

Programme of sector improvement support for 2018/19

PEER CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT

Challenge and support from one's peer's lies at the heart of our approach. Councils recognise the need for peer challenge to be adopted by all councils and that they will need to increasingly work with other partners from the public sector, private and from the voluntary and community sectors to realise their ambitions for their communities. The Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) offer focuses on councils' leadership, corporate capacity and financial resilience – but is also able to be flexed to focus on other significant local issues such as homelessness; economic growth; transformation, etc. The Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) has recently been refreshed and strengthened. We will continue to keep it under review and are currently implementing a number of the recommendations from the recently published independent evaluation from Cardiff University – including, for example, how we can use “impact stories” to promote and market CPC and how we can draw out and widely share good practice. There is an expectation that all councils will have a corporate peer challenge or finance peer review over a 5 year period. The LGA will proactively market peer challenge to those councils with zero/low take up.

A tiered approach to the peer based model has been introduced, recognising that whilst most support offers will be universal some councils will sometimes face more significant challenges and will require more bespoke support. In these circumstances work will be undertaken with councils to develop intensive packages of support drawing appropriate elements from this wide-ranging offer. The peer-based model has also been adapted to provide support for councils who are looking to work with their partners around a placed-based approach or to work with other councils.

As part of the approach to sector led improvement it has been agreed with the sector that the LGA maintains an overview of the performance of the sector and uses this information to drive improvement in the overall performance of the sector. The LGA also manages the risk of significant underperformance at a service or corporate level in councils in order to minimise the number of councils that government need to consider intervening in. In order to help the LGA do this it looks to Government Departments to share any concerns with it at the earliest opportunity.

For those councils identified by the LGA and the Department as having the most severe performance challenges and at risk of intervention or in intervention a programme of support, developed with the local authority, will be delivered to help it overcome severe challenges. Councils deemed to require this level of support will have access to a rapid response team of senior members/officers with the appropriate mix of specialist skills and experience to help them respond to the

challenges being faced. Beyond this IDeA will package together a combination of the support offers outlined in the four core work-streams set out in this Annex.

Outcome: A resilient and self-aware local government sector that is receptive of challenge and support from peers and committed to the collective ownership of performance and improvement.

Objective 1: our ambition is that every council will have received a corporate or finance peer challenge, between 2017 and March 2022 and acted on the resulting recommendations to improve their performance

Deliverables to include:

1.1 Deliver at least 110 peer challenges, of all types (including fire and rescue), of which 70 are corporate or finance peer challenges.

1.2 Reducing the number of councils that have not had a corporate peer challenge since 2012 by 50 per cent in 2018/19.

Objective 2: LGA acts as a focal point for the facilitation of effective peer to peer support, demand for which can often arise from the findings of a peer challenge

Deliverables to include:

2.1 Change of control support to 15 councils. A change of council control or political Leader/Mayor can be a vulnerable time for councils.

2.2 Provide support to at least 10 councils to manage and resolve issues between the political and managerial leadership

2.3 Tailored member/officer peer support to at least 60 councils. For example one to one mentoring support for individual councillors or Chief Executives

2.4 Support to at least 20 councils to improve the way they engage with their communities and establish a clear vision based on their residents' concerns about the priorities for the council

2.5 Support fire and rescue authorities as required and in a way that aligns with the new inspection regime.

Objective 3: Scrutiny makes an effective and positive contribution to organisational effectiveness and support takes account of the Government's response to the Communities and Local Government Commons Select Committee report on Overview and Scrutiny.

Deliverables to include:

3.1 With CfPS, a range of support for scrutiny, accountability and good governance including promotion of good practice

3.2 Training for at least 20 councillors on a Leadership Essentials Scrutiny course

3.3 Maintain and improve LG Inform, the on-line data and benchmarking service, enabling the comparison and analysis of performance and thereby supporting efficient service delivery and enhancing local accountability

Objective 4: To work with the most challenged councils to minimise the risk of formal intervention by MHCLG

Deliverables to include:

4.1 Bespoke packages of support for up to 10 councils identified by the LGA and the Ministry as having the most severe performance challenges and at risk of intervention or in intervention.

Measures

- 90 per cent of Chief Executives of authorities that had received a peer challenge say their confidence about their council delivering its priorities had increased as a result
- 80 per cent of respondents from councils receiving a corporate peer challenge a year earlier report it had a positive impact on their council's performance and delivery of their priorities
- The number of councils to have not received a corporate peer challenge since 2012 is reduced by 50 per cent
- 85 per cent of councils receiving peer support state that it has had a positive impact
- 50 per cent of councils receiving peer support provide a member or officer peer as a result to support another council by 2020.

LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY

Background:

Effective leadership has always been at the heart of effective democracy, and the LGA and IDeA both remain committed to supporting and developing the councillors and senior officers on whose shoulders this rests.

We know that local government is only ever as vibrant, effective and relevant as the people running it. In the context of new challenges for the sector - whether it be incentivising economic growth, or the onward devolution of powers to Mayors and Combined Authorities - a new cadre of leaders at both political and officer levels is required.

These leaders need to be capable of building strong working relationships, both across their communities and across central and local government. These leaders should also reflect the diversity and richness of the communities they serve. As part of our leadership offer this year we will include; strategic digital and cyber leadership; integration and cohesion; and preparing for emergencies and providing effective community leadership through response and into recovery. Unconscious bias training for councillors is included in parts of some of our programmes.

We have a duty to support and challenge the politicians and council officers of today to be the best leaders they can, and to encourage and talent spot the best leaders for the future – helping the sector to build a cadre of strong viable leaders at senior levels.

Individual councils themselves invest considerably in developing the workforce skills and managerial capacity of their senior managers. We are currently consulting on a new local government workforce strategy called “Growing Places” and this will drive our work over the next few years. It will take into account the potential workforce issues that may arise from Brexit. In consultation with councils and relevant stakeholders we have identified five key areas which we believe will shape the development of the local government workforce for the foreseeable future:

- organisational development
- skills development
- leadership
- recruitment and retention
- pay and rewards.

<p>Outcome: Councils provide strong, accountable local leadership that sets the direction for place shaping, growth and effective local partnerships</p>

Objective 5: Councillors and officers are provided with the support and development opportunities they require to become strong, capable and effective leaders who

understand the needs of their areas, lead and manage their organisations and are able to work effectively with partners to improve outcomes for citizens and communities.

Deliverables to include:

5.1 Provide development opportunities for at least 680 councillors with leadership roles in their councils

5.2 Promote good standards in public life in appropriate leadership courses and through the sharing of good practice and information

5.3 In partnership with SOLACE:

- The Ignite leadership development programme for at least 10 chief executives
- A programme for senior managers who aspire to be CEXs
- A programme that recognises and develops rising talent
- A management development programme aimed at “middle” managers

5.4 In partnership with CIPFA enhance the programme of leadership support for s.151 officers

5.5 Training and support for at least 75 council leaders or other senior politicians and chief executives and senior officers to develop their leadership roles through top team development and other programmes including digital leadership

Objective 6: The supply of talented political and officer leaders is continually refreshed

Deliverables to include:

6.1 At least 20 councils are supported to deliver bespoke “Be A Councillor” programmes to enable them to promote democracy and attract a wider pool of diverse talent to stand for election

6.2 60 ambitious and talented councillors are supported to progress their political careers through the Next Generation programme

6.3 The national graduate development programme (a two year management development programme) recruits at least 100 high calibre graduates in to local government

6.4 An apprenticeship programme (of encouragement and practical support) designed to help councils increase the number of apprentices and maximise their levy investment

Measures:

- over 90 per cent of participants agree that the political leadership programme has helped them improve the way they carry out their role
- over 90 per cent of members in our political leadership programme agree that as a result they feel more confident in their ability to carry out their role.

- over 90 per cent of participants in our officer leadership programmes agree that as a result they feel more confident in their ability to carry out their role.
- At least 50 per cent of participants in the Next Generation programme go on to be cabinet members, committee chairs or leaders within the following 5 years.
- At least 50 per cent of participants in the national graduate development programme for 2018 go on to managerial positions by 2022.
- At least 75 per cent of senior members and officers attending our senior leadership courses go on to provide peer or mentoring support to others by 2020.

Outcome: Councils recruit, develop, reward and deploy their workforce to best meet their objectives.

Objective 7: Councils are supported to address future workforce changes associated with public sector reform, the practical implementation of current employment legislation etc and to modernise and transform the way they work, developing workplace cultures that motivate and value staff at all levels

Deliverables to include:

7.1 Publish a new pay and workforce strategy by September 2018

7.2 Support over 75 councils to transform their workforces and modernise the way they are managed through a range of HR/OD initiatives and in line with the new pay and workforce strategy

7.3 Develop further campaigns to retain and attract staff in hard to recruit professions.

Objective 8: Pay settlements are agreed and workforce disruption minimised

Deliverables to include:

8.1 To maintain the national negotiating machinery on pay and workforce issues, facilitating the negotiation of a pay agreement for local government that addresses the challenge of the National Living Wage and delivers pay agreements for a range of other occupational groups, to avoid the duplication of single employer negotiations.

Measures

- Over 90 per cent of councils provided with bespoke support agree that it has had a positive impact on their authority
- Councils reporting significant difficulties in recruiting to key jobs falls by 10 per cent by end of 2020.

EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY

Providing value for money and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of councils is as important today as it's ever been. Over the last five years councils have made great strides to reduce costs whilst maintaining the quality of service delivery.

The efficiency and productivity programme is designed to ensure that local government continues to be the most efficient part of the public sector and comprises a range of initiatives and support to help councils continue to improve their productivity and efficiency - including the development of common solutions or the facilitation of collaborative approaches where appropriate.

More so than ever before local authorities need to look at how they now go beyond efficiency savings to how they can transform their services making use of digital and other opportunities.

Local government has a track record of working with other bodies: public sector (including central government), voluntary sector and the business community to help to transform the lives of their residents and communities for the better. It is by working together collaboratively in a place that added value can be achieved and councils are at the forefront of this way of working.

The LGA welcomes the government's recognition of local government's partnership role as set out in the common strategic agenda outlined in the UK Digital Strategy, the Government Transformation Strategy and the National Cyber Security Strategy. These set out an ambitious agenda which impacts directly on local communities, business and public services and emphasise the importance of collaborative work, as highlighted in the recent local government family's joint local digital leadership statement.

In the digital age it is more important than ever that councils are at the heart of developing a cross cutting culture of collaborative local digital leadership. It is vital that local leaders are on board with this agenda if it is to succeed. The LGA together with other key local government membership bodies will promote and build the local digital leadership required to maximise the benefits of digital transformation for local citizens, communities and businesses.

Our refreshed programme will support this area of work.

Strands involve:

- Transforming services: to make them more efficient, managing demand and finding more effective ways of delivering local people's needs - including digital tools and solutions to improve online transactional services through to new innovative ways of delivery;

- Smarter sourcing: commissioning and procuring services, goods and works more efficiently;
- Generating income; for example through commercialisation, better use of assets or investing to grow the local economy.

Outcome: Councils undertake their functions in an efficient, effective and resilient manner, responding to and taking advantage of new technologies in order to improve continuously and provide value for money for citizens.

Objective 9: Help councils become more efficient in the way they procure and deliver services and to assist them in managing risks including having in place sound contingency arrangements for contracts that have been outsourced.

Deliverables to include:

- 9.1 Revise the Local Government National Procurement strategy and set out a programme of work by October 2018 to help councils improve their procurement arrangements
- 9.2 Collaboration with Local Partnerships to provide practical support to help councils deliver efficiency savings and/or improve performance in areas such as waste and recycling, re-financing PFI contracts, undertaking major contract/fundamental spend reviews, etc.
- 9.3 Annual refresh of the national shared services map and a matchmaking service for councils in order to help increase the efficiency savings councils make through sharing services
- 9.4 Capture and share intelligence covering major suppliers to help reduce the risk for councils if a supplier got into financial difficulty
- 9.5 Work with MHCLG to synthesise data to develop a better understanding of the characteristics of intelligent and efficient councils

Objective 10: Help councils protect their financial resilience, including exploring new sources of revenue, fighting fraud locally and understanding and responding to local financial challenges

Deliverables to include:

- 10.1 Productivity and income generation experts to work with at least 25 councils, saving the councils or generating income of at least £25 million
- 10.2 Help councils become more commercial through a series of courses, events and sharing good practice.

10.3 Provide expert financial advice and assistance to 40 councils to help them address specific issues

10.4 Help councils to be more pro-active in dealing with fraud by supporting Fighting Fraud Locally with CIPFA and others; supporting the Fighting Fraud Locally Board to review the 2016 strategy; and working with MHCLG in support of the Procurement Fraud Review.

Objective 11: Innovation and good practice in service design and delivery is encouraged and shared across the sector, including responding to the implications and opportunities of new technologies and digital transformation

Deliverables to include:

11.1 Through the “Design in public sector” work with the Design Council equip 10 councils to use design techniques to transform services and/or manage future demand and disseminate the learning across the sector

11.2 Work with the Behavioural Insights Team to help 8 councils better understand the behaviour of customers in order to better manage demand for services

11.3 Support to help councils maximise the opportunities that digital tools and solutions create to get more services online and help local residents and businesses carry out their business with their council online and to play a full part in digital aspects of various government strategies, including the UK’s industrial strategy

11.4 A programme of work to proactively support widening of the use of digital tools and solutions across local authorities and on-going work to highlight the importance of cyber security to senior officers and leaders in local authorities to promote their active participation in the national Cyber-Security Programme and membership of the online Cyber Security Information Partnership (CISP).

11.5 Showcase innovation and good practice through the Innovation Zone, on-line searchable database, publications and events.

Measures:

- councils continue to improve performance as evidenced by a basket of performance indicators used by councils across a wide range of services (as a proxy to measuring how our support has had an impact);
- the sector continues to transform services, utilising opportunities presented by new technologies, to become more efficient and effective in its use of resources - for every £1 of MHCLG grant invested in this part of the programme of sector led improvement we will help councils save £10.
- Leaders and Chief Executives in councils value the improvement support the LGA is making available as demonstrated by 90 per cent saying it has had a positive impact on their authority.

STRONG COMMUNITIES WITH EXCELLENT PUBLIC SERVICES

Central and local government are both committed to creating the right conditions to deliver strong local economies with local authorities delivering high quality, value for money services.

This means there needs to be a shift in power from central to local government. We want to see economic growth being boosted in a way that offers prosperity to every place. We want public services transformed so they prevent problems instead of just picking up the pieces. We want services to be built around people and their needs, joining up to make a positive impact on the lives of individuals, families and communities. We will support councils in responding to the challenges of building strong, integrated communities. To deliver the outcomes councillors are seeking for their communities, councils will need to transform their services and work with others. This will include continuing to put citizens first, integrating service delivery at the local level with other councils and with other public sector bodies including health and central government.

We want to help councils put housing at the centre of solutions to wider public service challenges by developing an improvement offer based on the LGA Housing Commission's key findings. The offer will support councils to meet the ambitions of the Housing White Paper, Fixing our Broken Housing Market by focusing on delivering homes, generating revenue or finding savings, and preventing and relieving homelessness. We will look to expand the reach of our housing adviser programme.

The government has embarked on a journey that will bring power close to local communities. This offer is to help councils on this journey. For those with deals already agreed, it will involve helping them with implementation. For those that are just embarking on the journey it will involve help to establish the meaningful partnerships required to sustain any deal.

<p>Outcome: Councils that support the creation of strong local communities, working with partners to support healthy communities and strong local economies, and provide services that meet the needs of the citizens and communities to whom they are accountable.</p>
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Objective 12: Councils are provided with the support they need to work effectively with partners to deliver excellent public services that support the creation of strong communities

Deliverables to include:

12.1 Implement the Housing Advisers programme, providing practical bespoke support to help at least 20 councils deal with the housing, planning and homelessness challenges they are facing in their areas and draw out the lessons for wider dissemination within the sector. Work with MHCLG on a series of national sector-wide projects supporting councils to meet common challenges in housing delivery, planning and homelessness prevention.

12.2 A mixture of generic and bespoke support for newly elected mayors and assistance to those areas in the process of developing their devolution arrangements, capturing and sharing good practice

12.3 In association with NALC, continue to promote effective collaboration between principal authorities and town and parish councils and support for mutually beneficial areas of work.

12.4 Support councils on the local growth agenda, including working with councils and their partners on developing Local Industrial Strategies through a programme of events and capturing good practice.

12.5 Support for officers and members to strengthen councils' licensing and regulatory functions, including issues arising from the Hackitt review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety

12.6 Assist councils to tackle modern slavery, including identifying and supporting victims, through the dissemination of guidance, sharing best practice and raising awareness

12.7 Help councils make an effective contribution to the public health system, by addressing the issues of health inequalities and examining the links between economic growth, employment and health

12.8 A programme of support for councils to help secure integrated communities, taking account of the Government's Integrated Communities Strategy, and including leadership support to handle the complexities of the agenda

12.9 A programme of support for councils to help counter extremism, taking account of the Government's Counter-Extremism Strategy

12.10 Strengthen fire and rescue authorities' ability to take forward the fire reform agenda by strengthening their strategic leadership

12.11 Work with MHCLG to ensure that the national Troubled Families Programme is effectively implementing service transformation across Early Help Services

12.12 Support councils to prepare for EU Exit by sharing best practice from within the sector on EU Exit planning including capturing and sharing evidence of the differing, local impacts of Brexit through engaging with the sector and local seminars

12.13 Support councils to strengthen their resilience and emergency planning, focussing on community leadership in civil emergencies, through a series of training events and other materials

12.14 Through the One Public Estate, support the delivery of the Land Release Fund.

Measures:

- Council residents maintain high levels of trust and satisfaction in local government
- Over 85 per cent of those authorities provided with support report that it has had an impact
- Officer and Member peers come forward to support others from at least 50 councils as a result of the support provided