

## **Improvement and Innovation Board – report from Cllr Paul Bettison OBE (Chairman)**

1. Much of this Board's recent activity formed part of the LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition 2018, as outlined throughout this report.

### **Innovation**

2. Many of our Board Members contributed to our sixth successful three-day Innovation Zone. Cllrs Peter Fleming OBE, Joy Allen, Laura Miller and Catherine Rankin formed a working group in November that has since provided strategic oversight of the Zone's development, advised on the Zone's programme, and compered in the Zone along with other Board Members – Cllrs Linda Robinson, Judi Billing MBE, Nicole Meardon and Mayor Dave Hodgson MBE.
3. In advance of conference, I also promoted the Zone through a Local Government Chronicle article. We also promoted the Zone through our membership magazine 'first' and various other ways.
4. The Zone itself involved over 60 speakers from over 40 organisations including many councils. It started with an engaging session with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and their social humanoid robot Pepper. The final day included the National FGM Centre and councils' work to improve the lives of children, and how councils and Nesta are exploring the future of drone usage. Hundreds of delegates visited the Zone, and case studies therefrom are being uploaded to the LGA website.

### **Leadership**

5. Cllrs Judi Billing and Liz Green chaired a new development day for women councillors on 22 June, which created a network for female politicians and empowering women to develop their political careers. Further to its success, a two-day programme will be launched this winter; the first "weekender" will take place 8-9 December in Warwick.
6. Cllr Green also hosted the LGA's Leadership Academy graduation event at the end of June.
7. At conference we promoted the Be a Councillor campaign, soft launched the opening of council registrations for the next round of the National Graduate Development Programme (ngdp) and contributed to the LGA/SOLACE session on getting more senior women into local government.
8. NGDP was recently voted 25<sup>th</sup> in the Guardian UK 300 top employers, ranking it higher than John Lewis, Apple, Sky, HMRC, the Army, GCHQ and the RAF.

### **Efficiency and productivity**

9. Cllr Allen chaired a successful conference workshop on commercial councils – profit with a purpose, during which we heard from commercial councils having successful impacts on local jobs, skills and growth through their commercial activity, and how councils were investing in property within their local areas to achieve a commercial return as well as social value.
10. Following the fully booked 2017/18 pilot, the free 2018/19 Commercial Skills for Councillors Masterclass training dates have been [finalised](#) in Leeds, Cambridge and Winchester. The

masterclasses focus on the role of the councillor in commercialisation and is hosted by and LGA member peer and an experienced trainer with a commercial background.

11. At the last Improvement and Innovation Board meeting, the Chief Digital Officer at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government gave a presentation on the proposed Digital Declaration. Members raised a number of concerns about the Declaration, which officers continued to negotiate with civil servants. We were advised at conference that the Minister wanted to spend a considerable amount of his speech focussing on the Declaration. Sufficient changes to the Declaration's wording were made for the LGA to agree. A meeting was arranged with the Minister, Cllr Fleming, officers and civil servants where the Minister was very clear that he needed a decision before his speech. An urgent meeting was therefore convened of the Chairman and Group Leaders who agreed the LGA should support the Declaration. This will be reported to the next meeting of the Improvement and Innovation Board in July.
12. The Digital Place: connecting citizens, councils and communities sponsored by Capita workshop took place at conference on 4 July.
13. We launched the [National Procurement Strategy 2018](#) on 3 July at a conference workshop – an updated version of our first strategy in 2014. There will be a benchmark diagnostic exercise taking place later in the summer to identify the baseline position for councils.
14. The LGA's refreshed [Shared Services Map](#) shows that there are now 555 individual shared service arrangements (up from 486) across the country, resulting in £840 million (up from £640m) of cumulative efficiency savings. The map shows once again that when it comes to making efficiency savings there is no sector better at doing it than local government.
15. We ran a closed fringe session with Chief Executives on cyber security with SOLACE at conference where they discussed how some of their peers dealt with a cyber security attack.
16. As part of the National Cyber Security Strategy (2016 – 2020), we have been awarded funding by the Cabinet Office to ensure councils are as resilient against cyber-attacks as possible. Our Chief Executive wrote to every council in England in June, highlighting our 'stocktake', inviting them to complete a questionnaire regarding their cyber security arrangements, and asked them to nominate a lead contact to collate their organisation's response. Through this information, we aim to: capture each council's existing cyber security arrangements, identify good practice, risks and councils at risk, so we can target support, including grant funding to individual councils on a bidding basis to undertake agreed activity or work to improve their cyber security. We will advise councils how to bid for this later this year. Each organisation has until 31 August to complete the 'stocktake' questionnaire and can email this to [cybersecurity@local.gov.uk](mailto:cybersecurity@local.gov.uk). Councils that have not yet sent details of their lead contact are asked to do so via the same email address.
17. We have created a [webpage](#) that will have links to guidance and support for councils wishing to submit a modern slavery transparency statement. There will also be a portal of almost 50 councils who have done so. Councils can contact [productivity@local.gov.uk](mailto:productivity@local.gov.uk) for help or to discuss further.

## **Improvement**

18. Principal Advisers supported the organisation of five sessions for Chief Executives on: driving the health and social care integration agenda, lessons from inspection, an update from the

permanent secretary at MHCLG, walking tall: the 21st century Chief Executive, and commercialisation – is this the answer to plugging the gap?

**Accountability, transparency and sharing good practice**

19. We recently launched our [free online data maturity self-assessment tool](#) through which local authorities can complete a questionnaire to highlight their capabilities, be compared with others, and receive suggested next steps.
20. The LGA research and information team demonstrated [LG Inform](#), [LG Inform Plus](#) and the new [LG Inform Value for Money profiles](#) at conference. The Value for Money profiles bring together data about the costs, performance and activity of local councils and fire and rescue authorities.

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