

LGA Boards' improvement activity

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This is a progress report on improvement activity undertaken by other LGA Boards.

Recommendation

That Members note the report.

Actions

Subject to members' comments, officers will develop the LGA's improvement offer as part of its on-going work.

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LGA Boards' improvement activity

Background

1. Members have agreed that it is important for this Board to retain a strategic or "overarching" perspective on the improvement activity currently undertaken across LGA Boards. This helps ensure consistency with the key principles underpinning the approach to sector-led improvement and helps avoid any potential duplication.
2. To achieve this:
 - 2.1. officers coordinate the flow of business through the Boards so that the Improvement and Innovation Board can be invited to express strategic views about any significant improvement issues put before other Boards
 - 2.2. during the year the Improvement and Innovation Board receives suitably timed progress reports on the major improvement programmes
 - 2.3. as far as possible, the Improvement and Innovation Board meets towards the end of each cycle of meetings so it can consider any significant issues put before other Boards and then report back to Boards at their next meeting.
3. Significant improvement activity led by other LGA Boards since this was last reported in October 2018 is set out below.

At a Glance

NEW PEER CHALLENGES LAUNCHED



- Children's Services PC
- Early Years PC Programme
- Library PC
- Cultural Services PC

NEW GUIDES, TOOLS AND HANDBOOKS



- Children's Financial Diagnostic
- Children's Leadership Capacity Diagnostic
- Trade and Investment Guide
- Cllr Handbook on Digital Connectivity
- Cllr Handbook on running an effective museum service

THIS QUARTER IN NUMBERS



 **45** Housing Improvement bids funded, directly supporting **60** councils

Workforce support provided to **85** local authorities 

TOP ACHIEVEMENTS THIS QUARTER



LGA became a Disability Confident Leader

Social Care Digital Innovation Programme launched pilots in **9 Councils**

LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS OFFER



- Children's Services
- Sports and Physical activity
- Cultural Services
- Fire and Rescue



CHIP assisted **96** councils affected by Allied Healthcare

71 councillors have signed up to the Children's Services LE course

Community Wellbeing Board: Care and Health Improvement Programme (CHIP)

4. The [Care and Health Improvement Programme](#) (CHIP) is the sector-led improvement programme for adult social care and health delivered jointly with ADASS, funded mainly by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).
5. **Allied Healthcare:** the Care Quality Commission issued a Stage 6 notification on Allied Healthcare in November, indicating a likely disruption to home care service provision due to financial issues. CHIP responded immediately to assist the 96 councils affected to enact their contingency plans, identifying essential resources and offering local support. Allied has since confirmed its intention to sell the business on a branch-by-branch basis. Many councils are considering taking the services in house. Discussions with a major home care provider continue about its financial restructure.
6. **Markets and modelling project:** many councils are working with us on 'the markets and modelling project' in order to capture local market information on care for older people and those with learning disabilities. A reference group of regional specialists has identified a national dataset to inform thematic and trend identification. Council consent to collect data is being sought. Final data will be presented through secure online reports and tools for use by local councils and regions.
7. **Value for money:** we are holding workshops in each of the nine ADASS regions to discuss our new approach to measuring value for money in adult social care. The approach is designed to encourage councils to look at how resources are used and seek to improve value for money. There has been a positive response from councils. The data, which is available country-wide, allows benchmarking at national and regional level to give a better understanding of each council's individual and relative position. Once agreed, we aim to launch via LG Inform to support sector-led improvement.
8. The [Social Care Digital Innovation Programme](#) tasked councils to create digital pilots that will advance frontline practice, improve systems and enable integration across adult social care. Nine councils have been awarded implementation funding. Projects include biometric devices measuring anxiety triggers for people with autism and an app for social care providers collating employment information to assist the care worker recruitment process.
9. **Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system:** The CHIP team is currently piloting the LGA's new CRM system to manage our interaction with member councils and other bodies. CHIP staff are using the system to record all the team's interactions, with learning being fed back to the CRM development team for consideration ahead of full rollout across the LGA.

Children and Young People's Board

10. **Children's improvement joint working protocol:** the LGA, ADCS and Solace have agreed a joint working protocol that sets out how our organisations, working with the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted, will work collectively to provide support to Regional Improvement Alliances (RIAs). A national conversation will enhance regional arrangements by sharing best practice and learning, as well as comparing progress. This national discussion will add further value by creating a shared understanding of identified issues and providing an overview of the support offered by partners to address these.
11. **Sector-led improvement:** we are developing a programme of support as part of a DfE grant to improve leadership in children's social care services, including two new peer review offers. The Children's Financial Diagnostic will be piloted in West Berkshire (January) and Shropshire (February) and we have already begun discussions with several authorities to deliver this diagnostic in future months. A Children's Leadership Capacity Diagnostic is also being tested and we are working with Cornwall and Bath and North East Somerset to ensure this is fit to be rolled out in other places. Another strand of support is focussed on providing development opportunities for political leaders of children's services. Additional Leadership Essentials courses are being delivered and 71 lead members or chairs of children's scrutiny have signed up since September 2018. Discussions are also underway to trial a lead members network in London and all other regions have a similar network in place and are being supported to maximise the effectiveness of these. In addition, a range of regional learning, development and support opportunities for lead members is being developed and delivered – masterclasses, leadership essentials, training, buddying, mentoring
12. **Children's Services Peer Challenge Refresh:** to respond to the changing needs of Councils and the different approach now taken by Ofsted through ILACS, we are refreshing the safeguarding peer challenge methodology. A revised model is being piloted in early 2019 and will feature a modular approach where Councils can build a peer challenge tailored to their individual needs.
13. **Early Years Peer Challenge Programme:** funded by the DfE, we have now piloted this in three councils and have agreed the roll out to a further 10 areas. In total, up to 30 early years peer challenges will be delivered over the next 18 months. In addition, we are busy training early years peers with nearly 60 having completed the training and further sessions in early 2019. We are also working closely with the Early Intervention Foundation who have developed an Early Years Maturity Matrix, which will be used as part of the peer challenge process. Further developments will include the delivery of three learning and evaluation events over the next 18 months and the agreement that DfE will fund a follow up visit, 12 months after each peer challenge.

Case Study

Slough Borough Council is using the national child management programme (NCMP) to engage schools by linking it in with the healthy weight programmes they were beginning to run. These include the national Daily Mile, a tier one health promotion scheme called Active Movement and Let's Get Going, the 12-week local tier two weight management scheme. Active Movement is offered to all schools and is based on nudge-theory, offering help and advice about how to change the culture in schools. It encourages teachers to get pupils to stand up when answering questions and move round the classroom. It was only launched just over a year ago and is already in five schools with another 15 due to join soon, meaning it will reach 10,000 pupils. Read more [here](#).

City Regions and People and Places Boards

14. The LGA's work on devolution is led by the City Regions, and People and Places Boards.
15. Under their direction, the LGA has provided a range of generic and bespoke support to combined authorities (CAs) and CA Mayors, with key activity including:
 - 15.1. providing tailored capacity support to CAs, including the facilitation of leadership support sessions
 - 15.2. convening the CA chief executives' network as well as established thematic networks for senior CA officers covering housing and planning, employment and skills, and finance
 - 15.3. delivering the inaugural meetings of two new CA networks focused on HR and governance
 - 15.4. working with selected CA networks to commission research on areas of collective interest to CAs
 - 15.5. facilitating the sharing of best practice among CAs through both the networks of CA officers and peer-to-peer exchanges.
16. In addition to improvement support to CAs, the Boards have also overseen the commissioning of improvement support in relation to the following Board priorities:
17. **Local Industrial Strategies** – both Boards provided input into the commissioning of improvement support focused on councils' role in supporting and influencing Local Industrial Strategies. LGA officers are working closely with the Government's Cities and

Local Growth Unit to deliver an offer that will incorporate learning events, masterclasses, action learning and good practice sharing.

18. **Trade and investment** – the Boards have also undertaken a programme of work to explore and strengthen the role that councils across the country can play in helping businesses increase exports and attract inward investment. As part of this officers are working with a supplier to create a guide that captures good practice to support councils and their private sector partners. This will focus on maximising capital infrastructure investment opportunities and developing a longer-term pipeline of projects that are attractive to international investors and would benefit local communities and businesses.
19. **Digital connectivity** – the People and Places Board’s Rural Digital Connectivity Working Group has approved the commissioning of a councillors’ handbook on digital connectivity. It will provide a clear and accessible guide to support backbench councillors with limited/developing knowledge in this area who wish to play a leading role in helping their communities improve their connectivity.
20. The LGA is also working with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) to produce a report exploring the opportunities for principal and local councils to work together to **tackle loneliness**.

Culture, Tourism and Sport (CTS) Board

21. **Library and Culture Peer Challenge Launch:** we have now conducted the first round of applications for ten library peer challenges and the three cultural services peer challenges we are offering to councils, funded by our contract with Arts Council England (ACE). Four applications have been accepted, and we have implemented a second round of applications for the peer challenges, which closes on the 31 January. The four challenges awarded will take place in March.
22. We have also refreshed our pool of peers and peer challenge managers to conduct the challenges and will be hosting a training event for them on the 30 January.
23. **Leadership Essentials Courses:** over the last quarter we have held several Sports and Physical Activity Leadership Essentials courses, including one dedicated to councillors, delivered in partnership with Sport England. We have also delivered two Culture Leadership Essentials courses in partnership with ACE. These courses continue to be well received and command positive feedback from attendees.
24. **Research:** the CTS Board has commissioned research into the role of councils in supporting a pipeline of skills for local tourism sectors, testing our Work Local principles and exploring how they can be implemented on the ground with 8 council areas. As part of our contract with ACE, the Board has also commissioned development work for a

councillor handbook on running an effective museum service. This is due to complete in March.

Case study

Waltham Forest Council was named the first ever London Borough of Culture, securing £1.35m of funding. The Council developed a strategy that put residents at the centre and focused around them telling their stories about what made Waltham's Forest's cultural offering unique. This approach helped Waltham Forest to achieve more than 16,000 pledges of support – 6,000 more than they set out to secure. They reached out to over 400 influencers with ties to the borough including Fleur East and Damon Albarn, and more than 70 partners – from community groups to world-renowned organisations like the Barbican – signed their letter to the Mayor endorsing the bid. The bid was at the forefront of culture-led regeneration that has been a key part of Waltham Forest's economic growth strategy for some time. Read more [here](#).

Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT) Board

25. **Housing improvement:** the Board is currently funding over 45 bids, directly supporting over 60 Councils meet their local Housing need, through a mix of direct Grant funding and LGA procured expertise. The projects are diverse and wide ranging, covering our key themes of homelessness, housing supply, overall housing strategy and planning. Projects are in delivery phase and we will start publishing comprehensive case studies and best practice examples from April 2019 onwards.
26. We have launched a Building Council Homes Programme to provide support to Councils who want to immediately access the skills needed to increase the delivery of homes via their HRA. The Programme will issue grants to support a minimum of six projects to the value of £50,000 and potentially more depending on the demand. We have written to all HRA holding councils, and have asked them to complete a short survey in order to help us create a longer-term offer that helps councils have access to the skills and expertise needed to realise their growth and building ambitions.
27. **Growth:** The LGA's work on the future of high streets and town centres continues. The second session of the town centre masterclass takes place on the 17th January and the LGA's national conference on town centres takes place on 14th February.

Safer and Stronger Communities Board

28. **Building Safety Programme:** we have been working with MHCLG and the National Housing Federation (NHF) to jointly host three regional events for councils and housing associations, to allow experience and good practice from the building safety remediation programme to be shared more widely across the social housing sector. Senior officers

from councils will have the opportunity to hear MHCLG's plans for implementing the recommendations from the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety. They will also hear from councils and housing associations, which are leading the way in changing their culture and practice, and have the chance to participate in roundtable discussions on how to meet the challenges and opportunities facing the sector over the next year.

29. Events are taking place on the following dates:

- 29.1. 5 February in London
- 29.2. 25 February in Birmingham
- 29.3. 28 February in Manchester

30. **Leadership Essentials for Fire:** following previous successful programmes, programme 10 was run in November and was the best attended course to date. The two-day programme included the nature of political leadership and key skills like scrutiny, and Diversity. There will be a second programme in late February.

31. **Diversity and Inclusion in Fire Masterclasses:** as part of the Fire Services Management Committee diversity priority, there have been two masterclasses in January focusing on diversity in the fire sector and inclusive practices. There are a further three masterclasses concluding on the 20 February. Speakers include representatives from the Fire Inspectorate, the Asian Fire Service Association and the Home Office.

32. **Disrupting Modern Slavery conference:** in November, Cllr Allan Rhodes, the SSCB's champion on tackling modern slavery, chaired a conference on how councils can help disrupt modern slavery in their areas. Delegates heard about the important role that community safety, housing teams and wider regulatory services can play, as well as hearing from the National Crime Agency (NCA) and Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority.

Resources Board – Finance

33. **Fair Funding Review:** This quarter we continued our work with the Government on business rates retention and the Fair Funding Review. The Leadership Board, Executive and the Task and Finish Group have continued to receive regular updates on progress, and to guide our policy on these areas.

- 33.1. We have published a modelling tool for member councils to use to assess the potential implications of different options for transition mechanisms as part of the Fair Funding Review. They help provide members with some early

indications on where the emerging proposals are leading, as well as build their own proposals.

33.2. We have also published a similar tool for modelling business rates retention. It allows local authorities to gauge the implications of various options on business rates resets, tier splits, safety nets and levies in a variety of growth/loss scenarios over a 15-year horizon from 2020/21 to 2035/36.

34. **Treasurers' societies:** Officers continued to attend regular meetings of the county council, district council, municipal and unitary authority treasurers' societies to provide them with updates on various developments to aid with financial planning and share knowledge.

35. **Spending review:** We are continuing work on preparing for the 2019 Spending Review and looking at the efficiency of local government in delivering services and how local government is a 'good investment' by generating savings elsewhere in public spending.

Resources Board - Workforce

36. This quarter the Resources Board has focussed on two main equality and diversity priorities for workforce – gender and disability:

37. **Gender:** working with the Government Equalities Office and the Equalities and Human Rights Commission we have produced a range of information and guidance on our website for local authorities on reporting and improving their gender pay gap figures. Support has also included a series of events around the country, a number of which are specifically for Fire & Rescue Authorities to support the LGA's diversity work for these employers.

38. **Disability:** we have been working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to promote good practice for employing people with disabilities under the Government's Thriving at Work agenda. We have provided a range of online guidance and resources for employers to support employees with mental health conditions or disabilities, and also held an event with DWP and DHSC to share good practice in local government. LGA also became a Disability Confident Leader under the Government scheme to promote good practice in employing disabled people (replacing the Two Ticks accreditation scheme). This allows us to help councils gain Disability Confident Leader status to support their communities in employing disabled people. There is additional work planned for these strands of work, including podcasts, events to promote Disability Confident, and piloting a disability passport framework.

39. **Direct support to councils:** During the course of this financial year to date we have commenced or completed projects providing direct support to approximately 85

local authorities. This casework varies from the provision of pay and grading advice to organisational design and employee engagement. Importantly, it often requires the team to help elected members resolve the most complex senior manager employee relations casework. Recent examples include the necessary advice and support provided to councils to facilitate the mutually agreed termination of the contact of their chief executive.

Implications for Wales

40. There are no implications for Wales.

Financial Implications

41. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

Next steps

42. Subject to Members' views, officers will continue to brief the Board on the latest improvement activities across all LGA Boards.