

## **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 ongoing 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:
  - 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
  - during the year the Improvement and Innovation Board receives suitably timed progress reports on the major improvement programmes
  - 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 March 2019 is set out below.

### **At a Glance**

#### **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. **Markets and Modelling Project:** the project aims to support councils to better manage their social care provider market and to develop the next generation of market position statements. The seventy five councils participating (c82%) across six regions have submitted data for the national learning disability dataset with a few contributions from the remaining regions. This will ensure a robust core for analysis and a base on which to develop an analysis tool. We aim to have this available for 'show and tell' sessions with councils in June, followed by testing.
6. **Value for money:** Following extensive engagement with councils, elected members, government departments and consultancies, a new approach to looking at the use of resources to ensure value for money in adult social care has been developed. The aim of the approach is to allow benchmarking at a national, regional and local level to support

sector led improvement. The data set will be launched on LG Inform in June and in the first instance will be made available to directors of adult social care, before being rolled out to the wider sector when the 2018/19 national data becomes published. A series of events and webinars are being designed to support the launch, ensure consistency of returns and address any queries about the data.

7. The third wave of the [Social Care Digital Innovation Programme](#) has commenced with 12 councils discovering if there is a digital solution to the social care challenges they are facing in their locality. Challenges being approached include using technology to provide assistance for independent travel, falls prevention and citizens having access to real time care and support information. Approaching 40 councils have now been funded over the last two years in the three waves of the programme.

### **Children and Young People's Board**

8. **Sector-led improvement:** We have recently refreshed our series of children's services 'must know' guides, a long-standing source of information and support for lead members for children's services. The suite of information covers the evolving council role in education, Special Educational Needs and Disability (developed in conjunction with the Council for Disabled Children), youth services and what happens if children's services are judged to be inadequate by Ofsted.
9. We have also developed a new 'must know' on children's services for council chief executives, which has been shaped by CEXs who are either former directors of children's services or for other reasons have been closely associated with leading improvement journeys in council children's services. We have also published a guide for new Lead Members for Children's Services which sets out key issues for the first ten days in the role.
10. A wider update is provided through the Children's Improvement Programme report – item

#### **Case Study**

Cheshire East Council was looking to improve integrated, place based working within Children's Services to align with existing ways of working in Adult and Health services. The aim was to improve information sharing, integrate plans, reduce duplication and increase the time spent with children and families across multi-agency settings. Appointing a skilled Change Manager from the LGA Productivity Experts Programme enabled the Council to co-design of a Locality Model to enable the multi-agency workforce to collaborate, share knowledge and work together focussing on the families within the communities that they serve.

It is expected that the new way of working will reduce duplication and create efficiencies and the Council have already restructured to make operational savings of £1.2m across Children's Services in 2019-20.

2 on the agenda.

## City Regions and People and Places Boards

11. The LGA's work on devolution is led by the City Regions, and People and Places Boards. The LGA has continued to provide a range of generic and bespoke support to combined authorities (CAs) and CA Mayors, with key activity including:

- Providing tailored capacity support to CAs and linking them into the LGA's wider improvement support offer
- Convening the CA chief executives' network and established thematic networks for senior CA officers covering: housing and planning, employment and skills, governance and scrutiny, HR and finance.
- Working with selected networks to commission research on areas of collective interest to CAs
- Facilitating the continued sharing of best practice among CAs through both these networks of CA officers and the facilitation of peer-to-peer exchanges between CAs.

12. In addition to improvement support to CAs, the City Regions Board and the People and Places Board have also overseen the commissioning of improvement support in relation to the following Board priorities:

12.1. **Local Industrial Strategies:** Both Boards provided input into the commissioning of improvement support focused on Local Industrial Strategies (LIS). Working closely with the Cities and Local Growth Unit, the team delivered the following during the reporting period:

- Three fully-booked LIS masterclass events focused on inclusive growth, developing a place narrative and business and stakeholder engagement
- Two LIS action learning sets attended by council officers that have each met on three occasions
- Extensive engagement with local leaders to better understand and articulate the role of councils in LIS development
- A national stakeholder roundtable with attendance from key partners including the CBI, FSB and NHS Confederation
- Development of an online resource that will capture learning from all of this activity as well as the final outputs from the improvement support offer.

12.2. **Trade and investment:** The LGA has produced a guide for local authorities looking to attract investment, from both domestic and foreign sources, into local capital projects. The guide has been drafted in partnership with the Department of International Trade and has been informed by interviews by local authorities, Government departments and capital investors.

12.3. **Local councils (town and parish):** The LGA commissioned The Campaign Company to produce a follow up to their well-received guide on how principal and

local councils can work best in partnership. The new guide focusses specifically on the role all tiers can play in helping to tackle loneliness in the community.

- 12.4. **Digital Connectivity:** Fast and reliable connectivity is widely considered as “the fourth utility” on a par with water and electricity. The LGA has produced a guide for councillors who want to expand their knowledge of the technical and policy aspects of digital connectivity and the infrastructure that supplies it. It provides a range of case studies where councillors have played an instrumental role within their communities advocating for better connectivity to be provided to their residents.

### **Culture, Tourism and Sport (CTS) Board**

13. **Library and Culture Peer Challenge Launch:** Following a second round of applications for the peer challenges, we have now accepted applications for 10 library peer challenges and 4 cultural peer challenges funded by our contract with Arts Council England (ACE). Three library peer challenges have taken place to date at Sandwell, Haringey and Worcestershire councils and initial feedback has been very positive. The remaining challenges will be completed by 31st July 2019.
14. We ran a successful training event for our peers and peer challenge managers on the 30th January which was well received and we continue to increase our pool of peers for these challenges.
15. **Leadership Essentials Courses:** In partnership with Sport England we have recently delivered Sports and Physical Activities Leadership Essentials courses for councillors and officers. These courses continue to be well received gaining positive feedback. We are now commissioning further courses for 2019/20. We continue to work with Arts Council England to develop the Cultural Services Leadership Essentials courses for 2019/20.

### **Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT) Board**

16. **Local growth:** Following a request from the Board, a study visit of Woking and Bracknell town centres took place on the 24th April. The visit allowed members to explore and discuss contrasting approaches to town centre redevelopment. The day provided very useful insights into the approaches taken by councils facing their own unique town centre challenges and the key decisions that were required to deliver much needed regeneration and investment into their town centres. A further visit in a different part of the country will be considered for later in the year.

## Case Study

Bracknell has undergone major transformation and has used its leadership role, strategic investments, land contributions and planning powers to influence the mostly private sector led redevelopment to change the town centre to a high quality retail based offer with significant improvements to the public realm.

Woking is still in the process of transforming its town centre. Its approach has included much more significant direct local authority investment, using the facilities provided by the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB), with the council significantly involved as a developer itself. Some of their investment is through a joint public/private partnership and they have invested in housing and the public realm, including local roads, where they have taken on highways authority responsibilities from the county council.

17. 17<sup>th</sup> January was the second and final day of the Better Town Centres masterclass, where 23 local authorities – a mix of elected members and officers – attended to learn from experts in retail, modern shared workspaces and delivering a better public realm, with very positive feedback from all those who participated. This was followed by a larger and fully booked national conference on 14<sup>th</sup> February where a diverse range of councils shared how they were taking greater control of their town centres.
18. **Housing and planning:** The LGA's Annual Housing, Planning and Infrastructure Conference took place on 13 March 2019 starting with a keynote address from Kit Malthouse MP, Minister for Housing. The winners of the Future Place Programme were announced at the event. Future Place is a joint programme from the LGA, RTPI, CIH, RIBA and now Homes England to unlock local potential for place-shaping.
19. **Transport:** The LGA hosted a conference on 17<sup>th</sup> January reflecting our future transport work. The conference entitled "Clean, connected and in-control: what tomorrow's transport technology could mean for councils" looked at how innovative new technologies will change how we travel. The conference was addressed by experts from the automotive industry for their reflections on the technology that is currently in testing and development and the opportunities for new services it will offer. We also heard from innovative councils who have made use of big data to redesign transport and highway services and to deliver more efficient and more responsive services.
20. The discussion at the conference has led to us looking into how councils are using drones in new ways and how that might impact on public services and the potential role of councils, for example, in regulating their use. We are also planning to publish guidance on electrical charging and why and how councils should become involved in planning for the roll out of charging infrastructure as we transition to different types of engines.

### Case Study

Waste and Zones are two of the Colchester Borough Council's biggest operational services. Waste touches every household every week and Zones is one of the key visible services in communities as it includes Street Cleansing, Street Enforcement and the Market. The review of these services had a savings target of £400,000 for 3 years against the annual budget

The LGA Productivity Expert worked closely with, and transferred knowledge to, the cross functional project team, identifying total annual revenue savings of £750,000. The expert provided support in developing a new combined management structure which will generate £107,000 of annual revenue savings and provide a more effective and integrated service. They also provided advice on the future development of the existing Trade Waste Service including how to introduce a new charging methodology and how to increase future market share, which will be utilised when the new organisational structure has been implemented. Finally, their advice enabled a case to be made for further investment in the front line refuse and recycling collection service and the depot the service operates from. The magnitude of the savings identified in the Business Case were sufficient to invest the required funding for the service to grow to meet the future needs of Colchester.

### Safer and Stronger Communities Board

21. **LGA guidance on Building cohesive communities:** We have published [new guidance](#) on Building cohesive communities, exploring councils' key role in responding to community cohesion challenges and building resilience. The document looks at some of the tools and key service areas that can support local cohesion work, and brings together some of the theoretical approaches with good practice and ideas collected from councils across the country.
22. **Leadership essentials course on Prevent and counter-extremism:** In March we ran a Prevent and counter-extremism leadership essentials course for elected members in the Darlington. We are hoping to run similar regionally-focussed courses later this year.
23. **Building Safety Programme:** In February, we partnered with the National Housing Federation to host three regional events focused on Building Safety. These events were an opportunity for local authorities and housing associations to hear from colleagues who are innovating and adapting in light of the wide-ranging changes to the building safety system, in order to keep their residents safe.
24. **Building Safety Knowledge Hub:** in April, in collaboration with the National Housing Federation, we launched a building safety knowledge hub. This provides members with a space to share learning and best practice from their organisations relating to building safety, so that we can work together as a sector to improve. Members can find more information about the knowledge hub on the [LGA's website](#).

25. **Leadership Essentials for fire and rescue:** programme 11 of these Leadership Essentials ran in February and was attended by a variety of members including representatives from police, fire and crime commissioners offices and mayoral offices. The two-day programme covered a range of topics of significance to fire authorities from inspection to culture and inclusion. We are now reviewing the programme ahead of the 2019/20 series.
26. **Diversity and Inclusion in fire and rescue masterclass:** following on from two successful masterclasses in January, there were three further masterclasses in Lancashire, Exeter and Birmingham in February. Speakers included representative from the fire inspectorate, the Asian Fire Service Association and the Home Office. We will be reviewing the feedback from these events with an aim to producing further masterclasses going forward.
27. **Scrutiny:** in line with the second tranche of fire service inspections, a Scrutiny Toolkit has been commissioned for publication in June 2019. The toolkit will be an online and open-access resource to help elected members to provide the necessary scrutiny to their fire service.

## **Resources Board – Finance**

28. This quarter the Resources Board has focussed on the following finance issues
29. **Business Rates Retention and the Fair Funding Review:** we responded to Government consultations on [Further Business Rates Retention](#) and the [Fair Funding Review](#). During January and February 2019, the LGA organised a series of joint LGA / MHCLG regional events on the MHCLG Needs and Resources and the Business Rates Retention consultations to allow delegates to hear from MHCLG and LGA officers, to ask questions and to give feedback on the proposals. Events were held in Birmingham, Bury St Edmunds, Leeds, London, and Taunton and were attended by over 220 delegates representing over 150 local authorities and local authority organisations. We are also continuing to work with local authority officers and councillors to develop our policy on these work programmes.
30. We are having further discussions with MHCLG and local authority representatives, on the alternative administration model of business rates retention. We have commissioned a further business rates retention model to show how this might work in practice.
31. **Spending review:** we are continuing our work on preparing for the forthcoming 2019 Spending Review by building the case for local government and gathering evidence of how local government is a 'good investment' by generating savings in public spending. The LGA has made submissions to the Treasury Select Committee on Business Rates as a Tax and to the Housing Community and Local Government Select Committee on Local Government and the 2019 Spending Review.

32. **Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally:** we supported the Board of Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally in arranging a well-attended conference in March to highlight good practice in counter fraud activity across the sector and to raise fraud awareness with council leadership teams. As well as looking at council activities, the conference included a session with senior staff across the sector investigating the wider impacts of fraud activities on communities. More generally, we are supporting the Board in its review of how to take forward and refresh the Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally Strategy which was published in 2016.
33. **Engagement with local government:** we are continuing our engagement with the county councils, district councils, municipal and unitary authority treasurers' societies by attending regular meetings and updating them on developments in local government finance to keep them up to date and provide information that will help with their financial planning.

### **Resources Board - Workforce**

34. This quarter the Resources Board has focussed on the following workforce issues
35. **Advice for Social Workers on returning to practice:** The LGA Workforce Team have worked in collaboration with Community Care to produce advice and guidance for social workers about the next steps in their social work career. The guidance forms part of the continuing work to help social workers who want to return to practice and has been written in collaboration with practising social workers and managers. The guides and templates include useful information on how to complete an application form, draft a cv, prepare for an interview, re-register with the regulator through to how to make an impact on the first day. The Careers Zone is due to be launched in May 2019.
36. **Apprenticeships:** The Apprenticeship Accelerator Programme (AAP) aimed to accelerate the development and implementation of apprenticeship programmes in councils by testing a targeted intervention and support system. An independent evaluation was carried out by Shared Intelligence. The experience of receiving the AAP support and its achievements were overwhelmingly positive for all councils covered by the evaluation. Specific feedback indicated that AAP:
- **improves or secured senior buy-in** in the majority of councils, with more senior leaders taking notice of and promoting the apprenticeships agenda
  - **provides clarity** on the issues councils needed to address to improve/grow apprenticeship delivery
  - **formalises internal approaches** through leads implementing processes and procedures within the council
  - **empowers and invigorates teams** as a result of having a clearer vision of the required tasks to meet set goals and having the tools to undertake those tasks

- **improves awareness and understanding** by translating apprenticeship language into something more readily understood
- **provides a time for focussed thought and reflection** due to the requirement for councils to dedicate time to carry out face to face meetings and tasks.
- **Provides external validation** as a result of the LGA brand delivering the support. Put weight behind the apprenticeship agenda and raised its profile

Additionally, 10 councils were able to record that the AAP had led to an increase of at least 480 apprenticeship starts in the AAP period. Given the positive impact of the LGA's work the Education and Skills Funding Agency are keen to expand the AAP to a further 40 councils in 2019/2020 with confirmation expected in June 2019.

### Case studies

Devon County Council AAP support is focused on schools. The AAP approach has included: facilitating a Devon Schools survey on barriers to apprenticeships; significant workforce data analysis; mapping school roles to apprenticeships.

The "new" Dorset Council has set up Strategic Apprenticeship Project Board signed up to by the incumbent Chief Executive, Matt Prosser, to extend apprenticeships within the new Council and with external partners. An early adopter is a career pathway in Legal Services.

Birmingham City and Gloucestershire County Councils have established career pathways in Children's Services with an apprenticeships policy for new recruits.

37. **Senior officer capability:** The regulations regarding the management of disciplinary and capability cases for the three senior protected officers in local government changed in late 2015. As a consequence the appointment of a DIP was no longer a statutory requirement. In response to this change the JNC for chief executives has trained a cohort of Independent investigators to support Councils when they are dealing with these complex senior management conduct and capability issues.

After managing this new approach for approximately 3 years the process for appointment of independent investigators and the operation of the model procedure has been reviewed. We have received feedback from councils as well as the investigators, and changes to the model procedure and guidance are imminent.

38. **Workforce Focus:** Using various data sources and an online consultation, the team has now published Workforce Focus, available to download [here](#). The primary aim of this document is to help senior HR professionals and their teams to develop local action plans for workforce improvement by providing facts and ideas.

### Implications for Wales

39. There are no implications for Wales.

**Financial Implications**

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

**Next steps**

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