

## **LGA Boards' Improvement Activity**

### **Purpose**

To note the update on improvement activity undertaken by the LGA Boards.

### **Summary**

The report details the improvement activities undertaken by LGA Boards.

### **Recommendation**

That the Improvement and Innovation Board note the update on improvement activity undertaken by LGA Boards.

### **Action**

Officers to respond as necessary to any comments.

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## **LGA Boards' Improvement Activity**

### **Background**

1. Members have agreed that it is important for the Improvement and Innovation Board to retain a strategic or “overarching” perspective on the improvement activity currently undertaken across LGA Boards. This will help ensure consistency with the key principles underpinning the approach to sector led improvement and help avoid any potential duplication.
2. In order to achieve this, the Board agreed that:
  - 2.1. officers be asked to coordinate the flow of business through the Boards so that the Improvement and Innovation Board is 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; and
  - 2.3. as far as possible, the Improvement and Innovation Board meets towards the end of each quarterly 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. A full report describing the improvement activity and support provided through LGA Boards was submitted to the last meeting in October 2014.
4. At this meeting today, the Board is invited to provide strategic input to the on-going work of the Planning Advisory Service and to provide views on the development of the integrated care and health improvement programme for 2015/16.
5. In addition a short update on the improvement activity undertaken by other Boards is attached at **Appendix A**. In terms of consistency with, and implications for, our approach to sector-led improvement, Members may wish to note:
  - 5.1. There continues to be a strong element of external inspection and intervention in children’s services. The Children and Young People Board has called for an independent review of Ofsted.
  - 5.2. The Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care (TEASC) programme of sector-led improvement in adult social care will shortly be producing its third annual report on adult social care performance. This is an important example of the sector taking stock of its own performance and making the results publicly available.

### **Next steps**

6. Subject to Members’ views, officers will continue to update the Board on the improvement activities across all LGA Boards.

### **Financial implications**

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

**Appendix A**

## **LGA Boards' Improvement Activity**

### **Children and Young People Board**

1. **Ofsted annual report:** The Ofsted annual report for schools and further education and skills was launched on 10 December 2014. The headline findings this year are that primary school standards are continuing on an impressive upward trajectory – with more than eight in ten schools now rated at least good but that the overall rate of improvement in secondary schools has stalled. Teaching in the further education sector has improved but Ofsted is concerned that too many college courses are still not equipping learners with the skills that employers want and the economy needs.
2. The report raised concerns about the supply of teachers; at a time when pupil numbers are rising sharply, the number of new entrants to teacher training has fallen by 16% since 2009/10 and was 7% below target in 2014/15. It also expressed concerns that too many academies are isolated – Ofsted analysis of academies that experienced a sharp fall in inspection grade last year shows that most had not made any arrangement for external support and challenge until it was too late and serious decline had set in. Finally, it highlighted the level of confusion in the system over the exact role of local authorities in relation to academies and their pupils.
3. Responding to the report, Cllr Simmonds said *“Ofsted is intended to be a key part of the improvement of schools, and in the case of academy schools are the only people councils can call on to intervene when there are signs that standards are slipping. As well as asking questions of schools, Ofsted has questions to answer about whether its regime is bringing about the improvement we need to see. Mums and dads want to know that someone has their finger on the pulse of local schools and that can't be done from Whitehall. It is time for an independent review of Ofsted so that we can all be confident in the quality of judgments which at the moment seem to change at a moment's notice.”*
4. Ofsted launched its **Single Inspection Framework** for council services that care for and safeguard children in November 2013. Since then a total of 34 inspections have been completed with the following results:
  - 9 councils have been found to be good;
  - 18 are requires improvement; and
  - 7 councils are rated as inadequate.
5. As yet no council has been judged to be outstanding. The Single Inspection Framework is onerous and resource intensive and the results to date show that the bar has been raised for children's services. As a result of being found inadequate, the Department for Education has placed 23 councils in intervention. Of these, 13 are subject to an improvement notice, which sets out what the council needs to do to improve. 10 councils have had a formal direction notice from the Secretary of State

which means the council must adhere to the actions set out in the notice and must work with officials and government appointed advisers to improve services.

6. The Department for Education (DfE) is working to develop **alternative models for working with councils in intervention**, which go beyond the appointment of an improvement board and chair and, in the most serious cases, involve the appointment of a children's commissioner and establishment of a Trust. Julian Le Grand was asked by Ministers to commission work on alternative models for driving improvement in children's services and we are awaiting an announcement on the conclusion of that work.
7. The Department has also tendered for children's experts to participate in their commissioning framework to work alongside councils in intervention. DfE officials have described this as a more transparent way of recruiting expert advisers. The tender includes a call for agencies to deliver improvement support such as diagnostics. LGA has raised concerns that we are all looking to recruit from a small group of professionals, and there has been speculation in the trade press about whether this cuts across sector led improvement.
8. **The LGA, Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and SOLACE children's improvement meeting** took place on 2 October 2014 and was attended by the Chairman of the Children and Young People Board and the Chairman of the Improvement and Innovation Board. It considered how the sector can provide support to councils to ensure they come out of intervention as quickly as possible. It was recommended that LGA develops advice for councils that find themselves in intervention drawing on learning from peer challenges.
9. The LGA has developed a children's improvement offer to support councils, details of which were reported to the last meeting.
10. **Child Sexual Exploitation:** The Board received a full report at the last meeting outlining the current position on child sexual exploitation and how the LGA was seeking to support councils.
11. DCLG, Home Office and DfE are keen to identify good and emerging practice for tackling CSE and have been working with LGA, Solace and ADCS to consider effective approaches at the frontline.

#### **Community Wellbeing Board**

12. Over the last three years the LGA has been delivering an increasing number of programmes, primarily sponsored by the Department of Health, aimed at bringing about leadership developments, improvement or implementation support in the areas of care and support, health and wellbeing, and service integration with health. The programmes include Winterbourne View, Health and Wellbeing, and Better Care Fund.
13. The LGA has been commissioned to continue these programmes in 2015/16. There is a full report elsewhere on this agenda setting out the proposed approach,

objectives and activities to support councils across these programmes, including a proposition to complete the transition to a single programme to ensure that we have a more coherent offer to councils, that it is firmly based on the sector-led improvement principles, to ensure that it is complementary to the LGA's policy objectives and to deliver this at a reduced cost.

14. Responsibility for the **commissioning of public health responsibilities for 0-5 year olds** will transfer from NHS England to local government on 1 October 2015. In addition to lobbying for appropriate transfer of funding to support the new responsibilities the LGA has been working jointly with NHS England and Public Health England (PHE) to support councils and areas teams with the transfer of commissioning responsibilities. This includes:

- delivery of nine regional events to share key messages about the transfer;
- developing a dedicated LGA web resource with support tools and updates: [www.local.gov.uk/childrens-public-health-transfer](http://www.local.gov.uk/childrens-public-health-transfer); and
- setting up nine Regional Oversight Groups with membership from local government, PHE and NHS England local leads to provide sector led support.

15. Once the funding allocations are confirmed, local areas will be asked to complete a light touch self-assessment, to identify areas of concern or requests for support as areas plan for the transfer in October 2015. Support will be made available through sector-led regional groups involving local government, PHE and NHS England if required.

16. TEASC is expected to publish its annual **National Progress Report on Adult Social Care Priorities** for 2013/14 in the next few weeks. It will offer an overview of the progress of councils in England towards Adult Social Care priorities based on Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework data.

#### **Culture, Tourism and Sport Board**

17. The Culture, Tourism and Sport Board has contributed towards William Sieghart's independent review of public libraries, making the case for recommendations that reinforce the locally-led nature of the service and build upon the considerable sector-led innovation to date.

18. The report, which was published in December 2014, recognises that libraries are locally-led, acknowledges the breadth of existing innovation and recommends setting up a local government-led Task Force that is jointly accountable to the LGA and Ministers to pursue the report's recommendations and "...to help reinvigorate the public library service in England"

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/388989/Independent\\_Library\\_Report-18\\_December.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/388989/Independent_Library_Report-18_December.pdf).

#### **Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC)**

19. Following an evaluation commissioned from Cardiff University the FSMC agreed to review the Operational Assessment and fire peer challenge (jointly developed by the LGA and Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA)) to ensure to it remains fit for purpose and responsive to developments in the sector. Members agreed to re-establish a member-led joint LGA/CFOA working group to review the Operational Assessment and peer challenge and this work was reported to the FSMC in December 2014.
20. There is a very good level of buy in to the current process (all 46 fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) have undertaken the Operational Assessment and fire peer challenge over the last three years) and the working group therefore agreed that the approach needed a refresh rather than a radical overhaul.
21. In the terms of the fire peer challenge it is proposed that:
  - there is an increased focus on:
    - leadership, governance, corporate capacity, financial planning and outcomes for communities;
    - the specific priorities and challenges of the FRA – discussed and agreed at the scoping meeting; and
    - gathering and sharing notable practice
  - team composition – potential to include a peer from beyond the sector;
  - flexible approach to on-site activity and formal follow-up;
  - benchmarking – suite of comparative data being developed; and
  - refresh of the officer and member peer pool plus training as appropriate.
22. It is proposed that the revised approach is piloted in the first part of 2015, adjusted further as necessary and then applied to all FRAs commissioning a peer challenge to take place from April 2015 onwards.
23. In February 2015, the LGA will be delivering its next **Fire Leadership Essentials Programme**. The LGA has now delivered three free fire leadership essentials programmes drawing attendance from 32 councillors across 22 authorities. The feedback we have received from members has been positive about this programme, and it provides a useful platform for discussion and learning.
24. Following the closure of the FiReControl project in December 2010, the Department consulted on the future of **fire and rescue control services** in January 2011. The overwhelming response to the consultation was that improvements to control rooms remained important, and that locally determined solutions, with central Government support, were the preferred way forward. To deliver these, Government made £81 million available for local improvements. The purpose of the grant was to help fire and rescue authorities improve the efficiency and strengthen the resilience of their local control services, and their ability to interoperate with each other and with other emergency services, thereby strengthening resilience at all levels.

25. The Government's latest update of the future control room services scheme in October 2014 shows the progress being made by the 22 control room projects. The projected savings of the schemes now stand at £130 million, £1 million more than reported in the March 2014 update and, significantly, £2 million more than the original early estimates.
26. Also in October 2014, the Government announced the projects receiving a share of a £75 million transformation fund. In total 37 projects from across the sector received support from the fund. Further information can be found on the Government's website:  
[www.gov.uk/government/news/fire-services-improvement-fund-public-get-a-win-win-better-local-services-and-at-lower-cost](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/fire-services-improvement-fund-public-get-a-win-win-better-local-services-and-at-lower-cost)
27. In response to a CFA consultation on **collective procurement** 30 FRAs have indicated they would be willing to start the process of joining up on procurement. The project has received funding to set up a back office function to coordinate procurement activity. This will be based in Devon and Somerset. The spending categories are currently being finalised. The next step will be to agree which authority acts as the technical lead and how the procurement will be done, which could either be via a Professional Buying Organisation or another authority.

#### **People and Places Board**

28. The People and Places Board, working jointly with the City Regions Board, has commissioned research to work with a small number of places to exemplify what can be achieved for residents through a **community budgeting type approach** at the local level.
29. The case studies (see **Appendix A**) will map the different approaches in order to provide insights into how a community budget or similar approach can lead to improved outcomes for residents, as well as allowing us to explore the barriers and enablers to this way of working. They will be brought together for publication in February.
30. The People and Places Board along with the City Regions Board and the LGA Executive are considering potential support to areas pursuing the **devolution** agenda. This will be discussed at the LGA Executive on 22 January 2015.