

Economy and Transport Programme Board communications update

Purpose of report

For noting

Summary

Focusing on progress with online Economy and Transport Programme communications and resources, this paper provides an update on the Local Government Association website, e-bulletin, Communities of Practice and Knowledge Hub.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to note the report.

Action

As agreed by the Board.

Contact officer:

Craig Titterton

Position:

Adviser, LGA

Phone no:

07799 344 853

E-mail:

craig.titterton@local.gov.uk

Item 8

Economy and Transport Programme Board communications update

Introduction

1. This report summarises the main ways councils can access, engage with and be updated on the work of the Economy and Transport Programme online.

Website

2. The LGA's new single website www.local.gov.uk was launched in July 2010. There is a dedicated section on economy and transport which features latest news, links to the Economy and Transport Programme Board, the Economy and Transport e-bulletin and Communities of Practice.
3. Numbers visiting the new website as a whole are still growing as content is moved across from other areas and awareness of the website increases. However, visits to the economy and transport pages have continued to rise month on month. For example, there was a 56% increase in visits from September to October (416 to 649 unique visits).

Economy and Transport monthly e-bulletins

4. At the start of September 2011, the LGA launched a new suite of e-bulletins. The bulletins aim to streamline email communications with the sector and provide digests of relevant, timely information on the most important issues. There are 11 monthly bulletins covering the LGA's key priorities which include Economy and Transport. To subscribe, or manage subscriptions to these bulletins please visit the 'My account' page of the LGA website: www.local.gov.uk/my-account
5. The two monthly Economy and Transport e-bulletins published to-date (in September and October) have been well received. We continue to promote the e-bulletin through our marketing and communication channels and to increase the number of subscribers.

Communities of Practice

6. The LGA's online resources are complimented by Communities of Practice (CoPs). The Communities of Practice platform is a website that supports collaboration across local government and the public sector. It is a freely accessible resource that enables people to form online communities of practice, which are supported by online tools that encourage knowledge sharing and learning from each others' experiences.

Item 8

7. The Economy and Transport team leads the facilitation of two Communities of Practice; the Winter Weather CoP and the Driving Local Economic Growth CoP. The Winter Weather CoP was launched in September and allows the exchange of information between those involved in keeping roads open during periods of snow fall and freezing temperatures. In October 'winter' was the tenth most popular search term across the whole CoP website. The Driving Local Economic Growth CoP (previously the Local Enterprise Partnerships CoP) has over 500 registered members. This community supports the LGA's local growth campaign and provides a space for those working to increase local economic growth to share information, highlight good practice and network.

Knowledge Hub

8. On 27 October 2011 the Knowledge Hub (<https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk>) was launched to provide a single access point for CoPs, blogs, twitter and other electronic media. While the Communities of Practice have been a great success, there are few links between communities. An individual could be having a very similar conversation to someone else in another community and not know about it. The Knowledge Hub aims to address this by enabling information to flow more freely around the system, encouraging more open conversations. It includes search functions that help users to find things more easily, but also brings information and connections to individuals based on their own interests and activity.
9. From the end of October new groups will be encouraged to establish themselves on the Knowledge Hub. Existing and active Communities of Practice, including the Winter Weather and Driving Local Economic Growth CoPs, will be migrated across to the Knowledge Hub by early next year with a view to closing down the Communities of Practice by the end of March 2012.