

Item 5

Update on LG Inform

Purpose of report

To update the Improvement and Innovation Board on progress with the new version of LG Inform.

Summary

The new LG Inform was made available to all registered users on 31 July, and the formal launch to Leaders will be on 18 September, followed by a series of promotions and presentations over the autumn. The launch to the public will be at the end of November.

Recommendations

That the Board should:

1. note the launch of the new version of LG Inform and associated communications work
2. note the timing of the launch of LG Inform to the public.

Action

Officer's to action as directed.

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Background

1. LG Inform is the on-line data and benchmarking service developed by the LGA, as part of its support for councils. This free, online service allows anyone in councils and fire and rescue services to access and compare both contextual and performance data for their local area, covering around 1,800 individual items. Users can view data or pre-written reports, and create their own reports, using the most up to date published information.

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2. LG Inform was successfully 'soft' launched to all existing registered users on 31 July and throughout the following week. Initial feedback has been extremely positive.
3. Over the course of August, the statistics have been very encouraging:
 - 3.1 Total number of visits: 3,443
 - 3.2 Number of unique visitors: 1,739
 - 3.3 Page views: 33,199
 - 3.4 Average number of pages per visit: 9.64
 - 3.5 Average visit duration: 15 minutes, 13 seconds
4. During this period, the system failed just once. The problem was identified quickly and it was fixed within 24 hours. Part of the intention of conducting a 'soft' launch was to identify exactly this sort of issue before a 'full' launch in September.
5. A series of workshops has been run with councils who are part of the LG Inform Learning Group, and around 40 delegates visited the LGA to have a 'hands on' tutorial. Their comments were very positive. We are now building on this, by encouraging them to be advocates of the system, to offer help to their neighbouring authorities and to host events in their authority where we can demonstrate LG Inform to a number of councils.

Next Steps

6. On 18 September, and in the following weeks, LG Inform will be launched formally. This includes an announcement in Sir Merrick's e-bulletin to Leaders and in Carolyn Downs's e-bulletin to chief executives (with a personalised headline report attached, to encourage Leaders and chief executives to register). There will also be a feature in *'first'* magazine.

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7. Following this, we have a plan to promote LG Inform more widely to chief executives, senior officers and councillors, and encourage corporate adoption of the tool. We will also be encouraging widespread use of the tool and benchmarking amongst performance officers. Our intention is to make use of existing regional meetings of these audiences to demonstrate the tool to them, and we will be using a range of communications tactics to target each audience group on its own terms.
8. Staff in the Research and Information Team are now taking forward work with some regional performance networks, to identify and agree local metrics that authorities may want to collect and compare using LG Inform as a free benchmarking club. These may be:
 - 8.1 existing metrics which they wish to view more quickly than central government makes them available
 - 8.2 existing metrics which they want to collect more often than central government collects them
 - 8.3 new metrics which are not collected anywhere else.
9. The first example of this will be published at the end of September. Fourteen authorities have taken the opportunity to use our guidance for resident satisfaction surveys and have submitted their data for LG Inform. This is a positive start, and we anticipate that this number will grow steadily, as other authorities see the benefit.
10. Finally, at the end of November, LG Inform will become open to the public. We will be communicating in more detail with authorities in October and November about the implications of this, and demonstrating how authorities can use LG Inform data in their own websites.
11. The Board is asked to note the progress of the new version of LG Inform, and comment where appropriate.

Financial Implications

12. There are no financial implications, over and above the planned costs of delivering and promoting LG Inform this financial year.