

LG Inform Progress Report: May 2012

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update the LGA Executive on the LGA's data service for councils and fire and rescue services/authorities, known as Local Government Inform (LG Inform). The Improvement Board is the 'sponsoring' board for this programme of work.

This item in the agenda will take the form of a presentation by Cllr Peter Fleming (Chairman of the Improvement Board) and Juliet Whitworth (LGA Research and Information Manager), who will update the Executive on progress with the LG Inform programme, future plans, and provide a demonstration of the tool.

Recommendations

The Executive is asked to note the LG Inform programme of work and the progress that has been made in delivery of this programme to date, and to comment on plans for its future direction.

Action

The Research and Information Team and the Digital Communications Team will continue to develop the LG Inform programme in line with feedback from the sector, and any comments made by the Executive.

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Background

1. Local Government Inform (LG Inform), the LGA's online data service for councils and fire and rescue services/authorities, was launched as a prototype in July 2011.
2. Since then we have improved the performance and content of the service and application. In November the live system was updated and new online resources made available. For example:
 - 2.1. additional metrics – over 800 data items are now available, including finance data and key performance information across a range of local services;
 - 2.2. a range of 'How to' guides (www.local.gov.uk/about-lginform) to help new users;
 - 2.3. themed LG Inform reports (such as waste, children's services, planning) that pull together a number of data items;
 - 2.4. improvements including PDF printing; and
 - 2.5. faster access to the metrics library and headline reports.
3. This month we will be enhancing LG Inform so that authorities can build their own headline reports which reflect their local priorities.
4. However, we have ambitions to give them more. We have recently commissioned a developer to help us deliver the next version of LG Inform. We are aiming to have this available in the autumn of 2012, and it will build upon requirements specified by the sector. For example:
 - 4.1. further increases in the speed at which the tool works;
 - 4.2. the ability to collect data directly from councils (and so operate like a benchmarking club); and
 - 4.3. improved look and feel that is simpler to use.
5. As part of the next phase, we are also hoping to make key elements within LG Inform, such as the standard report for each data item, available to the public. This will help councils meet the code of practice on transparency.
6. We are particularly focussed on making LG Inform sector-led, and we continue to work closely with councils and fire and rescue services. We started the programme with a learning group of 11 councils/fire and rescue services who met at key points to give us feedback, act as a sounding board and conduct user

Item 5

testing. Over the year, as councils have engaged with us, this active group now includes 32 organisations.

7. We are also regularly meeting groups of councils and fire and rescue services in the regions to promote and champion LG Inform, and to get their input. Also, to date we have had over 100 written inputs from users that have been acknowledged and incorporated into the process to develop the specification for the next phase.
8. At this point, we have 1,400 registered users across 85 per cent of councils.

Action

9. The purpose of this report is to update the Executive on the progress made to date, before presenting a demonstration of LG Inform, and inviting comment from the Executive on the service and its planned future direction.