

Note of last Improvement & Innovation Board meeting

Title: Improvement & Innovation Board
Date: Tuesday 14 July 2020
Venue: Zoom video conference

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

Item	Decisions and actions
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1 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Cllr Peter Fleming OBE (Chairman) welcomed all members to the meeting, and briefly ran through remote conduct guidelines.

No declarations of interest were made.

2 Note of last Improvement & Innovation Board meeting

The Chairman noted that previous references to Bournemouth Council should be corrected to Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council moving forward.

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21 May 2020 were agreed.

3 SLI Shared Intelligence draft reports

The Chairman invited Matthew Hamilton (Head of Improvement Strategy and Coordination) to give a brief introduction on the draft reports being presented and the work conducted by Shared Intelligence.

Phil Swann (Shared Intelligence) presented on the two draft reports produced on Sector-led Improvement (SLI) and outlined key findings.

Following Phil's presentation of the report, there followed a confidential discussion on the findings.

The Chairman thanked Phil for his time.

Decision

The members of the Improvement & Innovation Board noted the reports and agreed that they will move forward with publication with a view to further activity in the autumn.

4 Peer Challenge Stocktake

The Chairman invited Heather Wills (Principal Advisor – Improvement) to present the findings of the Peer Challenge Stocktake.

Heather explained that the Stocktake had taken place alongside the Shared Intelligence reviews, forming a key element of the continuous improvement agenda, and proceeded to share the findings with members.

There followed a confidential discussion on the report.

The Chairman thanked Heather for the report.

Decision

The Members of the Improvement & Innovation Board noted the report. Officers to proceed with implementation.

5 LGA Remote Peer Support Offer

The Chairman invited Kevin Kewin (Programme Manager, LGA) to introduce the report on a new Remote Peer Support Offer.

There followed a confidential discussion on the contents of the report.

Decision

Members of the Improvement & Innovation Board noted the report. Officers to continue their work providing support to authorities remotely.

6 Improvement support to councils on digital

The Chairman invited Tom Denman (Digital Advisor – Productivity) to introduce the report.

Tom outlined the different streams of the Digital Inclusion Programme (DIP), Remote Council Meeting Hub (RMCH), and Digital Case Study Hub (DCSH). Cllr Neil Prior (Deputy Chair) added that the DCSH now features learning from over 90 case studies. Tom introduced two speakers to give short presentations on their experience of the LGA's support on digital projects and remote working:

i. Digital Inclusion Programme

Tom introduced Javed Hussain (Head of Digital Transformation at Achieving for Children) to discuss the DIP. Achieving for Children is a body owned by Kingston & Richmond Borough Council. Starting from a very low point of digital engagement, DIP funding enabled the development of a comprehensive digital strategy running across three key streams: meeting recording, analytics in early help, AI Chatbot for digital help. Javed spoke with particular reference to the chatbot service which is being targeted at vulnerable children and families which has improved engagement and freed up resources.

ii. Remote Council Meeting Hub

Councillor Roger Blaney (Chairman of Planning Committee from Newark & Sherwood District Council) outlined his experience of remote working processes. The COVID pandemic forced an immediate halt on the work of most committees except for bodies with urgent statutory responsibilities including the Planning Committee. The committee made early use of remote working tools and legislation, with a case study produced to discuss pros and cons of this. Working alongside legal and Democratic Services, the process was further developed to enable more effective working and inclusion for local residents. He gave an overview of what has been implemented. Moving forward Newark & Sherwood District Council will be implementing remote meetings for the remainder of 2020.

Following the presentations, the Board members raised the following points:

- Discussion of engagement levels due to increased digital working through the COVID pandemic. Several members highlighted that remote attendance among elected members and the public at meetings has been generally high in comparison to physical attendance pre-COVID pandemic.
- There was a consensus that strides made on improving digital engagement in recent months should not be lost. Further efforts are needed to improve the overall standards and culture toward digital. Questions remain however around digital poverty and what authorities can do to ensure the most isolated and vulnerable members of communities have access to resources.
- Some points were raised around running engagement events such as “Be A Councillor” training as online sessions. Members highlighted this would improve accessibility citing well attended recent events.

Tom gave additional information on upcoming webinars which will focus on steps taken by councils to improve digital engagement and remote workstreams.

The Chairman thanked Roger and Javed for their time.

Decisions

The members of the Improvement & Innovation Board noted the report. Officers to continue their work providing support to authorities on remote working.

7 Improvement support to councils on climate change

The Chairman invited Grace Abel (Advisor – Productivity) and Cllr Liz Green (Vice-Chair) to introduce the report. Liz asked board members to encourage their respective authorities to provide best practice case studies for inclusion in the Climate Change Hub.

Grace gave an overview of some of the recent climate change improvement and support work:

- Four online engagement events have been delivered through the LGA green webinar series.
- The Design in Public Sector programme is being rolled out for 2020/21.
- A new Universities and Councils programme is being established that will create partnerships on working toward net-zero carbon emissions.

Following Grace's report, the following items of discussion were raised by members:

- Discussion arose on whether the content of recent webinars has been too focused on a Unitary authority model. Views expressed recognised the work of borough, district and county bodies but also stressed that consideration is needed of whether central government opts for greater use of the unitary model in the future.
- Questions were raised about the updating or release of certain resources including the 'Acting on Climate Change councillors' workbook' and '10 Questions to ask when scrutinising services to tackle climate change'. Grace explained that the former should be updated by the end of the calendar year, and the latter will be launched shortly with an accompanying webinar.

Decision

The members of the Improvement & Innovation Board noted the report and agreed the proposed work programme for the rest of the financial year set out in paragraphs 23-31.

8 LGA Board improvement activity

The Chairman invited Mia Shelton (Improvement Strategy Advisor) to provide an update on improvement activities taking place across the wider spectrum of LGA Boards.

Mia gave a brief overview of the paper which provides a comprehensive update of recent improvement work undertaken by other LGA boards and since COVID substantially affected working practices.

Decision

The members of the Improvement & Innovation Board noted the report.

9 Sector-led improvement in 2019/20 - End of year report

The Chairman invited Mia Shelton to present the SLI End of Year Report (2019/20).

Mia highlighted the following achievements:

- 98% of CEOs and 94% of Leaders have said that SLI has had a positive impact on their council
- 129 Peer Challenges delivered

- Record number of (5000+) applications to National Graduate Development Programme
- Council approval of SLI and LGA is at record levels.

The Chairman noted his thanks for such a comprehensive report.

Decision

The members of the Improvement & Innovation Board noted the report.

10 Any other business

Cllr Judi Billing (Deputy Chair) asked for an update on reviewing the Digital Conference. Matthew Hamilton noted that engagement of Board Chairs is important to ensure good coverage in key media and industry outlets. Remote sessions were well attended with many events at the lower end still having 200 attendees and 5000 attendees overall.

Lusi Manukyan (Improvement Strategy Advisor) added that feedback surveys have been issued with specific findings to be provided to the Board at its next meeting, with proposals around wider business coming forward.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Peter Fleming OBE	Sevenoaks District Council
Vice-chair	Cllr Liz Green	Kingston upon Thames Royal Borough Council
Deputy-chair	Cllr Judi Billing MBE	Hertfordshire County Council
Deputy-chair	Cllr Neil Prior	Pembrokeshire County Council
Members	Cllr Nigel Ashton	North Somerset Council
	Cllr Philip Broadhead	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council
	Cllr Carl Les	North Yorkshire County Council
	Cllr Damian White	Havering London Borough Council
	Cllr Phil North	Test Valley Borough Council
	Cllr Alice Perry	Islington Council
	Cllr Asma Begum	Tower Hamlets Council
	Cllr Vince Maple	Medway Council
	Cllr Rebecca Lury	Southwark Council
	Cllr Andrew Western	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Wayne Davies	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
	Sir Stephen Houghton CBE	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Alan Connett	Teignbridge District Council
	Cllr Mike Haines	Teignbridge District Council
	Mr Richard Priestman	Independent Observer
	Mr Philip Sellwood CBE	Independent Observer
Apologies	Cllr Laura Miller	Dorset Council
	Cllr Joy Allen	Durham County Council
	Mayor Dave Hodgson	Bedford Borough Council

MBE

Lord Gary Porter CBE

South Holland District Council

In Attendance

Phil Swann (item 3)

Jabed Hussain (item 6)

Cllr Roger Blaney (item 6)

Shared Intelligence

Achieving for Children

Newark and Sherwood District Council