

## Note of last Improvement & Innovation Board meeting

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**Title:** Improvement & Innovation Board  
**Date:** Friday 5 March 2021  
**Venue:** Online via Zoom

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### Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
<b>10</b>	<b>Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</b>  The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting.  Apologies were received from Cllrs Phil North and Laura Miller.  Cllrs Phil Murphy and Rory Love, OBE, attended as substitutes.  There were no declarations of interest.	
<b>11</b>	<b>Confidential minutes of the previous meeting</b>  The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.	
<b>12</b>	<b>Memorandum of Understanding 2021/22 negotiations</b>  The Chairman invited Dennis Skinner, Head of Improvement, to introduce the update.  Dennis updated Members of the Board on the confidential MoU 2021/22 negotiations.  <b>Decision:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Improvement &amp; Innovation Board <b>noted</b> the update.</li></ul>	
<b>13</b>	<b>National Graduate Development Programme update</b>  The Chairman invited Cllr Judi Billing, Helen Reeves, Programme Manager (Leadership & Localism), and Laura Wilson, Adviser – Leadership, to introduce the report and welcomed Callum Campbell, Kevin Kalala and Soriyah, Carnegie, National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) Graduates, to the meeting.	

Cllr Judi Billing introduced the report which provided members with an update on the NGDP. Helen and Laura referred to a number of the programme's strengths and challenges which were being worked through and emphasised the importance of keeping the programme's recruitment process simple. The main points highlighted were:

- The NGDP continued to be a very successful programme, despite the challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic had presented.
- In relation to the recruitment process, officers had been working hard to ensure that the recruitment process was as fair and equal as possible, monitoring any adverse impact on different groups through data collation and offering comprehensive support for individuals to ensure that the scheme was as representative as the communities that both LGA staff and Members served.
- The NGDP recruited annually, through an intensive multi-stage recruitment process. Whilst the number of applications received in 2020/21 had increased, officers continued to undertake marketing work, produce monthly newsletters and targeted coaching/development work to attract councils and graduates to the NGDP.
- The officers emphasised the importance in working with other councils to share ideas and best practice.
- Helen highlighted a useful programme of Learning and Development which graduate trainees undertook whilst on the NGDP, intended to equip them with the skills and knowledge that they needed to become public sector leaders of the future. The Learning and Development programme was delivered by the Society of Local Authority of Chief Executives (Solace) in conjunction with INLOGOV at the University of Birmingham.
- The NGDP were an income generating programme with an ambition to be self-sufficient in the future, with no funding from government grants.
- Laura referred to a piece of work which had been commissioned specifically to encourage councils to sign up to the NGDP, focusing on marketing and engagement strategies to tailor the wants and needs of councils and promote the talent of the graduates within the NGDP.
- Helen emphasised the importance of flexibility and how the NGDP could work in partnership with councils to define the real meaning of local recruitment and special campaigning, and also to allow councils to come on board with partner organisations, like housing associations or jointly with other councils.
- With regards to next steps, officers encouraged Members to discuss the progress of the NGDP, offer any reflections on the programme and support the promotion of the NGDP to potential council partners.

The Chairman invited the three NGDP graduates to speak, answering the following questions in their speeches:

- Why did you apply to the NGDP?
- What work have you undertaken on the scheme?
- How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected your placement (if at all), and what adaptations have you had to make?

Following Helen and Laura's introduction, and the three graduate's speeches, Members asked a number of questions and raised the following points:

- Cllr Judi Billing referred to past residential events which brought together NGDP graduates and the next generation which they found very useful in terms of member/officer roles and living through them in practice, could that be an activity to be considered in the future?
- The Chairman asked each of the graduates if they had spent much time working with elected Members in their placements. Overall, the graduates had not spent a significant amount of time working directly with elected Members but were all very keen to work more closely with them.
- Whilst it would be excellent if all of the graduates remained working within the local government sector, we must remember that even if the graduates decide to move on from local government, they will take all of the valuable experience and skills that they have learnt along the way to their new role and will champion the cause of what local government can do.
- How do we attract more graduates to apply to the NGDP and enable them to see a career pathway in local government, could we perhaps publicise the programme at an even earlier stage (i.e. in schools)?
- How do we attract more councils to sign up to the NGDP and are there particular reasons as to why councils won't sign up?
- Whilst the report refers to councils focusing on apprenticeship schemes and the NGDP perhaps not being totally suitable for that, are there any access routes for apprentices to become involved in the NGDP?

In response to the points raised by Members, Helen and Laura stated that:

- The comments made in relation to NGDP graduates working more closely with elected Members were noted and officers would actively work with councils to ensure that graduates had more direct involvement with elected Members. Helen referred to the Learning and Development programme that graduates undertook and said that a session was available within the programme which focused on working with politicians.
- With regards to attracted candidates to the NGDP, a piece of work

would be commissioned over the summer to better understand young people's interest and perception in terms of local government. Officers were also working closely with the LGA's apprenticeship team to see how apprentices and graduates could work in partnership. The NGDP had also been working closely with councils to share best practice about summer school internship programmes for young people.

- As Russell Group university candidates tend to perform well in the NGDP recruitment, NGDP officers focus more time and resource on universities whose students could benefit from more support to succeed. However, the NGDP works directly with a wide range of universities, including in the Russell Group. Laura reassured Members that these graduates would not be lost in the system with limited support.
- With regards to councils and candidates who did not wish to sign up to the NGDP, or were yet to sign up to the NGDP, officers recently commissioned independent research to investigate the reasons behind this. The two key reasons behind this related to competitive salary levels and councils prioritising apprenticeships schemes rather than graduate schemes. Officers continued to work closely with regional teams in Improvement and regularly attended meetings to discuss the programme's success, introduce people to the NGDP, and allow the NGDP graduates to tell their stories and provide insight into the programme.

**Decision:**

- Improvement & Innovation Board **noted** the report.

**Action:**

That officers deliver the programme as agreed by members.

## **14 Procurement Support Update**

The Chairman invited Susan Attard, Head of Productivity, and Tina Holland, Programme Manager (Productivity), to introduce the report.

Susan set out the two future legislative proposals relating to procurement that would affect councils. First, the Transforming Government Procurement Green Paper, which was published in December for which the closing date for consultation is 10 March 2021. Second, a new National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS) which Cabinet Office wish to legislate for from April 2021. LGA officers have been engaging with the National Advisory Group for Local Government Procurement (NAG) on the wider consultation about the Green paper and formulating a response. LGA officers had also engaged with colleagues in the LGA's Brussels office on potential legislation.

In relation to paragraph 3 within the report, Tina confirmed that there had been significant movement from government on the NPPS.

The proposed implementation date for the new legislation (NPPS) was April 2021. The effect on councils for the new legislation was as follows:

- All councils will need to 'take into account' *Government priorities* in their procurement.
- Councils will need to *publish forward 'pipelines'* of work from April 2022, if they have a spend of over £200m (reducing to £100m from April 2023) for at least 18 months in advance preferably 3-5 years.
- From April 2021, councils with spend of over £200m, (reducing to £100m next year), will need to *undertake a benchmark of their capability* to do procurement.

Tina stated that LGA officers continued to work closely with the Cabinet Office and the Government commercial function and had received positive news from them about how the NPPS would be pitched; this would follow conversations with Members also. She emphasised the importance of contracting authorities' priorities, and advised that there would be nothing in the initial legislation about an oversight body.

Tina confirmed that the response to the Green Paper consultation had not yet been signed off and that substantial comments from the IIB meeting would be fed into the draft response.

Following Susan and Tina's introduction, Members raised the following points:

- In relation to the need for councils to publish forward pipelines, it could be clearer with regards to the stage at which contracts are published into a forward pipeline.
- Welcomed the inclusion of social value, because when we procure in our individual economies, there is a significant amount of work that councils can do through the procurement process.
- A concern was raised about the proposal to exclude NHS procurement rules from the simplification and the problem this will cause for councils who collaborate with NHS on delivering healthcare services.

**Decision:**

- Improvement & Innovation Board **noted** the update on the NPPS and identified issues within the Green Paper that the LGA should seek to influence.

**Action:**

Officers to take members' views into account in the response to the Green Paper consultation.

**15 One Public Estate update**

The Chairman confirmed that this item would be deferred to the next

meeting of the Improvement & Innovation Board.

## **16 LGA annual conference and Spotlight webinar series**

The Chairman invited Amanda Pullen (Programme Coordination Manager) to introduce the report.

Amanda provided a verbal update to the Board which highlighted key information in relation to the LGA annual conference and Spotlight webinar series. The key points highlighted were as follows:

- The LGA annual conference would be held virtually over three days (6, 7 and 8 July).
- The LGA annual conference was still in the early stages of planning, and in relation to the platform that would be used, the LGA's conference and events team would go out to tender for a virtual platform. An outcome in relation to the virtual platform was expected at the end of March/beginning of April.
- The LGA annual conference would focus on ensuring that improvement was threaded throughout the conference agenda in a greater way than it had been in the past, and a number of joint submissions had been put forward by colleagues between the policy and improvement teams, such as: climate change and green recovery. The productivity teams, improvement teams, and test, track and outbreak management teams had put forward submissions on behavioural insights, equality, Covid-19 and digital connectivity.
- Two Spotlight-on webinar sessions would take place which would have a more interactive, improvement and innovation focus. It was anticipated that one of the Spotlight-on sessions would focus on leadership, and the other session would focus on one or two topics that had not made it into the main selection.
- The Spotlight-on sessions would be curated rather than the usual call for submissions.

### **Decision:**

- Improvement & Innovation Board **noted** the verbal update.

### **Action:**

Officers to submit an update to the next meeting of the Improvement & Innovation Board.

## **17 Sector-Led Improvement activity in 2020/21**

The Chairman invited Mia Shelton, Improvement and Strategy Advisor, to introduce the report.

Mia introduced the report which updated Members on MoU Sector-led improvement activity in 2020/21.

**Decision:**

- Improvement & Innovation Board **noted** the report.

**18 Any other business**

Cllr Judi Billing referred to Item 6, Appendix A, and asked that Stevenage be referred to as Stevenage *Borough* Council, not Stevenage *District* Council.

Susan Attard confirmed that the Cyber Security programme, funded by the Cabinet Office, would be extended for a further year and £1.3m had been allocated to the programme for 2021/2022. Officers would focus on creating a sector-wide awareness raising package which the LGA could procure on behalf of the sector whilst working with the sector. Officers would also be undertaking work with 10% of councils on security penetration testing.

**Decision:**

Improvement & Innovation Board **noted** business raised by Members and officers.

**Action:**

- Officers to note that Stevenage Council should be referred to as a *Borough* Council, not a *District* Council, in Item 6, Appendix A (to be brought to the next meeting of the Improvement and Innovation Board).
- Officers to submit a report to a future meeting of the Improvement and Innovation Board in relation to the LGA's Cyber Security programme.

**Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Peter Fleming, OBE	Sevenoaks District Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Liz Green	Kingston upon Thames Royal Borough Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Judi Billing, MBE Cllr Neil Prior	Hertfordshire County Council Pembrokeshire County Council
Members	Cllr Nigel Ashton Cllr Damian White Cllr Vince Maple Cllr Oliver Ryan Cllr Andrew Western Mayor Dave Hodgson, MBE Cllr Carl Les	North Somerset Council Havering London Borough Council Medway Council Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council Bedford Borough Council North Yorkshire County Council
Apologies	Cllr Laura Miller Cllr Phil North	Dorset Council Test Valley Borough Council
Substitutes	Cllr Rory Love, OBE Cllr Phil Murphy Cllr Anthony McKeown	Kent County Council Monmouthshire County Council High Peak Borough Council
In Attendance	Cllr Alan Connett Cllr Mike Haines Mr Richard Priestman  Mr Philip Sellwood, CBE	Teignbridge District Council Teignbridge District Council Local Government Improvement and Development Energy Saving Trust (EST)