

# Improvement and Innovation Board

## Agenda

Friday, 5 March 2021  
11.00 am

Online via Zoom

**To:** Members of the Improvement and Innovation Board  
**cc:** Named officers for briefing purposes

**Improvement & Innovation Board**  
5 March 2021

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There will be a meeting of the Improvement & Innovation Board at **11.00 am on Friday, 5 March 2021** online via Zoom.

**Political Group meetings:**

The group meetings will take place from 10.00 -11.00am. Please contact your political group as outlined below for further details.

**Apologies:**

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting.

<b>Conservative:</b>	Group Office: 020 7664 3223	email: <a href="mailto:lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk">lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk</a>
<b>Labour:</b>	Group Office: 020 7664 3263	email: <a href="mailto:LABGP@local.gov.uk">LABGP@local.gov.uk</a>
<b>Independent:</b>	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: <a href="mailto:independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk">independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk</a>
<b>Liberal Democrat:</b>	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: <a href="mailto:libdem@local.gov.uk">libdem@local.gov.uk</a>

**LGA Contact:**

Jonathan Bryant  
jonathan.bryant@local.gov.uk - 07464652746

**Carers' Allowance**

As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of £9.00 per hour or £10.55 if receiving London living wage is available to cover the cost of dependants (i.e. children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.

**Social Media**

The LGA is committed to using social media in a co-ordinated and sensible way, as part of a strategic approach to communications, to help enhance the reputation of local government, improvement engagement with different elements of the community and drive efficiency. Please feel free to use social media during this meeting. **However, you are requested not to use social media during any confidential items.**

The twitter hashtag for this meeting is #lgaiib

## Improvement & Innovation Board – Membership 2020/2021

Councillor	Authority
<b>Conservative ( 8 )</b>	
Cllr Peter Fleming OBE (Chairman)	Sevenoaks District Council
Cllr Nigel Ashton	North Somerset Council
Cllr Philip Broadhead	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council
Cllr Carl Les	North Yorkshire County Council
Cllr Laura Miller	Dorset Council
Cllr Damian White	Havering London Borough Council
Cllr Phil North	Test Valley Borough Council
Lord Gary Porter CBE (Observer)	South Holland District Council
<b>Substitutes</b>	
Cllr Kelham Cooke	South Kesteven District Council
Cllr Rory Love OBE	Kent County Council
Cllr Phil Murphy	Monmouthshire County Council
<b>Labour ( 8 )</b>	
Cllr Judi Billing MBE (Deputy Chair)	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Alice Perry	Islington Council
Cllr Joy Allen	Durham County Council
Cllr Asma Begum	Tower Hamlets Council
Cllr Vince Maple	Medway Council
Cllr Oliver Ryan	Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Andrew Western	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Sir Stephen Houghton CBE (Observer)	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
<b>Substitutes</b>	
Cllr Anthony McKeown	High Peak Borough Council
Cllr Miranda Williams	Royal Borough of Greenwich
Cllr Tom Coole	Gloucester City Council
<b>Liberal Democrat ( 3 )</b>	
Cllr Liz Green (Vice-Chair)	Kingston upon Thames Royal Borough Council
Mayor Dave Hodgson MBE	Bedford Borough Council
Cllr Alan Connett (Observer)	Teignbridge District Council
<b>Substitutes</b>	
Cllr Caroline Leaver	North Devon Council
<b>Independent ( 3 )</b>	
Cllr Neil Prior (Deputy Chair)	Pembrokeshire County Council
Cllr Wayne Davies	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Cllr Mike Haines (Observer)	Teignbridge District Council
<b>Substitutes</b>	

Cllr Alex Coley	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Cllr Jo Beavis	Essex County Council

<b>Non-Voting</b>	
Richard Priestman	Independent observer
Philip Sellwood CBE	Independent observer

## Agenda

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### Improvement & Innovation Board

Friday 5 March 2021

11.00 am – online via Zoom

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Item	Page
<b>1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</b>	
<b>CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS</b>	
<b>2. Confidential minutes of the previous meeting</b>	1 - 8
<b>3. Memorandum of Understanding 2021/22 negotiations</b>	
Verbal update from Dennis Skinner and Matthew Hamilton	
<b>NON-CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION</b>	
<b>4. National Graduate Development Programme update</b>	9 - 24
Helen Reeves, Programme Manager, to present	
<b>5. Procurement Support Update</b>	25 - 28
Tina Holland, Programme Manager, and Susan Attard, Head of Programmes, to present	
<b>6. One Public Estate update</b>	29 - 38
Ellen Vernon, Programme Director, to present	
<b>7. LGA annual conference and Spotlight webinar series</b>	
Verbal update from Amanda Pullen and Dennis Skinner	

**8. Sector-Led Improvement activity in 2020/21**

39 - 58

Mia Shelton, Improvement & Strategy Adviser, to present

**9. Any other business**

- Cyber security update – Susan Attard

**Date of Next Meeting:** Thursday, 20 May 2021, 11.00 am, venue tbc

Document is Restricted





## **National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP)**

### **Purpose of report**

For discussion.

### **Summary**

This report provides members with an update on the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP).

### **Recommendation**

That members:

- a) Discuss the progress of the NGDP and offer any reflections on the programme.
- b) Support the promotion of the NGDP to potential council partners.

### **Actions**

That officers will deliver the programme as agreed by members.

**Contact officer:** Helen Reeves  
**Position:** Programme Manager  
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**Email:** [helen.reeves@local.gov.uk](mailto:helen.reeves@local.gov.uk)

## National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP)

### Background

1. The NGDP is the LGA's flagship management development programme, which aims to create a pipeline of talent into local authorities across the country. It has been running for over 20 years and is now recruiting for its 23<sup>rd</sup> cohort.
2. The LGA attracts graduates from across the UK, primarily through the extensive work we do on university campuses, as well as through online attraction media such as Times Top 100 and Target Jobs. This year we also commissioned a marketing company which broadened our reach into social media like Facebook, Instagram and TikTok.
3. The NGDP recruits annually, through an intensive multi-stage recruitment process. Candidates undertake:

<b>Time period</b>	<b>Stage</b>	<b>Information</b>
September to January	<i>Applications are open:</i> during the initial application stage, candidates need to confirm they have or are expected to achieve a 2:2 degree and have the right to work in the UK; candidates are also required to undertake 3 online tests: verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning and a Situational Judgement Test.	All test questions have been designed bespoke for the local government context, in partnership with our partner councils.
February	<i>Video interview:</i> Candidates record themselves answering three questions.	At this point we are testing candidates' motivations for working in local government.
March	<i>Assessment centres:</i> Candidates undertake our assessment centres, and take part in presentation, group, and written exercises.	Again, all the exercises are designed bespoke. In previous years this has been done in person but had to quickly pivot to virtual delivery during March 2020 and that remains the case for 2021.
April	<i>Information gathering:</i> Candidates have the opportunity to get to know the councils on board and think about where they would like to work.	Councils have until the end of March to sign up. We encourage councils to really use this opportunity to promote themselves to candidates as a great place to work.
May to June	<i>Interviews:</i> The LGA matches candidates with councils for interview. Councils interview candidates and decide who they would like to take on.	The rigorous recruitment process means that by the time councils see candidates for interview, they can be assured they will be of a very high calibre, and it is simply about ensuring best fit for the culture of

		the council and the nature of the work planned.
September to October	<i>Graduate trainees start in councils: The two-year programme commences.</i>	

4. The cyclical, annual nature of the programme means that the NGDP team is at any point concurrently working on: a current recruitment process (currently Cohort 23), planning for the next recruitment process (Cohort 24), and working with the graduate trainees and councils already on the programme (currently Cohorts 21 and 22).
5. Whilst on the two-year programme, the graduate trainees undertake a minimum of three placements within their host organisation. In doing so, they fast-track their learning about the organisation and its different service challenges, gaining broad experience and knowledge it may otherwise take a longer period of their career to build up. Placements can be in different council departments, or it may be on different projects; this is up to the council and can be based upon their organisational need.
6. Graduate trainees also undertake a programme of Learning and Development whilst on the NGDP, which is intended to equip them with the skills and knowledge they need to be the public sector leaders of the future. This is delivered by the Society of Local Authority of Chief Executives (Solace) in conjunction with INLOGOV at the University of Birmingham. As part of this, participants work towards the ILM Level 7 qualification. All content is specifically tailored to the local government context and should add value to the host council, as should the assignment requirements for the ILM.

#### *Cost to councils*

7. Councils must hire the graduate on a two-year contract. They may use their own terms and conditions, but the basic salary must be a minimum of Spinal Column Point 20 on the NJT scale, or £25,991 as of this cohort.
8. There is a one-off fee, per graduate of £2,800, covering both the recruitment and the learning and development programme. This is only charged when the graduate is successfully employed, and things are going smoothly.

*Recent numbers*

Year	Number of applicants	Councils on board	Places offered in councils/cohort size
2021 (Cohort 23)	7429	TBC by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021	TBC by end of 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021
2020 (Cohort 22)	5444	49	149*
2019 (Cohort 21)	4484	56	147
2018 (Cohort 20)	2737	58	124

9. \*Please note: in 2020, a number of councils had to drop out of the NGDP part way through the process due to the unexpected pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, remaining partners opted to take on more graduate trainees, meaning the overall cohort size was able to reach a record high.
10. Candidate interest is growing, however the capacity of the programme to grow is bound by the number of councils who sign up each year.
11. The LGA takes on our NGDP graduates each year, and we have expanded how many we recruit from 3 to 4 as of the last cohort. Currently we have 2 graduates in Cohort 21 and 4 in Cohort 22, and we will continue to recruit annually. We also have a number of past NGDP graduates working throughout the LGA. Graduates rotate between placements every 6 months, undertaking 4 over the duration of the programme. In recent years, placements have included: people policy, place policy, workforce, our regional teams, Brexit, CHIP, OPE, Research and Productivity. Every 6 months managers are invited to bid for placements, which are then matched to our graduates based on organisational need and the graduate's own interests.

**Issues**

*Diversity:*

12. In recent years, several of our partner councils have emphasised the importance of the diversity of the candidates they receive through the NGDP. Indeed, the NGDP agrees that it is important that the NGDP graduates reflect the diverse communities they will serve.
13. In 2019, agreed by the Board, the NGDP hired an independent expert who also advises the Civil Service Fast Stream on diversity to undertake a 'root and branch' Equality and Diversity review of the programme, to explore both how the programme performs on diversity currently, and how we can attract and retain a broader diversity of candidates through all stages of the programme.

14. Whilst the NGDP received a broadly positive review and applications are increasing year on year from both BAME candidates, and those with disabilities, the report noted potential for adverse impact in our recruitment process, particularly during the assessment centre stage. The review produced a full report, against which we have taken action against all recommendations made.

15. A detailed report is available, but in summary, this includes:

*Marketing:*

- a. We commissioned an expert marketing company who have done work with the NHS and TeachFirst, to deliver targeted marketing for BAME students and graduates.
- b. We have specifically prioritised engagement with universities who rank highly for student diversity; we run bespoke sessions with key universities to further demystify the application process and to challenge misperceptions about local government.
- c. We have revised all our marketing and web content with diversity in mind, and to show it is a priority.
- d. We held a number of panel events potential applicants to hear from our diverse current graduate trainees, to address concerns around equality and diversity on the scheme and in the sector.
- e. We know that BAME graduates are more likely to find out about the scheme direct from council websites, and so we developed resources and guidance for councils to do this and also to promote the scheme locally and internally.
- f. We are commissioning further research into misperceptions of local government with a view to shaping and targeting our marketing messages in the next round of recruitment.

*Recruitment stages:*

- g. All our recruitment stages (e.g. online tests, video interviews, assessment centres) have been completely redesigned in conjunction with our partner councils with a view to reducing potential bias and adverse impact. Independent and professionally trained assessors are now used for all stages of assessment. Previously staff from the LGA and councils had acted as assessors, however potential for bias tended to creep in.
- h. Recruitment is blind until assessment centre stage when the candidates naturally must interact with others.
- i. We statistically test for adverse impact at every stage of the recruitment process.
- j. We have made it easier year on year for candidates to disclose a disability and make special requirements available at every stage.
- k. We took feedback that providing practice tests helps to demystify them and stop candidates being put off and now feature these on our website and within the actual testing platforms.
- l. Based on feedback around drop out, once candidates have applied, we send them regular, friendly, and supportive communications, talking them through the

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next stages and signposting to advice to make the process seem less intimidating.

- m. A BAME mentoring scheme was established. For Cohort 22, this coached around 40 people through the final stages of the recruitment. A BAME mentoring programme is being piloted with The University of Brighton. This year we are piloting extending the reach of the mentoring and coaching available to include those with a disability or from a lower socioeconomic background.

*On the scheme:*

- n. We support NMTs to self-organise any networks they would like to. We have an active NGDP BAME network. They recently held a public event for which 300 people registered and have been an active voice in improving our recruitment practices. The Chief Executive of Newham, Althea Loderick, is the sponsor for the network. Other networks include: an LGBTQ network, a disability network, a social mobility network, a women's network.
- o. We work closely with our partner councils around issues of equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- p. We are putting more resource into our 'local' recruitment offer so employers can craft their recruitment around what local means to them, and which communities they wish to focus on; we provide resources to help them promote the scheme
- q. We have given greater focus with recent cohorts to the welfare and wellbeing of graduate trainees. We are currently organising a wellbeing session hosted by an external facilitator focused on their wellbeing whilst working from home during the pandemic.

*Data:*

- r. For the last two cohorts, we have improved the range of data we collect from candidates and made sure we have permission from them to use it for the purpose of improving the NGDP. We track the data of our candidates and cohorts against all the protected characteristics, as well against the key social mobility measures. We have formalised our processes for data collection and analysis, which will now be analysed independently by the LGA's research team – they will create deeper insights, and highlight trends (e.g. in drop out, or disproportionate elimination) which we can respond to in real time.
- s. We are working on improving our evaluation activity, including making sure EDI data is be re-collected in later surveys to enable better journey tracking of our alumni.

*Impact of our work:*

- 16. Particularly in terms of ethnic diversity, an area where the report made particular recommendations, our efforts are already showing impact:

Cohort	Proportion of final cohort identifying as BAME
Cohort 22	28%
Cohort 21	19%
Cohort 20	14%

17. More applicants feel able to disclose a disability year on year, and we are accommodating more special requirements.
18. The proportion of graduates from the LGBTQ community who are represented on the scheme is higher than for the general population.
19. Our recruitment process shows no adverse impact in terms of gender, though we continue to attract more women overall.
20. We are attracting more older candidates (there is no upper age limit) and those with caring responsibilities, who see local government as an attractive and flexible place to work.
21. The virtual nature of the programme is making the NGDP more accessible to those from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

*Regional spread*

22. As noted, the continued growth of the NGDP depends on new councils signing up to take part, and on existing partners continuing to remain part of the NGDP.
23. The NGDP continues to be strongly clustered in London and the South East, despite a concerted strategy by the NGDP team, with support from LGA regional teams to prioritise less represented regions. COVID-19 has further exacerbated this challenge; for example, unfortunately, advanced conversations to sign up around 6 councils in the North West unravelled in 2020 due to the impact of the pandemic.
24. To illustrate further, the make-up of councils on the NGDP does not currently meet the regional demand from our graduate applicants. Looking at our most recent cohort, Cohort 22, who were recruited in 2020, for example:

Region (university)	Number of applicants	Number of jobs available in that region
East Midlands	319	2
Eastern	266	13
Greater London	711	69
North East	283	6
North West	421	2
South East	490	20
South West	298	5
West Midlands	432	14
Yorkshire and Humberside	419	18

25. The demand for trainee places in different parts of England is clear. When Sheffield joined the NGDP in 2020, they were the second most popular choice amongst all candidates.

#### *Council participation*

26. To better understand how to work with councils to attract them to the NGDP, in 2019 we commissioned research, undertaken by Shared Intelligence, into why councils do not join the NGDP.

27. We found that the main way councils find out about the programme is through word of mouth and exposure to NGDP alumni; this may be why we see such a significant cluster around London and the South East. A full list of participating councils can be found in **Appendix 1**.

28. Councils also lacked awareness of the potential flexibility of the programme, and its relatively low cost, indicating more can be done to promote this. Some councils were also more focused on apprenticeships as a recruitment and HR priority<sup>1</sup>.

#### *Flexibility for councils*

29. We have adapted our offer to potential new council partners to focus on the flexibility of the scheme, and how it can be used to meet different organisation's needs. As

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<sup>1</sup> **Please note: Though this has been subject to a detailed review, it is not possible to provide the NGDP as an apprenticeship.**



well as the conventional 'national route' in which councils recruit from our broad national pool of candidates, this flexibility includes:

- a. The option to undertake a 'Local Recruitment': the organisation decides what 'local' means to them and can shortlist only candidates who meet this requirement. 'Local' candidates are then put through the same recruitment stages as all other candidates; however they interview only at the organisation in question. If successful, they join the national cohort alongside all other graduate trainees.
- b. The option to 'Grow Your Own' member of staff: Existing members of staff are supported to apply for the NGDP. As with the 'local' route, candidates go through the same recruitment stages as other candidates, however they do not interview elsewhere and remain in their host authority if successful. They join the national cohort alongside all other graduate trainees.
- c. Councils can come on board with another organisation e.g. a county and a district working together. We also welcome participation from combined authorities, or regions. Participation is also welcome from other types of local authority. We are in conversations, for example, with a couple of housing associations about signing up.
- d. Councils can design the placements graduate trainees undertake around the needs of their organisation, filling hard to reach roles, or working on high profile but short-term projects.
- e. Councils can make it clear, they welcome interest from graduates with a specific focus e.g. finance, housing, or the environment.

30. We continue to seek new ways to promote the NGDP to councils, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Virtual delivery:*

31. Key elements of the NGDP programme have been shifted to virtual delivery, including:
  - a. Marketing activity with universities: This year we have attended a number of virtual, as opposed to in-person, careers fairs. We use a lot of our current graduate trainees and alumni to promote the scheme, and the virtual nature of this activity has made it a lot easier to facilitate their participation. Our reach remains UK wide.
  - b. All stages of the recruitment process: This year we undertook some big procurement projects, in particular to take our assessment centres fully virtual. This year's recruitment looks set to be delivered fully virtual, though with no less attention given to providing a great candidate experience.
  - c. Delivery of the Learning & Development programmes: After a full OJEU procurement process, Solace won the contact again to deliver this programme for the NGDP. The team are now delivering all programme content fully virtually. Initial feedback from councils and their graduate trainees is really positive. We are able to hold sessions much more regularly which enables a greater feeling of

connectedness between peers on the programme. It also cuts down costs in terms of venues.

- d. Many graduate trainees are working from home in their councils, though many have also been moved to front line work.

### **Alumni journeys**

32. We are aware of at least one current Chief Executive, who started on the NGDP in 2007 and became a Chief Executive in 2019. We also aware of a number of Directors who are NGDP alumni.

33. We hope to undertake a further alumni impact study soon. However, some evaluation work was paused in 2020 in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the most recent impact survey undertaken in 2020, with the cohort who completed the NGDP in 2019, one year on from completing the NGDP, we found that:

- a. 70% were still working in local government.
- b. 18% were in parts of the public sector, such as the NHS or the civil service.
- c. 100% said the NGDP had helped them to fulfil their current role.
- d. 100% said the NGDP had helped them be able to progress in their careers e.g. such as to take on management responsibility.

34. Testimonials:

- a. *"It allowed me to gain such a wide amount of experience and knowledge in just two years.*
- b. *"It has given me great insight into the different services within a council, allowing me to be more collaborative within my work and projects. The programme gave me a great awareness of the role and challenges within local government. Allowing me to see the big picture when delivering projects. I also developed my confidence and project management skills- giving me the belief that I can have a successful career in local government."*

35. A 2016 survey which covered all past NGDP graduates (from Cohorts 1-15) we were able to contact, found:

- a. 60% were still working for a local authority.
- b. 12% were working for other parts of the public sector.
- c. 62% were in a managerial role, of which 27% described themselves as senior managers.

36. You can find out more personal stories from our graduate alumni here:

<https://local.gov.uk/national-graduate-development-programme/ngdp-candidates/ngdp-stories>

### **Implications for Wales**

37. Newport City Council hired graduates in Cohort 21. Welsh councils are not eligible for the grant subsidy.

### **Equalities Implications**

38 As detailed in the report, the NGDP is working to improve the diversity of the graduates it recruits, and in doing so, will contribute to diversifying senior leadership in local government. NGDP graduates are also taught about equality, diversity and inclusion as part of their learning programme and will bring this to the work they do within the sector.

### **Financial implications**

39 This programme requires continued funding from the MHCLG grant.

### **Next steps**

- 40 Members are asked to:
- a. Discuss the progress of the NGDP and offer any reflections on the programme.
  - b. Support the promotion of the NGDP to potential council partners.

**APPENDIX 1 – breakdown of participating councils**

<i>Cohort 22 Participating Councils</i>			
<b>Council Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>CONTROL</b>
Ashfield District Council	D	EM	IND/OTHER
Basildon Council	D	E	NOC
Bedford Borough Council	UA	E	NOC
Black Country Transport			N/A
Bradford Council	MD	YH	LAB
Brent Council	LB	GL	LAB
Cambridgeshire County Council	C	E	CON
Cheshire West and Chester Council	UA	NW	NOC
City of Wolverhampton Council	MD	WM	LAB
Cornwall Council	UA	SW	NOC
Coventry City Council	MD	WM	LAB
Croydon Council	LB	GL	LAB
Doncaster Council	MD	YH	LAB
Enfield Council	LB	GL	LAB
Gloucestershire County Council	C	SW	CON
Horsham District Council	D	SE	CON
Local Government Association			N/A
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Barnet	LB	GL	CON
London Borough of Hackney	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Harrow	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Havering	LB	GL	NOC
London Borough of Hounslow	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Islington	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Newham	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Redbridge	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Sutton	LB	GL	LD
London Borough of Waltham Forest	LB	GL	LAB
London Councils			N/A
North Lincolnshire Council	UA	YH	CON
North of Tyne Combined Authority			N/A
North Tyneside Council	MD	NE	LAB
Northumberland County Council	UA	NE	NOC
Oxfordshire County Council/Cherwell District Council	C	SE	NOC
Rotherham MBC	MD	YH	LAB
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	LB	GL	CON
Royal Borough of Kingston	LB	GL	LD
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	UA	SE	CON

Sheffield City Council	MD	YH	LAB
Slough Borough Council	UA	SE	LAB
South Kesteven District Council	D	EM	CON
South Norfolk and Broadland Council	D	E	CON
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	UA	E	NOC
St Albans City and District Council	D	E	NOC
Surrey County Council	C	SE	CON
Warwickshire County Council	C	WM	CON
West Midlands Combined Authority			N/A
Westminster City Council	LB	GL	CON
Winchester City Council	D	SE	LD
Wokingham Borough Council	UA	SE	CON

<b>Type of Council</b>	<b>Number of Councils</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
County	5	9.8
District	7	13.0
London Borough	18	35.3
Metropolitan District	7	13.7
Unitary Authority	9	17.6
Other	5	9.8
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>51</b>	

<b>Political Party</b>	<b>Number of Councils</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Conservative	13	25.5
Independent/Other	1	2.0
Labour	20	39.2
Liberal Democrat	3	5.9
N/A	5	9.8
No overall control	9	17.6
<b>Total councils</b>	<b>51</b>	

<i>Cohort 21 Participating Councils</i>			
<b>Council Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>CONTROL</b>
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	MD	YH	LAB
Bedford Borough Council	UA	E	NOC
Birmingham City Council	MD	WM	LAB
Black Country Transport			N/A
Bracknell Forest Borough Council	UA	SE	CON
Buckinghamshire County Council	C	SE	CON
Cambridgeshire County Council	C	E	CON
Chelmsford City Council	D	E	LD
Cherwell District Council (partner with Oxfordshire)	D	SE	CON

Chorley Council	D	NW	LAB
Cornwall Council	UA	SW	NOC
Coventry City Council	MD	WM	LAB
Dacorum Borough Council	D	E	CON
Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council	MD	YH	LAB
Dorset Council	UA	SW	CON
Gloucestershire County Council	C	SW	CON
Horsham District Council	D	SE	CON
Local Government Association			N/A
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Barnet	LB	GL	CON
London Borough of Bexley	LB	GL	CON
London Borough of Brent	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Croydon	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Enfield	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Hackney	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Haringey	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Havering	LB	GL	NOC
London Borough of Islington	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Redbridge	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Sutton	LB	GL	LD
London Borough of Tower Hamlets	LB	GL	LAB
London Borough of Waltham Forest	LB	GL	LAB
London Councils			N/A
Luton Borough Council	UA	E	LAB
Newport City Council	UA	W	LAB
Northumberland County Council	UA	NE	NOC
Oxfordshire County Council (partner with Cherwell)	C	SE	NOC
Royal Borough of Greenwich	LB	GL	LAB
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	LB	GL	CON
Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames	LB	GL	LD
Sefton Council	MD	NW	LAB
Slough Borough Council	UA	SE	LAB
South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils	D	E	CON
Southend on Sea Borough Council	UA	E	NOC
St Albans City and District Council	D	E	NOC
Stevenage Borough Council	D	E	LAB
Surrey County Council	C	SE	CON
West Midlands Combined Authority			N/A
Westminster City Council	LB	GL	CON
Winchester City Council	D	SE	LD
Woking Borough Council	D	SE	NOC
Wokingham Borough Council	UA	SE	CON

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Wolverhampton City Council	MD	WM	LAB
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Type of Council	Number of Councils	Percentage
County Council	5	9.3
District Council	10	18.5
London Borough	19	35.2
Metropolitan District	6	11.1
Unitary Authority	10	18.5
Other	4	7.4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>54</b>	

Political Party	Councils	Percentage
Conservative	15	27.8
Labour	23	42.6
Liberal Democrat	4	7.4
N/A	4	7.4
No overall control	8	14.8
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>54</b>	







## National Procurement Policy Statement and Procurement Green Paper

### Purpose

For discussion and direction.

### Summary

There are two future legislative proposals relating to procurement that will affect councils. First, the [Transforming Government Procurement Green Paper](#), published in December for which the closing date for consultation is 10<sup>th</sup> 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 our National Advisory Group for Local Government Procurement (NAG) on the wider consultation about the Green paper and we are formulating our response. We have also engaged with colleagues in the LGA's Brussels office on potential legislation as we recognise the role that Policy (and the Parliamentary team) need to play during the consultation periods.

### Recommendations

- Board Members are invited to feed their reflections and views on the outline of our response
- Board members to note the update on the National Procurement Policy Statement.
- Board members are asked to identify which of the issues identified in 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.

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## National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS) Update

### Background

1. Members may be aware that the Government are planning to bring forward proposed legislation that sets out national priorities of strategic importance and how contracting authorities can deliver these through their procurement processes.
2. The proposed implementation date for this new legislation is April 2021. The effect on councils for this legislation is:
  - 2.1 All councils will need to 'take into account' *Government priorities* in their procurement.
  - 2.2 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.
  - 2.3 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.
3. LGA officers have regular dialogue with the responsible Cabinet Office officials who have now responded to our concerns about this policy in the following terms:
  - 3.1 Cabinet Office has said it will now prioritise contracting authorities' priorities within the legislation and is looking again at how it can ensure that there is written consultation about the national priorities in the event that they are amended and/or updated.
  - 3.2 The requirement to publish pipelines of future work will be limited to those *individual contracts* that will be valued at more than £2million. The publication of a contracts register of those contracts to include whether the services being procured will be required again at the end of the current contract period, and the addition of known future new requirements (for example, where a council plans on building a new Town Hall in three years' time) will suffice.
  - 3.3 The NPPS legislation will simply require councils to benchmark themselves against a relevant set of standards (for example, our national procurement strategy for councils), and there will be nothing in the initial legislation about an *oversight body* (see below). Cabinet Office proposed that it work together with the LGA to develop any future guidance in relation to benchmarking and what 'good practice' looks like across the public sector.

## Transforming Public Procurement Green Paper Update

### Background

4. As the UK is no longer subject to EU public procurement law, on 20 December, Government published its 'Transforming Public Procurement' Green Paper for consultation. The paper sets out Government's plans to overhaul the procurement regime, creating an entirely new regulatory framework that aims to deliver better outcomes with the least burden on suppliers and the public sector.

5. The closing date for consultation is 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021. LGA is currently preparing its response.
6. There is much in the Green Paper that LGA has been calling for and which we support in principle, for example:
  - 6.1 A simplified contracting regime.
  - 6.2 The use of an 'open contracting data standard' especially if this means that we can remove the burden of reporting under the LG Transparency Code.
  - 6.3 A review of the Remedies rules (in the Public Contract Regulations 2015) which currently favour aggrieved suppliers, and increase the threat of legal challenge against councils.
  - 6.4 The central collection of data about suppliers and proposal to develop a central 'debarment register'.
  - 6.5 Improved access to training for procurement and commercial staff across the public sector (although our experience is that much of this is very much focussed on central government without a proper understanding of what local government does).
7. However, despite the welcome headlines and executive summary in the Green Paper we have some concerns about the detail. For example:
  - 7.1 Removal of the threshold for the existing Light Touch Regime will put a huge additional burden on councils to introduce additional processes for services such as adult social care, children's services, and passenger transport. An estimate from a county council suggests that instead of undertaking four procurement exercises a year for one particular service they will need to undertake 104 exercises in this one service alone.
  - 7.2 The proposal that councils will need to publish in full all the tender documents they have received from all bidders once they have selected a preferred bidder for a procurement will cause issues relating to commercial confidentiality, needing to restart a procurement completely if a small error has been found as all the bids have been published and could be some unfair advantage.
  - 7.3 The proposal that only the Cabinet Office will be able to declare a 'crisis' under the new rules. If there is a local 'crisis' then councils will need to ask Cabinet Office for permission to use the 'crisis' rules to undertake emergency procurements. (For example, emergency accommodation, sandbags and clear up/reinstatement operations following large-scale local flooding.)
  - 7.4 We are all for there being simplicity around the existing regulations, however, Government is proposing to exclude NHS procurement rules from the simplification. A problem for councils who very often collaborate with NHS on delivering healthcare services. There will be continued confusion and debate about which set of rules to follow.
  - 7.5 A one-size-fits all approach which does not recognise the breadth of different markets that councils contract in. Lack of understanding that a contract for social care will be very different to a contract for window cleaning.
  - 7.6 The proposal that there will be a central 'oversight body' run by the Cabinet Office "to oversee public procurement with powers to review and, if necessary, intervene to improve the commercial capability of contracting authorities". The oversight body will monitor and assess gaps in commercial capability and will

have powers to issue improvement notices with recommendations to drive up standards in individual contracting authorities. And where the recommendations are not adopted the unit could have recourse to further action such as spending controls.

- 7.7 The tone of the document comes across as policing/enforcing rather than supporting and we don't think the balance has been struck which will make access to Public Sector contracts easier for SMEs and new market entrants.

### **Implications for Wales**

8. Councils in Wales are currently subject to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 except for Part 4 provisions. The Wales National Procurement Service has its own policies in relation to public sector contracts. The Green Paper suggests that the procurement reforms will be for the whole of the UK.

### **Financial implications**

9. No financial implications for LGA. Potential additional resource implications for councils due to administrative burdens

### **Equalities Implications**

10. Equal treatment of potential suppliers is mandatory.

### **Next steps**

11. We welcome members' views in particular relating to the issues raised in the Green Paper which we can include in our response.
12. The timetable for implementing the proposals in the Green Paper (apart from the National Procurement Policy Statement) will be 2022. LGA is working through the detail of much of how this will work at a granular level with Cabinet Office colleagues.
13. Officers will provide regular updates to members so their views can be taken into account in developing the best options for councils.

## **Improvement Support to Councils - One Public Estate**

### **Purpose:**

For information.

### **Summary**

The One Public Estate (OPE) programme has grown since its inception as a pilot programme in 2013, working with 12 council areas, to a large national programme encompassing 97% of local authorities.

This report details the growth and progress of the programme and provides details of the Phase 8 grant awards to local authorities.

### **Recommendation**

That IIB notes the progress of the One Public Estate programme.

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## **Improvement Support to Councils - One Public Estate**

### **Background**

1. The One Public Estate (OPE) programme was established in 2013 and is jointly delivered by the LGA and the Cabinet Office through a blended team, half working in the LGA and half in the Office of Government Property (Cabinet Office). Since 2017 MHCLG have been an additional sponsoring partner.
2. The OPE programme aims to support public bodies to identify and release surplus land, with a particular emphasis on repurposing such public land for housing and economic uses.
3. The programme provides practical and technical support, alongside revenue and capital funding. To date the programme has administered eight rounds of funding totalling c.£57m of revenue funding (OPE) and c.£65m of capital funding (the Land Release Fund, LRF).
4. The One Public Estate (OPE) programme is currently supporting MHCLG to design and develop approaches to administering future funding to support the delivery of housing on surplus local authority land.

### **One Public Estate Programme Structure**

5. One Public Estate operates through a structure of 72 local OPE partnerships. Local authorities act as the accountable bodies for these OPE partnership, convening a variety of public bodies in the locality in order to collaborate on public property matters.
6. The public bodies involved vary by locality, depending on property ownerships and local ambitions, but typically involve blue light bodies, health bodies, central government departments with a local presence (DWP, MOJ, MOD et al) alongside local authorities.
7. Each OPE partnership sets a programme of work to review public property needs collaboratively, in order to identify opportunities for colocations, public service hubs, and other efficiencies, in order to release surplus public land for housing and regeneration purposes. Partners benefit from capital receipts and revenue savings where surplus land can be repurposed, as well as improved public service delivery. Local authorities also benefit from the ability to repurpose public land to meet local housing needs.
8. In addition, the network of OPE partnerships plays a helpful role connecting central government to local areas. Over the last year this has included:
  - 8.1 supporting response and recovery in relation to the pandemic: for example, supporting property searches for response infrastructure

- 8.2 providing intelligence to the IPA (Infrastructure and Project Authority) about the public sector construction pipeline
- 8.3 providing early views to MHCLG on policy direction in relation to public land.

### **One Public Estate Support**

- 9. The One Public Estate offer includes financial support, peer support, plus practical and technical advice and brokering from the OPE team.
- 10. OPE provides revenue support to early-stage property projects which involve an element of collaboration between local and central government. OPE grants typically fund feasibility studies, masterplans and other technical studies, plus local authority capacity.
- 11. To date the programme has administered eight rounds of OPE revenue funding totalling c.£57m and supporting c.700 projects.
- 12. LRF provides capital support, to local authorities only, typically funding the capital works that are required to bring a local authority owned potential housing site to a point of viability, and therefore deliverability. Typical works funded include: abnormal costs related to contamination, demolition of obsolete buildings, abnormal utilities costs, highways requirements and so forth.
- 13. To date the programme has administered two rounds of LRF capital funding totalling c.£65m and supporting c.140 projects.

### **One Public Estate Delivery**

- 14. To the end of July 2020, the OPE programme has enabled the delivery of:
  - 14.1 over £383m in capital receipts
  - 14.2 over £76m in revenue savings to benefit public bodies
  - 14.3 the release of surplus public land for over 15,500 homes
  - 14.4 the creation of 25,000 jobs.
- 15. Equally as valuable have been the softer benefits. These include:
  - 15.1 enabling local authorities to control the supply of some land for housing
  - 15.2 the ability to support SME's and local supply chains
  - 15.3 enabling local authorities to connect and engage with harder to reach parts of government
  - 15.4 the ability to share problem solving and best practise between councils and other public bodies
  - 15.5 the ability to link public property to place agendas – for example town centre regeneration.

16. Case studies of OPE and LRF supported projects are attached at **Appendix A**.

### **One Public Estate – Phase 8 Awards**

17. Phase 8, which included a £10m OPE revenue offer, and a £20m LRF capital offer, was available for bidding between September and November 2020. Bids have now been assessed and are in the process of being awarded to councils.
18. **Appendix B**, a more detailed pack of information regarding Phase 8 awards will be provided to IIB members on March 5<sup>th</sup>, as at the time of drafting this report the awards are yet to be announced by MHCLG's Secretary of State and Cabinet Office's Minister of State.

### **Issues**

19. None - there are no specific issues to raise in relation to the OPE programme.

### **Implications for Wales**

20. None – the OPE programme only covers English local authority areas. The OPE programme has previously engaged with Welsh Government colleagues to share experiences and learnings.

### **Financial implications**

21. The OPE programme is delivered by the LGA in partnership with Cabinet Office through a 'time and materials' contract. The current contract encompasses the period April 2019 through to March 2022. A contract for the period April 2022 onwards will be renegotiated with Cabinet Office during Q1/Q2 21/22.

### **Equalities Implications**

22. Support from the OPE programme, both financial and practical, is available to all English local authorities. The OPE programme encourages local authorities to develop innovative and creative projects to rationalise public property in order to best meet their local needs, and encourages partners to use approaches most appropriate for their locality. OPE does not have a 'one size fits all' approach to the projects it supports.
23. From a programme team perspective, the OPE programme seeks to recruit and develop a diverse team with a variety of skills, backgrounds and experiences, and to ensure an inclusive working environment.



**Next steps**

24. The OPE programme continues to work with OPE partnerships to support the delivery of property projects through to delivery.
25. The OPE programme is exploring options to work more closely with private sector stakeholders, in particular the scope to introduce commercial income to the programme/delivering partners.
26. The One Public Estate (OPE) programme is currently supporting MHCLG to design and develop approaches to administering future funding to support the delivery of housing on surplus local authority land. Further updates may be able to be provided in the near future.


**APPENDIX A – ONE PUBLIC ESTATE and LAND RELEASE FUND CASE STUDIES**

**One Public Estate Phases 1-7**

The York Central Development

- Planning permission approved for the infrastructure work that will deliver 2500 homes, 6500 jobs and 1.2m sq ft commercial development space.

City of York – 2500 homes | 6500 jobs




**Region: North East**  
**Theme: regeneration**

- Construction can start at York Central after City of York Council gave planning permission for infrastructure work.
- The York Central development includes 2500 new homes; c.1.2 million sqft commercial development and improved visitor access to the National Railway Museum.
- c. 6500 new jobs are expected to be created and a £1.2 bn boost to the local economy.

Chatham, Medway

- The development at White Road has progressed to 20 MMC homes on site and a capital receipt of £2.8m has been reported.

Medway – 20 homes



Top Hat MMC unit being delivered at White Road, Chatham, Medway

**Region: South East**  
**Theme: Regeneration**

- Medway: White Rd **20 MMCs in place.**
- £2.8m CR reported

Wareham relocatable housing

- 18 homes have been delivered at the community-based project through a relocatable housing solution that supports affordable key worker accommodation.

Wareham Relocatable Housing – 18 homes




**Region:** South West  
**Theme:** Health and social care (in OPE), regeneration

- A phase 7 project – **18 homes delivered.**
- Community-based accommodation and supported services
- Creates continuum of accommodation and services & enables people to live as independently as possible.
- Relocatable housing solution: supports affordable and keyworker housing, accommodates care sector workforce.

Worcestershire JPV integrated public services

- 5 sites sold resulting in a capital receipt of £7m and reduced running costs of £9m.

Worcestershire JPV – CR: c.£7m | RRC: c.£9m




**Region:** North West  
**Theme:** Integrated Public Services; regeneration

- **5 sites sold**, including Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Services HQ, enabled through HWFRS co-locating with West Mercia Police HQ.
- HWFRS disposed of their HQ to Worcester City Council with the Health and Care Trust as a tenant.

Hounslow Cavalry Barracks

- Development partnership with Inland Homes agreed, a key milestone for a project due to deliver in excess of 1000 new homes and £50m capital receipt.

Hounslow Cavalry Barracks - 14.85 hectares



**Region: London**  
**Theme: Housing; MOD**

- The West London OPE partnership has reached a key milestone to deliver more than 1000 new houses, including affordable housing, **agreeing a development partnership with Inland Homes.**
- Increased confidence to deliver forecast benefits c.£50m CR

## Land Release Fund Round 1

### Hertfordshire OPE Partnership - Stevenage - 30 new homes over 2 sites

- Gresley Way - 15 new homes completed. Re-named Blackwell Close, this scheme comprises 14 homes for affordable rent and 1 for private sale. Stevenage District Council has collaborated with Hertfordshire County Council to let a proportion of the properties to clients with higher support needs, with properties designed to ensure they best met the needs of this client group.
- Burwell Court - 15 new homes completed. 15 one and two bed apartments which are entirely for social rent. The scheme was built on a derelict pub site that was a hot spot for anti-social behaviour, and has transformed the local area.
- Kenilworth Close - Construction started in October 2020 for the delivery of 236 homes by January 2024.



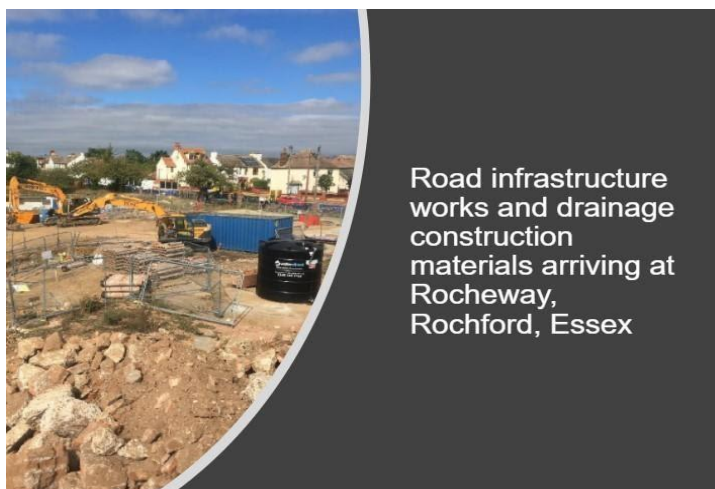
Plymouth OPE Partnership - Corporate Asset Release Project - 24 new homes

- St Budeaux Library site - 24 new homes completed. All are affordable homes, and four are wheelchair accessible. The site will eventually be part of a mixed development.



Essex OPE Partnership - Rochford - 14 homes construction start

- Rocheway and Millview sites - September saw construction start on 14 new homes in Rochford. Road infrastructure and drainage work commenced at Rocheway for the first phase of housing. This initial phase will deliver 14 homes, with a procurement exercise underway for the second phase (a further 60 homes).



## **Update on MoU activity in 2020/21**

### **Purpose of report**

For information.

### **Summary**

This report updates MoU SLI activity in 2020/21.

#### **Recommendation**

That the meeting considers the report and agrees any follow-up action.

#### **Action**

Officers to initiate any required action.

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### Update on MoU activity in 2020/21

1. The following report provides a cumulative summary of Sector-Led Improvement (SLI) activity and achievements since April 2020. The tools and resources outlined include various elements of our COVID-19 refocused support offer, in addition to a range of ongoing and comprehensive improvement support in other key areas, such as climate change.
2. In the December report to the Improvement and Innovation Board, we highlighted a range of new support, which has continued to develop over subsequent months. The Housing Advisors Programme has agreed funding for 17 projects with the involvement of 43 councils; through the Rough Sleeping Peer Support programme, 192 councils have already benefited from Delivery and Impact Panels; the new Digital Inclusion Network has 42 members; and the new Advanced & Predictive Analytics Network (APAN) network has swiftly grown to a membership of 195.
3. Among other highlights for the month, the report marks a landmark for the National Graduate Development Programme, which received 7400 applications for the next cohort. This surpasses the previous record of 5000 applications in 2020.
4. The LGA's carbon accounting tool has now been downloaded more than 335 times and received endorsement by the Committee for Climate Change – a key climate body, which advises the UK and devolved governments tackling emissions and responding to climate change.
5. With the COVID-19 vaccine programme now underway, the LGA has launched a new behavioural change project to support uptake of the vaccine within the broader population. This work is informed by our Behavioural Insights programme.
6. There also continues to be broad interest and take up of remote peer support and finance offers, which support councils with their immediate responses to COVID-19 and plans for recovery and renewal.

### Equalities Implications

7. Recent consultation with the sector has highlighted that equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) remain core priority areas for our member councils. The LGA continues to ensure EDI considerations underpin existing support offers, including by taking steps to diversify our pool of peers and range of applicants to programmes such as the NGDP. With a view to provide the sector with further tools and resources to enhance EDI within councils and communities, this report also highlights new EDI support under development. This includes the creation of a new EDI leadership programme for councillors and a new EDI hub, which will host support such as this and other key EDI tools and resources.



**Implications for Wales**

8. Although MHCLG grant funding cover England councils only the LGA continues to work closely with WLGA in relation to our positions on SLI.

**Next steps**

9. The LGA will continue to report directly to both the Improvement and Innovation Board and IDeA in relation to this year's MOU and shaping the future SLI offer as well as ongoing negotiations with MHCLG.



# LGA Refocused Sector-Led Improvement Offer: Highlights and Summary

April 2020-February 2021



## Peer Support

Following the onset of COVID-19 measures, the LGA rapidly refocused its sector-led improvement offer to provide councils with a range of remote support. **235 councils** have now benefited from these offers, delivered through peer-based programmes including our Remote Peer Support offer and Rough Sleeping Peer Support (see next section).

### Headlines

- Our [Remote Peer Support](#) offer includes following programmes:
  - [Recovery and Renewal Panels](#), which provide councils an opportunity to reflect on their response to COVID-19 through a **remote panel discussion**, involving an open and collaborative conversation about recovery and renewal plans, capturing and sharing learning about developing practice from across the sector.
  - [Remote Corporate Health Checks \(RCHCs\)](#), which offer a flexible framework and **process for councils to focus on key corporate issues—such as priority setting, place leadership and financial planning—over a period of days**. We have begun engaging with councils to pilot this approach. This offer was developed in response to sector identified needs and does not replace the flagship Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) programme (which will recommence when appropriate to do so, given the importance of onsite engagement).
  - [Remote Bespoke Peer Support](#), which give councils the option to **review a specific issue or set of issues in greater depth**. This process involves a more detailed series of remote interviews and discussions with the council and uses a similar approach to the traditional peer challenges, being delivered over 2-3 days.

Following the launch of the remote peer support offer in July, **39 councils** have benefited from these programmes and the feedback has been positive. There continues to be strong interest from the sector: Sessions with **36 councils** are planned over the next 4 months.

- **Bespoke Support:** Bespoke support has been provided to a large number of councils and has been a key focus for our COVID activity. Examples of the support has including extensive support to a new Leader who took on the role during the pandemic, mentoring of several leaders and cabinet members, and secondment of staff to two authorities who needed additional strategic capacity.
- **Engagement and wider support:** Principal Advisors and regional teams have continued to support councils in responding to COVID-19 through **extensive engagement in Chief Executive (CEX) meetings, one-to-one meetings and by answering queries**. We engaged or provided information to every council during the first quarter and this level of activity has been maintained in subsequent months.

## Housing and Homelessness

### Headlines

- **Rough Sleeping Peer Support:** MHCLG have worked jointly with the LGA to develop and facilitate a peer support offer to assist councils in the next stage of their rough sleeping response. The offer involves the delivery of a programme of dynamic and inclusive **Delivery and Impact Panels (D&IP)**, designed to provide a safe space, framework and process for council lead officers to come together, reflect on their work to date, share and challenge learning and highlight good practice across the sector. As part of the **Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP)** process, MHCLG have an expectation that all successful councils will engage in a peer support process. However, this offer of peer support has been opened up to all councils to support their rough sleeping response, including those councils who are not in receipt of NSAP funding. As of week ending 19 February 2021, **192 councils have participated in a D&IP** (since the end of December 2020). The LGA will be producing a national report detailing key themes and emerging learning from the D&IP in March 2021. This final report will capture the strengths and challenges from councils' responses, identify good practice in local planning and delivery arrangements and highlight key issues and learning with the potential to inform national policy development.
- **Housing Advisers Programme:** In November, we launched the Housing Advisers Programme, which will fund the provision of bespoke expert support to councils – or groups of councils – wanting to transform the delivery of homes and places, the quality and security of existing homes and/or to prevent and reduce homelessness. Funding has now been agreed for 17 projects with the involvement of 43 councils. Projects will include housing planning and delivery with a focus on carbon reduction, affordable housing, regeneration for low income households, as well as homelessness and homelessness prevention, including for 18-25 year olds. The support from the Housing Advisers will help to make a significant difference to the housing crisis and help to build capacity in councils by ensuring that great sustainability of projects in the longer term. The programme also helps to create learning about what works, so that the wider sector can benefit from that knowledge.

### Other activity

- **One Public Estate (OPE):** We have supported councils and MHCLG through a range of activities activity undertaken through our OPE programme:
  - In August our regional OPE teams have **input into the moderation of bids submitted to the Future High Streets Fund**
  - In October we supported MHCLG to engage with relevant local authorities regarding the approach to **refreshing the Right to Contest**.
  - Since September we have supported MHCLG sponsorship of **OPE Phase 8 and LRF2**, involving launch of revenue and capital funding offers, alongside technical advice and practical support and brokering to all English local authorities. **OPE8 equates to £10m of revenue support** to rationalise, co-locate and repurpose surplus public land. **LRF2 is equal to £20m** of capital funding to bring surplus public land forward for housing delivery. We hope to announce awards in the near future.
  - In November we **supported MHCLG's Housing Delivery team** with project delivery intelligence from the OPE programme, and with the **design of future place-based housing delivery funds**. We are also working with new Heads of Place, sharing regional intelligence and expertise from the programme, and offering access to OPE networks.
- **Digital Housing Programme:** The digital housing programme funds councils to reuse the assets and learning from the Kent Home Choice Partnership Project to **support local government respond to the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017** and scale up

across other councils the resource and assets from this project. A case study series from this work is now being finalised. This financial year, the programme has predicted projected **savings of £430,000** for four of the councils involved.

## Finance and commercialisation support

### Headlines

- **Support via the Finance Improvement Support Advisers (FISAs):** Finance associates (FISAs) have now **directly supported 54 councils** since the start of the financial year, with support ranging from helping to understand and monitor the impact of COVID on their finances, options for seeking in-year savings and alternative funding strategies and support for individual CFOs in undertaking their duties. FISAs have also been working to provide assurance to MHCLG on councils, which have applied for exceptional financial support in 2020/21. Feedback from councils has highlighted that this role has provided councils with critical support address significant financial and governance challenges throughout COVID-19. FISAs continue to play a critical role in supporting councils with financial planning around recovery and renewal.
- **Collaborative finance panels:** These panels bring small groups of councils together to reflect on their responses to COVID-19, presenting an opportunity for councils to compare notes and good practice and build resilience through this process. The first of these panels took place on July 15, involving several councils from the North East, East Midlands and Yorkshire & Humber. Further sessions were held in December (18), February (11, 15 and 25) and March (2). Feedback from attendees has highlighted that panels have proven both cathartic and instructive and, with high demand, further sessions are planned for spring and late autumn.
- **Income generation:** Since April, we have delivered more than 20 commercialisation events to support councils with their income generation objectives. Events have been well attended and covered topics including commercial thinking, business planning, financial health and commercial leadership and decision making.

### Other activity

- **Finance Leadership Essentials:** We have delivered 3 courses – two online and one face-to-face, benefitting 20-30 elected members with financial responsibilities.
- **Webinar on Review of Local Authority Financial Reporting and Audit (Redmond Review):** In October, we ran an online webinar to cover recommendations and explore learning from the Redmond Review.
- **Finance Portfolio Holder Guidance:** Published and shared via social media, bulletins and website. The guide offers context, strategic questions and guidance to senior councillors with responsibility for council finances to help them respond effectively to the present context.
- **CEX Finance Roundtable:** In May we brought together a group of Chief Executive's from some of the most financially challenged councils to explore their issues and to share good practice.

## Economic Growth and Recovery Support

### Headlines

- **Economic Growth Advisors Programme:** We have launched a new programme to source **Economic Growth Advisors** on behalf of councils. Councils are supported on a targeted need basis and receive support on projects concerning economic recovery from COVID-19. An initial 10 councils have been identified for support and preliminary conversations have been arranged to take the programme forward and. Of that group, 4 councils have been

awarded funding to suppliers who will deliver their respective projects on: skills launchpads, tourism strategies, support for 18-25s and high street regeneration. An additional 3 additional councils have been granted £14k to deliver projects on economic recovery, area action plans and green jobs.

- **Economic Growth Support Hub**: The LGA has launched an Economic Growth Support Hub to provide councils with a central point for tools and resources on all aspects of their economic development plans, including employment, re-skilling, high streets, SME support, procurement and business retention. News support and resources, including case studies, publications and upcoming events will continue to be added.
- **Economic growth events**: We held our third economic growth roundtable on February 17 around remote working and the opportunities for an adaptable economy and on February 22, held our first webinar will be hosted on 22 Feb around the green economic recovery.

## Other activity

- **Supporting locally led jobs and skills recovery**: We engaged with member authorities to inform views and policies relating to COVID-19, including with the Combined Authority Employment and Skills Network. We also organised a roundtable between local authorities from non-devolved areas with DfE, DWP and MHCLG officials to address challenges relating to the present environment.
- **Business Support**: We have continued to support councils in the distribution of the Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF) and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Grants Fund (RHLCGF) schemes, promoting the efforts of councils and raising issues relating to the schemes and interpretation of the Government guidance.
- **Town centres toolkit**: This toolkit has been updated to reflect present challenges and national guidance, including guidance to help local authorities and place partnerships to develop COVID-19 recovery planning as part of wider revitalisation.
- **Culture, Tourism and Sport (CTS)**: We have developed or contributed to a **range of COVID-19 centred publications** in this area, including **guidance on parks management** and a **joint statement on working together during COVID-19**; held and 10 **webinars** for councillors and officers on all aspects of CTS (with a further 16 planned); and contributed to DCMS working groups that are drawing up reopening guidance for libraries, museums, and leisure centre. We also carried out **interviews** with 20 councils to help gauge the **financial impact of COVID-19 on their cultural, tourism and leisure provision**. Following increased concern from councils about operating leisure facilities under restrictions, we have published a case study report entitled **Leisure under lockdown: how culture and leisure services responded to COVID-19**.
- **Local Partnerships**: Local Partnerships have also been working closely with councils to support them with their leisure providers. In addition, they worked closely with Sport England, DCMS and MHCLG to help pull together the funding bid to HMT to rescue councils and their providers.

## Leadership

### Headlines

- **National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP)**: The NGDP recruits high calibre and diverse graduates, with the right skills to help councils recover. Following the implementation of COVID-19 restrictions in March 2020, all restrictions have taken place remotely. In January, the programme recorded more than 7400 applications for the next cohort, including a substantially more diverse pool of applicants.

- **Coaching for CEXs and senior officers:** We created a brand-new offer to provide coaching for chief executives and other senior officers in the COVID context and by July individuals from 88 councils were engaged in coaching and some councils have signed up for group coaching. As of January 2021, 465 individual coaching hours had been completed. A total of 171 officers are receiving or have received coaching (32 of which are chief executives). We have also provided 76 hours of top team coaching.
- **Coaching for councillors:** We also launched a similar programme for councillors, and for leaders in particular, specifically designed to support councillors with their leadership challenges during COVID19. In February, there were 69 signed coaching agreements with Members.
- **E-Learning Hub and resources:** We have developed a new e-learning platform in support enable councillors to deepen their knowledge of local government and develop the essential leadership skills needed to work more effectively with their communities. We have produced a range of **webinars**, **workbooks** and **e-learning modules** on COVID-19 related topics in order to build skills and capacity. These include:
  - An e-learning module on **handling intimidation**
  - A Workbook and e-learning module on **mentally healthier communities**
  - A webinar on **chairing of remote meetings**
  - A webinar series on the **role of the ward councillor in responding to COVID-19**
  - A webinar series on **effective opposition** during COVID-19
  - A webinar on **rapid innovation** to support councils working toward recovery/renewal
  - A webinar on **presentation skills** to build skills and confidence for virtual presentations
  - A webinar on **Coalition Administrations**, identifying how to ensure robust, stable coalition working during Covid-19 and beyond.

Further leadership webinars are planned for subjects including Councillor wellbeing, risk management and finance.

- **Leadership Essentials/Academy:** Due to the COVID restrictions, most Leadership Essentials programmes were adapted to be delivered virtually to ensure councillors able to carry out with their development and respond to current challenges. This includes Audit Cttee; Finance, Children, Leading Healthier Places; Scrutiny; Effective Cabinet Member; Cultural Services; Climate emergency; Communication and Media, involving 241 delegates as of February. In person Leadership Academy sessions were able to take place in October, however have since been carried out virtually following COVID-19 restrictions – 82 Members will complete the programme virtually.

### Other activity

- **COVID-19 Knowledge Hub (KHub):** Councillors can access key COVID-19 documents on a newly launched KHub group and are also signposted to the full COVID-19 pages and support package for councils on the LGA's website. We have added a range of councillor workbooks including 'Changes to Local Authority Powers and Duties Resulting from the Coronavirus Act 2020', 'Protecting the Local Government Supply Chain from Fraud' and 'Tackling Domestic Abuse'.

## Procurement and Commissioning Programme

### Headlines

- **Informing the Green Paper on Transforming Public Procurement:** Members of NAG continued to engage with MHCLG and Cabinet Office in relation to emerging procurement reform including in the development of the **national procurement policy statement** and the

**Green Paper on Transforming Public Procurement.** The Green Paper was published in December and LGA is consulting widely with councils on the implications for the sector of the wide-ranging reforms set out. We engaged with MHCLG and DCMS to develop a process that will share council's position on use of VCSE's within our supply chains, particularly with a view to how we can continue to engage the VCSE sector better in the future.

- **Informing Procurement Policy Notes:** The LGA, supported by the National Advisory Group, has worked with Cabinet Office, MHCLG and others at pace, to get three **PPNs** and various additional guidance documents published (PPN deal directly with emerging procurement issues councils are continuing to face, particularly the increased flexibility afforded to councils with supplier relief) and to address emerging supply chain issues.
- **PPE procurement:** The LGA also continues to run regular **meetings on PPE procurement**, attended by councils, LG professional buying organisations, MHCLG, DHSC, CO colleagues. This meeting is open to all councils. Some attend on behalf of their region, ensuring information from these meetings is carried forward. This has helped to ensure that central government departments understand council needs, while providing a space to inform policies – they have also provided further opportunities for networking and sharing good practice between councils. We have also worked with MHCLG, Cabinet Office and others specifically to develop sustainable supplies of PPE for councils and their partners. We have also held two workshops on the increasing environmental impact of the production and use of disposable and single use face coverings since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Modern Slavery and Social Value:** Since December, we have held a series of events relating to modern slavery and social value, including a Modern Slavery in the Supply Chain webinar, attended by 250 attendees; a practical deep dive Modern Slavery in the Supply Chain, attended by 70 people; a session on modern slavery in the supply chain for the construction steering group; and a Social Value Masterclass, attended by 50. We have also launched our [social value guidance and template](#), for councils to use to set out their key messages and Social Value commitments. Since COVID-19, it has become clear that the need for social value is greater than ever – having a clear, committed Social Value Statement will help communicate this to their key stakeholders.
- **Adult Social Care and Childrens services:** We are continuing work on formulating a standard contract for foster care and in adult social care commissioning, our network continues to work with the big four providers to address SSRM related issues (one of the issues identified was the need overcome measures that prevented care homes from gaining insurance during COVID-19. The LGA has worked alongside central government to ensure that care homes can now access that insurance). We also recently set up a group to consider the market for care homes and future planning.

### Other activity

- During the first lockdown, the LGA hosted a series of meetings **on home to school transport**, open to all councils and DfE, providing a forum for councils to ask questions and share concerns in order to better ensure the safe transport of children when schools returned.
- **Strategic supplier updates:** We have ensured procurement officers and commissioner remain updated on key issues via our [weekly COVID-19 Supply Chain Bulletin](#). Whilst the focus has shifted to transition and recovery a lot of councils have also had to cope with the changing restrictions of the tier system and gearing ourselves up for the second lockdown. There are more than 3,000 subscribers to this bulletin.
- **Waste management:** We have provided guidance and support for waste authorities with significant private sector partnerships that are experiencing difficulties in balancing waste



services resources as a consequence of contracting arrangements that are coming under stress because of COVID-19.

## Digital Innovation and Improvement

### Headlines

- **Digital Inclusion:** The Digital Inclusion Programme supports 10 councils to work with specific cohorts of residents to support those who haven't had the skills, confidence or infrastructure to go online so they can benefit from the potential for digital tools and solutions to contribute to improving life outcomes. The present round has entered the evaluation phase, with the councils involved contributing to case studies available to all councils. We also recently launched a Digital Inclusion Network, which provides participating councils an avenue to network and collaborate on digital inclusion development – and opportunity for councils to help less developed councils with their digital inclusion projects. There are currently 42 members of the network.
- **Digital training and events:** We have held three training sessions as part of our [digital and data training series](#). These sessions, covering inclusion, connectivity and smart places, were well attended – with **78 attendees** in total – and a further session, on digital political leadership, has been added due to popular demand. We also held our annual **Digital Showcase Conference** on 24 November, with over **175 attendees** registered to participate. This event offered a range of presentations, viewable on the [LGA website](#), covering a range of ways that councils have redesigned and improved their services, adjusted to and innovated new ways of working and utilised digital tools and solutions.
- **Digital Connectivity Programme:** This grant funded programme builds councils' skills and capacity to take advantage of the opportunities offered by connectivity to local place and communities. We will be running a workshop on developing broadband and mobile connectivity expertise on March 31, open to all programme applicants. This workshop is being developed (and will be delivered) in partnership with Trowers and Hamlins, the lawfirm responsible for the legal work associated with the rollout of 5G in the West Midlands.

### Other activity

- **Remote meetings:** Our [Remote Council Meetings Hub](#) has helped to ensure the democratically elected voice of communities continues to be heard during this crisis, including advice, case studies and a hybrid meeting section, with guidance from partners in line with social distancing regulations. The Hub has been well utilised, **viewed 50,926 times** at last count in February. We have also launched a [Remote Council Meeting interactive map](#), to help members, officers and residents explore which video conferencing software all local authorities across England are using, how the meetings are streamed to the public and press while also collating all authority's council meeting calendars in one place for the most up to date information on local democracy around the country.

## Test, Trace and Outbreak Management, Shielding and Enforcement

### Headlines

- **Vaccination programme support:** The LGA has commissioned a suite of support for councils on behaviour change in collaboration with LGA's [Behavioural Insights](#) lead, specifically on vaccine uptake. This will include a think piece to support councils to use behavioural insights techniques to encourage the take up of vaccine; collation of useful resources and interviews with those using behavioural insights to encourage take up; and top tips and guidance, which was launched in February at the **Applying behavioural change techniques to COVID-19 and climate emergency responses webinar**, which

showcased behaviour change techniques relating to these two subject areas. This highly successful event was chaired by Councillor Peter Fleming and **attended by nearly 400 people**. This programme of work also involves engaging with MHCLG's National Vaccine Deployment Group, including supporting a Data Task Group and Inequalities Steering Group, led by Council Chief Executives, to ensure roll out in reaches all sections of the population and is equitable.

- **Specific support to MHCLG:** We have provided support and guidance, including leadership and administrative support to the **Nine Regional Chief Executives group** and their associated networks and groups. We have been involved in the **Stakeholder Engagement Forum**, and its sub-groups on data, local lockdowns and food supply, working with MHCLG and councils to share local learning to inform the future system. We have worked with councils, MHCLG and Defra on the delivery and development of the shielded programme, including input into the development of the Adult Social Care COVID-19 Sector Assurance Framework'. We have also supported discussions between councils and MHCLG/Government Digital Service to develop a minimum viable product for the new framework and better data flows to and from councils.
- **National Partnerships:** We have helped convene **roundtable discussions with national partners including**, ADPH, ADASS, ADCS, SOLACE and Association of Chief Environmental Health Officers (CEHO), to support councils in their work with vulnerable and shielded communities.
- **Local Outbreak Control Plans Advisory Board:** The Advisory Board has drawn together expertise from local government to support national arrangements in ways that build on local capabilities and to provide opportunities to share knowledge so that outbreaks can be managed most effectively. Case studies on one of the most recent are currently in preparation. The Advisory Board was established in May and has met 27 times at last count.
- **Cross Whitehall Working Group for Assurance of COVID Local Outbreak Management:** Participation in this forum has led to the LGA being positioned as a **key part of the regional architecture**, with the remit of sharing insights, identifying council support needs. Since December, points of focus for the group have included identification of relevant data sets to **inform risks, support and improvement** for recording and reporting.
- **Top Tips for Leaders:** We have created a [top tips document](#) based on interviews with leaders who have experienced intervention followed by negotiations to enter into 'high' or 'very high' local alert level. It is a reflection of the leaders' experiences and the advice that they would like to offer leaders.

### Other activity

- **TTOM Knowledge Hub:** This network brings together a range of resources, including presentations and case studies from the Advisory Board, which help to inform local developments and insights, including support on shielded residents. There are currently **602 members**, including more than 60 are DPHs.
- **Supporting councils to support shielded groups:** We have facilitated the **sharing of learning, practice and updates on shielded groups**, with a focus food provision, through case studies, webinars, bulletins and engagement to ensure councils are well prepared to deliver local responses
- **Enforcement:** We have had regular engagement with councils and government officials to support in the development of effective policy approaches on compliance and enforcement. We also **brought together more than 30 tier 3 authorities** to help shape consistent approach to interpreting key issues in regulation and have supported ongoing discussions between Government and councils on the resources required to ensure ongoing compliance, enforcement, and bolster capacity in key professions such as environmental health.

- **TTOM, Shielded Groups and Enforcement Webinars:** Facilitated well received and attended webinars between MHCLG officials and councils to share and prepare for changes to support for the shielded group. We have hosted webinars on topics including **Food Processing** (405 attendees), **Testing Prototypes, Communications and Engagement** (147 attendees) and with the **Contain Team** (203 attendees) and further sessions on **data and enforcement** (attendee numbers not yet available).
- **TTOM Leading and Learning Together Sessions for chief executives:** These action learning sets provide a safe space for reflection, exchange of experiences, learning and a mutually supportive peer network. Feedback has been positive and Insights have been shared through a [Top tips for Chief Executives document](#) that identifies leadership challenges and learning from Chief Executives during the pandemic. This includes lessons learnt, as well as video case studies from chief executives with direct experience of tier three restrictions.

## Workforce

### Headlines

- **Negotiations:** We continue to work with the unions to reach **JNC agreements** on pay and allowances for the sector, the latest being the successfully concluded pay negotiations for craft workers, youth and community workers and Soulbury staff. In addition, our work for the Home Office in negotiating pay for police staff reached a pay agreement for an increase for 2020. We also worked with unions to agree working to **support shielded or clinically extremely vulnerable local government staff** and our **Fire Negotiations Team** continue to work with the unions, under the Fire Tripartate Agreement, to implement any further work activities needed in the fire service to support the response to COVID-19.
- **Direct consultancy for Local Government Employers:** We have provided direct consultancy advice to **14 local government employers** on a range of strategic and operational HR issues, including senior employee relations issues, organisational design proposals and job evaluation.
- **Support for Schools:** We developed **new advice for councils and schools recruiting overseas teachers** after the end of the transition period for leaving the EU. As part of the School Teachers Review Body, we launched the annual statutory consultation for local government on teachers' pay. We developed and launched new resources to support ongoing advice and guidance on applying pay and conditions for teaching staff.
- **Environmental Health Together:** Environmental Health Together is the dedicated solution for councils and local authorities experiencing capacity issues within their environmental health departments as they respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides a **register of professionals with relevant environmental health qualifications and experience** who have signed up to assist LAs during this crisis. We recently launched a new engagement campaign to ensure more councils are aware of and sign up to the register. At last report, this register has received 212 candidates and has 109 councils signed up.
- **Return to... programmes:** We are working with Government departments and national partners to run a series of programmes to help councils sure up resilience, fill vacancies and attract people back to the sector within **planning, ICT, social work and legal** (recently launched). At last count, planning had 48 candidates, with 25 councils engaged; ICT had 77 candidates in training, with 24 councils engaged; social work had 111 registered candidates, with 86 placements and 59 job offers; and legal had 32 candidates and 40 councils engaged.
- **Wellbeing support:** We recently launched the **annual health check for social workers** on the Employers Standards for Social Workers in local government and successfully secured a record 10,000 responses from the profession. Following this, we are developing reports and

action plans for 123 employing councils. We are also working with councils, professional partners and Government departments to provide advice, resources and other support for HR leads dealing with wellbeing and mental health issues stemming from COVID-19, including **managing front line staff during the pandemic, responding to muscular skeletal injuries** and providing employer **guidance and advice on domestic abuse**.

- **Bi-weekly surveys on sector response to COVID-19:** Surveys collect **key workforce data** –size of LA workforce, recruitment, deaths in service, furloughed staff, redeployment, unavailability, service disruption, PPE and testing with a participation rate of 60% of councils (i.e. a third of the workforce). Reports are offered to or shared with LRFs, MHCLG, DHSC and are available through LG Inform.
- **T-Level Qualification support for councils:** We **worked with DfE to launch a campaign to promote the new T-Level qualification**, which includes a 45-day industrial placement. Councils as employers will be encouraged to provide at least one placement from September 2021 and we are helping councils to work with T-Level providers (FE and 6<sup>th</sup> Form Colleges) to meet this responsibility.

### Other activities

- **Regular, ongoing guidance for councils on workforce implications of COVID-19:** These resources **support councils to navigate and understand government guidance** and cover themes including the COVID-19 tier system and present nation lockdown, H&S, funding issues and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. This support includes joint guidance and engagement with employers and trade unions on extended opening of schools and COVID-secure workplaces. We also recently developed resources for the LGA's Brexit Advice Hub concerning workforce issues relating to Brexit.
- **'Social Work Together' campaign:** We have continued to support this campaign with partners: DfE, Social Work England and DHSC. The campaign has attracted **1000+ expressions of interest** from social workers. We are encouraging councils to use the talent pool to cover need to respond to the impact of COVID-19 on the profession.
- **Sharing of workforce centred best practice:** Covering issues encountered by councils and facilitating planning and preparedness in the light of changed mechanisms for working and delivering services resulting from COVID-19. Topics include **skills shortages, redeployment, remote teams and more integrated ways of working**. Lessons build on agile/smart working progress that improves efficiency and capacity, workforce planning and organisational design.
- **Workforce bulletin:** Provision of **general and specific assistance to councils, schools and others on workforce issues**. Council engagement with these publications has increased significantly as a result of the demands of the COVID challenge as councils seek to manage their staff and new service delivery demands.

## Communications

### Headlines

- **Bulletins:** Our key messages and guidance have been promoted in email bulletins from the Chairman, Chief Executive and Director of Communications. **More than 300 bulletins have been published** during the 2020/21 financial year and feedback highlights these updates are highly valued by senior councillors and officers. The number and composition of subscribers is as follows:
  - Chief Executive's bulletin: **1,153 recipients** (Chief executives, Chief finance officers, LGA staff, Including chief executives of the four councils not in LGA membership)
  - Chairman's bulletin: **1,138 recipients** (Leader, Opposition and group leaders, All members of LGA boards including regional peers)

- Director of Communication's bulletin: **622 recipients** (Local authority communications teams, via CommsNet)

With this subscriber list, our reach is well over industry standard. Many Government departments are now using LGA bulletins to share their messages with councils and invite response. In addition to providing key information, these bulletins also provide councils, senior officers and politicians another way to engage with the LGA and central Government.

- **COVID-19 communications: Living with COVID-19:** This resource, launched in July, continues to be updated with new materials relating to **COVID-19 communications prioritisation, strategy development, insight and internal communications**. It covers practical guidance on issues affecting council communications teams, **including local outbreaks and vaccine communications**.
- **Direct support:** We have provided direct support to 15 councils, including training to Members, strategy development and crisis communications support. This feeds into the creation of [our recovery communications resource](#), which gives **practical advice/guidance on communicating the move to recovery and living with COVID-19**.
- **Communications Health Check:** We have launched a virtual health check offer to support councils to review their **recovery communications plans and learnings from the COVID-19 response**. This direct support focuses on ensuring councils have the right capacity, strategies and plans in place to engage with their communities around adhering to any new local lockdown rules and recovery from the pandemic. Since launching at the end of August, we have conducted 15 virtual communications health checks.
- **Workshops for directors of Public Health:** We have organised **media training workshops** for directors of public health in conjunction with the ADPH, to ensure they are well equipped to provide clear communication to residents during the pandemic.
- **Virtual events programme:** We have now held over 100 virtual events since the beginning of the year, with an events programme that carries a focus on COVID-19, including an event on **supporting mental health of communities during COVID-19**, which was attended by 350 attendees and another on [Asset Based Community Development and Local Area Coordination](#) during COVID-19, which **attracted 324 attendees**.

### Other activity

- **Communicating improvement at the virtual LGA conference:** The conference programme included speakers from across local and central government and focused in on the local government response to COVID-19 and recovery. **The launch event alone was attended by over 600 people**. Overall, **over 5,000 attendees took part**, including in a series of improvement sessions, putting a spotlight on the fantastic work councils have been doing in response to COVID-19 and providing learning and advice to councils (See below for more information). Recordings and other resources from the conference are available on the [LGA website](#).
- **Chief Executive briefings:** These regular briefings, hosted by LGA CEO Mark Lloyd, are for council chief executives and directors of public health and have concentrated on Local Outbreak Plans and the Test and Trace service. **Numbers attending have ranged between 299-430**.
- **COVID-19 communications good practice hub:** This hub holds a range of good practice examples around the public sector in response to COVID-19 and provides key information to enable communications teams to use and adapt content for their own channels and audiences.

## Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

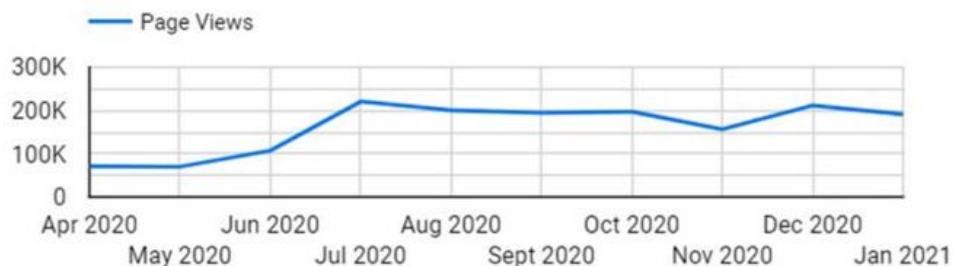
### Headlines

- **Workforce Race Equality Standard:** We continue to work with Government departments and national partners on developing and implement the **Workforce Race Equality Standard for social care in local government**, with the first cohort of councils on target to commence working with the WRES in April 2021. We are also preparing a range of webinars, guidance and other materials for councils wishing to respond appropriately to workforce equality, diversity and inclusion issues for black and ethnic minority staff highlighted by COVID-19 and BLM.
- **Equalities, diversity and inclusion hub:** The LGA is developing an equalities, diversity and inclusion hub, where councils can easily navigate to the **range of EDI tools and resources available, including peer support, guidance, good practice examples** and more.
- **A short course equality, diversity and inclusion for councillors:** This package of leadership support is under development and will help councillors to gain skills to provide **more representative leadership, enhance equality and challenge discrimination**. This will include a short course will involve 4 modules and run during spring. Bookings for this course will be available soon.

## Research, LG Inform and LG Inform Plus

### Headlines

- **Predictive analytics:** In November, we published a [guide to using predictive analytics in local public services](#), which draws together contributions from councils and national organisations with policy and technical expertise. A new practitioners' network for local government, the **Advanced & Predictive Analytics Network (APAN) in Local Government**, was undertaken in partnership with the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation (CDEI) and MHCLG and launched in December. The purpose of this network is to connect information managers, analysts and invited experts to encourage the sector to share learning, opportunities and knowledge of risks in the use of algorithm-based analysis of data. At the time of writing, the APAN has 195 members, we have uploaded some 85 resource items (reports, case studies, tools, guidance) to the network pages and draft terms of reference are under review by the membership.
- **LG Inform:** As shown by the graph below, this platform is a very well used council resource. Spurred on by our **COVID-19 reports**, which provide information on the **number of cases and deaths across England and in specific contexts** (e.g. council areas, hospitals, care homes), recent reports show the current average number of page views per month is over 200,000 per month. Reports on **Financial Hardship and Economic Vulnerability** give authorities good insight into the impact of COVID-19, across a broader range of metrics and are also being well used. By January this report had more than **1,600 views**.



- **LG Inform Recovery and Renewal Panel reports:** We have produced **two LG Inform reports** to support Recovery and Renewal panels for councils. The first report provides recent **contextual information about a local area** since the first lockdown, such as COVID-

19 cases and deaths, and statistics on employment rates, unemployment benefit claimants and crime figures. The other report provides a **demographic overview of a local area**.

- **LG Inform Plus:** LG Inform Plus provides information for each ward and smaller areas of geography, so that councils can compare with wards within other regions and nationally. **Reports** published on this platform cover topics including changes resulting from the **Coronavirus Act; school admissions changes; fostering, adoption and care; Special Educational Needs and Disabilities; and planning and road traffic orders**. There have been over 5,600 downloads of LG Inform Plus reports between April and January. We have recently relaunched LG Inform Plus with a redesigned platform that is more accessible and user-friendly.

### Other activity

- **Find My Area Tool:** This tool allows councils to **link locations with parliamentary constituencies, local authorities, wards and more**. Launched at the same time as the newly designed LG Inform Plus site, this tool is designed to help with requests like “In what parliamentary constituencies are businesses affected by a government scheme?”

## Climate Change and Environment

### Headlines

- **Carbon accounting tool:** With support from Local Partnerships, we launched our tool to baseline carbon emissions for councils in September. The tool collates data to consistently measure greenhouse gas emissions across the country, in order to measure and compare impacts in a standardised way. The tool has since been **endorsed by the Committee for Climate Change**. Latest figures show **183 councils have downloaded the tool** and there have been more than **335 downloads in total**.
- **Net Zero Innovation and Design in the Public Sector (DiPS):** The new DiPs programme was launched on 10 August for councils to gain skills in design to tackle local climate change challenges. The Net Zero Innovation Network was launched in September and is delivered through a collaboration between the LGA and University College London (UCL). It brings together local authorities, universities and other stakeholders to address climate challenges at the local level and seek routes to achieve council’s net zero commitments. Partnerships, funding support and a ‘train the trainer’ model are all key parts of this programme. There were 96 applications for these two programmes, which are now fully underway to support councils in reaching their local climate action plans.
- **Green webinars series:** We have delivered a series of webinars including **renewable energy, decarbonisation of transport, green reset, scrutinising climate action** and **locking in green behaviours** from the pandemic. The most recent webinar, examined the **case for planting trees** in terms of finance and carbon and the challenges this presents for local authorities. This webinar was chaired by Councillor Mike Haines, Leader of the Independent Group at Teignbridge District Council, and **attended by 170 people**. As mentioned in the *Test, Trace and Outbreak Management, Shielding and Enforcement* section, we also held a webinar, **attended by new 400 people**, on how **behavioural change techniques** can be used to tackle climate change (and COVID-19).
- **Climate Change Web Hub:** This web hub features a range of climate change tools and resources and is regularly updated with new offers of support and good practice. In the past year, the Hub has received 21,977 views.

## Other activity

- **Action Learning Sets:** The LGA is delivering action learning sets for both officers and Members off the back of the LGA green jobs report. This is helping local authorities to work through the issues of **green economic recovery** and to create **local green jobs**. The learnings will be made available to all councils.
- **Green finance:** The LGA is working with Local Partnerships to develop **support for councils on green finance** as part of their green economic recovery. The support offer will provide innovative approaches to accessing green finance and practical guidance, by looking at domestic and international best practice.
- **Publications:** We have developed a [renewable energy good practice guide](#), which considers the risks and opportunities for councils in developing **large scale wind and solar energy generation projects**. We are also developing a Sustainable procurement guide, to provide guidance for councils on how to procure sustainably. Our [Climate change ebulletin](#) continues to provide councils with regular news, support offers and good practice.

## Service Specific Support and Other Developments

### Headlines

- **Resident Satisfaction Polling Survey:** We have been tracking people's perceptions of their local council every 3-4 months since 2012. Our June saw **record levels of satisfaction** after the response of local government to the pandemic. The results from the [October \(2020\) survey](#) were also encouraging as they sat above the average recorded over the last eight years. During February, the LGA ran its 28<sup>th</sup> round of public polling to measure residents' views of their local council. The findings of this report are available on [the LGA website](#).
- **Collection and sharing of COVID-19 related good practice:** We have shared 150+ examples covering nearly 20 themes on our COVID-19 good council practice webpage, which had received **48, 917 views** at last count in February. **Topics include:** communications; adult social care; children, young people and education; culture, entertainment and other activities; cyber and digital solutions; deaths management; emergency food provision; finances and economy; governance; health and wellbeing; personal protective equipment (PPE); procurement; unlocking; supporting vulnerable residents; waste and recycling.
- **Coronavirus enquires helpline and issues log:** Established to provide an online enquiries helpline with national coverage to receive, categorise, consider and answer issues and ideas relating to pandemic support in local government. Between March and June, the enquiries and issues log **managed 2,500 complex cases** involving **over 15,000 email communications**.
- **Frequently Asked Questions hub:** At the beginning of the outbreak we launched a FAQ hub to help provide councils with the most up to date responses to their enquiries on an ongoing basis. The hub currently contains over 150 answers to questions on 22 different topics, ranging from Business rate relief and support for business to Waste and Recycling.
- **COVID-19 role-specific support:** We have developed a web hub containing **guidance, training and tools for councillors and officers**, including on **workforce and HR, leadership, virtual meetings, communications**, and more, to ensure councils are well equipped to respond to existing and emerging challenges relating to COVID-19, including guidance on [Very High Alert Level Regulations](#).



## COVID-19 Related Publications and Guidance on the LGA Website

- [Councillor workbook on creating mentally healthy places](#)
- [Changes to local authority powers and duties: Adoption, fostering and care planning and health protection resulting from Coronavirus Regulations 2020](#)
- [Changes to local authority powers and duties resulting from Coronavirus Regulations 2020: school admissions](#)
- [Changes to local authority powers and duties resulting from the Coronavirus Act](#)
- [COVID-19: a leadership workbook for cabinet members](#)
- [Councillor guidance on emergency response structures](#)
- [Key questions and issues for finance portfolio holders during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Councillor guidance: COVID-19 outbreak](#)
- [Protecting vulnerable people during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)
- [Tackling domestic abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [A councillor's workbook on effective opposition during COVID-19, reset and recovery](#)
- [The impact of COVID-19 on culture, leisure tourism and sport](#)
- [Fiscal devolution: adopting an international approach](#)
- [Changes to local authority powers and duties covering special educational needs, planning and road traffic orders resulting from Coronavirus Regulations 2020](#)
- [Councillor guidance: COVID-19 reset and recovery](#)
- [Councillor workbook on creating mentally healthy places](#)
- [Managing the wellbeing of furloughed staff during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Loneliness, social isolation and COVID-19: practical advice](#)
- [Changes to local authority powers and duties resulting from the Coronavirus Act](#)
- [Approaches to managing licensing and related issues during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Councillor workbook: Health in All Policies and COVID-19](#)
- [Lessons learnt from councils' response to rough sleeping during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Leisure under lockdown: how culture and leisure services responded to COVID-19](#)
- [React, Respond, Renew – Workforce COVID-19 response](#)
- [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(All Tiers\) Regulations 2020: Enforcement advice for local authorities](#)
- [Changes to local authority powers and duties Health protection and business COVID security resulting from Coronavirus Regulations 2020](#)
- [Loneliness, Social Isolation and COVID-19](#)

