

Note of last Improvement & Innovation Board meeting

Title: Improvement & Innovation Board
Date: Thursday 24 February 2022
Venue: Hybrid – 18 Smith Square and online via Zoom

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting. There were no apologies for absence. Cllrs Liz Green and Neil Prior both declared an interest in item 3 as paid employees of Shared Services Architects who deliver the LGA Leadership Academy. The Chairman thanked officers for delivering a highly successful Behavioural Insights event which attracted around 900 online attendees.	
2	Behavioural Insights Programme update The Chairman invited Cllr Neil Prior and Rhian Gladman, Programme Manager (Productivity), to introduce the report. Rhian provided members with a brief reminder of the principles of Behavioural Insights (BI) and an update on the LGA's work in this area. She then introduced Ameela Iles from Bradford Council – part of the LGA-led project to use behaviour change techniques to encourage active travel across the Yorkshire and Humber region. The project was being carried out in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University's Centre for Behavioural Science and Applied Psychology. Ameela took members through the project and explained the details of the focus groups and online surveys that formed part of the trial. Some of the challenges faced, including capacity in councils, the impact of covid and maintaining stakeholder engagement, were outlined. Finally, the next steps for the project were described including analysing the trial results, disseminating and applying the findings in Yorkshire and Humber and beyond and further exploring the data for additional insights to inform the wider active travel agenda. Decision: Improvement & Innovation Board noted the report and presentation.	

3 Leadership update including Disability Strategy

The Chairman invited Cllr Judi Billing and Helen Jenkins, Head of Leadership, to introduce the update.

Cllr Billing welcomed the fact that there had now been over 2,000 training and development opportunities provided to members in the year up until 31 December 2021. Members were informed that the LGA had received some additional in-year funding to support, amongst other things, a new programme of leadership development and support in response to the UK Government's Disability Strategy. This would help to widen participation of councillors in community leadership roles. Cllr Billing expressed reservations about the use of the term 'disabled people', despite this being the currently accepted phraseology by Disability Rights UK. She asked for members views on the matter. Concern was also expressed about members initially signing up for, and then dropping out of, leadership programmes, leaving them short of participants. This had possibly been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic, but Cllr Billing asked for members' views on how this could be addressed going forward.

Helen updated members on the NGDP programme. Video interviewing of candidates was now complete and they would receive the decision later that day. The current cohort would be the most diverse so far with over 30% from BME backgrounds. Helen requested members assistance in spreading the word amongst their colleagues about the new disability offer, contracts for which were now being awarded.

Members' comments and questions:

- It was agreed that any members interested in the disability terminology issue should contact Jonathan Bryant in the first instance to set up a meeting.
- A request was made for Lead Members of the Board to continue to lobby the Government about the importance of councils being able to hold hybrid or online meetings in order to widen participation in the democratic process.
- It was suggested that there might be a gap in the LGA's leadership training around resilience, particularly in the light of increasing public health and terrorist threats.

Decision:

Improvement & Innovation Board **noted** the update and, subject to the comments above, **endorsed** the Leadership Team's ongoing programme of events and training.

4 Algorithm Register

The Chairman invited Cllr Neil Prior and Juliet Whitworth, Head of Research and Information, to introduce the report.

Juliet updated members on the discovery work which officers had been undertaking to ascertain the level of activity currently underway in this field. The benefits of establishing an Algorithm Register were described

including the sharing of best practice and providing open and transparent information for citizens. The furthest advanced project in the UK is being led by the Cabinet Office in partnership with the Ada Lovelace Institute, the Alan Turing Institute, the Committee on Standards in Public Life, the Open Government Partnership, the AI Now Institute and the think tank, *Reform*. Lead members had agreed that the LGA should join this project at an early stage to enable greater input and influence over its direction, including a leading role for local government. Over the coming months, officers would be promoting the use of predictive analytics with member councils with a view to piloting some projects with LGA support.

Cllr Prior reiterated his support for the decision to join the Cabinet Office register.

Members' comments and questions:

- It was suggested that officers look to Estonia, who are well advanced down this path already.
- In response to a query about possible duplication with LG Inform, Juliet confirmed that data for predictive analytics would generally be more granular than that from LG Inform and so both could continue to be used side by side.
- Members expressed some caution about bad publicity that algorithms had received in the press in recent times and so welcomed the Government taking the lead on a register. They also considered it would be helpful to be able to demonstrate real life examples of where this was making a difference to residents and communities.

Decision:

Improvement & Innovation Board **noted** the update and **endorsed** the decision by Lead Members to join the project to create a government algorithm register.

5 Improvement activity of other Boards

The Chairman invited Lusi Manukyan, Senior Adviser – Improvement & Policy, to introduce the report.

Lusi took members through her report and drew their attention to some of the highlights from the improvement work of each of the LGA's other Boards. Lusi asked members to get in touch with her if they wanted more detailed updates on any aspect of the other Boards' work at a future IIB meeting.

Members' comments and questions:

- A suggestion was made for the LGA to provide some extra support to district councils on some of the issues raised in the report, as they didn't necessarily have the resources to make best use of new opportunities – e.g. the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the administration of which looked likely to be going direct to districts.

Decision:

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

6 Sector Support Grant Negotiations Update and DLUHC Improvement Grant Performance Report Quarter 3

The Board received a confidential update on performance against the DLUHC Improvement Grant and negotiations for 2022-23.

Decision:

Improvement & Innovation Board **noted** progress against the KPI's outlined in the grant determination letter.

7 Levelling Up White Paper and the Independent Data Body

A confidential discussion took place on the implications of the Government's new Levelling Up White Paper in relation to the proposed new Independent Data Body.

Decisions:

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

8 Communications update

Board members were given a confidential update on communications matters affecting councils.

Decisions:

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

9 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 December 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

10 Any other business

The Chair invited Cllr Nigel Ashton and officers to feed back to the Board, at its next meeting on 19 May, on the cyber-security training course that he had been attending for his Council.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Peter Fleming OBE	Sevenoaks District Council
Vice-Chair	Cllr Liz Green	Kingston upon Thames Royal Borough Council
Deputy-chair	Cllr Judi Billing MBE	Hertfordshire County Council
Deputy-chair	Cllr Neil Prior	Pembrokeshire County Council
Members	Cllr Nigel Ashton	North Somerset Council

Cllr Philip Broadhead
Cllr Carl Les
Cllr Laura Miller
Cllr Phil North
Cllr Alan White
Cllr Alice Perry
Cllr Tim Roca
Cllr Vince Maple
Cllr Oliver Ryan
Cllr Peter Mason
Mayor Peter Taylor
Cllr Alex Coley
Lord Gary Porter CBE
Cllr Alan Connett
Cllr Mike Haines
Mr Philip Sellwood CBE

Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council
North Yorkshire County Council
Dorset Council
Test Valley Borough Council
Staffordshire County Council
Islington Council
Westminster City Council
Medway Council
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
Ealing Council
Watford Borough Council
Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
South Holland District Council
Teignbridge District Council
Teignbridge District Council
Independent Observer

In Attendance

Cllr Kam Kaur
Cllr Anthony McKeown
(as substitute)
Cllr Steve Norman
Cllr Jo Beavis
Ameela Iles (for item 2)

Warwickshire County Council
High Peak Borough Council

Lichfield District Council
Braintree District Council
City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council