

Improvement and Innovation Board – report from Cllr David Simmonds CBE (Chairman)

Improvement

1. We have published our new Councillors' Guide for 2016/17 which is now online. The guide is a quick reference resource providing councillors with essential information that they need to know as a new councillor. It explores some of the main issues and challenges facing local government today and includes hints and tips from experienced councillors.
2. Following the local elections we are in touch with councils who may have experienced a change in leadership and/or political control to offer support. The LGA offers up to five days of free support from experienced councillor peers for new leaders and cabinet members.
3. Our bespoke sector-led improvement peer support and challenges remain popular. By Quarter 4 of 2015/16, over 100 peer challenges have been delivered. The peer challenges have covered a range of different areas including corporate, finance, fire, children's and adults. We have also held a further 15 peer development or briefing events during the year as we seek to widen our pool of member and officer peers.

Transparency

4. We have responded to a Cabinet Office consultation about enabling information sharing between public authorities to improve the lives of citizens and support decisions on the economy and society. Whilst welcoming the consultation we expressed concern that it was too narrowly focussed and ignored some of the more pressing data sharing challenges councils face around housing, health and adult social care.

Productivity

5. We have launched the LGA [demand management microsite](#). The microsite equips councils with the knowledge and tools they need to manage demand effectively. By bringing together and highlighting examples of demand avoidance and demand prevention from across the country, it demonstrates how councils are changing their relationship with residents to better understand and manage demand.
6. We have awarded £560,000 funding for digital schemes to projects involving 34 councils through the digital transformation programme. The aim of the programme is to develop digital solutions to support work on national transformation programmes including troubled families and welfare reform, which can be reused by other councils and will enable them to operate more efficiently.

Leadership

7. Cllrs David Simmonds, Judi Billing, Shirley Pannell and Mayor Dave Hodgson participated in a full day panel and group sessions called 'Political Nous' for ngdp Cohort 17 Module 2, on 21st April. The session was aimed at giving National

Management Trainees the chance to meet members, find out a bit about how they became Councillors or Mayors and an introduction on working with members once back at their councils. The session was a great success. Below are two feedback quotes from our NMTs:

- *Political nous session was also very good and added another dimension to event.*
 - *I found the political nous session to be very useful to find out a little more about what Councillors value and what qualities they like to see in Officers.*
8. Cllr Howard Sykes will be speaking at the West Midlands Member Induction event on 27 June 2016.
 9. The National Graduate Development Programme has proved to be incredibly popular this year with more councils and graduates getting involved than ever before.
 10. New 'Be a Councillor' projects have been agreed with Birmingham and Isle of Wight. The programme provides a new, bespoke set of resources to promote the role of a councillor and encourage people to stand for election. The Isle of Wight campaign will be the first to specifically target getting more women into public office and will centre around an event in the Autumn.
 11. Our flagship development programme for councillors in leadership positions (Leadership Academy) now has dates and full details for 2016/17. Refreshed and updated for the current challenges faced across local government, the Leadership Academy delivers for local leaders a step change in leadership behaviors, strategies, skills and mind-set and is accredited by The Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM), the UK's leading award winning body for leadership and management.
 12. On 19-20 May, the Leadership Academy graduation took place in Warwick. We have over 140 new Leadership Academy graduates, the highest number since 2010. This has been a record breaking year, with more Leaders than ever attending our programmes.
 13. Details of our new "Leadership Essentials" programme are now available. 'Leadership Essentials' is a series of events designed as themed learning opportunities for councillors. Each event concentrates on a specific portfolio area, such as Planning or Children's Services, or a specific theme, such as communications or digital leadership. The Programmes provide a great chance for councillors to develop leadership skills in a particular area and share experiences among colleagues dealing with similar challenges.

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