

Extract of Memorandum of Understanding

MOU - Programme of sector improvement support for 2017/18

ENABLING IMPROVEMENT IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES

There is now real momentum around sector led improvement. Councils support the approach, value the tools and support provided and report that this has a positive impact on their authority.

Challenge and support from one's peer's lies at the heart of our approach. Councils recognise the need for peer challenge to be adopted by all councils and that they will need to increasingly work with other partners from the public sector, private and from the voluntary and community sectors to realise their ambitions for their communities. The Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) offer focuses on councils' leadership, corporate capacity and financial resilience – but is also able to be flexed to focus on other significant local issues such as homelessness; economic growth; transformation, etc. The Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) has recently been refreshed and strengthened. We will continue to keep it under review and are currently implementing a number of the recommendations from the recently published independent evaluation from Cardiff University – including, for example, how we can use “impact stories” to promote and market CPC and how we can draw out and widely share good practice. There is an expectation that all councils will have a corporate peer challenge or finance peer review over a four to five year period. The LGA will proactively market peer challenge to those councils with zero/low take up.

A tiered approach to the peer based model has been introduced, recognising that whilst most support offers will be universal some councils will sometimes face more significant challenges and will require more bespoke support. In these circumstances work will be undertaken with councils to develop intensive packages of support drawing appropriate elements from this wide-ranging offer. The peer-based model has also been adapted to provide support for councils who are looking to work with their partners around a placed-based approach or to work with other councils.

As part of the approach to sector led improvement it has been agreed with the sector that the LGA maintains an overview of the performance of the sector and uses this information to drive improvement in the overall performance of the sector. The LGA also manages the risk of significant underperformance at a service or corporate level in councils in order to minimise the number of councils that government need to consider intervening in. In order to help the LGA do this it looks to Government Departments to share any concerns with it at the earliest opportunity.

We will:

- help councils to continue to achieve the outcomes they set for their communities
- ensure that the need for intervention by government of councils is kept to a minimum

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- support councils to improve, as measured by a basket of performance indicators commonly used by councils
- help local government to continue to be the most transparent part of the public sector
- help fire and rescue authorities on their process of reform and change in response to the new independent inspection regime.

In order to achieve this we will:

1. Deliver at least 110 peer challenges.

This will include at least 70 corporate or finance peer reviews.

Peer Challenge is a process commissioned by a council and involves a small team of local government peers spending time at the council to provide challenge and share learning. The team normally involves a council leader, chief executive, specialist officers (depending on the scope) and an IDeA peer challenge manager. It will often include peers from the business, health and voluntary sectors and with the agreement of the authority concerned, representatives from Government Departments.

Peer challenges are offered across a range of subjects including:

- corporate peer challenges focusing on issues of leadership, corporate capacity and financial resilience;
- finance reviews (including consideration of major spend areas such as children's services, adult social care, etc) and health checks;
- service specific peer challenges, particularly on child safeguarding, adults, health and housing;
- place-based peer challenges.

Peer challenges normally last between three and five days, at the end of which there is a feedback presentation which is in turn followed by a formal report.

2. The LGA will **continue to proactively market peer challenge** to those councils with zero/low take up, and share the analysis of those areas that have not engaged with sector support with DCLG as part of their end of year monitoring report.
3. **Provide tailored member/officer peer support to at least 75 councils.** For example one to one support for individual councillors from experienced councillors with relevant expertise e.g. mentoring for new portfolio holders from an experienced portfolio holder from the same political party and an authority facing similar challenges, or mentoring support to a Chief Executive.
4. **Provide change of control support to 20 councils.** A change of council control or political Leader/Mayor can be a vulnerable time for councils. In order to help the new political team make a good start the IDeA offers five days free support from experienced member peers for new leaders and cabinet members, and where necessary other forms of support.

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5. **Provide support to at least 10 councils to manage and resolve issues between the political and managerial leadership.** Acting as an independent and trusted partner to help resolve disputes between leading members and senior managers – often at the most senior level - to ensure these councils continue to deliver the outcomes they are seeking for their communities.
6. **Provide top team development support for at least 10 councils.** Support for the council leader and cabinet to improve strategic direction and leadership (this could include the chief executive and corporate management team if requested). Support is tailored to the specific needs of each council and team(s) and can cover a variety of needs including visioning, team building, roles and relationships, leadership styles, performance management, budgeting and financial monitoring, and communication.
7. **Provide service based or subject support to at least 45 councils.** This might, for example, include bespoke support such as helping develop an economic development strategy, reconfiguring a library service, helping a council strengthen its performance management arrangements, etc.
8. **Provide a range of support for scrutiny, accountability and good governance** through the Centre for Public Scrutiny. This will include:
 - Continuing national support – helpdesk, maintaining networks, organising conferences and roundtables etc,
 - 50 days direct support to individual authorities,
 - Options around guidance and advice on finance scrutiny.
9. **Hold regular meetings between LGA Principal Advisors (PAs) and all councils** to discuss challenges and support. PAs are the LGA's focal point for discussions with councils about their improvement needs and the support the LGA can make available. PAs work with regionally based improvement programmes, for example with the Care and Health Improvement Advisers funded by Dept of Health, to coordinate support. PAs also make use of data and intelligence to discuss potential risks/challenges, offer support and share good practice and expertise across the sector. Drawing on this the LGA will hold regular meetings with DCLG and government departments to provide opportunities to share information and concerns.

Given the additional money for adult social care, we will take account of the new measures being introduced alongside the new money and work closely with the wider Care and Health Improvement programme funded by DH. This will include ensuring, where appropriate, that all our programmes of support have regard to the new measures. We will also work closely with CQC on their review programme including drawing upon our pool of peers and associates to assist in this work.

10. **Deliver a safeguarding adults programme** to support councils in their lead roles including peer challenge, leadership support for lead members and capturing innovative practice to share with others and **deliver a programme of support for**

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children's social care (particularly safeguarding) working with the Children's Improvement Board (comprising representatives of ADCS, SOLACE and LGA) and support to help councils tackle issues such as adoption and child sexual exploitation effectively.

11. **Provide bespoke support for at least 10 councils with the most severe performance challenges.** This is a package of bespoke support for councils identified by the LGA and the Department as having the most severe performance challenges and at risk of intervention or in intervention. A programme of support, developed with the local authority, will be delivered to help it overcome severe challenges. Councils deemed to require this level of support will have access to a rapid response team of senior members/officers with the appropriate mix of specialist skills and experience to help them respond to the challenges being faced. Beyond this IDeA will package together a combination of the support offers outlined in the four core work-streams set out in this Annex. For example this may include leadership development and mentoring; top team development work for the senior member/officer team; peer challenge; specialist subject specific support e.g. from a children's improvement adviser; signposting to relevant good practice; etc. and could be delivered over a period of many months.
12. **Provide support to fire and rescue authorities**, as required, through a tailored peer challenge process that aligns with and complements the new independent inspection regime for fire and rescue services being introduced in the autumn of 2017. The inspection regime will include both full inspections and thematic inspections on individual issues including diversity, collaboration and flexible deployment.
13. **Provide support to at least 20 councils to improve the way they engage with their communities** and establish a clear vision based on their residents' concerns about the priorities for the council.

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Efficiency and productivity

Providing value for money and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of councils is as important today as it's ever been. Over the last five years councils have made great strides to reduce costs whilst maintaining the quality of service delivery. The efficiency and productivity programme is designed to ensure that local government continues to be the most efficient part of the public sector and comprises a range of initiatives and support to help councils continue to improve their productivity and efficiency - including the development of common solutions or the facilitation of collaborative approaches where appropriate. More so than ever before local authorities need to look at how they now go beyond efficiency savings to how they can transform their services making use of digital and other opportunities. Our refreshed programme will support this area of work.

Strands involve:

- Transforming services: to make them more efficient, less wasteful or to find more effective ways of delivering local people's needs - including digital tools and techniques to improve online transactional services;
- Smarter sourcing: commissioning and procuring services, goods and works more efficiently;
- Generating income; for example through commercialisation, better use of assets or investing to grow the local economy.

We will:

- Support councils to continue to achieve value for money for the outcomes they set for their communities
- Help councils to continue to become more productive through a range of programmes of support
- Support councils to ensure they are effectively managing their finances and making informed financial decisions
- Support councils to share services and management teams with each other and with other public sector organisations
- Support councils to generate new sources of income to supplement their local tax raising powers.
- Support councils to adopt a more demand management approach to help them better manage different types of demand, including through the use of digital technology.

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In order to achieve this we will:

1. **Develop opportunities for local authorities to enter more strategic procurement arrangements**, working with professional buying organisations including the Yorkshire Purchasing organisation (YPO), the Eastern Shires Purchasing organisation (ESPO), the North East Procurement organisation (NEPO) and the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) where appropriate, saving councils at least £10 million per annum. In line with the recommendations of the Local Government National Procurement Strategy we will:
 - a) Refresh category strategies and/or support councils in implementing good practice in the high spend areas: Information Technology, Social Care, Energy and Construction. Within each category tools and products will be developed to help councils achieve better value (including social value and better outcomes) through procurement.
 - b) Support nine experts to strategically manage relationships, on a national basis, with local government's key suppliers, informed by spending analyses to provide robust data on which to base the work.
 - c) Support councils to encourage innovation in local government procurement practice and in responding to change in the procurement and commissioning environment.
2. Oversee the sector-led body established to put in place national contracts for provision of external audit service to councils, ensuring these are operating in a cost-effective way and responding to the needs of the sector.
3. **Provide productivity and income generation experts to work with at least 25 councils, saving the councils or generating income of at least £25 million:** Through this programme IDeA identifies and provides an expert for councils, providing additional skills, capacity, or expertise to realize efficiency savings e.g. to improve approaches to procurement, renegotiate contracts, rationalise capital assets, etc. The expert could be from another council, public sector organisation or the private sector and will have successfully implemented a project with results similar to what the council is trying to achieve.
4. **Help councils become more commercial and achieve savings or generate additional income of £10 million** by providing a range of support to help councils with improving the way they commission services and use their commercial opportunities. This includes advice, case studies, a commercial skills training offer and access to commercial expertise.
5. **Increase the efficiency savings councils make through sharing services** by continuing to support councils to share services, refreshing the annual national shared services map and by continuing to run a matchmaking service for councils contemplating making greater use of shared services or to expand their existing

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arrangements. We will also explore the extension of the matchmaking principle to other areas e.g. digital collaboration.

6. Support 8 Councils to manage demand for services by **understanding the behaviour of their customers and staff** and develop a “top tips” guide to the use of behavioural insights to manage demand.
7. **Provide expert financial advice and assistance to 40 councils** (as distinct from finance peer reviews) to help them address specific issues. Assistance includes, but is not limited to, financial sustainability (including consideration of major spend areas such as children’s services, adult social care, etc), integrated budgets, management of risk and new delivery models. Examples might include: technical support to the medium term financial planning process and advice on capacity building within the finance service; expert advice to support changes to a council’s budget monitoring process and approach to budget risk; advice on the appropriateness of financial standing orders, etc.
8. Working with Fighting Fraud Locally, CIPFA and others, help councils to be more proactive in dealing with fraud. This will include **supporting counter fraud initiatives** in local government and researching and publicising learning from the DCLG Counter Fraud Fund pilots run in 2014/15 and 2015/16.
9. **Equip 10 councils to use design techniques to transform services and/or manage future demand including making use of digital or other opportunities.** Through the “Design in public sector” work with the Design Council, delegates from up to 10 councils will receive the mentoring and guidance needed to implement new activity and tangible projects over a 90 day period and their experiences and knowledge will be disseminated across the sector.
10. **Maintain and improve LG Inform**, the on-line data and benchmarking service, enabling the comparison and analysis of performance and thereby enhancing local accountability of councils. Over the coming year we will:
 - a) ensure that key financial data from the Audit Commission vfm profiles is made available to councils on the LG Inform or similar platform,
 - b) produce at least six ready-made reports for councils, on a range of subject areas including:
 - Housing/homelessness
 - Economy,
 - c) explore with DCLG the possibility of creating community cohesion bespoke reports,
 - d) Provide DCLG with free access to LG Inform and LG Inform Plus.

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11. To ensure that Councils are well prepared to make effective, efficient use of digital technology and play a full part in digital aspects of various government strategies, including the UK's industrial strategy, and working where appropriate with Government agencies, including the Government Digital Service (GDS), we will:
 - a) Continue to develop resources and good practice (including case studies) from our digital expert and digital and data programmes and cascade across local and combined authorities,
 - b) Work with the sector to build capacity in digital transformation of local authorities, digitisation of transactions and digital leadership,
 - c) Provide tailored support to councils promoting ambitious use of digital to provide efficient public services and local economic growth,
 - d) Support the delivery of the National Cyber Security Strategy by widening digital and cyber resilience awareness across local authorities; hosting the Cyber Security Stakeholder group; and developing by 31st July 2017, and then helping coordinate the delivery, with others, of a plan of support on cyber security work, which will include:
 - Hosting official advice and guidance on the LGA website and disseminated via LGA newsletters, **first**, publications, events and campaigns,
 - Hosting discussions/round tables with council chief executives and elected members including at the LGA Annual Conference; facilitating a discussion at the LGA Improvement and Innovation Board and at the LGA's Chief Executives Sounding Board, and in association with the National Cyber Security Centre and National Cyber Security Programme discussing at the Local Government Delivery Council (LGDC) and LG Cyber Security Stakeholder Group, in order to raise local authorities' awareness of the risks and cost of cyber-attacks on local public service systems – and share lessons,
 - Enhancing the number of peers in the peer pool who have expertise in digital transformation and cyber security,
 - e) Coordinate and promote open data standards,
 - f) Develop at least 12 senior councillors through continuation of the data and digital leadership programme.
12. **Update and further develop the on-line searchable database of innovation and other notable practice** designed to help councils identify opportunities to save money and generate income. Examples of good/innovative practice are gathered from our contacts with councils, including peer challenges. There are currently over 1,000 examples on the data base.

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13. **Run the Innovation Zone** at the LGA annual conference – showcasing over 25 examples of innovative practice relevant to local authorities and providing another opportunity for local authorities to learn what works from each other.
14. Work with the Cabinet Office to extend the One Public Estate programme until 2020, and with a sustainable funding model thereafter, with the aim of covering 95 per cent of the country, and with a view to reducing running costs on central and local government assets by £98 million, generating £415 million in capital receipts and creating 44,000 new jobs and 25,000 new homes by 2020.
15. **Deliver the Commissioning Academy Leadership Essentials** courses attracting at least 20 councillors. These courses, run jointly with the Cabinet Office, are designed for councillors involved in the commissioning of services to help them develop their knowledge and skills.
16. **Help councils to deliver efficiency savings** through collaboration with Local Partnership, in areas such as waste and waste disposal, re-financing PFI contracts, undertaking major contract/ fundamental spend reviews, etc. This will include working with:
 - a) up to 10 Councils to help them arrange re-financing of their current PFI contracts and help realise up to £10 million of annual savings,
 - b) up to 15 Councils to help them achieve savings on the soft service elements of their PFI contracts with a target saving of £3-£5 million,
 - c) up to 10 new Councils to help them achieve guaranteed savings on current energy spend with a target saving of £5 million,
 - d) 2/3 groups of Councils interested in considering new forms of governance etc. and/or achieve significant financial savings, and
 - e) We will train officers in up to five Councils on effective project and programme management.

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Leadership and capacity

Effective leadership has always been at the heart of effective democracy, and the LGA and IDeA both remain committed to supporting and developing the councillors and senior officers on whose shoulders this rests.

We know that local government is only ever as vibrant, effective and relevant as the people running it. In the context of new challenges for the sector - whether it be incentivising economic growth, or the onward devolution of powers to Mayors and Combined Authorities - a new cadre of leaders at both political and officer levels is required.

These leaders need to be capable of building strong working relationships, both across their communities and across central and local government. These leaders should also reflect the diversity and richness of the communities they serve.

We have a duty to support and challenge the politicians and council officers of today to be the best leaders they can, and to encourage and talent spot the best leaders for the future – helping the sector to build a cadre of strong viable leaders at senior levels.

Individual councils themselves invest considerably in developing the workforce skills and managerial capacity of their senior managers. Our programme is designed to support councillors and officers at each stage of their careers and to secure a continuous supply of high calibre recruits into the sector. In addition, to enhance leadership across the public sector, we will also create more opportunities by which senior, aspirant and future leaders across local and central government can come together and work collectively.

Finally, because the health and vitality of our sector depends on ensuring that the pipeline of talent continues to flow into local government, we will explore with SOLACE, CiPFA and others, including central government, how we can better ensure a continuous supply of skilled, high calibre senior managers into local government.

Our leadership offer aims to support these objectives.

We will:

- provide development programmes and direct support to improve the skills of councillors across local government
- provide support that is not only relevant, ambitious and flexible enough to respond to the changing local government agenda but that also offers value for money for councils and the places they serve
- provide national development opportunities that we know local politicians really value, with renewed vigour and refreshed content to reflect the challenges facing the sector
- provide support for leading members and senior officers to work together effectively
- support senior managerial leadership development across government and the wider local public sector
- support new talent into the sector - both councillors, graduates and apprenticeships,

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- support councils to address the future workforce challenges and to provide the national negotiating machinery on pay and workforce issues.

In order to achieve this we will:

Effective joint political and senior officer leadership

1. **Provide training and support for at least 30 leaders and chief executives to develop their leadership roles** through the Leading Edge and other programmes providing them with the opportunity to work together on developing their leadership roles, exploring new ways of working and new models of service delivery, in particular focusing on dealing with the financial challenges facing local government and the opportunities created by Devolution.
2. **Provide top team development support for at least 10 councils** (see earlier Enabling Improvement section for further details).

Strong Political Leadership

3. **Provide development opportunities for at least 700 councillors with leadership roles in their councils** – including those in opposition – through the refreshed suite of leadership programmes. (Details of our programmes are set out in Table A).

The aim is that over 90 per cent of participants agree that the programme has made a difference and that the confidence of leaders and portfolio holders in leading their councils increases by 15 per cent.

4. **Support at least 60 ambitious and talented councillors with the potential to progress in their political careers through our Next Generation programme.**

The aim is that at least 50 per cent of participants will go on to be cabinet members, committee chairs or leaders within the following five years.

5. **Support and facilitate bespoke “Be A Councillor” programmes with at least 20 councils** to enable them to promote democracy and attract a wider pool of talent to stand for election.

The LGA will create a “toolkit” and diverse set of resources which councils could use to create their own local, bespoke programmes to help attract new talent to stand for election. Resources available will include a specific focus on supporting local authorities to attract a more diverse range of candidates.

6. **Refresh and renew our e-learning opportunities for all councillors.** Over 7,000 councillors are currently registered to access e-learning modules. We will look at refreshing and renewing our current offer to ensure it reflects the needs of

councillors. At the same time we will take the opportunity to join up our workbooks, course work and interactive online modules into a more connected offer. We will also look for partnership opportunities with other organisations that can help spread best practice and continuous improvement (e.g. CIPFA, Local Government Ombudsman).

Strong senior leadership and effective officer development

7. To take advantages of the opportunities on offer to local government chief executives and other members of council senior management teams will need to ensure that – along with other skills – they provide strong and clear leadership both at a system and personal level. To equip our leaders to do this we will:

8. **Continue to develop and support the cross public sector leadership development programme** we delivered in conjunction with SOLACE and central government last year. It is designed to create more opportunities for leadership development across government and the wider public sector: This will continue to include building on the success of Ignite, a leadership development programme created in conjunction with SOLACE and central government, to recruit at least 20 additional chief executives to the programme.

9. **Develop and introduce programmes to support the leadership development of managers in councils in partnership with SOLACE to include:**

- a) A programme for senior managers who aspire to be CEXs
- b) A programme that recognises and develops rising talent
- c) A management development programme aimed at “middle” managers.

Managerial leadership is essential and needs to work in conjunction with political leadership. These programmes would address all aspects of managerial leadership - from supporting the CEXs of tomorrow, to recognising the fast track rising talent in councils, to ensuring that other local government managers are equipped with the skills and knowledge to deal with the changing face of local government and public service delivery.

Graduate Recruitment

10. **Recruit at least 100 high calibre graduates in to local government**, working with councils to secure interesting and challenging placements for them through a two year management development programme as the basis for a successful leadership career in local government, and linking with graduate recruitment across the rest of the public sector.

11. Develop opportunities to create a trial interchange programme between NGDP and the Civil Service Fast Stream with the aim of at least 5 graduates spending up to six months on each exchange.

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12. Support a programme of trial secondment opportunities between central and local government including less formal exchanges with the aim taking forward at least 20 such opportunities by end of March 2018.
13. Our programme will **help councils meet their public sector apprenticeship target** and maximise their levy investment. It will provide guidance and support to both encourage and help local authorities to achieve their apprenticeship targets by taking a planned approach to spending their Levy. It will help address skills shortages in the workforce and increase skill levels to meet present and future needs. The programme will support councils in a number of way ways:
 1. Help councils deliver their apprenticeship targets through a variety of means, including:
 - Running the Apprenticeship Campaign to encourage senior leaders and chief executives to sign up to “Apprenticeship 10 step plan” (working title) for their council
 - Running the Apprenticeship Levy Khub, providing weekly updates, sharing learning and practice, providing advice and answering queries
 2. Publishing an initial guide on apprenticeship standards for local government by July 2017.
 3. Working with key partners like Sector Skills Councils, professional bodies, and providers as well as councils to help facilitate and provide capacity to assist in the development of new standards where needed and to update the guide by end of March 2018.
 4. Providing a guide on apprenticeship procurement frameworks by October 2017 and support councils where required to procure national training schemes working with the relevant partners. This will include, for example:
 - working with key provider networks e.g. AoC and AELP and HE and FE partners to map provision for councils against skills needs and
 - assisting regional networks / groups of councils to undertake procurement / create procurement frameworks for apprenticeship training provision.
 5. Supporting councils with workforce planning, including:
 - a. Delivering 4 cohorts of training offering 60 places to councils by March 2018, with two cohorts taking place by October 2017;
 - b. providing workforce planning support to partnerships/networks working with relevant providers to help match existing apprenticeship standards/frameworks to the skills and job roles required in local government; and

- c. working with relevant partner agencies to monitor the number of apprenticeships delivered, working with the SfA and using DAS supplemented by a bi-annual survey to capture progress.

Workforce

14. **Support 80 councils to transform their workforces and modernise the way they are managed** through a range of HR/OD initiatives which focus on organisational structures, job design, health and wellbeing, employee engagement, developing new skills and integrating workforces.
15. **Directly negotiate a pay agreement for local government** that addresses the challenge of the National Living Wage and deliver pay agreements for a range of other occupational groups to avoid the duplication of single employer negotiations.
16. **Provide sector specific advice** on a range of employee relations and pensions issues including employment law, job evaluation and new developments covering exit payments and tax responsibilities (IR35). Help councils respond to the practical implementation implications of employment law proposals.
17. **Build on the success of the “21st century public servant”** e-book “Walk Tall” and support councils to take the work forward. This will include providing practical advice and sharing innovative practice to help leaders, senior managers, HR practitioners and employees define and implement the skills and behaviours necessary for modern public service organisations.
18. **Support 20 councils through the “Creating performing organisations”** programme. The programme improves how councils manage people performance aligning it to organisational goals and resources. The programme helps councils embed behavioural based approaches across their organisation’s systems and processes. The programme provides on-site support, access to use the on-line PACE Toolkit, on-site training workshops and sharing of practice for all councils via access to the PACE website.
19. **Promote flexible working to councils** as a way of recruiting and retaining skills and knowledge. This could include workshops, visits, Timewise councils and regional meetings aiming to engage with at least 50 councils.
20. **Roll out the ‘Come Back to Social Work campaign’** with an ambition to facilitate the retraining of 100 social workers to return to the profession
21. Work with Central Government and national partners to **advise and support councils in addressing the workforce changes associated with public sector reform**. This could include leading the development of Employer Standards for the Public Health workforce; guidance on the employment of Medical Examiners and publishing an assessment of approaches to workforce challenges in places where health and social care integration is developing.

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Strong communities with excellent public services

Central and local government are both committed to creating the right conditions to deliver strong local economies with local authorities delivering high quality, value for money services.

This means there needs to be a shift in power from central to local government. We want to see economic growth being boosted in a way that offers prosperity to every place. We want public services transformed so they prevent problems instead of just picking up the pieces. We want services to be built around people and their needs, joining up to make a positive impact on the lives of individuals, families and communities. To deliver the outcomes councillors are seeking for their communities, councils will need to transform their services and work with others. This will include continuing to put citizens first, integrating service delivery at the local level with other councils and with other public sector bodies including health and central government.

The government has embarked on a journey that will bring power close to local communities. This offer is to help councils on this journey. For those with deals already agreed, it will involve helping them with implementation. For those that are just embarking on the journey it will involve help to establish the meaningful partnerships required to sustain any deal.

We will:

- support areas to explore the opportunities provided by devolution
- support councils to transform their services, putting their residents first
- support councils, other public sector partners, private and the voluntary sectors to work together, including integrating services to deliver more cost effective outcome based services
- support councils in their ambitions to increase the supply of housing.

In order to achieve this we will:

1. Support areas with the development of their devolution bids as well as helping those areas where devolution deals have been agreed, capturing and sharing good practice. This will include:
 - a) holding at least four meetings of the network of combined authorities and devolution areas that supports the development of a strong, connected cohort of chief executives and/or lead officers to share their experiences and encourage the development of good practice
 - b) providing tailored capacity support in up to at least six combined authorities. The election of 6 combined authority mayors in May 2017 represents an important shift in the responsibilities and accountability of local government. Combined authorities will take on new powers in areas such as transport, skills and planning. Drawing on its expertise the

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LGA will provide bespoke support and challenge to combined authorities to improve their strategic, organisational, economic, and political support functions.

- c) **developing as part of our suite of peer challenges a self-evaluation diagnostic** in partnership with combined authorities and trialling this in at least three areas
 - d) **producing a range of tools and web content** to increase councils' understanding of and ability to successfully manage devolution
 - e) **supporting new Mayors** to ensure that they are able to govern effectively, through bespoke support including political mentoring and top team development as well as at least two joint meetings
 - f) **working with NALC** to undertake work to identify principles and good practice for how principal authorities can work with local councils. This will build on #NewConversations recently commissioned by the LGA. We will jointly host a launch and workshop to present the outcomes and any resulting guidance and/or recommendations to both sectors by March 2018
 - g) in conjunction with the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (HEFCE) and Universities UK (UUK) **delivering the second phase of the Leading Places programme** supporting up to 5 partnerships to build and transfer best practice in collaborative leadership between combined/local authorities, universities and other institutions.
2. Help councils put housing at the centre of solutions to wider public service challenges by developing an improvement offer based on the LGA Housing Commission's key findings. The offer will support councils to meet the ambitions of the Housing White Paper, *Fixing our broken housing market* by focusing on delivering homes, generating revenue or finding savings, and preventing and relieving homelessness. In the light of the Commission's initial findings this could involve a programme of action learning events and in-depth work directly supporting a number of councils on an improvement journey, and drawing out lessons for the whole sector through case studies and regional events. Work alongside DCLG to support councils to take a strategic approach to homelessness prevention and the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Bill, including securing enhanced collaboration across local authorities and wider public services to improve prevention outcomes and therefore cost effectiveness.
 3. Through our support to Local Partnerships we will work with 3/4 Councils unsuccessful in the current bidding round and support them to achieve accelerated housing delivery in their area. We will publish a best practice guide and organise with the LGA regional launch events.
 4. Through our arrangement with Local Partnerships we will work with two Waste consortia, with a particular focus on Combined Authorities, to identify savings on

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current spend. Target savings £4 million per consortia. We will continue to hold best practice Regional network events.

5. **Support officers and members to strengthen councils' licensing and regulatory functions** so they are better placed to address issues like child sexual exploitation. This will include developing guidance on the scrutiny of licensing applications.
6. **Provide support to councils to assist them in tackling modern slavery** by identifying and disseminating existing good practice including around procurement and eliminating modern slavery from supply chains.
7. **Ensure** that councils are making an effective contribution to the public health system, by addressing the issues of health inequalities and examining the links between economic growth, employment and health.
8. In order to address issues around opportunity, integration and extremism, develop a programme of **support to councils to strengthen community cohesion and counter extremism**, taking account of the Government's developing strategy around Community Integration. This is likely to include:
 - developing a leadership offer for councillors,
 - bespoke training for councils
 - refreshed guidance around community cohesion and integration
 - identification and sharing of good practice
 - advice to support effective scrutiny.
9. **Strengthen fire and rescue authorities'** ability to drive up efficiency, increase collaboration with other emergency services and the health service, improve transparency and accountability and reform the workforce. This will include providing leadership training for fire and rescue authority members.
10. Work with DCLG to ensure that the national **Troubled Families Programme**, which is delivered for the government by 151 upper tier authorities, is effectively implementing service transformation across Early Help services in order to provide better outcomes for families, deliver better value for the tax payer and improve service delivery on the ground in a manner which will be sustainable beyond the life of the programme. We will explore with DCLG the possibility of developing a peer led methodology to support local areas' self assessment on their service transformation journeys as an outcome of the Troubled Families programme.
11. We will increase opportunities for the business community to work with local government at various levels. This will include:
 - a) Establishing a forum for the CBI and other leading business organisations to meet with representatives of the sector including councils themselves to explore opportunities for more collaborative working,
 - b) Establish a Town Centre Regeneration Network and promote examples of good practice, including via the LGA website and the LGA Conference.