

LGA Boards' improvement activity

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This is a progress report on improvement activity undertaken by other LGA Boards.

Recommendation

That Improvement and Innovation Board members note the report.

Action

Officers to respond as necessary to any comments.

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LGA Boards' improvement activity

Background

1. Members have agreed that it is important for this Board to retain a strategic or “overarching” perspective on the improvement activity currently undertaken across LGA Boards. This helps ensure consistency with the key principles underpinning the approach to sector-led improvement and helps avoid any potential duplication.
2. To achieve this:
 - 2.1. officers coordinate the flow of business through the Boards so that the Improvement and Innovation Board can be invited to express strategic views about any significant improvement issues put before other Boards.
 - 2.2. during the year the Improvement and Innovation Board receives suitably timed progress reports on the major improvement programmes.
 - 2.3. as far as possible, the Improvement and Innovation Board meets towards the end of each cycle of meetings so it can consider any significant issues put before other Boards and then report back to Boards at their next meeting.
3. A progress report drawing together a summary of significant improvement activity led by other LGA Boards since this was last reported is set out in **Annex 1**.

Implications for Wales

4. There are no implications for Wales.

Financial Implications

5. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

Next steps

6. Subject to Members' views, officers will continue to brief the Board on the latest improvement activities across all LGA Boards.

Annex 1

Progress report

This progress report summarises significant improvement activity led by other LGA Boards since this was reported to this Board in July 2017:

City Regions, and People and Places Boards

The LGA's work on devolution is led by the City Regions, and People and Places Boards. Under their direction, the LGA has sought to support councils with their devolution ambitions, with activity primarily focussing on: negotiating deals, moving from a deal to implementation, sharing knowledge and best practice. Recent activity has included:

- providing bespoke support to combined authorities (CAs) and CA mayors:
 - providing tailored capacity support to seven CAs: the West of England, Greater Manchester, the West Midlands, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Liverpool City Region, Sheffield City Region and the Tees Valley
 - hosting the July and September meetings of the CA chief executives' network to share public service reform plans and CA responses to Brexit
 - agreeing to commission research on behalf of the CA chief executives' network that looks at further fiscal devolution opportunities as well as the existing financial instruments available to CAs
 - commencing work to convene thematic groups for senior CA officers covering: finance, housing and planning, employment and skills, and transport
 - updating the CA self-evaluation diagnostic tool in light of the recently published National Audit Office report on the progress of CAs; the LGA has begun discussions with the West of England CA and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CA regarding the roll-out of the tool in their organisations
- establishing a mayoral support offer, whereby the LGA has established a Mayoral Hub, which provides support in arranging Ministerial meetings, commissioning bespoke policy briefings and research, and advising on external support offers and promotions; the next mayoral event is planned for autumn this year
- working with Universities UK and the Higher Education Funding Council for England to:
 - support the delivery of the second phase of the Leading Places programme, which continues to progress in fifteen areas
 - contribute to the development and delivery of the Local Growth Academy, which is a leadership programme developed in partnership between the Higher Education Funding Council for England, Universities UK, the LGA and the NHS Confederation; LGA officers have delivered policy update sessions at Module 2 of the Academy
- continuing to develop and deliver our bespoke support offer to areas looking to secure and advance local devolution, including: leadership support, overview and scrutiny support, policy development, communications and negotiations with Whitehall.

Community Wellbeing Board

Care and Health Improvement Programme (CHIP)

CHIP is the sector-led improvement programme for adult social care and health. It is funded mainly by the Department of Health (DH) with contributions from the NHS for some digital activity and Transforming Care. DH has agreed to continue that funding until March 2020 based on a set of priorities around risk and resilience, effective care and health systems and our contribution to the Transforming Care Programme.

Insight and activity for Quarter 2, July to September 2017, includes the following:

- We remain active participants in national negotiations on the Better Care Fund (BCF), improved Better Care Fund (iBCF) and BCF graduation, challenging decisions where necessary that do not recognise or consider the views and commitments of local government. We continue to give voice to the significant frustrations and local tensions aired by councils caused by the BCF planning and assurance process, particularly NHS England (NHSE) pressure around the delayed transfers of care (DToCs) target setting and agreements to spend iBCF. We maintain close contact with the 19 councils that have presented robust plans but are unable to agree to the DToCs targets and so are now subject to escalation measures and the potential withholding of BCF funds. We have previously alerted DH/NHSE to the implications of this action, which are jeopardising spending on interventions that support timely discharge or help avoid admissions in the first place. Councils that have agreed plans risk as yet undetermined sanctions should they fail to meet the unrealistic DToCs targets that could jeopardise the funding of services in the future.
- We continue to support councils around DToCs:
 - producing a single set of offers with national partners on managing hospital to home discharge
 - running a series of regional workshops with the Emergency Care Improvement Programme (ECIP) to improve consistency with data and counting (80 plus attendees at each)
 - developing a medium to long-term offer from the North of England DToCs work.
- Our two national events on the High Impact Change Model and emerging practice attracted over 160 attendees with demand for further events. Councils have expressed concern at how discharge delays are attributed and reported, which do not support the principle of integration, and have warned of the potential damage to local relationships this is causing. There are similar feelings about the use of the High Impact Change Model as a sector-led improvement tool as well as a requirement for BCF funding and the additional burden this is creating.
- The disconnect between national and local priorities is becoming ever more evident. Sustainability issues in social care plus a focus on delayed transfers from hospital to home have lessened interest in commissioning and market shaping, which remain critical operational factors for councils. Market fragility, and the supply of the right support to the

right people continues as a significant concern. Meanwhile the national focus on DToCs, and linking funding to the achievement of targets is seen as unrealistic and likely to increase financial risk, create additional burdens and divert resources from other areas with the potential for costly escalation processes.

- We continue with delivery of the peer-led Better Care Advisers/Multidisciplinary Consultants Support Programme. We are currently working with 25 areas developing offers in the High Impact Change Model, iBCF and evaluation. Key themes emerging from our support work include: facilitating plan agreement, supporting scheme evaluations, planning for greater integration beyond the BCF, and planning for and implementing activity to improve DToCs performance including the High Impact Change Model.
- We ran a further three facilitated integration tool workshops with the NHS Confederation with two more scheduled for Quarter 3. These are part of our support package to assist areas assess their readiness for the integration of care and health services and develop plans.
- There is renewed interest in our programme of member training offers following notable churn at the recent local elections, especially Leadership Essentials as well as the recent Political Leaders in Care and Health Induction session co-delivered with NHS Clinical Commissioners.
- Our new draft framework for Integrated Commissioning for Better Outcomes framework proposes four revised domains: building foundations; person-centred, place-based and outcomes focussed; lifting the ambition; and shaping provision for people and populations. It has been challenging to develop an approach that works for both local government and NHS audiences while retaining a focus on personalisation.
- There is significant interest in our new suite of offers following publication of our *Public Health, Prevention and Early intervention Sector-Led Improvement Prospectus*. We delivered a further three Prevention Matters member training sessions (bringing the total to 10).
- Another cross system health and care peer challenge pilot was completed with a second in negotiation.
- Highlights of our NHS funded, digital and information work include:
 - 103 councils (80 per cent) submitted a Social Care Digital Maturity Self-Assessment. Updated for 2017/18, this voluntary process is designed to help councils understand their local progress and consider local priorities. We are working with councils to help address the findings.
 - We are also working with the 15 councils that received up to £50,000 funding as part of the Digital Local Investment Programme in partnership with NHS Digital.

Children and Young People Board

The LGA has launched a large scale campaign, Bright Futures, aiming to highlight the scale of the financial challenge facing children's services. As part of this work, we are building a broad based coalition of support behind our key messages of closing the funding gap,

reversing the cuts to early intervention funding, and investing in sector-led improvement. Further information is available at www.local.gov.uk/bright-futures.

We have also launched two resource packs for councillors focusing on corporate parenting and support for care leavers. These outline the legislative and policy context that councils should be working in, highlight key lines of enquiry to support councillors in the oversight, scrutiny and development of services, and collate examples of best practice. The resource packs are available at <https://www.local.gov.uk/corporate-parenting-resource-pack> and <https://www.local.gov.uk/support-care-leavers-resource-pack>.

Robert Goodwill, Minister of State at the Department for Education, announced in his speech at the National Children and Adult Services Conference in October 2017 that:

- £20 million will be made available to support children's social care improvement through expansion of the Partners in Practice programme and the testing of Regional Improvement Alliances in the East and West Midlands, and the East of England
- Nesta will run the previously trailed What Works Centre for Children's Services.

Culture, Tourism and Sport (CTS) Board

We have agreed improvement contracts with Sport England and Arts Council England for 2017/18. These will deliver:

- two culture leadership essentials
- three culture peer challenges
- three sport and physical activity leadership essentials
- one sport and physical activity officer development course
- one regional sport and physical activity event, to facilitate cross-border working between councils.

We are also holding a sport and physical activity conference on 5 December to communicate the latest policy developments and best practice to the sector.

In August, we published a councillor handbook on library services to help councils to plan the future of their services and learn from innovative practice in other councils. We also published a strategic planning and needs mapping tool to help library services identify local need and develop plans to address that, and a new benchmarking framework for library services to use for continuous improvement. These tools were developed as part of our commitment to the Libraries Taskforce.

We also launched the Culture Hub, with Arts Council England, to help councils develop innovative ways to invest in culture, even where financial resources are under pressure. This brings together cultural case studies across four themes: value of culture, inspiring leadership, different delivery models, and achieving efficiencies. During the week of the launch, it was the third most visited page on the LGA website with nearly 800 unique hits.

Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT) Board

Housing

The Housing Advisers Programme was launched over the summer. This programme is designed to support local authorities deliver a project that helps meet the housing need of their local area. It aims to be simple, flexible, and locally-led. The programme will fund the provision of an independent adviser to offer bespoke expert support to local authorities undertaking a specific project that works towards delivering homes, reducing homelessness, or generating savings or revenues.

By 12 September, the deadline for expressions of interest from councils, the LGA had received 71 submissions and these are now being assessed. All regions and political control are represented in the submissions, which are fairly evenly split across issues of housing supply, planning and homelessness.

Two additional sector wide improvement projects are planned:

- building through Housing Revenue Accounts, innovations and limitations
- delivering planning permissions, strategies and innovation.

Reports including best practice examples will be published later in the financial year.

Growth

Our growth improvement commitment includes increasing opportunities for the business community to work with local government. Our joint work with the British Property Federation, which brings councils together with institutional investors and other business interests, continues. This will include working with Bassetlaw on regeneration issues.

In addition the first of our town centre forum events is scheduled to take place on 29 November.

Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Counter extremism leadership essentials

The second leadership essentials course on counter-extremism took place in September, attended by eight councillors. A further four courses on counter-extremism or Prevent are scheduled over the coming months.

Community cohesion workshop

The first community cohesion workshop was held in Birmingham in September, attracting approximately 30 delegates. The event was aimed at providing councils with an opportunity to share and discuss ideas, practice and current issues around community cohesion, leadership and engagement.

Inclusion and Diversity Masterclass

The Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) held this masterclass on 26 September for fire and rescue authority members. The masterclass included case studies, which members found very useful, and a session from the new inspectorate of fire and rescue services, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services.

Supporting Avon Fire and Rescue Authority

The Government commissioned an independent inspector, Dr Craig Barker, to undertake a statutory inspection of Avon Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA), the report of which has now been [published](#). Avon FRA has requested support from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the LGA. We are currently putting in place a bespoke member development package, which will be informed by discussions with the FRA. The FRA has also agreed to establish an independent improvement board, which will be chaired by Huw Jakeway, Chief Fire Officer at South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, and Vice Chair of the NFCC. Cllr Rebecca Knox, Deputy Chair of the FSMC, will also be a part of the board and we will continue to engage with Avon through our regional Principal Adviser.

Resources Board

Finance

Officers attended regular meetings of county council, district council, municipal and unitary authority treasurers' societies to provide them with updates on various policy developments to aid longer-term financial planning and share knowledge. This includes developments related to local authority commercial investment such as the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management, CIPFA prudential code and the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive II, progress and potential implications of business rates retention reform and the Fair Funding review.

Workforce

Workforce Strategy

In the context of continuing budget restraint, service integration, Brexit and wider changes in the nature of work and employment, it has been judged timely for the LGA to produce a new assessment of the general strategic workforce priorities in local government. The report will look at the major themes of leadership, organisational development, recruitment, skills and rewards. A series of initial priorities for action will be identified and the workforce team will talk to the sector about the most effective forms of targeted information and support the LGA can provide over coming years. The report is currently in the consultation phase.

Apprenticeships

A new member of staff, Jamie Saddler, Apprenticeship Adviser, has been appointed to provide additional full-time support to councils helping them make the best use of the levy that came into force this April. The focus will be on an increase in the number of apprenticeship programme starts councils can achieve. Take up was slow in the first quarter of the year as councils used the time to identify needs and get robust procurement practices in place. All councils who have contacted the LGA have registered for the Digital account

services so they can access their levy accounts. The LGA is undertaking a gap analysis for DCLG to identify which councils are progressing well with this agenda and which need further support. The analysis report is due to be published in December 2017.

Rewards

The workforce team has commissioned some research on detailed comparisons between local government and private sector reward packages for key comparable jobs. The intention is to cut through the “noise” around public/private packages with some properly focused research that will support councils in making vital decisions in various labour markets.

Health and Care

The workforce team is working with Public Health England to develop a set of employer standards for the public health workforce. Based on the well-established social work standards, the intention is to help employers ensure that they can achieve a stable supply of properly qualified and experienced public health staff across a complex system that includes many specialist disciplines.