

Improvement and Innovation Board – report from Cllr Paul Bettison OBE (Chairman)

Improvement

1. Corporate Peer Challenge continues to be an effective tool at the heart of the LGA's support for sector-led improvement. We have launched our [Annual Report](#), which is available on our website and shows that Corporate Peer Challenge continues to be highly regarded by councils who have received one, delivers a range of positive benefits and impacts, and provides value for money.

Leadership

2. Increasingly councils are having to make difficult decisions about which services they provide to their communities. These decisions can sometimes be divisive and stressful, especially when it comes to explaining these decisions to, and dealing with the impact of those choices on, their own communities. Our new councillor [workbook](#) aims to help councillors understand the signs of stress, develop strategies to deal with it and build up their own personal resilience in the role.
3. Councillors play a pivotal role in keeping close to their residents and understanding their needs, views and concerns. There are many tactics, approaches and strategies that councillors can adopt in resolving disputes between local people to ensure those issues do not escalate into disorder or even violence. Our new [workbook](#) is designed to provide councillors with insight and assistance with the key skills needed in relation to facilitation and conflict resolution to enable them to be effective in their role.
4. Our Be a Councillor campaign's Women's Network brings together female councillors and women considering standing for election to discuss the issues and barriers to women entering (and staying in) politics, provides support to women in achieving their political aspirations, and creates new resources. We will be running events as part of this year's centenary of the first women to get the vote. Email beacouncillor@local.gov.uk to join.

Efficiency and Productivity

5. We have been supporting councils at risk because of the failure of Carillion. Whilst overall numbers with Carillion contracts is relatively small their contingency plans have proved to be robust and there has been very little disruption to service delivery. However, we are aware that some councils had experienced difficulties getting information and data from the Official Receiver, to enable the transfer of contracts to other providers and we continue to push for clarity on additional charges for the continuation of services. We held an event with the sector to explore what we can learn from the Carillion collapse in the event of the future failure of a major supplier and are implementing these lessons into our business planning process.
6. We are also continuing to work with councils, the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), Cabinet Office and DCLG to raise the importance of cyber security as well as signpost councils to where they can get advice, find guidance and good practice to support their own work on cyber resilience. The National Cyber Security Centre's free [Web Check](#), has been developed with councils and other public sector organisations to help identify out of date certificates or systems that need patching, reducing councils' risk of a cyber-attack.

8 March 2018

7. We have launched a [film](#) to encourage councils to apply for support from one of the LGA's 'pool' of productivity experts.
8. On 16 February, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in partnership with the Local Government Association and Cabinet Office announced awards for the [Land Release Fund](#). As part of Government's drive to get Britain building homes again, a total of 79 projects from Newcastle to Plymouth will receive funding to support building up to 7,280 homes on council owned land.

Accountability, transparency and sharing good practice

9. We have launched our new My Local Metrics service, which lets LG Inform Plus subscribers add their local data to LG Inform, LG Inform Plus or the API (direct data feed). This can be data relevant to a range of geographies, such as local authority, ward and defined neighbourhood levels. Subscribers' data is held in a secure environment and, depending on the geography chosen, can be shared with selected users of those tools.
10. During January and February, we ran three regional briefing events on the importance and obligations of the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). We presented to around 400 delegates, with five talks and nine detailed workshops run by experts and senior practitioners in data protection matters. The London event was recorded as [podcasts](#) for later viewing by those unable to secure a place. We were particularly thankful to Cllr Abdul Jabbar (Oldham) who opened our Manchester event for us on 18 January.

Contact officer: Dennis Skinner
Position: Head of Improvement
Phone no: 0207 664 3017
Email: dennis.skinner@local.gov.uk