

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 Members note the report.

Actions

Subject to members' comments, officers will develop the LGA's improvement offer as part of its on-going work.

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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. Significant improvement activity led by other LGA Boards since this was last reported in May 2018 is set out below.

Community Wellbeing Board (CWB)

4. Autism Self-Assessment Framework (SAF) - in August, in partnership with the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS), CWB provided comments to the Department of Health and Social Care on the SAF. The SAF assists and prompts local areas in reviewing how they are doing in relation to the Autism Strategy and helps them to map out their local priorities. The SAF was issued in September and the completion date is 10 December. Information submitted will be collated and analysed by Public Health England (PHE). The Strategy is being reviewed during 2019 and the responses to the exercise will also help with that process. Cllr Jackie Meldrum attends the national Autism Strategy Board.
5. National Strategy on Loneliness - in August we made a joint submission with ADASS and the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) to the Office of Civil Society Consultation on a National Strategy for Loneliness. The submission can be found [here](#). The National Strategy on Loneliness is planned to be launched in November. We are speaking to the Office for Civil Society about promoting the Strategy with an event or a series of events.
6. Publications - in June 2018 we published LGA ‘Must knows’ for councillors on [Mental Health](#) and [Loneliness](#). We have also commissioned a case study guidance document on supporting carers and hope to publish this in November.

7. Local suicide prevention plans - CWB is working with PHE, ADPH and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) on a sector-led approach to helping councils further improve the delivery of local suicide prevention plans. We are taking forward the following actions:
 - 7.1. sending a voluntary survey to Directors of Public Health to capture what is working well, what the gaps are and what support would be most useful for councils. This was sent on 1 October with a 1 November closing date
 - 7.2. using the survey results to develop a thematic analysis for publication. This will focus on sharing good practice and we have been clear it must not rank nor 'name and shame' individual councils
 - 7.3. developing a business case around improvement support, based upon what councils tell us they want
 - 7.4. setting up a time-limited advisory group, including LGA representation, to oversee progress and ensure consistency with our sector-led improvement and the wider Care and Health Improvement Programme.
8. With ADPH, we have also commissioned the Centre for Public Scrutiny to develop a scrutiny guide for councils that want to take their suicide prevention plans through overview and scrutiny committees. This is currently with CWB lead members for clearance.

Community Wellbeing Board: Care and Health Improvement Programme (CHIP)

9. [CHIP](#) is the sector-led improvement programme for adult social care and health delivered with ADASS, funded mainly by DHSC.
10. CHIP is developing a national project to better understand adult social care (ASC) national, regional, sub-regional and local care markets, building on analysis in some regions, data and experience. A dataset covering older people and learning disability markets is being used, as these care groups form the biggest risk of market failure and budget overspend. The project will help improve commissioning planning to meet future demands - a current information gap.
11. The work has three broad stages, to;
 - 11.1 Develop a core dataset to enable analysis and comparison between councils and regions;
 - 11.2 Develop a modelling tool to inform understanding and enable modelling of future markets;
 - 11.3 Offer bespoke support to councils and regions to develop their commissioning plans.

12. Once finalised, the data will be presented through secure, private, online interactive reports and tools for councils and regions to understand and compare their markets.
13. We have completed all 14 system intensive diagnostics of the [enhanced support programme](#), working with the nine most challenged health and wellbeing board areas to improve patient flow and reduce delayed transfers of care. Patients reviewed did not achieve their ideal outcomes mainly due to risk aversion and lack of trust and knowledge in services available to support discharge. A final report will be published before the end of the year. This £1.2 million partnership programme was commissioned by NHS England, NHS Improvement, ADASS and the LGA, coordinated by CHIP.
14. We have developed proposals for a common, transparent approach to measuring efficiency/value for money (VfM) in ASC to encourage councils to look at how resources are used and improve VfM. The approach contrasts with recent attempts by various agencies to produce a definitive efficiency statement about a council, which we neither support nor feel possible based on available data. Our approach was positively received at an October workshop of specialist consultancies and government departments. Engagement with these groups will continue to inform the approach's development.
15. We are due to launch a trailblazer programme to tackle childhood obesity including a call to action following which, 12 councils will be selected to prepare a proof of concept for their innovative approach. Of these, five will be selected to develop and implement their proposal supported by experts and grant funding up to £100,000. This will be delivered with DHSC as part of the Government's [Childhood obesity: a plan for action](#).
16. Peer support offer for local systems. Through our new partnership with NHS Providers, NHS Clinical Commissioners (NHSCC) and NHS Confederation, we have developed a sector-led approach which offers support for sustainability and transformation partnerships (STPs), and local systems that voluntarily seek help. Our offer of tailored support includes an STP/local system health and care peer challenge, a leadership integration tool workshop and other bespoke workshops, peer-to-peer support and peer mentoring. Further details can be found on our [website](#).

Children and Young People's Board

17. Work is progressing well to develop a programme of support as part of a Department for Education (DfE) grant to improve leadership in children's social care services. One strand of this work is to develop two new peer review offers. A draft framework is now in place for a Children's Financial Diagnostic and the Children's Leadership Capacity Diagnostic, and we are looking to pilot both of these in councils in the next few months. These two new offers will be promoted to councils and expressions of interest will be sought for those that want to participate in the pilots or full roll out. Another strand of work is focussed on ensuring lead members of children's services and chairs of

children's scrutiny have access to support, information and development opportunities through regional member networks. In some regions this will be about enhancing and adding value to existing support networks, and in other regions, where these networks do not exist, it will need to be developed.

18. As part of Government's plans to improve social mobility through education, it has committed to spread best practice on improving early language outcomes. A new peer challenge programme and support for councils is central to this offer. The response from local authorities has been really positive and we have received 41 expressions of interest.

A pilot approach has been tested in three places (Wigan, Cambridgeshire/Peterborough and Bexley) and a further ten reviews have been scheduled to take place between December 2018 and May 2019.

19. We are also working alongside the Early Intervention Foundation to develop a self-assessment tool that councils will use as part of the review. In addition, we are training peers from the early sector from health, education and local government backgrounds so that there is sufficient capacity to deliver the reviews. Thirty-six have been trained in September, and further cohorts will be trained in December and January.

City Regions and People and Places Boards

20. The LGA's work on devolution is led by the City Regions, and People and Places Boards.
21. Under their direction, the LGA has provided a range of generic and bespoke support to combined authorities (CAs) and CA Mayors, with key activity including:
- 21.1 Providing tailored capacity support to CAs across a number of areas of delivery;
 - 21.2 Convening the CA chief executives' network as well as established thematic networks for senior CA officers covering: housing and planning, employment and skills, and finance;
 - 21.3 Progressing work to establish new thematic CA networks focused on HR and governance;
 - 21.4 Facilitating the sharing of best practice among CAs through both the networks of CA officers and the facilitation of peer-to-peer exchanges between CAs;
 - 21.5 Identifying improvement support of collective interest to CAs that will be commissioned by the LGA in the upcoming reporting period and have input from the relevant CA networks.

Culture, Tourism and Sport (CTS) Board

22. Sport England and Arts Council England improvement contracts - we have signed a two-year improvement contract worth £271,728 with Sport England - a significantly increased investment in local government compared to the £69,960 contract from 2017/18. This will deliver: five leadership essentials events for councillors, six leadership events for senior strategic officers, four regional events for councillors and/or senior strategic officers, and four masterclasses for senior strategic officers. Discussions with Arts Council England are ongoing but to date they have confirmed their intention to commission us to deliver: two leadership essentials events for portfolio holders, three cultural peer challenges, ten library peer challenges and a councillor handbook on museums services. The value of this activity will be £149,860, compared to £44,840 in 2017/18.
23. Investment in Grassroots Sport - we hosted a Football Conference at Wembley Stadium with the Football Association (FA). Over 150 delegates from 100 councils attended to hear about the FA's investment in grassroots sport, worth £100 million per year over the next 10 years. Councils will play a crucial role in targeting the investment through the development of local football facility plans. Discussions are underway about a further conference in the north with the FA to maximise councils' ability to support grassroots football.
24. Tourism skills research - we have appointed Rubicon Regeneration to work with eight council areas to identify how they can support a pipeline of talent for their local tourism sector. The work will investigate how our Work Local principles can be applied in practice to support the tourism sector, as one of the UK's fastest growing sectors.

Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT) Board

25. **Town centre revitalisation.** Since the last update the EEHT Board has launched a good practice handbook, aimed primarily at elected members, on town centre revitalisation. This, together with a more extensive online toolkit, were launched at an event on 14th May. The event, which was fully booked, also provided an opportunity for councils to learn from leading practice on issues ranging from public/ private partnership working to tackling anti-social behaviour and homelessness in town centres. Further masterclasses and events are being planned.
26. **Future transport technology.** The Board has taken a particular interest in future transport technology and how this may impact on local authority services and how they plan and invest for future needs of the people and places they serve. "Clean, connected and In-control" was the title of a new publication launched in May 2018 aimed at councils to raise awareness of developments in electric charging infrastructure, connected and autonomous vehicles. The subject was also discussed at a well-attended workshop at the LGA conference. We are working closely with partner organisations, such as the Energy Savings Trust (EST), CCAV (Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles) to

shape their offers of support to councils as well as developing our own. A further conference is planned in this financial year.

27. **Air quality.** As part of our work responding to the Government's clean air strategy and its strategy to reduce nitrogen dioxide the LGA has convened a group of authorities to share best practice on the development of their plans. We have convened a number of round table discussions and invited outside organisations to give their perspectives on how clean air plans will affect them. We continue to work closely with DEFRA and JAQU to provide any assistance authorities need whilst developing clean air plans.
28. **Recycling:** We have been working informally with councils who are struggling with their recycling figures. A series of roundtable discussions have been convened with councils to look at improving waste and recycling performance and barriers to increased recycling of difficult materials. We continue to work with DEFRA to facilitate further discussions they wish to have with these councils.
29. **Housing Advisers Programme:** We are continuing to procure suppliers to the 42 successful local authority project bids to the Housing Advisers Programme, many of the projects are now well underway. It may be possible that the project is able to fund further projects later this year.
30. **Housing Springboard programme:** we are launching a programme of masterclass events to support a group of 32 councils to investigate their different options for enabling house building. The programme culminates in a presentation to investors.
31. **Homelessness 'Duty to Refer':** We have completed a project providing guidance to councils for enabling their partners to treat the Homelessness Reduction Act 'duty to refer' as a 'commitment to cooperate' in the prevention of homelessness. We hope to launch the final advice shortly.
32. **Out of area moves:** We have commissioned an investigation into the issues surrounding the movement of families from one area to another which involve a local authority, in particular out of area temporary accommodation placements, and in providing help to secure a tenancy to prevent or relieve homelessness. This first phase of the project aims to first widely engage with councils to thoroughly understand the issues and to make recommendations for how the LGA might support sector improvement.
33. **Sustainably funding private rented sector offer:** We are currently commissioning a supplier to undertake a project looking at how councils are funding their services for ensuring a quality local private rented sector, providing learning for the options for other councils struggling to fund this service.
34. **Understanding developer contributions:** We have initiated a project developing a data standard with councils to understand the numbers of affordable housing units (and

possibly investment in infrastructure and other services) are required local plan policy compared with what is agreed within the Section 106, and to delivery. The tool will improve transparency, opportunity for benchmarking, and a simple model for councils to understand delivery against their local plan.

35. **Build-out rates:** We have completed a project looking into good practice from councils working with developers to ensure homes with planning permission are built quickly. A report and toolkit was recently launched at a national LGA event.
36. **Building council homes:** We will shortly publish the final report and toolkit looking at the innovative ways councils are building homes via their Housing Revenue Accounts, providing lessons for the different options councils have for making development happen in the face of many constraints.

Safer and Stronger Communities Board

37. Fire Leadership – following previous programmes there will be two Leadership Essential courses, which will include the nature of political leadership and key issues like scrutiny and diversity. To support improvement in diversity there will also be five member development masterclasses led by the LGA Diversity Champion Fiona Twycross and to include input from key stakeholders and the sharing of local good practices.
38. Modern Slavery – A [‘Modern Slavery: Disruption and Community Safety’](#) event has now been planned and will focus on councils’ role in disruption through licensing, regulation, housing and community safety services. The Board is also commissioning a suite of case studies around good practice from councils around modern slavery for publication in early 2019.
39. Taxis - we have launched the new National Register of Refusals and Revocations (NR3) to establish a mechanism for licensing authorities to share information about individuals who have had a taxi/private hire vehicle licence revoked or an application for one refused. This will prevent such individuals from going to other authorities and securing a licence without disclosing their previous licensing history.
40. Civil resilience - We will shortly be publishing an updated councillor guide on civil resilience as well as a joint document with Solace focusing on the life cycle of two different emergency responses.

Resources Board – Finance

41. This quarter we continued our work with the Government on business rates retention and the Fair Funding Review. The Leadership Board, Executive and the Task and Finish Group have continued to receive regular updates on progress. We have published [two modelling tools](#) for member councils to use to assess different options for the needs assessment and relative council tax resources as part of the Fair Funding Review. They help provide members with some early indications on where the emerging proposals are

leading, as well as build their own proposals. A similar tool for modelling business rates retention has also been commissioned and will be published in the near future.

42. Officers continued to attend regular meetings of the county council, district council, municipal and unitary authorities treasurers societies to provide them with updates on various developments to aid with financial planning and share knowledge.
43. We are continuing work on preparing for the 2019 Spending Review (including [the Autumn Budget submission](#), which we presented in late September) and looking at the efficiency of local government in delivering services and how local government promotes a 'good investment' by generating savings elsewhere in public spending.

Resources Board - Workforce

44. Direct support to councils - during the course of this financial year to date we have provided direct support to approximately 65 local authorities. This casework varies from the provision of pay and grading advice to organisational design and employee engagement. Importantly, it often requires the team to help elected members resolve the most complex senior manager employee relations casework.
45. Local Government Workforce Strategy - the workforce team conducted a consultation exercise on the strategic priorities for workforce development across councils over the summer. The results have provided a clear steer for *Productive People* a national workforce strategy for the sector, which will be published soon. The strategy sets out a widely shared vision for the workforce over the next ten years and explores the ways to achieve it through a focus on organisational development, leadership, skills, recruitment practice and rewards.
46. Modern digital workplaces - we have produced the first two videos in a series of case studies looking at how adopting new technologies is changing the nature of work and employment in local authorities. We are also working with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to explore ways of supporting digital leadership capability for senior officers as part of the Local Digital Declaration launched at this year's LGA conference.
47. Good practice - the workforce team has provided support to both new Dorset unitary councils at officer and elected member level. Cllr Roger Philips and Baroness Scott attended early meetings of both shadow authorities and provided member perspective on reorganisation based on their experiences at Herefordshire and Wiltshire respectively. At officer level we provided advice on the timetable for recruiting a new top management team, advised on the design of senior management roles and competencies, and on the appropriate salary for the chief executive and directors at both councils. This enabled both local authorities to go to the external market and recruit high quality candidates through a process of open competition.

Implications for Wales

48. There are no implications for Wales, other than that the football investment applies to Wales but the rest of the CTS activity is for England only.

Financial Implications

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

Next steps

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