

Improvement and Innovation Board – from Cllr Peter Fleming OBE (Chairman)

Public notices

1. We as a Board are asking the Government to look again at the issue of Public Notices and the burden these have on councils, significantly, the financial implications. As part of this work, we have conducted a survey to assess the impact of this statutory requirement and are investigating alternative methods to ease the financial burden on councils. Analysis of the survey results is currently underway.

Leadership programme

2. I would like to remind members of the LGA's brilliant Leadership Essential Courses, which are aimed at both experienced and newly elected Councillors. New programmes have been launched for 2019/20 that include licensing, building safety, and creating better high streets and town centres. Board members are actively involved in the delivery of these programmes as peers. Further information on booking on to these can be found [here](#).
3. I am also pleased to report that the LGA's national graduate development programme (ngdp) has just closed for applications with a record number (5,444) completing stage 1 of the recruitment process. Councils have until the end of March to sign up to take on a graduate. More information can be found [here](#).
4. The LGA's Be a Councillor campaign works with councils, councillors and political groups to encourage more people to stand for election. If you'd like to run a campaign at your council, you can find out more about the resources available to support this [here](#).

LGA membership survey 2019

5. The LGA's Perceptions Survey is a regular survey of member authorities. It is conducted to measure: councils' engagement with the LGA and its offer; their view of the LGA and specifically their views on and experiences of the support and resources it offers relating to sector-led improvement. The survey has been underway since late Autumn, with a short intermission for the General Election, and is due to close this month. A report will be published later in the Spring.

Sector led Improvement

6. Members were pleased to note the achievements of our sector-led improvement programme at the half year stage for 2019/20.
7. To help ensure our highly-valued Sector-led Improvement (SLI) approach continues to make a positive difference to councils, the board has commissioned Shared Intelligence to conduct an independent evaluation of the offer. Closely coordinated with this, we are also conducting a 'stocktake' of the peer challenge programme. Conversations with Chief

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Executives, Leaders and other stakeholders are being scheduled to supplement existing evidence. Reflections from both reviews will inform a wider discussion with the sector this summer about a vision for SLI for the decade ahead. To provide your views about peer challenges, please email heather.wills@local.gov.uk.

Climate Change Improvement Working Group

8. The LGA declared a Climate Emergency during the 2019 Annual Conference. In light of this, during November's Board meeting, Members agreed to set up a Climate Change Improvement Working Group to shape and guide the climate change improvement support offer for councils. We already offer significant support to councils and are looking to enhance the offer. You can find out more on our newly launched [climate change web hub](#).
9. The inaugural meeting of the Group took place on 13 January 2020 in which progress was discussed at length, as well as identifying 2020/21 key priorities. Chaired by the IIB's Vice-Chair, Cllr Liz Green, members include Cllr Laura Miller, Cllr Andrew Cooper, Cllr Catherine Rankin, Cllr Rebecca Lury and Cllr Clyde Loakes.

Innovation Zone

10. The first meeting of this year's Innovation Zone Working Group met to discuss next year's Zone on 15 January 2020. Chaired by the IIB's Chairman, Cllr Peter Fleming, members include Cllr Joy Allen, Cllr Neil Prior, Cllr Oliver Ryan, Cllr Judi Billing, Cllr Miranda Williams, Cllr Alex Coley. The Innovation Zone is a vibrant, creative space and programme within the [LGA's Annual Conference and Exhibition](#), taking place from 30 June-2 July 2020 in Harrogate.
11. Members agreed a refreshed format for this year's Innovation Zone. We will be keeping our popular interactive sessions, which help councils and partner organisations share how they use innovation to tackle local issues. At the same time, we are introducing a new element on day one of the Zone, where inspirational speakers will bring focus to new ideas in short, energetic talks, called 'Spotlight on Ideas'. More information will be available on the LGA website shortly.

New Cyber Self-Assessment Tool

12. In partnership with the sector, the Board launched a [new online self-assessment tool](#) in October, keeping it open until the 19th of December. 54 per cent of councils completed the assessment. The primary purpose of the tool is to provide councils with a means of understanding their cyber security capability and areas that may need improvement. It also provides the LGA with both a means of targeting the £500k of grants it will offer over the coming months, and of understanding patterns in the sector that can be addressed through LGA initiatives.

Digital and data masterclass

13. We are running another series of our successful masterclass days on data and digital transformation in local government in late January/early February. These events are for elected members who are working on, and keen to maximise, the opportunities of digital approaches and data exploitation in their authorities through their role as councillors.

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Members of the Board and other member peers, including myself, Cllr Joy Allen and Cllr Neil Prior, are speaking at these, drawing on their own experiences of delivering successful digital and data projects.

14. The events take place in Manchester (24-Jan), Bristol (31-Jan), Newcastle (7-Feb), London (14-Feb) and you can book to attend [here](#).

Use of predictive analytics in Local Government

15. Predictive analytics and related data science approaches are increasingly being used by councils, from identifying which heating boilers in council houses are most likely to fail (so they can be replaced first), to helping judge levels of risk for children's safeguarding. The use of these technologies is at an early stage and, with this in mind, Board members have recently given approval for a project to gather learning about the application of predictive analytics in local public services. Find out more [here](#).

Press and external communications

16. Since the last Forum, I have commented on the following LGA press releases and external communications on behalf of the Board:

16.1. [Councils leading the way on digital inclusion](#);

16.2. [Councils participate in 24-hour social media celebration showcasing vital local government services](#);

16.3. [LGA announces Behavioural Insights Programme has awarded funding to eight councils](#)

17. A reminder that our Sector Led improvement work is also detailed in the LGA's [First magazine](#).

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