

Highlighting Political Leadership offer: 2019/20 work update

Purpose

For information and decision

Summary

This report provides members with a brief update the LGA's Highlighting Political Leadership and managerial leadership offers for 2019/20.

Recommendation

That the Improvement and Innovation Board notes the progress so far in 2019/20 and offers any comments on the Highlighting Political Leadership or managerial leadership work.

Action

Officers to progress this work in light of the Board's comments.

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Background

1. The LGA's Highlighting Leadership offer forms part of our wider package of sector-led improvement support. We offer a range of programmes, events and resources aimed at supporting and developing councillors at all levels. Attending our political leadership programmes gives councillors a unique opportunity to network with other Members from different tiered authorities and from all over the country. As the majority of our programmes are cross-party, it also provides a safe-space to network and learn with councillors from across the political. Our managerial leadership development programme starts by growing future talent with the National Graduate Development Programme, through to opportunities for senior officers with the flagship Solace IGNITE programme.
2. This report provides an update on the programmes delivered to date.

Highlighting Political Leadership

3. The sector needs local government leaders who can adapt to the challenges for the sector, who understand their local place and reflect the diversity of the communities they serve. The LGA continues to offer a wide range of development opportunities to support councillors at all stages of their political career. Alongside flagship programmes such as Leadership Academy and Next Generation, the LGA offers specialised masterclasses and residential courses on topics that reflect the current strategic issues facing local government.
4. As previously reported, the high number of councils that changed control in the May 2019 local elections, has contributed to a significant rise in demand for the LGA's Political Leadership programmes. As of 17 January 2020, there are 1,067 places booked on leadership programmes for the 2019/20 period.
5. To meet demand and response to feedback from the sector, a number of new courses have been introduced. These include the four that were reported at the last meeting of the Board:
 - 5.1. Being an effective cabinet member
 - 5.2. Creating Better Streets and Town Centres
 - 5.3. Homelessness
 - 5.4. Housing
6. The following programmes have been introduced since the board last met:
 - 6.1. **Audit Committees:** Aimed at Audit Committee Chairs, this programme will discuss how Audit Committees can be most effective, drawing on the insights of auditors to ensure that the public can have confidence in the way the council is managing its financial affairs.
 - 6.2. **Building safety:** This course will help participants to explore the role that local authorities play in ensuring building safety understand how peers have dealt

with building safety issues that have emerged since the Grenfell fire understand planned reforms to the building safety system and their implications for local authorities lead and deliver the practical and cultural changes required in staff training, technology, and assurance processes.

- 6.3. **Climate emergency:** This programme will help leaders and portfolio holders explore the crucial local leadership role in responding to the climate emergency. It will explore levers for councils to reduce carbon emissions and provide opportunities to learn from the experience of others.
- 6.4. **County Lines:** This one-day training session focusses on practical steps that elected members may wish to take to help identify, disrupt and prevent county lines activity.
- 6.5. **Licensing:** Chairing a committee, and all the preparation and lead-in required for good decision making can be challenging. The course will focus on good quality decision making at licensing committee and how a good licensing committee is run. Attendees will be able to compare how their committee operates with other authorities and share ideas with other councillors.
7. Participation figures on the Leadership Academy (LA), Leadership Essentials (LE), Focus on Leadership (FoL), the Leader's Programme (LEAD) and Next Generation (NXG) are set out in the tables which follow.
- 8.

Political Leadership - Stats 2019-20 as of 17 January 2020 (Councillors)

	LA	LE	FoL	LEAD	NXG	Total	Percentages
Labour	70	315	62	4	20	471	44%
Conservative	42	229	22	5	18	316	30%
Liberal Democrat	23	100	18	3	13	157	15%
Independent	33	63	8	1	18	123	12%
Total:	168	707	110	13	69	1067	100%

Breakdown by type of authority

	LA	LE	FoL	LEAD	NXG	Total	Percentages
District	52	222	35	5	21	335	31%
County	3	56	3	0	9	71	7%
Metropolitan	20	109	21	0	14	164	15%
London	23	85	25	2	8	143	13%
Unitary	24	200	25	6	16	271	25%
Welsh	46	1	0	0	1	48	4%
Fire	0	34	1	0	0	35	3%
Parks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Total:	168	707	110	13	69	1067	100%

Regional breakdown

Region	LA	LE	Fol	LEAD	NXG	Total	% of delegates	% of Cllrs across all English authorities
East of England	11	72	17	3	13	116	11%	13%
East Midlands	8	48	9	0	4	69	6%	10%
Greater London	23	85	25	2	8	143	13%	10%
North East	3	26	0	0	3	32	3%	4%
North West	15	107	16	1	7	146	14%	12%
South West	21	102	9	4	6	142	13%	20%
South East	17	95	7	2	12	133	12%	18%
Wales	46	1	1	0	1	49	5%	7%
West Midlands	19	121	17	1	9	167	16%	9%
Yorkshire & Humber	5	50	9	0	6	70	7%	6%
Total:	168	707	110	13	69	1067	100%	100%

Breakdown by male/female gender:

Gender	LA	LE	Fol	LEAD	NXG	Total	Percentages
Male	95	387	47	8	40	577	54%
Female	73	320	63	5	29	490	46%
Total:	168	707	110	13	69	1067	100%

LA = Leadership Academy
Fol = Focus on Leadership
NXG = Next Generation

LE = Leadership Essentials
LEAD = Leaders Programme

Be a Councillor

- The LGA's Highlighting Political Leadership offer provides support and development to councillors throughout their local government political career. We also recognise that prospective councillors will benefit from access to advice, information and guidance

before making a decision about whether or not to stand. The “Be a Councillor” campaign focusses on raising the profile of the role of a councillor, with the aim that more people will choose to stand as a candidate.

10. In 2019 the focus has been on promoting and widening political advocacy, particularly to encourage more people from underrepresented groups to stand for election. The LGA through the Leadership Team and the Political Group Offices, has supported councils across the country to develop resources, run events and has provided advice on local campaigns. Examples of council engagement in 2019/20, are provided in the following table:

London Borough of Brent	Advice and resources for ongoing campaign
Lancashire County Council	Full campaign and event
Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council	Full campaign and event
Stroud District Council	Full campaign and event
Rutland County Council	Event focussed on increasing the number of women standing for election
London Borough of Waltham Forest	Youth focussed event
West Sussex County Council	Full campaign and event

11. One of the core objectives of Be a Councillor is to promote the role of councillor to a diverse range of potential candidates, so that local government can be representative of the communities it serves. To support this goal, Be a Councillor has recently engaged discussions with Operation Black Vote and a joint event is planned for late spring 2020.

Community Leadership

12. The Highlighting Political Leadership offer features a number of flagship programmes including Be a Councillor, the Leadership Academy and Next Generation. However, a key element of the leadership offer is supporting and developing councillors in their local community leadership role. The community leadership offer is available to councillors at all stages of their political career, from newly elected backbenchers to established leaders. It provides bitesize learning on core topics and skills to help support their important role as leaders of place.
13. Community Leadership includes the LGA’s councillor e-learning offer, councillor workbooks and bespoke workshops in councils on topics such as political awareness, community engagement and chairing skills. These are delivered in partnership with the LGA regional teams, and are particular popular during the first few months after election. Recent and upcoming workshops, include support to the following councils:

Stroud	Reigate and Banstead	Huntingdonshire	Dacorum
Spelthorne	Southampton/Fareham/Eastleigh	Stevenage	Lewes
Rochford	Windsor and Maidenhead	Darlington	
Braintree	Cheshire East	Swindon	

14. The community leadership offer provides an important opportunity to engage with councillors directly at their councils across the country, and ensure that the LGA’s leadership offer is accessible to as diverse a group of councillors as possible.

Highlighting Managerial Leadership

National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP)

15. Since the last report to the Improvement & Innovation Board, Cohort 21 of ngdp have been confirmed in post and started in their councils. Cohort 21 was the largest intake to date, with 149 graduates recruited.
16. Recruitment for Cohort 22 is now underway, with the first stage of the five-stage recruitment process closing in January. A summary of the recruitment process is included below:
 - 16.1. **Stage 1:** Application form (5,444 applicants for cohort 22 – this is in an increase from 4,484 for cohort 21)
 - 16.2. **Stage 2:** Online tests (3332 completed for cohort 22 – this is an increase from 2,781 for cohort 21).
 - 16.3. **Stage 3:** Video Interviews (Feb 2020).
 - 16.4. **Stage 4:** Assessment centres (March 2020).
 - 16.5. **Stage 5:** Council interviews (June 2020).

Diversity and Inclusion – ngdp

17. A report has previously been presented to the IIB that focussed on the commitment to improving diversity on the ngdp. An independent evaluation of ngdp has subsequently been undertaken. The review considered the equality and diversity implications of the ngdp's marketing approach, recruitment processes and life on the programme. The review found that views on the programme itself were overwhelmingly positive, with the majority of respondents (91 per cent), who had completed the ngdp, feeling that their objectives had been fully or largely achieved. It was noted that marketing materials were effective in that they reflect diversity and were clearly aligned with the organisational values and aims of the graduates. The report also found that there had been an increase in BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) applicants over the last five years. There has also been increased diversity with respect to sexual orientation year-on-year, and an increase in the number of disabled applicants.
18. A number of recommendations were proposed to help the programme continue to improve. These include:
 - 18.1. Ensuring that the universities that are targeted during the marketing phase balance social mobility and diversity indexes against previous interest and success.
 - 18.2. Update the website to ensure it promotes diversity (a specific section on equality and diversity has now been included on the candidate section of the

website: <https://www.local.gov.uk/national-graduate-development-programme/ngdp-candidates/equality-and-diversity>)

- 18.3. Ensuring that non-bias continues to be a key factor when re-tendering online tests for future cohorts

Council sign-up – ngdp

19. Councils can sign up to take graduates until 31 March 2020. New councils to the programme for 2020, to date, include:
 - 19.1. Ashfield District Council
 - 19.2. Broadland Council
 - 19.3. London Borough of Harrow
 - 19.4. Watford Borough Council
 - 19.5. Cheshire West and Chester
20. Board Members are encouraged to promote ngdp in their region. Information about the programme, including the process for signing up and fees, is available in the Council Information Pack: <https://www.local.gov.uk/ngdp-programme-201920-council-information-pack>.

Senior officer programmes

21. During 2019/20, the partnership with Solace will continue to deliver:
 - 21.1. Leadership Development for at least 10 chief executives through the prestigious Ignite programme. Delegates have recently been selected for the sixth cohort of Ignite, and discussions are now underway to determine how to engage the community of chief executives who are alum of the programme.
 - 21.2. Total Leadership for aspiring Chief Executives – identifying and supporting senior managers in local authorities to become the Chief Executives of the future.
 - 21.3. 2 cohorts of approximately 15 participants on the fast-track “Springboard” programme for head of service level managers who have been identified as rising stars.
 - 21.4. A specific event for managers at all stages of their career was held in September 2019, with a focus on inclusive leadership.

Local Government Challenge

22. The LG Challenge serves to develop the future generation of local government leaders, whilst providing local councils with an opportunity to overturn a local challenge in their area.

23. Taking part in five challenges between February and June across the country, ten contestants will embark on a leadership development journey that ends with four finalists competing for a prestigious Bruce-Lockhart Scholarship at the LGA's annual conference in July 2020.
24. LG Challenge is unique, as not only does it provide a development opportunity for ambitious and talented council officers, the five host councils receive valuable consultancy on a strategic project.
25. The first challenge of 2020 is taking place in February 2020 and will be hosted by Surrey County Council. By July 2020, the contestants will have developed their leadership and political management skills, business acumen and communication techniques – ready to present their final pitch for the scholarship at LGA Conference. LG Challenge is an important part of the LGA's managerial leadership development offer, as it helps shape local government offers into the leaders of the future in a way that will help deliver the best services for the local community.

Looking forward to 2020/21

26. As the end of the financial year approaches, it is timely to consider the priorities for the year ahead. The Highlighting Political Leadership offer aims to develop local government leaders who can adapt to challenges for the sector, who understand their local place and reflect the diversity of the communities they serve. It is proposed that the leadership offer continues to adapt so that it can reflect and respond to the strategic issues facing local government, as well as supporting councillors at all levels to develop effective community and place leadership skills. The following underpins the leadership offer:
 - 26.1. **Continuous development:** providing opportunities for existing leaders and managers to continuously develop and adapt to new challenges facing the sector.
 - 26.2. **Building a talent pipeline:** to ensure the future resilience of local government, it is important to not only develop, but also talent spot the best leaders for the future – helping the sector to build a pipeline of strong viable leaders at all levels and across all geographical regions. The role of incumbent leaders in identifying and nurturing the future talent that will lead the sector, is recognised, and forms an element of the continuous development strand.
 - 26.3. **Inclusive leadership:** local government leadership should reflect the diversity of its communities and the importance of inclusive leadership and understanding unconscious bias will remain a theme throughout a number of the Highlighting Political and Managerial Leadership programmes.
27. As the LGA's leadership development offer grows in popularity, it is increasingly important to consider how the programmes can be delivered sustainably to reach as wide an audience as possible. The ngdp has made a commitment to paperless assessment centres in 2020 and the ngdp team will be exploring ways to reduce the amount of paper used throughout the course of the programme.

28. It is recommended that the functionality of ModGov be explored to determine whether there is an opportunity to move towards a lower reliance on paper at political leadership programmes, for example hosting handouts and evaluation forms on ModGov.

Next Steps

29. Members of the Improvement & Innovation Board;

- 29.1. requested to suggest or recommend any topics or themes for programmes that should be considered;
- 29.2. asked to comment on the work undertaken by the Leadership team and make any recommendations for the future work programme; and
- 29.3. requested to support the investigation of ModGov functionality, to determine whether it can be used to support a move towards paperless, or reduced paper, leadership programmes.

Financial implications

30. All programmes will be met from existing budgets.

Implications for Wales

31. There are no implications for Wales.