

## **LGA Boards' improvement activity**

### **Purpose of report**

For information.

### **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:
  - 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
  - during the year the Improvement and Innovation Board receives suitably timed progress reports on the major improvement programmes
  - 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 December 2020 is set out below.

### **Community Wellbeing Board, including the Care and Health Improvement Programme (CHIP)**

4. The [Care and Health Improvement Programme](#) (CHIP) is the sector-led improvement programme for adult social care funded by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).
5. **Home First approach to discharge from hospital:** We have published [Top tips for implementing a collaborative approach to Home First](#). These tips will help health and care systems to identify what they need to commission to enable people to remain living independently at home, avoiding unnecessary admissions to hospital and enabling a safe and timely discharge home after a hospital stay.
6. **Commissioning social care:** We are working with DHSC to agree the areas of focus for supporting commissioned care in 2021/22. The four areas are expected to be: strategic commissioning, market intelligence, partnership working and market management. The approaches to providing support to councils will vary and include support created and delivered at a national level, work with regions that have developed best practice and bringing together LA's with shared challenges and objectives.
7. **Supporting adults with learning disabilities to have better lives:** The [outcomes and improvement framework](#) was commissioned by CHIP and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services to help directors of adult social services work with partners to

identify how they can support adults with learning disabilities and/or autistic people and how they can be assured that the care and support in their area is good value for money.

8. **System Transformation Peer Support Programme:** In partnership with NHS Providers, NHS Confed, NHS Clinical Commissioners and the ICS Network, we have secured funding to [deliver bespoke, peer-led support](#) to care and health system partners to develop a culture of collaboration, achieve effective partnership working at system, place and locality level and to navigate the implications of the White Paper proposals. Expert peers from across health and care will act as critical friends to help all partners reflect and learn, align their priorities and agree their collective next step. All support is free of charge.
9. **Workforce:** We have created a new [adult social care workforce webpage](#) where we will regularly be adding news and information relating to our five workforce priority areas:
  - strategic workforce planning
  - growing and developing the workforce
  - enhancing the use of technology
  - supporting wellbeing and positive mental health
  - building and enhancing social justice, equality, diversity and inclusion in the workforce.

The page will provide essential information ranging from practical guidance, like [details surrounding current grant funding and conditions](#), to support, such as [wellbeing resources for frontline staff](#).
10. **Better Security, Better Care Programme:** We are **one of 29** local support partners across the country helping care providers to understand the importance of data and cyber security. In collaboration with IPC, we have created [guidance](#) for commissioners of adult social care services to improve data and cyber security measures.
11. **Closure of NHS Digital Social Care Programme:** We ran the [Social Care Digital Innovation Programme \(SCDIP\) and Accelerator \(SCDIA\) programmes](#) that ended in March 2021. Through this programme we delivered funding and support to 49 projects involving 69 councils to develop and share new digital approaches and technologies in adult social care. Case studies are available from [www.local.gov.uk/scdip](http://www.local.gov.uk/scdip).
12. **Covid Response and Coordination team (CRCT):** previously known as Test Trace and Outbreak Management (TTOM), the CRCT team works to support the LGA's work around all issues arising from COVID-19 including vaccinations, variants of concern, testing and more, ensuring the voice of local government is heard. Support to the sector in the last 6 months has included:
  - A range of webinars and workshops to provide opportunities for Councils to hear national policy updates, raise challenges, and discuss issues. Over [70 Covid-19 related webinars](#) have been held with over 20 of them in the last 6 months,
  - The development of a new LGA COVID-19 Learning Exchange, due for launch by the end of May, to bring together resources across the sector and elevate best practice and shared learning. Transferring from the existing [Knowledge hub](#) which holds over 100 resources,

- Representing interests of members alongside national strategic partners, contributing a valuable, and valued, local government perspective on a broad and diverse range of Government policy initiatives.

13. **Armed Forces:** Following the publication of the Armed Forces Bill, we are working with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to develop the statutory guidance that will accompany the new statutory duty on public authorities, including councils, to have 'due regard' to the Armed Forces Covenant. We are also calling for MOD to undertake a full review of additional costs incurred by councils after the first year of implementation, pending publication of the New Burdens assessment.

### **City Regions and People and Places Boards**

14. The People and Places and City Regions Boards continue to focus on support around devolution, jobs and skills, growth and the SDGs. Moving forward work will also start to focus more on economic recovery.

15. **Export Toolkit:** Developed an Export Project to support councils who want to take a greater role in supporting export businesses. This includes a number of best practice examples, including developing export pathways to encouraging diaspora links and cultural exchange. We are currently working with the Department of International Trade to finalise publication arrangements following strong departmental interest.

16. **Devolution deal to delivery:** This project has carried out research with politicians, officers and external stakeholders in each combined authority area, looking at the process they had been on to secure a devolution deal, and what has worked well in the process of establishing a combined authority. It has extracted learning from this process about the ways that each of the combined authorities function, what questions councils exploring becoming a combined authority could consider, and what other options there are for collaboration if councils decide not to go down the route of a combined authority. The project is currently finalising a series of deep dives into selected combined authorities to look in more detail at specific contrasts around geography, governance and structures.

17. **Town and parish council devolution** framework project sets out a framework to guide principal authorities who are interested in supporting town and parish councils in their areas. We have engaged well with NALC and across the Town and Parish sector to deliver this support and will be proceeding with publication following elections.

18. **Tech Skills:** We have been conducting area-based skills forecasts of high-tech industries out to 2030, backed by case studies of good practice from local areas. The project is now complete and data is being integrated into LG Inform with case studies uploaded to economic recovery portal. Press work is in development following elections.

19. **Youth employment:** Young people's life chances have been severely affected by the economic implications of the COVID-19 crisis. Local government has statutory responsibilities for young people and those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). We know that it is a challenging time for the sector, therefore, we commissioned York Consulting to undertake an action learning project that focussed on developing a better understanding of the barriers and challenges for councils in fulfilling their statutory duties for young people. The project supported eleven areas and delivered two workshops, sharing best practice. The project completed at the end of March 2021. A final report with a range of case studies and recommendation on improving the offer for young people is ready for publication.
20. **Local government's role in jobs and skills recovery:** Local government continues to be at the forefront of efforts to coordinate jobs and training offers for residents and businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic and as we move towards recovery. To share learning and ideas across the sector we commissioned two online resources to be launched on 20 May at an LGA webinar. These include: 1) *Top tips on five themes to boost a local jobs and skills recovery* setting out what local government can do to: deal with economic shocks and opportunities, improve basic skills and capabilities, retrain the local population, addressing long-term unemployment and youth unemployment. 2) A range of case studies demonstrating local government's role to support jobs and skills during the crisis and looking ahead to recovery. This is accompanied by a report capturing learning for the wider sector and LGA.
21. **Mapping national employment and skills provision:** Most employment and skills provision is commissioned and procured nationally by Government departments or their agencies on different geographic boundaries. This makes it challenging for local government employment and skills teams to know what support is available and when. This project maps provision out and will help improve conversations between local and national government on how to collaborate on existing provision by geography and any future opportunity. This will be available in the summer.

## **Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT) Board**

22. **Economic recovery:** Three good practice guides were published by the LGA to support councils in their work on local economic recovery. These include guides on:
- [Local Economic Recovery Planning](#) (A playbook for action);
  - Microbusinesses ([How well do you know your Microbusinesses](#)) and
  - [Dealing with Empty Shops](#).
23. **Housing Advisers Programme:** [The 2020/21 Housing Advisers Programme \(HAP\)](#) closed for applications on 7th January 2021. There were 41 applications for funding and 17 councils were awarded grants of up to £20,000 for projects ranging from delivery carbon neutral homes to redesigning homelessness prevention services to address the

impacts of COVID-19. The list of successful applicants is as follows: Isle of Wight Council; Sunderland City Council; Wokingham Borough Council; West of England Combined Authority; Oxford City Council; Hertsmere Borough Council; Castle Point Borough Council; South Gloucestershire Council; Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames; King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council; Hertfordshire County Council, as lead partner of the Hertfordshire Property Partnership (HPP); Cornwall Council; Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea; East Riding of Yorkshire Council; Mid Devon District Council; Bristol City Council; Council of the Isles of Scilly.

24. **Leadership Essentials Course – Housing:** This was due to run from 4th- 5th February 2021. Due to a combination of a lack of registrations and the limitations of lockdown the course has been postponed until 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> September 2021.
25. **Leading the Homelessness Sector – a councillor's guide:** The LGA has published a written [guide](#) for elected members which will support them to effectively perform their role in shaping and scrutinising the local response to homelessness. The guide was launched at a training event on the 11 May 2021.
26. **Joint event with the National Housing Federation (NHF):** We ran a joint workshop with the NHF on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021 on partnership working around homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on identifying lessons learned and actions for the future. The outputs from the workshop will be fed into the [Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping](#), of which our Chairman is a member.

## **Children and Young People Board**

27. **Youth Services:** We held an online conference on 24<sup>th</sup> February to bring together youth service leads and councillors to hear from a young person, other local areas and experts in the sector about how they have coped during Covid-19.
28. **Early Years:** We have continued to share information with early years teams throughout Covid-19, supporting them to interpret guidance and acting as an intermediary between them and central government. We continue to receive very positive feedback from early years local authority teams.
29. **CAMHS:** For children's mental health week we collated a series of good practice examples, showcasing the work that councils have been doing to support children and young people's mental health throughout periods of lockdown.
30. We also ran a webinar on whole household approaches to mental health, showcasing work commissioned by the LGA into how councils and partners can come together to implement a joined-up model of support for families. This was undertaken jointly with the Community Wellbeing Board.

31. **Education and social care:** We have published [research looking at the response of local education and children's services departments to the Covid-19 pandemic](#). The research looked at council's initial response to the lockdown, adapting to the lockdown, the 'new normal' and; the return to lockdown, before identifying a number opportunities that have arisen from the pandemic period.

## **Safer and Stronger Communities Board**

32. **Counter Extremism:** we have ran two successful training courses for a total of 50 practitioners on strategies for effective communications and engagement with communities to tackle far-right extremism. In partnership with the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE), we also hosted two well-attended webinars on COVID-19 and conspiracy theories, and on approaches to online community tension monitoring. A further three practitioner roundtables also took place to explore emerging extremism and cohesion issues.
33. We ran some bespoke training sessions for elected members at a council facing significant issues around far-right extremism, and also held a joint event with the SIGCE and EELGA for elected members and senior officers in the East of England region about extremism challenges throughout the pandemic.
34. We have continued to work with the SIGCE's Faith Based Extremism Working Group, which brings together councils working on issues relating to "Islamist" extremism, and which has commissioned research into the impact of terminology on effective engagement and delivery of counter-extremism and Prevent work. We also continued to meet with the SIGCE's Far Right Working Group, working to proactively respond to far-right activism and providing dedicated support to affected local authorities.
35. **Domestic Abuse Act workshops:** The LGA has held a series of workshops with local government domestic abuse leads to discuss the new measures in the Domestic Abuse Act and the new statutory duty on local authorities. Over 300 delegates joined the workshop sessions, and an informal peer network has been established. We will continue to hold future sessions over the coming months, to help share best practice and learning.
36. **COVID compliance and enforcement activity:** We have continued our work to support councils with their COVID-19 compliance and enforcement activity, with several hundred officers attending our regular webinars to hear councils' experience on planning for different stages of the roadmap and the reopening of hospitality.



## **Resources Board**

37. **Social Work Health Check:** The National Social Work Health Check Report was launched at an LGA webinar on 17 February attended by 161 social work professionals and chaired by the Chief Social Worker for Adults. The report is based on over 9,000 responses from social workers across 133 councils and is now available on our website.
38. **Returners Programmes:** The Returners Programmes span Social Work, Legal, Planning and ICT. Returners have now completed their training programmes and graduation ceremonies took place at the end of April. 66 councils and over 300 candidates are now in contact with one another.
39. **Environmental Health and Social Work Together Programmes:** Councils are using our Together Programmes more and extensions have been agreed until the Autumn. The Environmental Health talent platform went live in October 2020 and has attracted 224 qualified Environmental Health Officers, with 122 councils subscribed. The Social Work Together talent pool registered over 1,000 qualified social workers, with 108 councils subscribed. Councils can use both of these resources free-of-charge to help support their Environmental Health and Social Work teams and avoid agency costs by employing directly.
40. **Apprenticeships:** The second iteration of our Apprenticeships Action Learning Programme for councils was launched in January 2021 and is supporting officers from 40 councils in five groups. Each group is helping councils work through challenges on issues like workforce development, leadership and culture and engagement, based on the LGA's Apprenticeships Maturity Model.
41. In total across our apprenticeships programme in 2020/21 we have:
- Reached officers from 163 councils at least once through our webinar programme;
  - Signed up 40 councils for the second phase of our Action Learning Programme;
  - Completed four apprenticeship MOT health checks;
  - Supported more than 40 councils via the LGA-funded End Point Assessment service provided by South West Councils (SWC), with over 100 apprentices certified;
  - Provided Levy Transfer policy development support to councils including Barnsley, Shropshire and Islington
42. **Workforce Planning:** The LGA Workforce Team provided two days funded bespoke workforce planning support to 36 local authorities, focusing on strategy and skills development, senior management development sessions and a benchmarking service that includes recommendations for improvement. The LGA also facilitates a national workforce planning network bringing together participating councils to share practice and learning, focusing on workforce planning during the pandemic. Between November and



March, we launched the Workforce Planning Workshops with 23 councils participating and receiving support through to the end of the 20/21 financial year.

43. **Workforce Guidance Publications and Bulletins:** Following the decision by Government to scrap the £95k cap on exit payments we issued a series of guidance notes to local government on implications on exit payments already made. By January 2021 we had also provided direct consultancy services to 14 local government employers on a range of strategic and operational HR issues, including senior employee relations issues, organisational design proposals and job evaluation.
44. **Schools:** Between January and March, as well as conducting the national consultation on teachers' pay on behalf of NEOST we also hosted two webinars on understanding and applying teachers' pay, attended by up to 500 delegates.
45. **Wellbeing, Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI):** Promoted wellbeing resources to councils between January and March 2021 via campaign days (e.g. Time to Talk with Dudley MBC councillors video). Hosted a webinar with over 500 delegates in partnership with the charity Our Frontline. Also contributed to the Government's paper on resources for local government employees, and social care in particular, on mental health support for the prevention of suicide. Workforce and Improvement Teams held a joint webinar on workforce and organisational EDI good practice with around 300 delegates, chaired by Cllr Paulette Hamilton with speakers from the London Borough of Haringey and the NHS.

## **Equalities Implications**

46. Officers continue to seek to ensure that issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion are factored in decision making processes and work undertaken with councils. This includes support to protect vulnerable people, enhance community cohesion and increase diversity within councils and the local government workforce.

## **Implications for Wales**

47. We are working closely with colleagues in WLGA to ensure that we share learning and best practice based from our work.

## **Financial Implications**

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

## **Next steps**

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