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

Improvement Update

1. With the easing of Covid-19 restrictions in July, face to face support offers have been able to resume, including the Corporate Peer Challenges. Remote peer support remains available, including recovery and renewal panels, remote corporate health checks and bespoke remote peer support.

2. The LGA has proactively engaged with councils following local government elections in England in May. Support has been offered to all councils that have seen a change of political control and our regional teams have already provided support (including top team development, mentoring and other leadership training) to more than 75% of those councils. We continue to be in conversation with those who have yet to receive support and have provided further support to a number of councils where there has been a change of leader or portfolio holder.

3. Councils interested in accessing peer support or support following elections should contact their Principal Advisor for further information.

Leadership and Localism

4. **Webinar: Becoming an effective ward councillor**

   On Wednesday 21 July, the Leadership team hosted a webinar for new and recently elected members on being an effective ward councillor. Chaired by Cllr Liz Green, Lead Member for Climate Change/Sharing Practice, and Alison Edwards, Adviser – Leadership, the webinar provided delegates a deeper understanding of their ward role and how they might increase their effectiveness by outlining the main areas of the ward councillor position and discussed the key skills needed to be effective in carrying out day-to-day activities. The webinar was attended by 43 councillors.

5. **Webinar: Developing a safe and effective social media presence event**

   On Monday 13 September, the Leadership team hosted a webinar with a focus on the use of social media. Chaired by Cllr Peter Fleming, Chairman of the Improvement and Innovation Board, the session provided newly and recently elected councillors with an overview of social media platforms and supplied them with tips and advice on how to build an effective online presence and build their reputation, whilst staying safe. The webinar was attended by 59 councillors.

6. From September a number of our Leadership programmes have commenced including Communication and Media; Fire and Rescue; Effective Cabinet Member; Climate Emergency; Housing; Economic Growth; Leading Healthier Places and Risk Management. We also have started our 200th Leadership Academy which is the flagship political leadership programme of the LGA recognised by the Institute of Leadership and

Management. On October 9th-10th, the LGA held a Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Councillors Event providing a unique and networking opportunity to BAME elected members committed to developed their leadership effectiveness and careers.

7. More [Leadership programmes](#) are set to take place in the near future. Our Annual Young Councillors Weekender event taking place on 13-14 November, our Women Councillors Weekender event 4-5 December 2021 and our annual Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Councillors Weekender taking place 19-20 February 2022.

We have launched a second Leadership Essentials EDI programme for councillors: Leadership Essentials: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The aim of the course is to strengthen the skills of councillors to champion equality, diversity and inclusion within their elected role.

Climate Change

8. **LGA Annual Conference 2021: Green light services to address our planetary emergency**

The climate change plenary session on green light services to address our planetary emergency took place on 7 July and was chaired by Councillor Liz Green. The session featured speakers from local, national and international organisations who discussed the importance of local government in the fight against climate change and their role at COP26. It was attended by 313 attendees.

9. **Webinar blog: Greening procurement**

In this session, attended by 133 councils, we heard first-hand experience from different local authorities about their innovative approaches to procurement. Councillor Neil Prior, Lead Member for Transparency, Productivity & Efficiency. chaired the session which included early market engagement; collaborating with stakeholders and suppliers; and the use of design and technology to overcome and mitigate climate challenges.

10. **Local Action for Our Environment Podcast**

The LGA has released the Local Action for Our Environment podcast [(linked here)](#), a training resource for council officers and Members. Focusing on community engagement, this podcast helps support councils on a pathway to net zero, enabling councils to fight climate change locally with the right tools, techniques and know how. We are very pleased that\ Councillor Liz Green has been the podcast host for the series.

Data and Digital

11. Over the summer, Councillor Peter Fleming was interviewed by Executive TV for an industry programme to be broadcast on Sky TV, called 'Adopting Transformation', in which he talked about digital transformation and the use of location data in local government. Following the broadcast on 10 October, the programme has been available at http://www.executivetv.org

12. **Cyber Security – 10 questions for a 'layperson' to ask**

Following engagement with Councillors and colleagues in Local Government, the Cyber Security and Digital team have produced a list of potential questions that can be used by councillors to find out more about their councils cyber security planning which are as follows:

I. How does my council understand, assess, manage, and remediate cyber-risk and what testing regimes, policies, processes and tools do we use?

II. Do my council's decision makers and scrutineers have the knowledge and information they need to make/scrutinize decisions relating to cyber-risk?

III. How do officers back up council data – is this secure, offline and regularly tested?

IV. Are staff given training on their role in reducing cyber-risk? Is cyber security understood as a whole workforce issue?

V. Do members receive regular cyber security updates – including on threats, incidents and near misses?

VI. How does my council use the National Cyber Security Centre's tools and services?

VII. What are the response, recovery and continuity plans for cyber incidents? Are they exercised and tested?

VIII. How would we deliver services if, following a cyber-incident, we had no access to IT?

IX. What are we doing to understand and manage cyber security risk within the supply chain?

X. How well connected is my council with others who it may learn from, or may support it in the result of and attack?

13. **Housing**

Our Housing Advisors Programme returned in September for a 5th year and is now open to applications. This programme is part of the LGA's sector-led improvement offer and aims to continue to fund the provision of expert support to Councils wanting to transform the delivery and quality of homes and places in their communities and reduce homelessness. The programme will award up to £20k or successful applicants to secure expert advice.

14. **Publications**

This section outlines the publications and media releases that have occurred since the previous Councillors' Forum.

July

LGA responds to NAO report on Implementing Digital Change

Responding to a National Audit Office report on 'The challenges in implementing digital change', Cllr Peter Fleming, Chair of the Local Government Association's Improvement and

Innovation Board said: "Over the last year, councils in particular have been at the forefront of this change, with the pandemic driving a rapid digital expansion within local government to match the growing need to engage with and inform local people."

August

[LGA launches Digital Pathfinders Programme](#)

The Local Government Association (LGA) has launched its Digital Pathfinders Programme to help councils innovate and pioneer projects to advance digital inclusion, digital connectivity, and cyber security.

Wider Coverage on Digital Pathfinders Programme included:

[UK Authority](#)
[Public Sector Executive](#) -
[LocalGovUK](#)
[Computer Weekly](#)

15. Local Government First Magazine Activity

The following articles were published in First Magazine delivered by the Improvement and Innovation Board's Lead Members:

First 661, dated July 21

- [A baseline for emissions](#) (covering greenhouse gas accounting tool by Cllr Liz Green)
- [Addressing barriers to being a councillor](#) (covering Be a Councillor Programme and diversity and inclusion by Cllr Judi Billing, Lead Member for Leadership)
- [Digital political leadership](#) (covering digital and data training by Cllr Peter Fleming)

First 662, dated Aug 21

- [Fresh talent](#) (covering Be a Councillor Programme, young people and NGDP by Cllr Judi Billing)

First 663, dated Sept 21

- [Net-zero innovation](#) (covering the net zero innovation programme by Cllr Liz Green)
- [Digital pathfinders](#) (See above – covering the programme's launch by Cllr Peter Fleming)

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