

## **Innovation Zone 2022 Update**

### **Purpose**

For direction.

### **Summary**

This report provides an update on the proposed approach to the Innovation Zone 2022 as part of the LGA Annual Conference. The report includes an outline of the purpose of the Zone, the focuses of next year's Innovation Zone and opportunities for member involvement. It asks for Member views on the approach to be taken.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the members note the report and discuss initial ideas for the format of the 2022 Innovation Zone including format of delivery.

### **Actions**

1. Subject to Members' comments, officers to progress the delivery of the Innovation Zone
2. Subject to Members' comments, Innovation Working Group to be set up by officers to provide advice and guidance
3. Request for Members to share any significant examples of innovative practice from the sector with relevant officers

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## **Innovation Zone 2022 Update**

### **Background**

1. The Innovation Zone is a core part of the LGA's Annual conference due to occur on 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> June in Harrogate. The Zone represents a vibrant and creative space separating itself from other parts of the conference by holding a series of open, walk-in, sessions throughout highlighting exciting and significant innovative ideas going on in the local government sector.
2. The Innovation Zone offers an interactive space to share examples of innovative practice from councils as well as public sector and private sector organisations (including international organisations), provided that their session is linked to local government.

### **Approach to Sessions**

3. The Innovation Zone 2022 comes at a significant time in local government as the sector looks to continue to respond and recover from the ongoing pandemic, drive delivery in response to the climate crisis and achieve local priorities including community engagement, economic regeneration, and progress on equalities, diversity and inclusion.
4. In this context this year's Innovation Zone is looking to adopt the theme 'Resilience and Renewal', which captures a broad range of ideas across the main ambitions and challenges impacting the sector, including
  - Empowering communities
  - Economic recovery and renewal
  - Enhancing living standards
  - Place leadership
  - Equalities, diversity and inclusion
  - Responses to climate change
5. Applications to hold a session at the Innovation Zone will open later in December 2021 with a view to close by March 2022. Applicants will be asked to give an outline of their innovative idea, the outcomes it has achieved and how this is relevant to other councils. We will look to supplement these through proactive identification of further ideas and examples of innovative practice from across the sector.

### **Improvement and Innovation Board input**

- 6 There is an opportunity for members of the Improvement and Innovation Board to be involved in the design and delivery of the Innovation Zone.
- 7 A member-led Innovation working group will be set up. The group will meet 3 times in the coming months to provide advice on the process and discuss how the Zone should progress. This will be to discuss approach to format of the Innovation Zone, to finalise selection of sessions and to update on the Innovation Zone at the end of the process. Provisionally it is expected therefore to meet in January, April and June, 2022. We will work with the political group offices to ensure appropriate representation across the group.
- 8 We are currently developing a number of ideas for the 2022 Innovation Zone, including the following:
  - 8.1 Exploring how to develop the Innovation Zone to be a central part of the overall conference.
  - 8.2 Exploring how to incorporate successes seen during COP 26 into the Innovation Zone approach.
  - 8.3 Considering options to make sessions or some elements of the Innovation Zone hybrid to be accessed by those outside of the conference.
  - 8.4 Considering options to utilise digital opportunities to improve delivery of sessions including through screens and interactive displays.
  - 8.5 Using the Innovation Zone as an opportunity to increase awareness and understanding of the LGA's sector-led improvement offer.
  - 8.6 Comments are welcome on aspects mentioned in the report and any others.

### **Equality, diversity and inclusion considerations**

- 9 The application process for this year's Innovation Zone encourages applications that focus incorporate an equalities, diversity and inclusion process with a view to shine a spotlight on good practice in this area. The diversity of applicants will be factored as a key consideration during the selection for the sessions to be delivered.

### **Environmental considerations**

- 10 Sessions focusing on combating climate change are welcome as part of the focus of the Innovation Zone.

### **Implications for Wales**

11 Welsh councils will be encouraged to apply to take part in the Innovation Zone.

### **Financial Implications**

12 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### **Next steps**

13 Members are asked to note the approach for the 2022 Innovation Zone.

14 Members encouraged to attend the Innovation Zone and to encourage attendance.

15 Members asked to email [Henry.Butt@local.gov.uk](mailto:Henry.Butt@local.gov.uk) and [Mia.Shelton@local.gov.uk](mailto:Mia.Shelton@local.gov.uk) with examples of innovative work in local government for potential Innovation Zone sessions, including from own councils.

16 Innovation Zone Working Group to commence and provide advice and guidance where necessary, facilitated by LGA officers.