

Note of last Improvement & Innovation Board meeting (Confidential)

Title: Improvement & Innovation Board
Date: Thursday 7 October 2021
Venue: Beecham Room, 18 Smith Square, and online via Zoom

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

Item Decisions and actions

1 Welcome, Apologies & Declarations of Interest

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and in particular, the new members who had joined the Board since July.

Apologies were received from Cllr Judi Billing.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Note of the Previous Meeting

Cllr Nigel Ashton suggested that the 87 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) the IIB were responsible for monitoring were too numerous to properly consider and that it was not possible to draw out the ones that were important and their impact. In response, the Board heard that the 87 KPIs were a requirement of the grant agreement with Government, and it was important for the Board to be aware of progress against the agreement as this was the way that DLUHC were monitoring progress and holding the LGA accountable. Officers agreed to consider how Cllr Ashton's suggestion could be addressed going forward.

Decision:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 July 2021 were **agreed** as a correct record.

Action:

Officers to consider how to balance the need to report back to DLUHC against the 87 KPI's and the need for the Board to be able to assess the impact of the programme against a smaller set of measures.

3 Membership, terms of reference and board priorities for 2021/22

Dennis Skinner, Head of Improvement, introduced the item explaining that whilst this Board was one of nine that reported to the LGA's Executive Advisory Board, it had some unique characteristics including independent members.

In recent years, Government had been much more prescriptive in the LGA's use of its improvement grant and this year had seen the government effectively contracted the LGA to deliver a programme of work that they wished to purchase. The recent reshuffle was an opportunity for officers to lobby for increased flexibility to allow the LGA to be appropriately responsive to the needs to the sector. Clarity was being sought on the Minister that would hold the local government brief.

An induction for new Members of the Board, as well as a refresher for existing Members, was planned and details would be circulated outside of the meeting once finalised.

Decision:

Improvement & Innovation Board **noted** its membership; **agreed** its Terms of Reference; and **noted** its priorities for the coming year.

4 Sector support programme for 2022 onwards - verbal update - CONFIDENTIAL

Matthew Hamilton, Head of Improvement Coordination and Strategy, explained that the LGA had over £17m awarded to provide sector support, including, but not limited to Peer Challenge, Leadership development and climate change support. Whilst more clarity on portfolio holders in Government was awaited, he considered that the direction of travel of discussions so far was positive and noted repeated mentions of the leadership that local government displayed.

A three-year spending settlement was expected for the first time and officers were preparing an options paper for a range of potential outcomes from the review.

During the subsequent discussion, Members raised the following points:

- That the cost of one-year settlements was around 8% higher than that of multi-year settlements, due to increased staff and management time in negotiations and understanding the implications of a settlement, amongst other things. It was therefore a key lobbying point that any grant could be better spent in a multi-year settlement; and
- That the Member induction/refresher session could be extended in part to other interested Members at the LGA.

Decision:

Improvement & Innovation Board **noted** the update.

5 Be a Councillor - CONFIDENTIAL

The Board received a presentation from Virginia Ponton, Adviser Leadership and Localism, and Helen Jenkins, Head of Leadership.

After the presentation on the Be A Councillor programme, the following points were raised by Members:

- More needed to be done to support parents, especially mothers, when a number of Councils did not operate a parental leave policy for Councillors
- Death threats and abuse continued to drive women Councillors and those from underrepresented communities out of their roles.
- What more could be done to improve the visibility of fantastic Councillors from underrepresented communities
- Participation will only be improved by adoption of virtual and hybrid Council meetings, especially for those with access requirements or caring responsibilities
- There were fewer women Council leaders than MPs
- More honesty was needed for prospective Councillors around the commitment required, responsibilities and remuneration
- Timings of any programme to drive up engagement with the process to become a councillor needed to bear in mind election cycles for Councils and also selection processes for parties
- Was there a compromise whereby a Councillor's home address would not need to be published as readily as was the case currently, which might help potential Councillors feel more safe?
- The Army Reserve had done good work in explaining to employers the benefits that employing Army Reservists would bring to that organisation. Was there best practice there that could be used by the LGA to prepare a similar package for employers of Councillors?

Decision:

That the Board's comments were **noted**, and subject to those comments, the actions noted in the report were **approved**.

6 Cyber security threats to councils - verbal update - CONFIDENTIAL

Items 6 & 7 were taken at the same time.

The Board received a presentation from Owen Pritchard, Programme Manager, Cyber Security, on cyber security threats to councils.

During the subsequent discussion, the following points were raised:

- Challenges for all Councillors to bring more of this to bear in authorities
- The presentation was to be welcomed and provided very useful colour for the Board, and that if there was a way to get the presentation to a wider audience it should be encouraged, via LGA Board or Executive Advisory Board
- The list of questions that Councillors should ask of their Councils should be circulated via the LGA's channels
- A training course was under development and being offered to IIB Members and Council Chief Executives, and resource-dependent, could be further rolled out to Lead Members and relevant Chairs
- There had traditionally been a challenge for Councils in making capital investments in improving IT, but as a move was being made to more subscription models, this was easing
- Councils would do well to remember that this was the first time since the second world war that the UK was under regular, sustained attack from foreign agents

Decision:

Improvement & Innovation Board **noted** the presentation and update.

Actions:

Owen Pritchard to consider methods for sharing the presentation received to a wider audience of Councils and Councillors, noting the security sensitivities around that.

Owen Pritchard to work with the LGA's communications team of sharing the list of questions that Councillors should ask of their Council via the LGA's channels.

7 Improvement Support to Councils - Cyber, Digital and Technology

The Board received a report on cyber, digital and technology support to Councils.

Decision:

Improvement & Innovation Board **noted** the update.

8 Care & Health Improvement Programme update

The Board received the update report on the Care and Health Improvement Programme (CHIP) from Andrew Hughes, Director of Health and Wellbeing Systems Improvement. The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) had made a request of the LGA to provide members for a number of working groups that ADASS had set up.

In respect of those Councils who were seeing boundary issues following the establishment of Integrated Care Systems over different geographies than their Council boundaries, the LGA were actively engaging Councils affected and seeing what support they could be offered.

Decision:

Improvement & Innovation Board **noted** the update.

Action:

Andy Hughes would ensure that the list of LGA appointments to ADASS bodies would be shared with the Board.

9 AOB

There were no additional items of urgent business.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Peter Fleming OBE	Sevenoaks District Council
Vice-Chair	Cllr Liz Green	Kingston upon Thames Royal Borough Council
Deputy-Chair	Cllr Neil Prior	Pembrokeshire County Council
Members	Cllr Nigel Ashton	North Somerset Council
	Cllr Carl Les	North Yorkshire County Council
	Cllr Laura Miller	Dorset Council
	Cllr Phil North	Test Valley Borough Council
	Cllr Alice Perry	Islington Council
	Cllr Tim Roca	Westminster City Council
	Cllr Asma Begum	Tower Hamlets Council
	Cllr Vince Maple	Medway Council
	Cllr Oliver Ryan	Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Peter Mason	Ealing Council
	Mayor Peter Taylor	Watford Borough Council
	Cllr Alex Coley	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
	Cllr Mike Haines	Teignbridge District Council
	Mr Philip Sellwood CBE	Independent member
Apologies	Cllr Judi Billing MBE	Hertfordshire County Council
In Attendance	Cllr Kam Kaur (as substitute)	Warwickshire County Council
	Cllr Anthony McKeown (as substitute)	High Peak Borough Council
	Cllr Steve Norman	Lichfield District Council