

28 July 2022

## Innovation Zone – Wrap Up

### Purpose of report

For discussion

### Summary

This report provides an overview of the Innovation Zone process

Is this report confidential? Yes  No

### Recommendations

Improvement and Innovation Board (IIB) to review overview of Innovation Zone to consider approach to inform next year's delivery.

### Actions

Members to discuss the Innovation Zone planning and delivery, and wider conference, to reflect on what went well and where improvement can occur.

**Contact officer:** Henry Butt  
**Position:** Improvement Strategy Advisor  
**Email:** henry.butt@local.gov.uk

## Innovation Zone Wrap Up

### 1. Background

- 1.1 The LGA's Conference took place on June 28<sup>th</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup> 2022 at the Harrogate Convention Centre.
- 1.2 The Innovation Zone (IZ) is a significant part of the LGA's Annual conference. The IZ offers a vibrant and creative space involving a series of open, walk-in, sessions highlighting exciting and innovative ideas of significance to the local government sector.
- 1.3 Sessions featured were being delivered by council representatives as well as public sector and private sector organisations, provided that their content links to local government and had a tangible impact on the sector.
- 1.4 This report provides an overview of the approach to IZ preparations, some reflections on the delivery of the zone and some questions to be considered to support planning for next year's IZ.

### 2. Approach and planning

- 2.1 The IZ was led by a small project team including members of the Improvement Coordination and Strategy team, the Events team, Communications team and Campaigns team.
- 2.2 Applications for the IZ were made live in January 2022 (open for 4 weeks). A short application form was produced, incorporating the agreed theme of 'resilience and renewal'.
- 2.3 Applications were reviewed by members of the project team and internal subject experts to identify the most innovative, impactful and interesting sessions to schedule. The decision on applications considered the type of council applying, the region of the council, the backgrounds of the speakers, variety in the sessions offered and ensuring representation across political spectrum. In total more than 110 applications were received with 36 sessions ultimately selected to make up the IZ session programme.
- 2.4 The IZ also featured 7 "Spotlight On" Talks. These were more proactively selected based on known significant challenges in the sector and/or opportunities to include excellent speakers.
- 2.5 The LGA committed to regularly updating IIB members on the IZ's progress. This occurred through two progress updates delivered to the board in the early stages of planning (December) and towards the end (May). In addition, a

Member's Working Group was implemented to allow for political oversight across the planning process including the approach to content, the space and activity on the day.

2.6 The IZ programme was promoted across a range of communications channels including LGA bulletins, social media and press releases including First Magazine.

### **3. Innovation Zone Delivery at Conference**

3.1 The IZ featured 3 stands for presentations to take place, as well as a coffee area and seating area. Stands included headphones to minimise noise disruptions when multiple presentations occurred at the same time. The IZ was part of the LGA Hub, which also featured the Campaigns area, which included further seating.

3.2 The IZ was opened by Cllr Peter Fleming, chair of the IIB, it featured an overview of the programme ahead and also launched the LGA's Annual Report, covering improvement activity 2021-2022. The opening culminated with a talk from Sarah Luke, of Embed, who spoke on how Resilience and Renewal could be used to achieve positive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion outcomes.

3.3 Sessions were planned with reference to the wider conference programme to chart the best times to hold them. On some days, session leads were asked to have a presence throughout the day to ensure there was always some activity in the IZ. This included augmented reality experiences, tech demonstrations and walkthroughs on tools and resources. Where possible, we attempted to have diverse sessions happening simultaneously, so delegates did not have to pick between similar clashing presentations.

3.4 The 7 Spotlight on Talks were promoted separately and were delivered exclusively of all other activity to ensure they had maximum engagement. Our Spotlight on Climate Panel was the most popular session across the 3 days with over 120 people attending that single session. The talks also included a notable presentation from Karl Lokko, discussing his life experience as a former gang leader turned activist.

3.5 Lead Members of the IIB and those in the Member's Working Group had an active role in the IZ. Members played a key role introducing Spotlight on talks, launching the IZ and promoting wider IZ activity across the conference.

3.6 The sessions across the 3 days were highly attended with many timeslots being standing room only (see appendix for images). A session time on the Thursday morning was particularly popular where nearly 300 people attended across the

3 sessions being delivered (Social Housing Peer Challenge, How Drones can benefit Council Services and Connected Community Project: Pembrokeshire).

- 3.7 Feedback for the IZ was overwhelmingly positive gaining recognition from the [LGC](#) and delegates. Positive comments were focused on the energy of the zone in addition to the learning offered and the diversity of the programme.

#### **4. Considerations**

4.1 To help inform planning for the IZ in 2023 it would be fantastic to hear your feedback including views on the following:

- a. What do you think worked well about the IZ? (both in planning and in delivery)
- b. what would you like to see carried forward from this year?
- c. What could have gone better?
- d. Any reflection on the role of the IIB in the process?
- e. Any thoughts on the wider conference and its programme?

#### **5. Financial implications**

- 5.1. The Innovation Zone is funded via existing LGA budgets.

#### **6. Implications for Wales**

- 6.1. Welsh councils are welcome and encouraged to apply to showcase their ideas at the Innovation Zone.

#### **7. Equalities Implications**

- 7.1 The LGA is committed to increasing diversity at all levels of local government and will ensure there are opportunities to include those from underrepresented groups, within the conference programme.

#### **8. Next Steps**

- 8.1. Reflections from the IIB and other stakeholders is being captured. These will be used to inform the process of planning for next year's Innovation Zone at conference in Bournemouth.

**Appendix A – Innovation Zone Images**





