

Meeting: Improvement and Innovation Board

Date: 15 December 2022



Economic Growth Improvement Support Offer Update

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This report updates the Improvement and Innovation Board on the LGA Economic Growth Improvement support offer for 2022/23.

Is this report confidential? No

Recommendations

That the Improvement and Innovation Board considers the report and agrees any follow-up action.

Contact details

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Economic Growth Improvement Support Offer Update

Background

1. Enhancing the role and capacity of local councils to deliver economic growth is a key priority for the LGA and forms part of our improvement support work with DLUHC. As set out in the grant determination letter, the LGA's economic support offer includes two key support programmes:
 - a) an Economic Growth Advisers' Programme, which will boost council capacity to deliver local economic growth and
 - b) an Economic Recovery Programme, which will deliver tools and resources including roundtables, masterclasses and E-learning offer for councillors and officers to support councils to tackle unemployment; address skills shortages; design a healthy high street; provide support for SMEs; adapt local economies to climate change impacts and low carbon growth and help councils to improve the digital skills of their local businesses.
2. In 2022/23, these programmes will deliver:
 - Economic Growth Advisers to support councils with skills and additional capacity to address their local economic challenges
 - Guidance and support to councils in their convener role to provide them with skills to address local economic challenges, particularly through collaboration with other councils and local institutions, through peer support, an online economic growth hub, toolkits, good practice and roundtables.
3. The Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for this programme are:
 - Delivery of learning and development opportunities, with at least 85 per cent of participants reporting that the support has improved their ability to carry out their role – by the end of March 2023.
 - A national learning event to share best practice through participants from the previous Economic Growth Advisers programme – by the end of December 2022.
 - At least 80 per cent of respondents in councils that have participated in the Economic Growth Advisers Programme report that it provided them with skills to address local economic challenges – by the end of March 2023.
4. Based on feedback from our member councils and the Principal Advisers, we have designed the following improvement support offer to councils to support their economic recovery in their local area. Two clear improvement support needs have emerged in the feedback from councils. Firstly, the importance of building capacity and skills in terms of economic growth in councils, and secondly, the role that the LGA can play in sharing learning and helping councils to replicate what has worked well in other areas.

5. In 2022/23 we will be delivering the following improvement support offers:

Economic Growth Advisers

6. The Productivity team are leading the Economic Growth Advisers programme to provide bespoke advice and capacity to local authorities to help them deliver economic growth in their area. The Advisers role includes helping councils to deliver a specific project, help to bring local partners together or assist with the development of a strategic approach to economic recovery. This year we have tried to link each of our projects with the twelve Levelling Up Missions outlined by Government:

- Living standards
- Research and development
- Transport and infrastructure
- Digital connectivity
- Education
- Skills
- Health
- Wellbeing
- Pride in place
- Housing
- Crime
- Local leadership

7. For the 2022/23 programme the LGA will be supporting ten councils with an adviser. The full list of councils being supported can be found in **Annex 1**. We have worked with the LGA research team and Principal Advisors to identify those councils most at need of the support and to ensure the councils we work with comprises of a mix of different types of councils, ensuring learning is applicable across the sector.

Economic Growth Advisers Alumni Event

8. As set out in this year's KPIs, we will be delivering a national learning event to share best practice through participants from the previous Economic Growth Advisers (EGA) programme. We have already hosted one webinar in October to showcase three examples of EGA projects from the 2021/22 cohort, Tamworth, North Somerset, and Hartlepool Council. An additional event in February 2023 will host learnings from our current 22/23 projects. The events will be chaired by a nominated councillor who we have worked with on the economic growth programme, and there will be a generous amount of time for questions from attendees.
9. To share the learning from the event we will be producing a blog and any slides or materials used will also be made available on the LGA website. The blog and slides from the October event are available on the [LGA's Economic Growth Support Hub](#).

Economic Growth Leadership Essentials Course

10. This councillor training programme aimed to enhance local leadership skills and capacity to lead economic growth, development, and resilience, and were delivered by expert facilitators. This year's programmes were held in person as a two-day residential. The topics covered were:

- The Councillor role in the Levelling Up agenda including practical examples from other councils;
- The link between economic growth and health including links to the Healthy High Streets work;
- The Councillor role in engaging with investors and local businesses;
- How Councillors can encourage an increase in aspirations regarding skills and jobs amongst local people;

LGA UK Shared Prosperity Fund Hub

11. Following the publication of the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#) (UKSPF) prospectus, the LGA engaged across the sector to understand the key issues for lead authorities. We developed a [UKSPF Hub](#) that included a number of LGA resources to help with the development of local investment plans. This included signposting to resources for developing economic plans, improvement publications to support the development of the different priorities of the fund, and details of current and historic European Structural and Investment Fund programme. Local authorities identified as lead authorities submitted their UKSPF Investment Plans over the summer, with the expectation that approval would be in October 2022. We now expect the plans to be approved in December and are currently seeking a supplier to design innovative training sets to support local authorities in their role as lead authorities for the fund. We expect a supplier to be selected and commence work in the new year as the fund is being introduced and deliver the training programme by the end of March 2023.

LGA Economic Growth Roundtable Series

12. The LGA have organised a number of roundtables to explore the challenges and opportunities for local economic growth and provide a forum for councils to share learning and grow their networks. So far this year we have delivered four sessions covering the following topics:

- What have Economic Development officers learnt from the pandemic response and what are the opportunities for the future?
- The council role in improving digital skills of local businesses
- Attracting alternative sources of investment into a council area
- Adapting local economies to climate change impacts and low carbon growth

13. Before March 2023, we will deliver the following roundtables:

- How to design a healthy high street - Linking health and economic growth

- How do councils attract a new talent pool in economic development as well as retain staff in the sector?

Case studies on the Economic Growth Hub

14. The case studies produced through the Economic Growth Advisers programme and also through the roundtables will be shared with all councils via the [Economic Growth Hub](#).
15. Last year the economic growth improvement team collected over **50 case studies** on a range of economic development topics. These were supplied directly through councils.

Proposed support for 2023/24

16. Work is ongoing with councils and LGA regional and policy colleagues to design improvement offers to increase the capacity of local economic growth teams.

Implications for Wales

17. We will continue to share and learn from case studies from the Welsh LGA and Welsh councils supporting the role of local authorities in delivering local economic growth.

Financial Implications

18. The Economic Growth Programme is fully funded via the grant determination from DLUHC.

Equalities implications

19. Our targeted, data-based approach for the Economic Growth Advisers programme will ensure that LGA support is provided to councils in most need of this support.

Next steps

20. Officers to initiate any required action.

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Annex 1: Full list of councils supported through the Economic Growth Advisors Programme

1. For the 2022/23 programme the LGA will be supporting ten councils with an adviser.
2. Working with the LGA research team we have undertaken research to identify those councils at most need of the support and capacity of an adviser. This has then been cross-referenced with the regional insights from the Principal Advisers to provide the final list of councils which are as follows:
 - London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
 - Bolsover District Council
 - Great Yarmouth Borough Council
 - Middlesbrough Council
 - North East Lincolnshire Council
 - North Warwickshire Borough Council
 - Pendle Borough Council
 - Rother District Council
 - South East Lincolnshire Council Partnership
 - South Hams District Council & West Devon Borough Council
3. We have ensured that the list of councils comprises a good mixture of different types of councils to ensure that learning is applicable across the sector.
4. The LGA has undertaken the work to procure the advisers so that the support can be quickly provided to the council with no extra work required from them.