

**Meeting:** Improvement and Innovation Board

**Date:** 15 December 2022

## **Innovation Zone 2023 Update**

### **Purpose of report**

For direction.

### **Summary**

This report provides an update on the proposed approach to the Innovation Zone 2023 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 and volunteers for the member-led Innovation Zone working group.

**Is this report confidential?** No

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the board note the report and discuss initial ideas for the format of the 2023 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 Zone Member 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 to be potentially included in programme

### **Contact details**

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# Innovation Zone 2023 Update

## Background

1. The Innovation Zone is a core part of the LGA's Annual conference due to occur on 4 – 6 July in Bournemouth. 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 wider partners (including international organisations), provided that their session is in collaboration with local government.

## Approach to Sessions

3. The Innovation Zone 2023 comes at a significant time in local government as the sector looks to deal with multiple challenges such as the cost of living crisis, energy crisis and rising inflation, whilst councils also drive delivery in response to the climate crisis and push to achieve local priorities including community engagement, economic regeneration, and housing.
4. In this context, this year's Innovation Zone is looking to adopt the theme 'Challenge and Change', which captures a broad range of ideas across the main ambitions and challenges impacting the sector, including:
  - Cost of living
  - Financial stability
  - Workforce capacity
  - Resettlement
  - Economic recovery and renewal
  - Enhancing living standards
  - Place leadership
  - Equalities, diversity and inclusion
  - Net-zero and sustainability
  - Housing
5. Applications to hold a session at the Innovation Zone will open on Friday 16 December 2022, with a view to close by the end of February 2023. 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. Sessions will be encouraged to be as interactive as possible to increase engagement with delegates and we will look to ensure sessions come from individuals and organisations with a diversity of backgrounds and experiences.

## 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 Zone working group will be set up following this Improvement and Innovation Board meeting. The group will be chaired by Cllr Peter Fleming, as previously agreed, and aim to meet 2-3 times in the coming months. 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 February and May/June, 2023. We ask for volunteers to make themselves known at the board meeting. Officers will then work with the political group offices to ensure appropriate representation across the group.
8. We are currently developing a number of ideas for the 2023 Innovation Zone, including the following:
  - 8.1 Exploring how the Innovation Zone can continue to be a central part of the overall conference
  - 8.2 Exploring how to ensure the same or increased levels of engagement and success seen at last year's Innovation Zone with the different space in Bournemouth
  - 8.3 Considering options to make sessions or some elements of the Innovation Zone accessible after they have taken place/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 and variety of support available
  - 8.6 Comments are welcome on aspects mentioned in the report and any others.

## Implications for Wales

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

## Financial Implications

10. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## Equalities implications

11. 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 consideration during the selection for the sessions to be delivered.

## Next steps

12. Members are asked to note the approach for the 2023 Innovation Zone.
13. Members encouraged to attend the Innovation Zone and to encourage attendance.
14. Members asked to email [Katharine.Goodger@local.gov.uk](mailto:Katharine.Goodger@local.gov.uk) and [Henry.Butt@local.gov.uk](mailto:Henry.Butt@local.gov.uk) examples of innovative work in local government for potential Innovation Zone sessions, including from their own councils.
15. Innovation Zone Working Group to commence and provide advice and guidance where necessary, facilitated by LGA officers.