



Improvement and Innovation Board – Report from Cllr Abi Brown (Chair)

Improvement Support

1. As part of the LGA's commitment to continuous improvement a review of the use of member and officer peers with the aim of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the peer support offer was commissioned in 2022 and its findings reported to the IIB in October 2022. It has been agreed that all four Lead Members and the IIB itself should oversee the implementation of the peer support review action plan and specifically those actions that require member discussion, agreement and oversight including those that involve the Political Group Offices.
2. Our peers are a key part of delivering improvement in the sector through the Corporate Peer Challenge. The 2022 LGA member peer conference took place on 10 November 2022 in Sheffield. This was the first in-person conference for three years and saw over 100 peers gather to share advice and keep abreast of the ever-changing landscape around local government. Feedback to the conference was very positive with 93% of respondents to the feedback survey stating they were very or fairly satisfied.
3. Along with sessions for new peers on how the CPC is evolving to match current challenges, the conference delegates heard from Max Caller CBE, Government Strategic Adviser, and Pat Ritchie CBE, former Chief Executive of Newcastle City Council, on the challenges facing local government – and how the LGA's sector-led improvement (SLI) offer is uniquely placed to contribute towards addressing them. Stephen Baker, former Chief Executive of East Suffolk Council, also shared his experiences as an officer peer, including how to have difficult conversations and get the best from CPCs.

Innovation Zone

4. Councillor Peter Fleming will be chairing a Member Led Innovation Zone working group. The group will meet over the coming months to discuss the format and programme of this year's Innovation Zone at the LGA Annual Conference, taking place from 4-6 July 2023 in Bournemouth. [Applications for this year's Innovation Zone are now open](#) with the theme of Challenge and Change, with the aim of sharing excellent practice that all delegates can learn from and utilise to create positive impact in their own councils and communities.



Leadership Support

Support for Councillors

5. The LGA's highly effective coaching programme is open and offering disabled councillors free one-to-one coaching sessions focused on personal leadership development. The coaching sessions provide councillors with a safe space to examine, explore and reflect on their leadership style, strengthen resilience, and build confidence to be brilliant leaders of their communities. The opportunity is open to councillors from any political party, including independents. The coaching consists of a chemistry call (1 hour), followed by three 1-hour coaching sessions held monthly via Microsoft Teams or Zoom. To find out more, or book your place, please contact leadership@local.gov.uk.
6. Councillor Neil Prior, Councillor Peter Fleming and Councillor Alex Coley provided support and input into the Leadership Essentials Digitalisation training programmes for councillors in November and December 2022, facilitating workshops and sharing case studies with delegates.

NGDP

7. The National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) is the LGA's flagship graduate scheme, developing new talent in local government for over 20 years. Applications for 2023 opened in September and we have had over 4,600 graduates apply to the NGDP to fast track their career in local government. We run a subsidised, rigorous national recruitment process to place high calibre graduates in councils across the country. [Councils can sign up](#) to take on a graduate by 31 March 2023.

Civility in public life

8. [Debate Not Hate campaign toolkit](#): the LGA launched a toolkit of digital and physical resources for councils and councillors to support aims to tackle abuse and intimidation of elected members in local government. The resources include options for councils and councillors to publicly demonstrate their support for the campaign and actions to take to improve the local public discourse.

Climate Change

9. Several updates have been made to the **Greenhouse Gas Accounting** tool, which assists councils in measuring their own greenhouse gas emissions. These included adding the option of accounting for the emissions produced during construction projects, which can be a large source of emissions for councils, and



further options for accounting for the emissions produced during the disposal of waste. We will publish a more detailed waste emissions calculator in early 2023 as part of our suite of greenhouse gas accounting tools. The LGA is hosting a [webinar](#) in relation to this on 17 January.

10. Eight climate focused webinars have been delivered with 1,136 attendees in total, including on carbon literacy, best practice sharing for COP27 and housing retrofit. Further detail is below:
 - Carbon literacy taster webinar: This webinar introduced the carbon literacy training to be provided by the LGA. It explained what it includes, how it is delivered and how it can contribute to a council's journey to net zero. Councillor Liz Green, Vice Chair of the Improvement and Innovation board chaired and 104 people attended.
 - COP27 webinar: During the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27), the LGA showcased good practice from councils through our Pass the Planet campaign. In this webinar, four councils presented their best practice, each linking with one of the four COP27 goals: mitigation, adaptation, collaboration and finance. I chaired the webinar and 208 people attended.
 - Housing retrofit webinar: The UK's housing stock will need to be carbon neutral by 2050. Councils are working hard to make their own housing stock more energy efficient, whilst building retrofit skills in the community to strengthen local supply chains. This webinar shared examples of good practice from experts and councils who are creating local green jobs in the area of housing retrofit. Over 140 delegates attended.

Cyber, Digital and Technology

11. **Cyber 360:** As of January 2023, 12 councils have taken part in our Cyber 360 programme and 2 councils have been supported through technical response 'Reaction' exercises this financial year.
12. **Universal Cyber support:** In December, we published a guide '[10 questions on cyber security](#)' for councillors sitting on scrutiny committees and the officers who support them. We have also created brand new training content for councillors on digitalisation, which will explore in depth the [12 strategic outcomes of digitalisation](#). These are set to be delivered as part of [four masterclasses](#) which are planned for February.
13. **Cyber resources:** We have written a set of video scripts on a wide range of cyber security topics that will be used to produce a suite of explainer videos which we will host on our website to help build knowledge of cyber security. The tender opportunity for the production of the videos is currently live. We have also produced a digitalisation almanac which pulls together an extensive compendium of information, advice and guidance on the 12 digitalisation



outcomes, centred around notable practice, with a publication date of February 2023.

14. **Workforce:** We are continuing to support councils to increase the number of cyber security qualified professionals working in councils and as of January, 217 councils have received support through the skills uplift grant.

Housing Improvement

15. The 2022/23 Housing Advisers Programme (cohort 6) closed to applications on 24 November 2022 and 55 applications were received. 21 successful projects from across all regions were notified on 12 December with more than 90 councils and other partners benefiting this year. [Brief summaries of this year's successful projects](#) are available to view on the LGA website along with [case studies from previous cohorts](#).

Publications

16. To help encourage councils to take up more CPCs, I also wrote an article for the First magazine entitled "[The local government family is here to support all councils](#)". Please take time to read this.
17. Councillor Neil Prior, deputy chair of the Improvement and Innovation Board, [published an article](#) in Government Business Magazine (p.63) on Digitalising Local Government.

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