

## LGA Innovation Zone and Wider Conference 2023 Update

### Purpose of Report

For information and decision.

**Is this report confidential? No**

### Summary

This report provides members with an update on progress of organising the Innovation Zone alongside a high-level update on how Improvement is featuring in this year's LGA Annual Conference, taking place in Bournemouth from 4-6 July 2023.

**LGA Plan Theme:** Communications and events

### Recommendation(s)

**That the Board note the progress on the Innovation Zone 2023.**

**The Board are encouraged to attend and promote the Innovation Zone at this year's Annual Conference.**

**That the Board note how Improvement will feature in this year's LGA Annual Conference 2023 in Bournemouth from 4-6 July 2023.**

### Contact details

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## LGA Innovation Zone and Wider Conference 2023 update

### Background

1. The LGA's Annual Conference is set to take place on the 4 – 6 July 2023 at the Bournemouth International Centre.
2. The Innovation Zone (IZ) is a significant part of the LGA's Annual Conference and was a hugely popular area of the conference last year. The IZ offers a vibrant and creative space within the wider conference and involves a series of open, walk-in, sessions highlighting exciting and innovative ideas of significance to the local government sector.
3. All sessions featured in this year's programme are being delivered either by councils themselves, or councils in collaboration with other public sector and private sector organisations, ensuring that their content links to local government.
4. For the wider conference programme, towards the end of 2022 a cross organisation working group came together to suggest key topics and ensure all directorate were able to feed into session content. Following these discussions, joint Improvement-Policy sessions have been planned as part of this programme which will span topics including sector led improvement, assurance, and procurement.
5. This report provides a detailed update on IZ preparations and an overview on how Improvement is featuring in the wider conference programme across the parallel and plenary sessions.

### Format of the Innovation Zone and Sessions

6. The IZ design is still being finalised but will feature 3 separate stages for presentations to take place, as well as a coffee area and seating. Drawing on the success of last year, stages will include an increased number of headphones to minimise noise disruptions when multiple presentations occur at the same time. The IZ will be located in the Bourne Lounge, a prime location at the top of the main escalators and on route to the exhibition stands.
7. Newton Europe, who supported the IZ in 2022, will be the official sponsor again this year. They will be contributing a number of sessions on the programme as well as providing professionally prepared coffee.

8. This year's IZ theme, 'Challenge and Change', captures a broad range of ideas across the main ambitions and challenges impacting the sector, including:
  - Adults and Children's Services
  - Climate/environment
  - Cyber/digital
  - Communities
  - Economic growth and regeneration
  - Equalities, diversity and inclusion
  - Housing
  - Planning
  - Public health
  - Workforce
9. The LGA were delighted to receive over 200 applications, a record number, for spaces on this year's IZ programme. Applications came from a range of councils and organisations that work with councils.
10. A draft programme for the IZ has been finalised and will be shared publicly in the next few weeks. The programme will include over 50 sessions representing councils of all types across all regions and political alignments. The draft IZ programme of sessions can be found in **Annex 9B**.
11. Sessions have been selected on the basis that the content is innovative, engaging and offers information and learning of value to councils across all regions. Applications were reviewed, based on these criteria, by teams across improvement and policy. A few examples of innovative applications received can be found in **Annex 9A**.
12. Replicating the success of last year's sessions, this year's IZ will primarily offer two different but complementary formats: IZ sessions and 'Spotlight on...' talks. New for this year, the IZ will also feature a limited number of 'Celebrating Success' events to draw attention to excellence and achievement across the sector.

## **IZ Sessions**

13. IZ sessions will run for 30-45 mins focusing on sharing learning from a specific innovative project or solution and will form the main part of the IZ programme. Each session will also include time for delegates to ask questions.
14. The sessions will see presentations on up to 3 projects running concurrently, with delegates able to 'drop in' to any session that interests them.

### ‘Spotlight on...’ Sessions

15. The IZ will hold several stand-alone ‘Spotlight on...’ talks across the 3 days of Conference. These are focused on standout innovation, big ideas and inspiring councils to think differently.
16. In total we have 7 ‘Spotlight on...’ sessions. Several examples include:
  - A session from Birmingham City Council and Stans Café which will highlight a community theatre production encouraging public engagement in local democracy and illustrating the huge challenges faced in running a council. The play features a 6ft bear mascot becoming leader of the council and has received national attention ([Guardian](#)) and strong ticket sales as it tours local pubs, community centres and night clubs.
  - East Riding of Yorkshire Council will be providing a session on a digital tool to help managers and staff manage the risks and stresses of working in the sector. Created in partnership with academics, psychologists, risk specialists and several councils, the tool's roll out has been progressed to a large positive impact. This follows a session from last year, which was so popular it was standing room only.
  - Nesta have been working with a number of councils on a tool to engage residents in imagining the benefits of a Net Zero future and to have their say on how to get there. Alongside Southend-on-Sea City Council, Nesta will bring a fully interactive and immersive Strategy Room experience to the conference, mixing digital storytelling, collective decision making and deliberative polling.
17. Given we have received a high number of applications focused on addressing climate challenges and reaching net zero goals, we plan to re-run and draw on the success of last year’s ‘Spotlight on Climate Change Panel’ session to focus on the environmental challenges facing councils and to share innovative examples of the actions that have been put into place across the country.

### Celebrating Success Events

18. Celebrating Success Events will bring delegates together to recognise excellence and achievement across the sector and provide information on how delegates can further get involved.
19. These events will take a different format to the IZ and ‘Spotlight on...’ sessions, encouraging celebration with high profile speakers and complementary extras such as ice creams or a drinks reception.

20. There will be at least 3 Celebrating Success events. These sessions will include:

- 10 Year Anniversary Celebration of OPE – One Public Estate (OPE) brings together councils, public sector and government departments via locally led partnerships across England to collaborate on public estate opportunities such as co-location, disposals, joint service delivery and new builds. OPE is celebrating 10 years of operation in 2023 and will be celebrating this achievement with a short presentation from high profile speakers and recognition of achievement for those who have been involved.
- LG Challenge Awards – Local Government (LG) Challenge brings together talented local government officers to compete in a series of real-life challenges around the country. Over a six-month period, ten contestants tackle five real-life challenges in councils across the country with the opportunity to be awarded the prestigious £10,000 Bruce-Lockhart scholarship and translate their very own ideas into a reality. Following a presentation of this year's challenge, the LG Challenge winner will be announced in the IZ with a drink's reception to follow.
- A session focussed on recognising the work of our peers, their impact across the sector and highlighting the excellent opportunity that being a peer represents. This session will be supported by Cllr Abi Brown, Chair of the Board and will also provide delegates with complementary ice cream.

21. Preparations for the IZ will continue at pace. The IZ Member-led Working Group has had two meetings so far (20 March and 18 May), with a third planned for June to give final comment on the overall approach and plans for 'on the day'.

### Wider Conference – parallel sessions and parallel plenary sessions

22. In addition to the IZ, the LGA Conference will feature a number of improvement informed sessions on the wider conference programmes. Improvement teams continue to work jointly with the wider organisation to ensure that improvement considerations are embedded within the wider conference programme including topics such as climate change and cyber security.

23. There are a total of 24 parallel sessions planned across the first two days of the conference and 6 parallel plenary sessions are planned across the last two days. Parallel sessions and parallel plenaries are between 45 minutes - 1 hour long and cover a range of topics and issues which are live to the sector and local government.

24. The [Annual Conference and Exhibition 2023 website](#) includes the latest version of the conference programme, confirmed speakers so far, links to sessions, the Innovation Zone, details of sponsors and exhibitors as well as other useful information.
25. Improvement led sessions held as part of this programme will include a session on sector-led improvement and assurance chaired by Cllr Abi Brown, Chair of the Board, alongside Lord Amyas Morse, Interim Chair of the Office for Local Government, and other speakers joining to provide perspectives from the sector.
26. There will also be a focused session on procurement with Cllr Neil Prior, Deputy Chair of the Board, speaking alongside Dr Martin Reeves, Chief Executive of Oxfordshire County Council, on the council's leadership role in implementing changes relating to the new Procurement Act.

## Implications for Wales

27. The Innovation Zone programme includes a session from Pembrokeshire Council as part of its commitment to showcasing new ideas and approaches from across a diverse range of organisations from a variety of backgrounds. The conference programme has been designed to be relevant across the whole of local government.

## Financial Implications

28. All planned activity will be met from existing budgets.

## Equalities implications

29. The LGA is committed to increasing diversity at all levels of local government and officers have ensured there are opportunities to include those from underrepresented groups, within the conference programme.
30. To the extent it is possible, officers have worked to ensure the programme is representative across all regions, authority types and political affiliations.
31. Officers will also continue work to ensure a diverse range of speakers across the whole programme including through the IZ sessions, 'Spotlight on...' talks and Celebrating Success Events.

## Next steps

32. Members are asked to note and reflect on the approach and progress to date.
33. Members are encouraged to attend the Innovation Zone and to encourage attendance from others across the sector.
34. Officers to progress any comments from the Board that can either be actioned for this year's Conference, including the Innovation Zone, or be incorporated into the planning of next year's Conference.

## Annex 9A

### Example applications

1. As mentioned, the LGA were delighted to receive over 200 applications for spaces on this year's IZ programme, from a range of councils and organisations that work with councils.
2. Colleagues across the organisation were engaged in the process of reviewing applications with successful applications having been selected on the basis that content is innovative, engaging and offers information and learning of value to councils.
3. A few examples of innovative applications received are listed below:
  - **Cheltenham Borough Council** have been working on EmpowerCyber, a unique event which aims to inspire the next generation of cyber talent. Gloucestershire-based CyNam in partnership with the Council has created a project to engage with school girls and capture the hearts and minds of a generation of potential female recruits. 1000 year 8 girls from 25 schools in Gloucestershire were able to enjoy a unique and fully immersive hands-on workshop style activity day with over 20 of the UK's top cyber specialists.
  - **Dorset Council** in collaboration with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Pool Council, NHS Dorset, and the voluntary sector, are taking the lead on rolling out digital inclusion support across the Integrated Care System using a strategic, data driven approach to increase access and reduce digital exclusion.
  - **Greater Manchester Combined Authority** have been developing a range of innovative natural capital investment initiatives seeking to reverse the decline in nature, secure much needed investment and deliver wider environmental and socio-economic benefits. The Greater Manchester Environment Fund (GMEF) is the biggest city region-based investment opportunity for nature in the UK. It is the first of its kind and to date has brought in over £6m of funding to deliver projects on the ground.
  - **The South London Partnership**, a cross-political party, sub-regional collaboration of five London Boroughs, have boosted innovation and growth through their local Business Innovation & Growth (BIG) partnership of organisations. With a range of support programmes, networks, funding, and workspaces – BIG is supporting the development and success of all South London based businesses, charities and third sector organisations. BIG South London looks to tap into and unleash the resources, expertise, and facilities available within South London's Universities and Further Education Colleges,



helping local businesses and organisations boost business capacity, talent, productivity and competitiveness.

- **Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council** have created an integrated Single Point of Access (iSPA) Team who have helped over 3,000 people in 2022 to be safely discharged from hospital. The iSPA team is made up of health and social care staff who attend the hospital every day to help people who are ready to leave and require new or additional support prior to going home. The team are present in the hospital engaging with people, family and friends face to face to give advice, information and assurances on the next steps for discharge.
- **Tower Hamlets** are leading the way with a holistic vision and plan to support the borough's young people. The council has recently brought in the Education Maintenance Allowance, which allows low-income pupils in Sixth Form schools and colleges to apply for £400 to support them with their studies. Tower Hamlets have also launched a University Bursary Scheme, offering low-income students £1,500 to help with their tuition fees and encourage them to take their education further.
- **Telford and Wrekin** are taking a soft approach to care, developing an innovative way of promoting independent living. The council are taking a preventative approach by providing a one-stop shop offer which looks to replicate the feeling of being somewhere familiar and homely rather than formal and process driven.
- The “Reimagining Watford” project describes **Watford Borough Council's** staff-centric approach to the development of its new values and behaviours. This unique, council-wide programme was born out of a desire and need for Watford to rethink its approach around a major transformation project, and was supported by Avanti Transformation Ltd. The project provided the opportunity for all staff to be actively engaged in the transformation of the council workforce.

## Annex 9B

### Draft Innovation Zone Programme 2023

1. A draft programme for the IZ has been finalised and will be shared publicly in the next few weeks.
2. The programme will include over 50 sessions representing a variety of topics from councils of all types across all regions and political alignments. A summary of this break down can be found at the end of this Annex.

Tuesday 4th	IZ Programme
8.30 - 11.30	Registration, exhibition viewing and refreshments
11.40 – 12.15	<b>IZ Opening Session and Celebrating Success Event:</b> Liverpool – Eurovision and the value of culture
12.25 – 12.55	<b>IZ session – x 3</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. East Riding – Adults</li> <li>2. South Tyneside – Communities</li> <li>3. LGA, NGDP – Workforce</li> </ol>
1.05 - 1.35	<b>IZ session – x 3</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Greater Manchester CA - Climate</li> <li>2. Newton (Sponsor, session detail TBC)</li> <li>3. East of England LGA – EDI</li> </ol>
2.45 – 3.15	<b>IZ session – x 3</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tower Hamlets – Children’s</li> <li>2. Stockton-on-Tees – Adults/Public Health</li> <li>3. Havant – Workforce</li> </ol>
3.20 - 4.00	<b>IZ session – Spotlight on: Newton</b> (Sponsor, session detail TBC)

4.10-4.40	<p><b>IZ session – x 3</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lambeth – Econ Growth</li> <li>2. Dorset – Digital/Cyber</li> <li>3. Antrim and Newtonabbey – Communities/Leisure</li> </ol>
4.50-5.35	<p><b>IZ session – IZ session - Celebrating Success Event... OPE 10yr Anniversary</b></p> <p>Presentation and Q&amp;A followed by a drinks reception.</p>
<b>Wednesday 5th</b>	<b>IZ programme</b>
8.30-9.00	<b>IZ session – Spotlight on... East Riding - Workforce</b>
9.10-9.40	<p><b>IZ session – x 3</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stockport, Trafford, Rochdale &amp; Tameside Councils – Procurement</li> <li>2. North Northamptonshire – Public Health</li> <li>3. Pembrokeshire - Communities</li> </ol>
9.50-10.20	<p><b>IZ session – x 3</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Watford – Workforce</li> <li>2. Suffolk – Adults</li> <li>3. Power to Change with Wigan – Communities</li> </ol>
10.30-11.00	<p><b>IZ session – x 3</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Telford and Wrekin – Adults</li> <li>2. Dutch Authority – Climate (International)</li> <li>3. LGA, LGCAF – Digital/Cyber</li> </ol>

11.05-11.30	<b>IZ session</b> – Spotlight on... Stan's Café Theatre Birmingham
11.40-12.15	<b>IZ session</b> – x 3 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Central Bedfordshire – Planning</li> <li>2. South London Partnerships with Richmond – Econ growth</li> <li>3. Wolverhampton – Digital/Cyber</li> </ol>
12.25-1.10	<b>IZ session</b> - Celebrating Success Event... Peer Support  Peer Support session led by Cllr Abi Brown
1.25-2.05	<b>IZ session</b> – x 3 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. WALGA – Procurement</li> <li>2. Global City Futures/East Devon – Climate</li> <li>3. Exeter – Housing</li> </ol>
2.15-3.15	PGO and CEx meetings – Nothing on in IZ
3.25-4.10	<b>IZ session</b> – Spotlight on... Climate Change (Panel)  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centre for Alternative Technology with Tunbridge Wells</li> <li>• Local Partnerships with Cambridgeshire</li> <li>• South West Net Zero with Cornwall</li> <li>• Westminster</li> </ul>
4.25-5.10	<b>IZ session</b> – x 3 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Newton (Sponsor, session detail TBC)</li> <li>2. Cheltenham – Digital/Cyber</li> <li>3. Waltham Forest – Econ growth</li> </ol>

5.25-6.15	Set up time for drinks reception
6.20	<b>IZ session</b> - Celebrating Success Event... LG Challenge Awards Reception
<b>Thursday 6th</b>	<b>IZ programme</b>
9.15-09.45	<b>IZ session – x 3</b> 1. Manchester City – Children’s 2. Bridport Town Council – Communities 3. Wiltshire – Workforce
09.55 – 10.20	<b>IZ session – Spotlight on...</b> Nesta’s Strategy Room With Southend-on-Sea
10.30-11.00	<b>IZ session – x 3</b> 1. Sutton – Climate 2. Newton (Sponsor, session detail TBC) 3. Essex – Housing
11.10-11.50	<b>IZ session – x 3</b> 1. Westminster – EDI 2. CCLA – Cost of Living 3. Socitim with Walsall – Digital/Cyber
12.10-1.10	PGO and CEx meetings – Nothing on in IZ
1.10pm	<b>Close of conference with lunch</b>

**Additional notes:**

Total slots: 24 programme slots: 13 IZ 3x session slots (39 sessions), 7 Spotlights, 4 Celebrating Success Events.

The sponsor, Newton, will have 3 IZ sessions and 1 Spotlight with content TBC.

Programme breakdown:\*

Theme		Type		Region		Party	
Adult's	3	County	3	E	7	Conservative	14
Children's	2	District	7	EM	2	Labour	15
Climate change	10	Unitary Authority	11	GL	7	Lib Dem	4
Communities	8	London Borough	7	NE	2	Independent	3
Cost of living	1	Metropolitan Borough	7	NW	5	NOC	5
Digital/Cyber	5	Combined Authority	1	SE	2		
E. Growth/Regen	4	Town Council	1	SW	6		
EDI	2		37	WM	4		
Housing	2			YH	2		
Public health	1			Wales	1		
Workforce	4			N. Ireland	1		
	42			Non-UK	2		
							41

\*Please note, this programme was drafted in April 2023 and so does not reflect any council changes in political control as a result of the May 2023 Local Elections.