

## Improvement Update on Q2 Delivery

### Purpose of Report

For information.

**Is this report confidential? No**

### Summary

This report highlights progress against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Milestones outlined in the grant determination letter between the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for 2023/24. It also provides an update on progress of key separately funded improvement programmes outside of the DLUHC sector support grant funding.

**LGA Plan Theme:** Financially resilient and ambitious

### Recommendation(s)

**That the Board notes the improvement update for Quarter 2 and progress against deliverables in the DLUHC Grant Determination Letter.**

### Contact details:

Contact officer: Katharine Goodger

Position: Improvement Coordination and Strategy Adviser

Phone no: 07818 562 932

Email: [katharine.goodger@local.gov.uk](mailto:katharine.goodger@local.gov.uk)

## Improvement Update on Q2 Delivery

### Background

1. Our sector support offer for councils continues to be shaped through direct engagement with councils to ensure that they have the support they most need to respond to a wide range of challenges and opportunities. Our support offer includes our Sector Support Programme - funded via an £18m improvement grant from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), which spans leadership, governance, finance, workforce, and transformation - and our wider improvement programmes in children's services; adult social care (Partners in Care and Health); cyber, digital and technology; One Public Estate; planning (PAS); and culture and sport.
2. This draft report highlights progress made against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) outlined in the grant determination letter between the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for 2023/24. It provides updates against both milestones and KPIs, as detailed in the present grant determination letter.
3. It also provides an update on progress of key separately funded improvement programmes outside of the DLUHC sector support grant funding.

### Sector support programme performance

#### KPI Performance Summary

4. Progress against KPIs is measured by using the following rating system:
  - 4.1. **Blue** – Indicating where a KPI has been completed/delivered
  - 4.2. **Green** – Indicating where a KPI is on track with limited to no risk
  - 4.3. **Amber** – Indicating where there is moderate risk to delivering a KPI, e.g. due to delay, and the KPI needs close monitoring
  - 4.4. **Red** – Indicating where delivery of a KPI is at significant risk or a where a KPI has not been delivered or missed its target.

5. As at end of September 11 KPIs are blue (the KPI has been fully achieved), 95 KPIs are Green (the KPI on track to be delivered), 2 KPIs are Amber (there is moderate risk to delivery) and 0 KPIs are Red (significant risk to delivery or missed).

	Blue	Green	Amber	Red	Total
<b>KPIs</b>	11	95	2	0	108
<b>Milestones</b>	26	114	1	0	141

\*Please note, these are draft figures and subject to change when final reporting is submitted to DLUHC

### Performance Highlights

6. 16 **corporate peer challenges** have been completed in total, with an additional 10 progress reviews carried out.
7. Work on establishing **Guidance to Good Governance** has continued. A series of stakeholder meetings has been carried out consulting 162 officer and elected members, with an additional 20 wider stakeholders. A further session was held at the LGA conference, attracting 100+ chief executive delegates.
8. 3 **Leadership Academy programmes** have now started which consist of 58 leading members attending the programmes.
9. Over 1500 **councillor placements** have already been provided on training and development opportunities.
10. **92 transformation experts** have already been recruited.
11. The first **Transformation Masterclass** was delivered in September to 28 attendees, with three more scheduled for October, November and December.
12. Our **National Recruitment Campaign** marketing local government as a career of choice has launched. Over 160 attendees have engaged in regional events, helping to shape the pilot campaign in the North East.
13. Over 670 non-councillors have engaged with our **Be a Councillor campaign**, including 222 sign ups to the Be a Councillor newsletter this quarter.
14. Support has already been provided to 23 local authorities facing significant financial challenge through our **Financial Associates**

15. A member **induction session to embed financial skills and knowledge** was available to all new councillors. The event was held on 14<sup>th</sup> September with 126 attendees.
16. The **Skills Shortages programme** has been successfully launched, with more than 45 councils taking part across the 5 skills shortage areas.
17. **Targeted workforce support or advice** has been provided to an additional 26 councils, including councils facing significant challenges.

## Separately funded programmes performance and highlights

### Specialist Graduate Programmes

18. In August 2023 the LGA secured a grant from DLUHC to deliver [Pathways to Planning](#), a programme to support aspiring graduates into the planning sector. The grant is worth £1.6m to deliver two cohorts in 2023-24 and 2024-25.
19. 21 councils have signed up for the first Pathways to Planning cohort which will recruit up to 30 graduates, to be placed with councils by March 2024. Applications opened on 18 September. Council sign-up for the second cohort will open in October 2023, with candidate applications due to open in January 2024.
20. In addition, the LGA secured agreement from 21 London boroughs (and relevant organisations) to deliver a new finance stream within the NGDP. The new scheme will recruit a cohort of 50 graduates into councils, who will complete a CIPFA Level 7 Apprenticeship which includes an accountancy qualification. At a fee of £7,000 per graduate recruited, the specialist stream can be delivered without grant funding.
21. New marketing materials and webpage have been developed for the NGDP finance stream, alongside additional assessments which will be incorporated into the NGDP recruitment process. Applications opened to graduates on 4 October 2023 and a series of university events and workshops aimed at prospective candidates will run throughout the autumn.

### Children's Services Improvement

22. Since June six peer challenges have been completed covering themes including social care, children's finances/resources, corporate parenting and youth justice.

23. Development programmes with children's scrutiny committees in 9 councils have been delivered or are underway using a mixture of activity including self-assessment, observation, facilitated conversations, workshops and mentoring.
24. A webinar for Chief Executives to support their understanding of the new Ofsted/CQC Area SEND Framework and an online workshop on effective cross-council working between IT and children's services have been delivered.

### **Planning Advisory Service (PAS)**

25. PAS are just ending a national event series supporting councils engaging in the government's consultation on new local plans. The intention is to make local plans simpler, faster to prepare and more accessible. [Our events](#) help councils make thoughtful contributions to the consultation, but also consider what they should be doing in the short-term given an uncertain outlook. We are about to start some "deeper dives" into supplementary plans as that was a common concern from delegates. There have been over 5,000 attendees at PAS events in this financial year to date.
26. We continue supporting the council's one-on-one who are struggling with the development management performance targets. None of the 10 councils identified by DLUHC for speed of decision-making will be designated this year. Previously, most councils avoided designation after our help by showing a turn-around in performance.

### **One Public Estate (OPE)**

27. Applications for the Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF) 2 closed on 31st March 2023, and the OPE team assessed bids and provided recommendations to DLUHC. On October 9th the Housing Minister announced over £62m of capital funding for 60 local authorities to release land for around 6000 homes.
28. The third and final round of BLRF2 funding is expected to be announced later this year and is expected to be up to £80m. Funding will be provided to successful councils in the 24/25 financial year.
29. The OPE programme continues to support local government partners to engage with the Cabinet Office Place Pilots initiative. Working in 5 places – West Midlands, Hull, Derby, Sheffield and NE London – the Place Pilot approach builds on OPE approaches to explore longer term collaboration around public service delivery and the role of public property in place.

## **Cyber, Digital and Technology**

30. In the last quarter, the team has conducted Cyber 360s with the London Borough of Havering and Isle of Wight Council, business continuity exercises with Bradford and Central Bedfordshire Councils, and a technical incident response exercise with Mid Devon council.
31. Additionally, the programme has published 10 'Cyber Unpacked' explainer videos. A tender is underway for a 2nd round of cyber unpacked videos and AI unpacked videos.
32. Finally, 11 network meetings have been held, convening over 400 colleagues, including a newly launched AI network, and distributed 3 editions of the Cyber, Digital and Technology newsletter to over 1100 subscribers.

## **Partners in Care and Health (PCH)**

33. PCH delivered a total of 167 direct support offerings to local authorities. In delivery of these support offerings, local authorities engaged with direct support offerings 338 times, of which 143 local authorities received a minimum of one form of direct support during this period.
34. For the second quarter running, direct support has been provided to all nine regions, with all local authorities engaging with PCH workstreams to develop and deliver sector-led improvement across key priority areas.
35. PCH hosted 11 events with 739 attendees.

## **Implications for Wales**

36. There are no additional implications for Wales in this report.

## **Financial Implications**

37. There are no financial implications resulting directly from this paper, though good performance against our KPIs is a significant factor in continuing to secure grant funding from DLUHC.

## **Equalities implications**

38. The LGA is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) standards. These standards are factored in across the range of programmes with key examples

in addition to those above, including programmes such as the NGDP, Be a Councillor and our coaching offer for disabled councillors.

### Next steps

39. Officers will continue to capture the delivery of our improvement offer against the grant determination letter KPIs with quarterly updates provided to the Improvement and Innovation Board.