

12 May 2015

## **Innovation in Councils**

### **Purpose**

For information and discussion.

### **Summary**

This report provides an update on the LGA's work on innovation in councils.

### **Recommendation**

That the Improvement & Innovation Board notes the report and offers any comments.

### **Action**

Officers to progress this work in light of the Board's comments.

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## **Innovation in councils**

### **Background**

1. This report provides an update on the LGA's work on innovation in councils.

### **Issues**

#### **Innovation Zone**

2. Planning for this year's Innovation Zone at the LGA Annual Conference is at an advanced stage and we are anticipating another buzzy and engaging event. Council innovation will be showcased under the following themes: political leadership, commercialisation, digitalisation, community action and partnership working. Invitations have been sent to those councils whose innovative projects we would like to feature in the Zone. Articles to promote attendance at the Zone amongst conference delegates are planned for our First magazine in the next two months.

#### **Innovative councils webpage**

3. We have also developed a searchable database of the innovative examples featured in last year's Innovation Zone. This was launched in March 2015 as part of the new LGA innovative councils webpage, which will signpost councils to all innovative work that the LGA is involved in – <http://tinyurl.com/p4htvbp>. The page has been very well received and from the date of the launch on 23 March until the drafting of this report in April 2015, we had at least 533 visits (446 unique visitors) to the main landing page, and 829 page visits overall. Our web team has confirmed that the resource has been one of the top most visited areas of the site for the last month. We also plan to build on this success by including wider examples of good practice within the searchable database beyond the Innovation Zone.

#### **Design in the public sector programme**

4. We recognise that there is a growing movement of design thinking and innovation in public services, and the LGA is keen through our partnership with the Design Council to equip more councils with tools and confidence in this area. An agreement has been reached with the Design Council for the LGA to part fund Better by Design pilots in two regions - the South West and East of England. Each cohort will have 16 participants, and 6 to 8 councils will be selected to participate in each regional cohort clustered around particular geographic and cross sectorial issues. Delegates will be exposed to critical design leadership content and supported to identify design-led opportunities. They will then receive the mentoring and guidance needed to implement new activity and tangible projects over a 90 day period and reconvene to share their knowledge. Four cohorts have already taken place in the North West, Yorkshire and Humberside, South East and Edinburgh. Councils in the East of England should contact [gary.hughes@local.gov.uk](mailto:gary.hughes@local.gov.uk) and in the South West [andy.bates@local.gov.uk](mailto:andy.bates@local.gov.uk) to register their interest in the programme.

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**Next steps**

5. Members are asked to:

5.1. note the report and offer any comments for officers to progress accordingly.

**Financial Implications**

5.2. None.