

Appendix A: LGA Boards' improvement activity

City Regions Board, and People and Places Board

Support offer on devolution

There is strong demand from across the sector for the LGA to facilitate knowledge sharing and dissemination of best practice. The LGA's paper 'English Devolution' has been downloaded around 25,000 times, and its accompanying series of essays on public health around 11,000. The LGA has also recently re-launched its DevoNext hub: local.gov.uk/devolution. This 'hub' is a resource for technical information, updates on the most recent activity at local and national government level, and key documents from devolution frontrunners. New additions to the hub include an overview of the September devolution submissions to the Treasury, alongside links to evidence and information on a range of services areas that will help councils to make the case for devolved powers and funding. Over time, this hub will be developed to include further detail on the evidence base for devolution, progress on deals, and learning from those further ahead in the process.

The People and Places, and City Regions Boards commissioned a demand-led programme of support to councils. The offer is open to be shaped by the changing needs of the sector but reflects the requests received by the LGA to date. Broadly, councils have asked for support in:

- brokering local conversations with support from member or officer peers
- expert support in developing bids and business cases; initially this has been directly from LGA officers but the LGA is building a list of expert advisers who can support councils to develop and implement specific areas of their bids and deals
- support in negotiating with Whitehall, led by Andrew Campbell, Associate Director on secondment to the LGA from the Department of Communities and Local Government
- communicating with the public and stakeholders about devolution, with the first in a series of events tailored to different areas of the country held in Birmingham on 21 October
- developing leadership in a wider sub-regional context.

It is expected that the support offered by the LGA will change as different councils and groups of councils move forward at different paces. In particular, we might look to offer more intensive local support to areas at key points and to help councils strengthen their offers on public service transformation. It will also be important to capture the learning, advice and reflections from places as they move through different stages, and ensure this is available to the rest of the sector. Comments are invited from members as to how the LGA can ensure it is engaging effectively with councils across the country.

Community Wellbeing (CWB) Portfolio

The proposal for the Care and Health Improvement Programme (CHIP) for 2016/17 is the subject of a separate item on the agenda.

As well as the CHIP improvement work, the CWB Portfolio is currently developing a range of improvement activity including:

- voluntary practice guidance and key performance indicators for commissioners and providers of independent advocacy on health complaints
- exploring whether to adapt the materials for the development training provided to Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to improve their contribution to Barnet Health and Wellbeing Board's work as a resource for working with CCGs, and meeting the NHS Clinical Commissioners Board to discuss how to broaden the Health and Wellbeing Board improvement support to CCGs and the health system
- commissioning a good practice document on how Health and Wellbeing Boards are working with health and social care providers in partnership with NHS providers
- working with LGA colleagues and Greater Manchester to develop the support offer to areas on health devolution. This is likely to involve a three-pronged approach:
 - holding a round table and providing tailored support for areas that have agreed devolution deals with contributions from Greater Manchester and Cornwall so they can share their experience
 - producing a document on 'ambitions for integration', which identifies levels of ambition on integration, what we have learnt from the Better Care Fund, the Integration Pioneers and other programmes in terms of drivers and barriers for integration and when a devolution deal is necessary to achieve your ambition
 - holding briefing sessions and publishing a written document on health devolution for stakeholders such as charities who are worried about health devolution.

Children and Young People Board

The LGA, working in conjunction with ADCS and Solace, has developed a sector-led inspection model that we hope will replace Ofsted's current Single Inspection Framework, which we do not believe is fit for purpose.

We are holding three more *Leadership Essentials* courses for children's lead members during 2015/16, with the first two taking place in October and November.

We have completely refreshed the *Must Know* series of guides to key issues for Children's Lead Members, including a guide that looks at what happens when a children's services department is put into intervention.

We have worked with IMPOWER to produce a report looking at the impact of an *inadequate* Ofsted judgement on a council and are carrying out a separate project looking at why some models of intervention are more successful than others.

During the coming the year the Board will continue to:

- promote good practice in 'what works' in children's services improvement
- assess the effectiveness, value for money and outcomes of current children's services arrangements
- discuss with Ofsted whether the current pace of inspections could be slowed to allow this support to take effect and drive rapid improvement in children's services
- help councils with their financial challenges by supporting a programme of productivity improvement.

Culture, Tourism and Sport (CTS) Board

The CTS Board is once again offering a comprehensive culture and sport improvement offer to help portfolio holders lead transformational change of their services. Fully funded by Arts Council England and Sport England, we have already delivered one Sport Leadership Essentials Programme on 22-23 July, one Library Leadership Seminar on 15 September and offered a library peer review to three councils for delivery by end of March 2016. Upcoming leadership events include two Culture Leadership Essential Programmes (on 3-4 November and 2-3 December), one library seminar on 27 January at The Hive and two Sport Leadership Essentials Programmes (on 21–22 October and early 2016 to be confirmed). So far, we have supported 35 councillors and we are aiming to support 150 by the end of March.

The joint LGA/Department for Culture, Media and Sport Leadership for Libraries Taskforce is developing good practice case studies and practical tools that will share different delivery models for libraries.

We have published new case studies highlighting the links between the arts and health, and are working with Historic England to share the latest innovative practice for re-configuring historic environment services.

Finally, we are working with the National Cultural Commissioning Programme, which is supporting cultural organisations to be ‘commissioner ready’, to share the learning from the three year programme that ends in March 2016 through joint regional and national events.

Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT) Board

The Board has commissioned case studies that will demonstrate how councils can be effective in promoting and sustaining growth. These case studies will be published and will provide guidance for other councils on successful practice. The Board has also commissioned two seminars looking at the role of:

- councils in promoting growth on 7 December 2015 and will be led by the Chair of EEHT
- transport in supporting local growth, which will be held in February 2016.

The LGA published case studies and a toolkit for councils in May 2015 to help councils as employers support their local economy through promoting good employment practices from the sector on helping apprentices, interns and NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) into work.

Safer and Stronger Communities Board

The Board continues to support councils and community safety partnerships around a range of responsibilities, the implications of new legislation and in tackling new or complex forms of crimes. These include supporting councillors in their licensing and regulatory functions, in particular around the role of taxi licensing in addressing child sexual exploitation and tackling illegal working, supporting councils to implement the new Prevent duty and to better engage communities around violence against women and girls such as female genital mutilation, and managing severe weather outbreaks and other emergencies. We also continue to provide a Community Safety Peer challenge on a paid for basis where there is demand.

Fire Services Management Committee

There are three strands to the LGA and Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) improvement offer. These are:

Fire Peer Challenge and Operational Assessment: The LGA and CFOA have developed an approach to peer challenge that builds on past experience and has been tested in all 46 Fire and Rescue Authorities since 2012. Following the recent refresh of the Fire Peer Challenge and Operational Assessment, Fire and Rescue Authorities can now commission a 'second round' of Fire Peer Challenges at a time of their choosing. These will use the updated Operational Assessment, the peer challenge toolkit and framework, and are delivered at no cost to the receiving Fire and Rescue Authority. A number of challenges have already been commissioned for the autumn of 2015 and the spring/summer of 2016.

Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials Programme: The programme provides development for councillors in leadership positions. The main objectives are to: develop the nature of political leadership in FRAs, ensure elected members are kept up to date on the key strategic issues facing the sector, appreciate how different leadership styles can assist in organisational change and explore tools and techniques for working with communities, partners and the media. The most recent programme was held in October, with another planned for the spring.

Fire and Rescue Service collaboration: The LGA will be supporting and promoting new forms of collaboration between the emergency services, and between the Fire and Rescue Service and other public services such as health.

Resources Portfolio

One of the key work themes for the Resources portfolio this year will be working to help councils have opportunities to access alternative sources of reviewing strategic finances for infrastructure, growth and devolution. As well as lobbying to free local government borrowing from Treasury restrictions, this work will assess and develop opportunities for councils to develop the case for accessing alternative sources of funding for investment in infrastructure.

Finance improvement support offer

Effective financial management has never been more important to local authorities than it is now. The sector-led improvement offer to local government has developed over a period that has coincided with large-scale change in the way local authorities operate. A key driver for this change has been financial; the reduction in government funding, increased spending pressure and changes in the way funding is distributed have changed the way councils need to think about their finances. An imperative to transform services, innovate and work in partnership demands new approaches to financial decision-making and the management of financial risk.

Work with councils has identified a demand for good practice and support to help them manage their overall finances. This can range from achieving productivity or efficiency savings, through to ways of helping them engage with their local communities to prioritise how they spend resources.

In summary the offer includes:

Financial Review: Recognising that financial sustainability and resilience have moved to the top of the agenda for most authorities, we have devised a specialist form of peer challenge called the Financial Review, which has now been piloted in three authorities and is now available to go 'live'. The focus is around the relationships and processes that enable financial management and financial decision-making to be successfully part of developing and implementing council policy, the corporate vision and strategy. As with our Corporate Peer Challenge, the Financial Review offer will be free to councils and will be resourced from Revenue Support Grant in 2015/16.

Finance Health Check: an in-depth technical analysis and assessment of financial management conducted over two days by a qualified associate.

Budget Challenge: aimed at leaders and finance leads, a facilitated discussion with a member peer on budget options and issues.

Diagnostic tools: modelling and analysis of an authority's financial position, incorporating, inter alia, the Future Funding Outlook and Spidergram. Each council Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer was sent a copy of their council's model at the end of July and feedbacks indicates that several councils have made use of this in their financial planning processes.

Leadership Essentials: Alongside the offers described above, a Leadership Essentials programme on finance ran successfully at Warwick as a pilot on 30-31 October 2014, attracting highly favourable comments from those who attended. This was repeated at Roffey Park on 29-30 September and at Warwick on 14-15 October 2015.

Good Practice: In order to support authorities fully in their journey towards financial sustainability, it will also be necessary to identify good practice and make it available, both as part of the feedback from financial health checks and peer challenges, and more widely to the sector as a whole. There are a number of areas where good practice would seem particularly important and opportune; for example, authorities are increasingly moving away from incremental approaches to budgeting towards outcome-based or programme-based approaches that are widely considered to more effective in periods of rapid change. We can capture best practice in implementing new budget approaches through our support for councils. Good practice will be reflected in our new online innovation and good practice database.

Workforce Improvement and productivity support offer 2016-17

The LGA workforce offer of support helps councils modernise and change their workforce in the drive to deliver more for less. Workforce costs are currently c.50% of council spending (current pay bill is £52bn covering 1.2m employees). The need to increase workforce efficiency and productivity is therefore essential as funding reduces and demands for services and customer expectations increase. The integrated offer of support includes:

Reduce management costs: Improving Organisational Design using Decision Making Accountability programme DMA™ creates a workforce that is dynamic and streamlined

reducing management costs and increasing efficiencies, ensuring accountabilities are understood and decision making is freed up from bureaucracy and overburdened process/layers.

Increase motivation and performance: Increasing Employee Engagement using Employer Value Proposition EVP™ - the tough decisions councils have taken in recent years have left many employees dissatisfied in their job – and low levels of employee engagement cost. The link between highly engaged employees and productivity is well documented, so getting employee engagement right has never been more important.

Reduce recruitment difficulties: Improving recruitment and retention of key skills and addressing skills gaps using Workforce Canvas Tool™ - this area of work includes continuing our support to address recruitment difficulties in town planning, social care (adults and children), public health, environmental health, building control and strategic commissioning. A key aspect of this programme is to work with councils to increase in number of apprentices in the workforce.

Create a more flexible and agile workforce: Creating more flexible working opportunities in communities using the Timewise Council™ programme - embedding true flexibility in culture and working practices will support a wider range of service delivery models.

Modernise pay and reward: Modernising pay and rewards drive up innovation and performance using Pay Toolkit, Epaycheck™ and Top Pay Review services - the new pay toolkit helps councils solve the key issues of redesigning jobs to increase efficiency and helps them link pay to performance. Working with the unions, this work stream updates the advice and guidance available on the National Joint Council job evaluation scheme. It also provides specific support to Leaders and councillors on reviewing top pay and providing independent pay reviews for council Chief Executives. This includes a pay advisory service, benchmarking top pay, a mediation, arbitration and performance review service including, where necessary, confidential advice and guidance on severance agreements.

Deliver workforce transformation and manage changes: 21st Century Public Servant™ Transformation strand supports the transformation of the local government workforce so that it delivers public services in the new policy/legal context – this strand will provide councils with representation at a national level to ensure any proposed or new changes to policy/legislation that affects councils as employers is understood and implemented efficiently and effectively. In the past, this has included vital work on such issues as the transfer of Public Health Workforce and challenges pertaining to the Universal Credit changes. The work includes research, consultation, dissemination events, on-line support and guidance, training workshops and support surgeries.

The Workforce team's work has already delivered savings of £4million working with up to 20% of councils year on year.