

Sector-led improvement in 2018/19



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This paper reports the achievements of the sector's improvement programme for 2018/19

It explains how the Local Government Association (LGA) has used the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) grant in 2018/19 alongside other grant funding from central government to help councils and to support improvement and innovation in the sector.

Introduction and background

Sector-led improvement (SLI) is the approach that councils and the LGA have put in place to support continuous improvement.

It is an approach developed by and delivered with the sector and is underpinned by the following key principles:

- councils are responsible for their own performance and improvement
- councils are primarily accountable to local communities
- councils have a collective responsibility for the performance of the sector as a whole
- the role of the LGA is to maintain an overview of performance and to provide tools and support.

The support offer itself is based on what we have learnt works for improvement – strong political and managerial leadership, challenge from one's peers, the ability to benchmark performance against others through the use of comparable data and the sharing and spreading of good practice.

Councils can access the support through our team of regionally based principal advisers (PAs). PAs are the LGA's focal point for discussions with councils about their improvement needs and the support the LGA can make available. PAs work with colleagues from other regionally based improvement programmes, for example with the care and health improvement advisers funded by the Department of Health and Social Care, to coordinate support and with other regionally based organisations supporting councils, for example London Councils and other regional LGAs.

The approach has been hugely successful.

70% (Over two-thirds) of a raft of **performance indicators** commonly used by councils to assess their performance **have improved** (evaluation of SLI Data analysis report, May 2018)

96% of **leaders and 95% of chief executives** say support from the LGA has a positive impact on their authority

100% of councillors say they feel **more confident** in their role having participated in our leadership academy programme

The number of councils requiring the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to formally intervene remains extremely low. Only one council (Northamptonshire) was in special measures in 2018/19.

Our record over the last year shows the continuing critical role played by the LGA, in partnership with others, including MHCLG, in ensuring the positive performance of councils, addressing those at risk of underperformance, driving improvement across the sector, supporting councils through significant changes and supporting strong local leadership.

The programme also delivers value for money. The National Audit Office (NAO) estimated that the cost of inspection, regulation and monitoring of local government at the time of central targets, the audit commission and government offices was in excess of £2 billion a year. This contrasts with £20 million for Sector Led Improvement (SLI) in 2018/19.

Sector Led Improvement also brings in significant additional resources. The value of the officer peer days provided free to our peer challenge programme alone is estimated at £3 million. The income we raise through charging on some of our programmes (£1.75 million a year) is all invested back in to support the sector.

As we approach 2020 it will be important for the sector to reflect both on the achievement of SLI and to also consider how the benefits of the approach can be maximised over the next decade. The LGA will work with the sector to articulate the vision for SLI going forward, over the coming months.

Programme delivery

The programme for 2018/19 was based around four themes:

- improvement through peer support
- efficiency and productivity
- strong political and senior officer leadership
- strong communities with excellent public services.

Key highlights and deliverables from each theme are set out in the remainder of this report. In addition, we helped the sector respond to in-year developments such as EU Exit preparations, responding to the aftermath of the Novichok attack in Salisbury, as well as dealing with external supplier performance particularly in relation to construction and outsourcing markets

Overall highlights for 2018/19

145 peer challenges delivered to a wide range of local authorities, a 20% increase from last year. Seventy-one of those councils having a Corporate/Finance Peer Challenge.

842 councillors developed through participation in our various leadership programmes.

£9.7M generated (estimated) by helping councils through our deployment of commercial experts.

£42.6M+ saved by helping councils through the deployment of our productivity experts in 42 councils over four years

14 councils supported through the 'Design in public sector' programme to provide them with design skills to address public health challenges.

120 graduates recruited and trained for the sector through our National Graduate Development Programme (ngdp).

60 councils supported on 42 specific housing projects

96% overall (48 of 50 targets) set in the MoU were either **met or exceeded**, with a further one (national workforce strategy) launched in April 2019 following mutual agreement.

1,000 examples of innovative practice maintained and developed and shared in our database

£971M+ cumulative efficiency savings identified by our shared service map.

Further details about our support offer are available here: www.local.gov.uk/our-support

Improvement through peer support and challenge

Challenge and support from peers lies at the heart of sector-led improvement and underpins its success.

This is the theme under which the vast majority of our peer support and peer challenge work is covered.

Improvement support provided by peers is effective because peers bring practical knowledge and experience of working in local government and knowledge of the challenges councils are facing. This means that they are able (much more so than inspectors or private consultants) to:

- provide practical advice based on real experience
- challenge any misunderstandings or unrealistic expectations held locally
- understand the challenges councils are facing and get to the heart of the issue
- offer advice in a way that is sensitive to local dynamics.

And because the advice and support is perceived to be coming from people who know what they are talking about it is much more likely to be accepted and acted upon than if it was coming from those with little or no practical experience.

The peer-based offer operates on a tiered basis, recognising that whilst most support offers will be universal (eg peer challenge, where there is an expectation that every local authority will have a corporate peer challenge or finance peer review (at no cost) at least every five years) some councils will sometimes face more significant challenges and will require a more bespoke package.

Some highlights from 2018/19

145 peer challenges delivered, a 20% increase compared to last year. 71 of these were corporate peer challenges.

2,500 days secured from member and officer peers working in councils to support the peer challenge process.

10 peer training and development days delivered.

Continued provision of intensive support to councils facing the most severe challenges, minimising the need for MHCLG intervention

40 councils received support to help them improve the way they engage with their communities.

Further details about our peer challenge offer are available here: www.local.gov.uk/our-support/peer-challenges

Peer challenges are central to the sector's approach to improvement. During the year, 145 peer challenges were carried out with teams of peers from councils and colleagues from other public sector organisations including the NHS, police and central government. In addition to corporate challenges, these included peer challenges on a range of key areas – including finance and commercial, adult social care, safeguarding children, communications, planning, culture and libraries, and health and care. Thirty-eight non-local government peers were also used from the voluntary sector, health and business community.

This approach is supported by our evaluation which found 94 per cent of local authority chief executive respondents that had received a corporate peer challenge (CPC) during the previous year said it had a positive impact on the council's performance and on the delivery of council priorities.

The most recent data also supports this conclusion. In a feedback survey sent to the leaders and chief executives in councils that received a CPC between April and December 2018, the key findings were:

100% of respondents were very or fairly satisfied with the CPC their council received.

96% (48 of the 50 respondents) said their **confidence** about their council delivering its priorities had increased, having participated in the CPC.

96% (48 of the 50 respondents) said that the **objectives** they had for taking part in the CPC were fully or largely achieved. The remaining two respondents (four per cent) said that they were partially achieved.

100% of respondents would be **likely to recommend** having a corporate peer challenge to other councils if asked about it.

The LGA also conducted an impact survey for those councils that had received a corporate peer challenge (CPC) between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018 to understand the impact of the CPC a year after it took place.

85% said that the CPC had a positive impact on their council's performance.

90% said that the CPC had a positive impact on delivery of their council's priorities.

89% said that the CPC had a positive impact on the external reputation of their council.

92% said that the CPC had a positive impact on culture and behaviours within their council.

The survey also captured the specific comments from leaders and chief executives about the contribution the CPC made and the impact it has had on improving individual councils.

Stories of impact from the sector Corporate peer challenge

Anonymous responses to peer challenge impact survey 2018/19

"It gave the cabinet members much more confidence in challenging officers' decisions and advice in a positive way. It also gave those members comfort that we had the right approach and vision for the council going forward with the added positive suggestions put forward by the peer review."

Leader

"The recommendations helped us clarify our priorities and strengthened the confidence of the political and managerial leadership that we were going in the right direction and that we could improve what we were doing with a few actions that were both deliverable and effective."

Chief executive

"Sparked a widespread tourism action plan review in both councils and better joint working in economic development gave a green light to, a management restructure supported fully by members in both councils."

Chief executive

"As a consequence of the peer challenge, and the subsequent governance review, we are moving to a new form of governance which will greatly assist in clarifying direction, and ensuring resources are allocated to our priorities. The LGA's support was invaluable in strengthening the views of local officers and lead members and providing strong and credible advocacy for change to the wider membership."

Chief executive

In addition to surveying those councils that have undertaken a corporate peer challenge (CPC), the LGA commissioned Shared Intelligence to undertake a series of in-depth interviews with leaders and chief executives from 18 councils that benefitted from either a CPC and/or in-depth sector-led improvement support.¹

Stories of impact from the sector Sector-led improvement

Rising to the Challenge report 2019, Shared Intelligence

“I think that certainly from our experience the willingness to be open to learn, the opportunity to look inwards and outwards, and actually doing it on a regular basis not waiting for an issue to appear, being appropriately self-critical is a really important part of how an effective council works and that’s actually how sector-led improvement has worked for us.”

Sharon Kemp, chief executive Rotherham Council

“If you reflect on the inspection, the Audit Commission regime....my view is that those regimes develop organisations that are good at passing exams and don’t necessarily kick on and deal with the issues that are coming around the corner. And so, if you want a genuine process that gives you a level of assurance, whilst also trying to move organisations forward, I do think it has to come from the sector.”

John Wood, chief executive Hertfordshire County Council

“The important bit is actually the way [the onsite activity] is done, the critical friend that encourages openness....I sat with Nathan² who was asking me some quite deep questions about being a chief executive...I didn’t feel the need to become defensive with Nathan. Had that been an inspection team of the type I experienced in the military it would have been very different.”

John Henderson, chief executive Staffordshire County Council

Four key areas of impact emerged in the Rising to the Challenge report:

- the power of validation as a way of boosting a council’s confidence and enabling it to address a further set of challenges and opportunities
- challenging the council to grasp particular issues, in some cases giving the council a wakeup call
- reinforcing messages that are given extra weight through the CPC process
- strengthening the arm of a council’s managerial and political leadership and, in some circumstances, providing support when there is a change in leadership.

Beyond peer challenge

In addition to our peer challenges, councils receive a range of other peer-led support. Our ‘change of control’ offer (which is being extensively utilised following the 2019 local elections) and the practical support we offer to help councils manage and resolve issues between the political and managerial leadership are two examples of how we seek to prevent problems arising in the sector. Changes in leadership or political control and a lack of trust and confidence in relationships between leading members and senior staff are both factors that can signal potential risk and underperformance.

We seek to prevent that by providing mentoring support from experienced member peers for new leaders and cabinet members and acting as a trusted partner to resolve complex disputes between senior members and managers.

Our advice and support enable the councils concerned to resolve issues quickly and discreetly, thus minimising any detrimental impact to service delivery or reputation.

During the year we provided such support to 33 councils where there had been a change in political control or change in leader, and a further 14 councils which were experiencing significant governance issues.

1 Rising to the Challenge report 2019, Shared Intelligence <https://local.gov.uk/rising-challenge-lessons-sector-led-improvement-local-government>

2 Nathan Elvery, chief executive West Sussex County Council

Our support for the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) has enabled them to provide direct support to councils and councillors in developing scrutiny skills and expertise, holding both local government and other parts of the public sector to account as democratically elected local representatives. During 2018/19 CfPS provided support and advice to 68 local authorities.

Throughout 2018/19 we have continued to offer more intensive support to a small number of councils facing severe performance challenges and at potential risk of government intervention. Councils have access to a rapid response team of senior members/officers with the appropriate mix of skills and experience and an appropriate package of support. Our practical support helps councils to turn things around and avoid the potential costs of intervention which we know can be significant. While one council (Northamptonshire) entered formal intervention in May 2018, it continues to receive significant additional support from the LGA.

It should be noted that despite a £178 million budget for NHS Improvement, 19 NHS trusts are in special measures compared with just one council within local government.

Efficiency and productivity

Increasingly councils are looking to the LGA for support in managing their costs and demand pressures and finding new ways of developing alternative income streams in order to reduce their financial dependence on government and their call on local taxpayers.

Councils have made great strides to reduce costs whilst, at the same time, maintaining the quality of service delivery; but providing value for money and improving efficiency and effectiveness remains important.

Local authorities are at the forefront of making savings and generating income. Our efficiency and productivity programme provides a range of support to help councils achieve this, grouped into three broad areas:

- transforming services either to make them more efficient and less wasteful or to find more effective ways of delivering to local people's needs
- smarter sourcing, commissioning and buying goods, works and services (with a combined value of £55 billion) that contribute to local outcomes more efficiently and effectively managing the resulting contracts to optimise value from them.
- generating income, including a greater proportion of funding locally, such as by commercialising the authority's existing skills, assets or commodities or investing to grow the local economy to generate wealth for the area.

We have recognised the importance that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) places on transformation and innovation.

As part of the work to help councils to continuously improve, the LGA is developing a package of support for efficiency in one place. It will:

- bring together all of our learning across local government, so that we can better describe the characteristics of efficient councils
- include an online self-assessment improvement tool to help councils identify areas for further improvement
- enable councils to access and share a range of resources (including guidance, tools, case studies and best practice) in one place.

The self-assessment tool, narrative and support package will complement existing LGA resources and data sets including LG Inform and our peer challenge offer. The self-assessment tool will be launched as the Transformation and Innovation Exchange at the LGA Conference in July 2019.

We have continued to encourage councils to consider the potential benefits of shared service arrangements, including through the shared services 'matchmaking' service to provide assistance to councils who wish to share services and/or management teams with other councils. The LGA Shared Services map was relaunched in June 2018 and evidenced £971 million in cumulative efficiency savings from over 559 partnerships – this was up £314 million from £657 million savings and from 486 partnerships in the previous year.

Some highlights from 2018/19

£9.7m of income was generated by councils through the deployment of commercial experts.

Delivered three cohorts of commercial skills training for officers and four cohorts of commercial skills training for councillors.

£1.69m savings generated through the Digital Channel Shift programme

One Public Estate Projects have delivered **£183 million in capital receipts, cut running costs by £26 million, created 5,938 jobs** and have released land for **3,463 homes**.

25 councils received support from productivity experts, who worked in partnership with a further **17 councils to deliver an estimated £42.6 million** of efficiency savings and/or income generation.

LG Inform, our comparative data service hosted over **250,000 page views**, from over **50,000 visits**, of which **44,000** were from unique visitors.

14 councils supported to innovate through our programmes with the Design Council.

Worked with eight councils through our Behavioural Insights Programme to reduce demand into services resulting in **£268,000 efficiency savings and £380,000 in cost avoidance**.

30 councils received support following the collapse of Carillion in January 2018, with ongoing reporting to Cabinet Office including evaluation of sector and individual council risks relating to other strategic suppliers

Worked with councils, suppliers and MHCLG to develop a set of **competencies for those involved in procuring new or refurbishment work** on High Risk Residential Buildings following the recommendations in the Dame Judith Hackitt report on Building Safety.

Further details about our efficiency and income generation offers are available here: www.local.gov.uk/our-support/efficiency-and-income-generation

The National Advisory Group for Local Government Procurement (NAG) launched a new national procurement strategy (NPS 2018) at the LGA Conference in July 2018. The new NPS 2018 has an overarching theme - 'delivering the ambition' – and includes a maturity model to help councils identify areas where they can improve. The initial benchmarking exercise where councils self-assessed their performance against the new NPS 2018 has provided a huge amount of insight into how procurement works within councils and areas such as contract management and social value where councils have said they wish to improve. Our 2018/19 work plan focused on these areas.

Our **Productivity Experts** programme provides an opportunity for councils to access expertise that will provide them with the skills they need to realise ambitious efficiency savings and income generation. During 2018/19 productivity experts worked with 42 councils contributing towards efficiency savings and/or income generation of over an estimated £42 million over the next four years. The experts provided support around a wide range of areas, including economic growth, procurement, asset management and specific service efficiency reviews.

Local government's interest in **commercialisation and income generation** has continued to grow throughout 2018/19 and we have developed a range of support designed to help councils pursue appropriate and well considered commercial opportunities. This year we have delivered a range of support and events to help councils become more commercial, including a session at the LGA Annual Conference, which focused on how commercial activities are driving social value, having a successful impact on local jobs, skills and growth. This session was attended by 300 delegates. The LGA has also delivered commercial skills training for officers in partnership with the Institute of Directors (IOD). Feedback showed that 95 per cent of delegates rated the course content as good or excellent with 92 per cent rating the value of the course to their organisation as good or excellent. Commercial skills masterclasses for elected members have also taken place in Cambridge, Winchester, Leeds and Manchester.

Stories of impact from the sector

Commercialisation

Fees and charges review for transport (Surrey County Council)

An LGA productivity expert was commissioned to carry out a review of potential opportunities for either introducing or increasing charges for discretionary service provision in Surrey County Council's Highways, Transport and Environment (HTE) directorate. The work identified over £2 million of potential savings/income in additional fees and charges.

Reducing the number of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans (Warrington Borough Council)

Using behavioural insights relating to how people make decisions the council has improved the way in which the EHC decision making panel operates. As a result, Warrington have realised actual savings of £42,000 and over 12 months from June 2018 to June 2019 will avoid £380,000 of costs.

Procurement savings through shared services (Trafford, Stockport and Rochdale Councils)

The Shared Service Expert programme placed an expert within Trafford, Stockport and Rochdale's STAR Procurement team. As a direct result, Tameside have also joined the procurement team. Immediate savings of £230,000 have already been delivered for Tameside Council in the first few months. STAR Procurement have also been able to deliver £6.3 million of ratified savings from our three founder councils this financial year, whilst also managing this growth programme.

Find out more on our case study pages: www.local.gov.uk/case-studies

In response to council demand, the LGA organised an event titled 'Profit with a purpose' which focused on the practicalities of how councils can deliver social value through their commercial activity. This event was attended by 84 delegates who heard case studies about the successful impact on local jobs, skills and growth from Durham County Council, Sheffield City Council, Warrington Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Birmingham City Council, and Runnymede Borough Council.

We have provided **financial advice and assistance** to 42 councils throughout the year ranging from our financial reviews and financial health checks to practical support on financial matters and governance. Since financial issues rarely stand on their own, this work is often part of a wider package of sector-led support. Additionally, our team of finance improvement and sustainability advisers enhance our capacity to support councils on financial matters. These advisers work alongside our principal advisers (PAs) to ensure we are proactive in supporting councils with financial challenges.

Working with others

We recognise that sometimes other organisations are better placed to provide practical support, so we have supported the One Public Estate programme which has delivered £183 million in capital receipts, cut running costs by £26 million, created 5,938 jobs and released land for 3,463 homes. We have also supported the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) to provide advice on scrutiny and through our collaboration with Local Partnerships, which helps councils achieve additional capacity and commercial capability, we have helped councils identify in excess of £43.9 million of savings.

Working with the Design Council and the Behavioural Insights Team, amongst others, we have supported 22 councils on a range of innovative projects. This included a hugely popular LGA Behavioural Insights Programme which demonstrates the popularity and interest in this innovative area of work. In the latest phase of the programme, the LGA have awarded funding to councils taking forward projects on a diverse range of areas including safeguarding, housing, waste and public health.

LG Inform is our online data and benchmarking service and has gone from strength to strength. This free, online service allows anyone in councils and fire and rescue services to access and compare both contextual and performance data for their local area.

LG Inform continues to be a well-used part of the LGA offer to local authorities. Over the last 12 months there were over 250,000 page views, from over 50,000 visits, of which 44,000 were from unique visitors.

Alongside this, the LG Inform Value for Money site content was viewed over 26,000 times during the year, receiving 5,800 visits. The total number of new metrics that were added to LG Inform this year came to just under 800, providing councils the intelligence they need to make the right decisions about their local areas and the services they provide.

Over the year, LG Inform published reports on personal wellbeing, children in need and care, the gender pay gap and the indices of multiple deprivation. It also produced updated reports on crime and disorder, workforce and special educational needs and disabilities. In addition, LG Inform worked with MHCLG to develop a Cohesion and Integration Report for consultation.³

Cyber and digital

This year we have also worked proactively to support the widening of digital and cyber resilience awareness across local authorities, highlighting the importance of cyber security to senior officers and leaders in local authorities through networks such as the LG Cyber Security Stakeholder Group and LG Cyber Security Technical Advisory Group.

The LGA organised a Digital Showcase event in November 2018, where Rishi Sunak MP, Minister for Local Government addressed over 100 local government delegates to highlight the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) work on the Local Digital Declaration and the funding available for the Local Digital Programme. The LGA also showcased a number of the funded digital projects to share their learning as well as promote the reusable assets developed by these councils.

In addition to the cyber security work with MHCLG, the LGA successfully bid for funding from Cabinet Office under the National Cyber Security Programme securing £1.5 million for 2018/19. This funding was used to help capture the current arrangements in councils, identifying risks as well as good practice and using this to help shape a programme of support for the sector.

The LGA carried out a cyber security stocktake of all 353 English councils. This captured each councils' arrangements in place for leadership, governance, training and awareness raising, and partnerships.

³ LGInform is accessible here: <http://lginform.local.gov.uk>

Every council received their own self-assessment setting out their RAG rating (red/amber/green rating).

Councils rated as red/amber-red were directly contacted – both the chief executive and the leader's office, to alert them to their assessment and to offer support. The LGA put in place a Grant Funding scheme to enable councils to bid for funds to address any issues identified. For phase one, we awarded over £1 million of grants to 116 councils. The focus for this phase is to support those councils at greatest risk and to address those issues that can be fixed quickly.

Stories of Impact from the sector Digital

Driving savings through digitisation of waste services (Scarborough Borough Council)

Scarborough Borough Council is delivering over £250,000 in savings and a 58 per cent channel shift to online citizen self-service by digitising its bin collection service. They received £15,000 through the Digital Channel Shift programme and the project delivered a communication and tracking system into the council's refuse vehicle fleet undertaking both residential and business collections. Combined with the introduction of new and enhanced online forms, this would provide the opportunity to optimise collection rounds and provide near real-time information exchange, resulting in an enhanced customer experience, reduced administration and notable cost reductions.

Moving towards digital services (Rochdale Borough Council)

Rochdale Borough Council dedicated a full-time resource to behavioural change in order to drive sustainable channel shift. Having received £15,000 through our Digital Channel Shift programme they have successfully delivered over £182,000 in savings through significant uptake of self-service and corresponding reductions in the use of traditional contact channels.

Find out more on our case study pages: www.local.gov.uk/case-studies

Strong political and senior officer leadership

We know that local government is only as vibrant, effective and relevant as the people running it. We have a duty to support and challenge the politicians and officers to be the best leaders they can be and to encourage and talent spot the best leaders for the future.

The LGA's highlighting leadership offer provides a range of programmes, events and resources aimed at supporting and developing councillors at all levels and helps them to progress through the various stages of their political careers. Key programmes include:

- encouraging new talent into the sector through our 'Be a Councillor' campaign
- helping non-executive members develop in their roles as community leaders, facilitators and advocates
- supporting leadership development through the Leadership Essentials programmes and flagship Leadership Academy programme
- the Leaders Programme designed specifically for council leaders.

Over the past year we have seen an increase in the local take up of the 'Be a Councillor' campaign. Support ranges from councils running bespoke events to full campaigns that include websites and resources, using 'Be a Councillor' branding. During 2018/19, the campaign maintained a communications focus, celebrating the votes for women centenary and encouraging young people to get involved in local politics.

On International Women's Day 2019 (8 March), the LGA launched a new toolkit⁴ to help councils create the underlying policies, procedures, ethos and environment that encourages and empowers women, parents and carers to become local councillors and take on leadership positions.

⁴ Twenty-First Century Councils: Enabling and Supporting Women, Parents and Carers to Stand and Serve in Local Government - www.local.gov.uk/twenty-first-century-councils

Some highlights from 2018/19

842 a record number of councillors participated in our leadership programmes.

62 recruited participants to the Next Generation programme aimed at talented councillors across the political parties.

123 graduates placed on the National Graduate Development Programme (ngdp).

77 councils supported to transform their workforces and modernise the way they are managed.

Increased the diversity of councillors who attend our programmes. In particular, the **gender balance has improved**, with 48% of Leadership Academy delegates being female in 2018/19 (compared to 37% in 2017/18).

Further details about our political leadership offer are available here: www.local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership

Further details about our managerial leadership offer are available here: www.local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-managerial-leadership

Attending our political leadership programmes gives councillors a unique opportunity to network with other members from different tiered authorities and usually across the political spectrum.

Our managerial leadership development programme starts by growing future talent with the National Graduate Development Programme (ngdp),⁵ through to opportunities for senior officers with the Institute of Directors (IoD) and Chief Executives with the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE). We also support councils on workforce issues and delivering their apprenticeship targets. The ngdp has continued to grow in popularity and success, with more councils taking part in the scheme and an increase in application numbers. We placed 123 graduates with councils this year.

Our on-going monitoring and evaluation of our leadership programmes demonstrates that:

98% of responding participants in our Leadership Essentials programmes and **100%** Leadership Academy delegates said they **felt more confident** in their ability to carry out their role, having participated in the course

56% of responding participants in the Leadership Academy in 18/19 **progressed to a new role** or have taken on additional roles or responsibilities since participating in the Leadership Academy. This figure increases to 59% for Next Generation participants. All of these respondents said that their participation in the programme had a **positive impact** on their ability to do this

91% of the responding participants in ngdp cohort 17 that still worked in local government had **progressed in their career** or taken on additional roles or responsibilities since participating in the programme. All of them said that their participation in the programme had a positive impact on their ability to do this.

During the year we have worked with SOLACE to strengthen our offer to support the development of managerial leadership capacity in the sector, supporting a total of 94 officers in a variety of programmes. This includes

- a leadership programme for existing chief executives to equip them for the future
- a programme for senior managers who aspire to be chief executives
- a programme that recognises and develops rising talent

- a development programme aimed at 'middle' managers focused on helping them successfully deliver their own transformational projects in their council.

Our apprenticeship programme is helping councils meet their public sector apprenticeship target through a range of activity including regional workshops and network events, running a Knowledge Hub group with over 250 active members, best practice guidance, and mapping progress to identify barriers and work with the Education and Skills Funding Agency to provide targeted support where necessary.

We have continued to provide a range of support to help councils develop flexible and productive workforces able to respond to major challenges within the public sector, ensure an affordable and flexible pay, reward and conditions system for local government and work with different public sector employers to address the challenges and opportunities in the local workforce. We have worked with 162 councils to help them transform their workforces and modernise the way they are managed. The LGA also provides support on all the machinery associated with the pay negotiations.

Stories of impact from the sector Leadership

Anonymous responses to leadership programme impact surveys 2018/19

Leadership Academy

“This is THE essential course for councillors in order to lead in, and with, our communities”

“Valuable to new portfolio holders, especially those who want to understand their own style and the impact their style of behaviour has on others.”

“A brilliant way to reflect, listen, learn and grow regardless of which stage of your career you are in.”

Leadership Essentials

“Very informative sessions, thought provoking and challenging. Great opportunity to exchange information and experiences with other councillors.”

Children Services LE participant

⁵ National Graduate Development Programme - www.local.gov.uk/national-graduate-development-programme

“I found the course really beneficial. It was motivational as it was very thought provoking. There were some great speakers from so many different backgrounds.”

Leadership Essentials Sport participant

“It’s helped me to shape how I structure my statements/speeches and answer questions, whilst being more aware of the language I use.”

Working with the Media participant

Next Generation

“I have taken a much more active role within the management of the group thanks to the techniques and advice given on Next Generation. My relationship with officers has also improved significantly due to the insights from chief executives. Lastly, my performance during council debates has improved due to the skills acquired as part of the programme.”

Next Generation 2018 participant

National Graduate Development Programme (ngdp)

“The strength of the ngdp is in the training and events arranged by the LGA... the training modules and qualification was excellent and I do believe taking part in the ngdp has fast-tracked my career.”

Graduate

“The ngdp scheme creates the opportunity to understand the integral role of local government and the challenges that it faces in secure space for you to grow and develop. The scheme quickly gives the opportunity to learn with other colleagues in your cohort, and these naturally become a large professional network for you to utilise in the future. The quality and passion of all of the support team, guest speakers and academics, cannot be beaten; combining all of these elements really creates an amazing scheme.”

Graduate

“I found the ngdp to be an excellent grad scheme; supportive, informative and offers wonderful opportunities for someone starting a career in public policy.”

Graduate

Strong communities with excellent public services

Central and local government are both committed to creating the right conditions to deliver strong local economies with local authorities delivering high quality, value for money services.

To secure the best possible outcomes there needs to be a shift in power from central to local government. The Government has embarked on a journey that will bring power close to local communities and our offer supports councils in doing this, including help to establish the meaningful partnerships required to support devolution.

In addition, we work with councils on a range of other thematic or service specific issues including improvement support for housing, licensing, community cohesion, etc.

We have worked with all combined authority (CA)/devolution deal areas and with aspiring areas to provide direct support. The LGA has also continued to facilitate and support established CA senior officer networks, including the CA Chief Executives Network, the CA Finance Network, the CA Housing and Planning Network and the CA Employment and Skills Network. This year, the LGA has also established the CA HR Network and the CA Governance and Scrutiny Network. The LGA has also supported an informal group consisting of those who have expressed an appetite to formalise this network.

Reflecting the importance placed by the Government on the development of local industrial strategies, the LGA has worked with the Cities and Local Growth Unit to deliver a comprehensive Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) support offer to councils and their local partners. Additional funding provided by the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has allowed us to appoint two providers – Shared Intelligence and Metro Dynamics – to deliver complementary support offers.

Some highlights from 2018/19

80 local organisations participated in a **comprehensive Local Industrial Strategy support offer** to councils and their local partners, delivered with the Cities and Local Growth Unit

Provided a range of national **level support and co-ordination for mayoral combined authorities**, plus more tailored support to specific areas on devolution.

60 **councils supported** through our housing advisers programme.

In partnership with National Association of Local Councils (NALC), launched a **councillors' workbook to develop effective partnership working** with town and parish councils. The LGA and NALC have also commissioned the Campaign Company to produce a guide on supporting principal and local councils to combat loneliness.

Produced a series of publications and held a number of events to help councils deliver their public health responsibilities.

Supported councils to strengthen community cohesion, including a leadership offer for councillors.

Prepared good practice guidance to help local authorities support their town centres.

Shared Intelligence has focused on understanding and strengthening the role of councils in the development of a LIS and their offer has included the delivery of action learning sets for council officers seeking to instigate or further their authority's engagement with their LIS. Metro Dynamics has focused more broadly on the 'key ingredients' of Local Industrial Strategies and their offer has included the delivery of a series of masterclasses on areas including driving inclusive growth through a LIS and developing a LIS evidence base. Over 80 local organisations have participated in this offer during the reporting period, including around 60 councils and eight combined authorities. The LGA is now developing a web hub to share the learning from the support offer more widely which will be available from August 2019.

Our new Housing Advisers Programme has gone from strength to strength. Flexible and locally-led, the new programme provides an independent expert for up to 20 days, providing bespoke support to a local authority project to deliver homes, reduce homelessness, or generate savings or revenues. This programme consisted of 45 projects which supported 60 councils during the year. The projects are diverse and wide ranging covering common challenges of homelessness, housing supply, overall housing strategy and planning. Councils who participated in the scheme were asked the extent to which, if at all, the Housing Adviser Programme's support had a positive impact on the outcomes which they had hoped to achieve. All authorities that have taken part in the programme (100%) said the support had a positive impact on the main outcome that they hoped to achieve.

Community safety and cohesion

The LGA has launched the new national register of taxi and PHV licence refusals and revocations (NR3), enabling councils to access vital intelligence about an applicant's past behaviour. We have also published guidance and provided support through various training sessions for councils. LGA continues to work with the Department for Transport in relation to taxi and PHV reform. In addition, we have been working with the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN) and Transport for London (TfL) to develop functionality that will enable TfL to use the register.

Stories of impact from the sector Housing

Anonymous responses to Housing Advisor Programme feedback surveys 2018/19

'The biggest benefit to [the council] from the Housing Advisers Programme was the ability to have access to critical friends with expert knowledge across a range of specialist development activities who were able to advise the council on its joint venture arrangements, guiding and advising in the early stages of project development. As a result, the council has a comprehensive set of procedural documents for the council to follow covering land acquisition, development appraisals and negotiation stages of contracts.'

"Very practical advice and support provided/alternative models suggested/ active and positive questioning with senior team members re current approach and suggested alternatives."

"The programme undertook a thorough review of previous studies and data and is now forming the basis for a council housing development pipeline."

We have continued to support the voluntary publication of annual transparency statements under Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act based on the issues around reputation. Nearly a hundred (94) councils (up from 66 in September and 46 in June) have now voluntarily submitted modern slavery transparency statements and are listed in our Transparency in the supply chain – council statements portal.⁶ A further 60 councils have signed up to the Co-op's Modern Slavery Charter. An event on disrupting modern slavery was held in October for 80 delegates.

We have also continued to provide a programme of support to help councils strengthen community cohesion and to counter extremism. We developed a successful new leadership essentials programme for elected members on cohesion and integration which was launched in December, attracting members from 14 different councils at the first event.

⁶ Transparency in the supply chain – council statements www.local.gov.uk/topics/community-safety/modern-slavery/transparency-statements

The LGA also re-launched our New Conversations guide⁷ for engaging with communities in February and published comprehensive updated guidance for councils on Building cohesive communities⁸ in March. We held two Prevent Leadership Essentials courses in October and November, with the latter a dedicated programme for East London councils, supported by the Home Office. We have also run further leadership essentials courses for elected members on countering extremism and developed a bespoke course for councils in the North East on both Prevent and counter-extremism, which focussed on tackling the far-right.

We are continuing to support the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE), including supporting a series of seminars focusing on leadership in countering extremism, and tackling far-right extremism, which we hope will help support peer-to-peer learning across councils and develop dedicated resources.

7 New Conversations Guide – www.local.gov.uk/new-conversations-20-lga-guide-engagement

8 Building cohesive communities guidance – www.local.gov.uk/building-cohesive-communities

ANNEX A

Accessing the improvement offer: the role of LGA principal advisers

Principal advisers are the LGA's focal point for discussions with councils about their improvement needs and the support we can make available – working with existing sector-owned improvement bodies at sub-national level and with regionally based colleagues supporting other programmes, such as the Care and Health Improvement Programme.

Principal advisers also have a key role in identifying good and innovative practice, which is fed back into the LGA to inform the wider improvement offer to the sector.

Each principal adviser is responsible for one or more regions. Principal advisers have extensive experience of working at a senior level in local government and the wider local public sector.

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