



Improvement 2007

December Newsletter: Issue Six

Key updates:

- National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy due out this week
- Big thanks from the LGA for National Indicators comments
- Place survey and APACS consultations published

Coming soon – the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy

Today the LGA with CLG launches the joint central/local [National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy](#).

The strategy recognises the consistent improvement of services from councils over recent years and that ongoing improvement of local public services is led by councils working in partnership with other public service providers. The strategy devolves £185m of Improvement and Efficiency funding from Central Government over the next three years to the nine Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs) and outlines plans to simplify the improvement architecture, making it easier for councils and partnerships to access the support they require.

RIEPs, which bring together [regional centres of excellence](#) and [improvement partnerships](#), have already begun work developing 3 year [Regional Improvement and Efficiency Strategies](#). These strategies aim to support councils and partnerships to deliver effective and efficient services and tackle the demands of a tight funding settlement, a higher efficiency target, growing public expectations for better services, increasing service pressures and ambitious national priorities. The strategies will be based on the priorities for improvement that councils and their partners identify in their Local Area Agreement (LAA) to ensure that councils and partners receive the support they need to meet local priorities.

The National Strategy announces an additional

£11m of funding to support councils in achieving these goals.

Councils should be actively involved in the development of regional strategies through their RIEP to ensure that the strategies are responsive to local needs and priorities and to encourage take up of support available.

National Indicator Set

The consultation period for the NIS closes on 21 December. Although the sector has welcomed the reduction to 198, there remain concerns about the overall burden of reporting. Some of the 198 contain sub-indicators, and authorities are calling on government to be clear about data returns that are stopping.

The LGA and the Lifting the Burdens Task Force would like to thank all those councils who have submitted responses to the consultation, particularly those who attended and assisted with workshops on 3 and 4 December. Headline comments from the events include:

- Councils feel a small number of indicators will not generate useable information for either Local Authorities or central government
- There are others which are in the right area but need more work on definitions
- Some indicators should be regarded as diagnostic - in the sense that it is hard to use them as the basis for a performance judgement or for comparisons between areas. They will need to be set in the context of more detailed local information and intelligence

- There needs to be absolute clarity in the guidance that accompanies the indicators.

The LGA and Lifting the Burdens Task Force will publish their responses on the [LGA website](#) when they are finalised.

Place survey

The [consultation document on the new place survey](#) has been issued. This survey will cover the indicators from the National Indicator Set which are measures of public opinion.

The deadline for responses is **8 February**. As ever the LGA is keen for Councils to copy their comments to info@lga.gov.uk. Key issues which have arisen so far are:

- The balance between a desire for consistency in methodology and evidence from some councils that postal surveys do not generate sufficient responses from disadvantaged groups
- The balance of the survey overall in terms of generating a useful picture of local people's views of their area
- A sense of how the measures would actually be used by local partners and central government

The Assessment of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) consultation

The [APACS consultation](#) is also now out. APACS is the performance assessment framework for the police working alone or in partnership and will therefore impact on Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs). The consultation is in two parts:

A [strategic consultation](#) on the APACS framework and how it will align with CAA, which **closes on 29th February 2008**, and;

A [technical consultation](#) on the indicators. Where these relate to local government they are the same as the Safer Communities indicators in the NIS. Government are therefore asking that comments on these indicators be submitted via the APACS technical consultation which **closes on 18th January 2008**.

More information coming your way...

Over the last six months our aim with this Improvement Newsletter has been to provide you with a monthly round-up of key policy developments and debates.

Next year will see the publication of a new e-bulletin from our colleagues at the **Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)**, which will focus on raising awareness of the various support, best practice and knowledge materials the Agency is working on, often in conjunction with the LGA.

The LGA newsletter and the IDeA e-bulletin will complement each other to give you a comprehensive overview of what's happening across the improvement agenda. Look out for the new IDeA e-bulletin in the new year on the [IDeA website](#).



Future Events...

Tuesday 15 January, 2008

'Place-shaping in practice: understanding and using the council's new powers'

This conference will provide ideas and debate on what place-shaping can mean and how to use new powers and influence to make it effective.

Speakers include: John Healey MP, Minister for Local Government; Joyce Bridges CBE, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment; Toby Blume, Chief Executive of the Urban Forum; Cllr David Shakespeare, Chair of the LGA Improvement Board.

For more information visit the LGA [conference and events pages](#)

Future Events...

Wednesday 27 – Thursday 28 February, 2008

'Delivering better outcomes for people and places'

The LGA Annual Improvement Conference and Exhibition 2008

For more information visit the LGA [conference and events pages](#)

If you have any questions on any of the items covered here, would like to see particular issues featured in future newsletters, or wish to discuss any other elements of the improvement agenda please contact us at:

improvement@lga.gov.uk