City Regions Board – report from Cllr Sir Richard Leese (Chair)

**Devolution**

1. On 17 October, the LGA hosted a well-attended event exploring the benefits of enabling citizens to influence local decision making and service design in the context of devolution. In addition, work commissioned from the New Economics Foundation (NEF) to develop materials that assists councils and combined authorities to engage citizens in devolution was formally launched on the LGA’s [DevoHub](http://www.local.gov.uk/devolution) at the event.
2. I welcomed assurances in the [Autumn Statement](https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/autumn-statement-2016) that the Government remains committed to devolving powers to support local areas.

**Brexit**

1. The City Regions and People and Places Boards have jointly developed a set of draft principles regarding the role of English local government in post-Brexit Britain. These were endorsed by Leadership Board in December and have now been [published](http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/5533246/December%2B2016%2B-%2Blocal%2Bgovernment%2Band%2BEU%2Bbriefing.pdf/ebabb7b4-2386-47c9-81f8-0a0c6fc0ecea).

**Skills and Employment**

1. Ahead of Autumn Statement, Cllr Mark Hawthorne and I urged Government to address our concerns with the [Work and Health Programme](http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/media-releases/-/journal_content/56/10180/8021564/NEWS) and devolve greater responsibilities to councils. The LGA will continue to push for integrated and localised interventions for jobseekers furthest from the labour market.
2. Working jointly with the People and Places Board, we have commissioned the Learning and Work Institute to model an improved employment and skills system. They will work with a number of councils across the country.

**RSA Inclusive Growth Commission**

1. The board continues to support the work of the RSA’s independent Inclusive Growth Commission and has submitted its response to the Commission’s call for evidence. We look forward to welcoming Charlotte Alldritt, Director of the Inclusive Growth Commission, to attend the January board meeting to discuss the commission’s findings and emerging recommendations. The final report will be published in March 2017.

**Leading Places project**

1. The City Regions and People and Places Boards are working with Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and Universities UK to deliver the [Leading Places Project](http://www.local.gov.uk/leading-places): a pilot programme that explores the opportunities for collaborative leadership between the higher education and local government sectors in support of devolution, public service reform and economic growth. On 21 November, representatives from each of the six pilot areas attended a national event facilitated by the project consultants the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE).

**Other Events and Activity**

1. The board’s Deputy Chairman, Councillor Robert Light, attended the Select Committee on Charities in Parliament on 22 November to give evidence on the role of voluntary organisations and charities within local communities and their relationship with local government.
2. In December, I wrote an article in City AM on [Manchester’s Smarter City Strategy](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/500315/smarter_city/7013/manchester_smarter_city_programme), which uses new technologies and ways of working to help better understand the needs of Manchester’s residents and businesses, and optimise public services to improve how people live, work and play, move, learn and organise.

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