

Devolution Improvement Support Offer

Purpose

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This paper provides members with an overview of the LGA's devolution support offer in light of the current devolution policy landscape and asks members to consider how this might best meet the needs of rural and non-metropolitan authorities. It also provides an update on the support provided to combined authorities and the LGA's engagement with the seven combined authority mayors.

Recommendations

That the People and Places Board:

1. **Consider** the LGA's devolution support offer for the coming year against the needs of non-metropolitan authorities.
2. **Note** the support provided to Combined Authorities and the LGA's engagement with the seven combined authority mayors.

Action

Subject to Members comments, continue to deliver the LGAs devolution support offer, reflecting the current national emphasis on mayoral combined authorities.

Contact Officer: Ami Beeton
Position: Senior Adviser
Telephone No: 07867852592
Email: ami.beeton@local.gov.uk

Devolution Improvement Support Offer

Overview

1. This report provides an overview of the current devolution policy landscape and describes how this has influenced the direction of the LGA's devolution support offer for the coming year.
2. Members of the People and Places Board are asked to consider this overview and reflect on how the LGA might best meet the devolution improvement and support needs of rural and non-metropolitan authorities.

Devolution

3. The UK is one of the most centralised democracies in the world. Within this context devolution presents one of the most fundamental changes to the way decisions are made for local areas and how public services are funded.
4. Since 2014, devolution in some parts of England has meant a transfer of power and funding from national to local government. In line with the Government's preferred model for devolved governance, in all but two areas, Cornwall and London, this transfer of powers has been contingent on the creation of a Mayoral Combined Authority.
5. There are now seven Mayoral Combined Authorities across England. These are mostly concentrated in urban areas. The eighth Mayoral Election will take place in North of Tyne in May 2019.
6. While the 2017 Conservative Manifesto proposed a new devolution framework, widely interpreted as a mechanism for securing devolution outside the combined authority governance model, recent intelligence has suggested that the Government is likely to focus its efforts principally on consolidating the position of the mayoral combined authorities rather than seeking to roll out the devolution deal model to a number of new areas.
7. Reflecting this context, the main focus of the LGA's devolution improvement and support offer this year will be to provide support to established combined authorities. An update on this support and the engagement with the seven combined authority mayors as part of the LGA's mayoral support offer is attached for information as **Appendix A**.
8. Without further devolution, decisions will continue to be made in Westminster, removed from communities that they affect. The LGA will therefore continue to pursue this agenda, pushing the Government for further detail on a framework for devolution suitable for the whole country.
9. The LGA also remains keen to work with and hear from areas that are looking to propose devolution deals and requests outside of the combined authority model. We also wish to support those areas minded to join existing combined authorities either as full or associate members. If and when the devolution framework emerges we will also provide support for those areas seeking to secure additional powers and resources through it.

10. Separately, it has been suggested that Local Industrial Strategies may provide a parallel mechanism for the devolution of powers and resources related to productivity and inclusive growth. In line with commitment above we will continue to explore the potential of this approach both within and outside the structure of a mayoral combined authority.
11. Given this context **members are asked to offer their thoughts on where the LGA's devolution support offer might be tailored to better meet the particular needs of rural and non-metropolitan authorities.**