

## **Appendix A – Support to Combined Authorities (CAs)**

1. The LGA has continued to develop and deliver a bespoke offer of support for existing and prospective combined authorities. This support is financed by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Governments' funding to the LGA. The deliverables and expectations aligned to this funding are set out in the recently agreed memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the LGA and MHCLG, and are based on a continuation of our work programme.
2. The nature of the support provided varies in response to the needs of individual areas. However key elements of the support provided to date include:
  - 2.1. **CA Chief Executive Network** - chaired by Eammon Boylan, Chief Executive of Greater Manchester CA, the network continues to provide an opportunity for chief executives and chief officers to share learning and experiences, have space to discuss practical challenges and focus collectively on some of the key areas of policy development emerging within CAs.
  - 2.2. **Officer Networks-** After discussion with the CA Chief Executives network a number of policy area officer networks have been set up and are supported by the LGA. Three networks, each of which have already met at least twice, are organised by the LGA and are focused on the following policy areas:
    - 2.2.1 Finance.
    - 2.2.2 Employment & Skills
    - 2.2.3 Housing & Planning<sup>1</sup>
  - 2.3 These meetings are for officers from both current and aspiring CAs. A small budget has been earmarked for each network for improvement support purposes.
  - 2.4 At the CA Chief Executives meeting in March it was agreed that potentially three further networks would be set up:
    - 2.4.1 Governance/Scrutiny.
    - 2.4.2 Communications – the first meeting has taken place
    - 2.4.3 Economic Development
  - 2.3. **The Finance group has commissioned some work on fiscal devolution** - this work assesses the extent and nature of financial freedoms that have been provided to Combined Authorities and whether and how these have been used in practice. This report is due to be published in the coming months.
  - 2.4. **CA peer support** – it was recognised that the sector needs a process through which it can reflect upon progress to date, consider areas for improvement, prepare for

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<sup>1</sup> A fourth network focused on transport issues is supported by ADEPT, the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport.

government reviews and identify where external support would be helpful. Therefore, following a meeting of the Chief Executive Network, it was agreed that a peer support tool be scoped with input from the CAs.

2.5. Initial thoughts around this tool are that it should include:

2.5.1. sector led support;

2.5.2. external input – e.g. private and other sector challenge; and

2.5.3. help to prepare for Gateway or government reviews.

2.6 The timing of the tool's use needs to be appropriate for the CA in question. This tool will be developed over the coming year.

2.7 **Bespoke support to CAs** – a range of financial, communication and in-kind support has been provided to existing and prospective CAs. The Principal Policy Adviser and Senior Adviser have recently met with the majority of the Mayoral CA Chief Executives to discuss their ongoing support needs and to understand the issues faced in year one. Examples of this include:

2.7.1 policy support;

2.7.2 preparing for a Mayoral Election;

2.7.3 implementation of communication recommendations; and

2.7.4 leadership support

### **Support to elected CA mayors**

3 As of the 3 May 2018, there are now seven elected mayors across the following areas: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, the Sheffield City Region, the Tees Valley, the West of England and the West Midlands.

4 Following on from the 2017 elections the LGA offered support and a 'home' for the new directly elected mayors. This included developing a package of support for mayors both as individuals and as a collective. As Chairs of their CA, it was agreed Mayors would automatically become members of the LGA.

5 During the first year, the LGA took steps to engage with the new mayors and the Mayoral CAs this has been replicated for the 2018 Mayoral election including;

5.6 Telephone calls to CA Mayors by Group Leaders during the weekend following the elections.

5.7 A letter sent from the Chairman to CA Mayors congratulating them on their election, welcoming them to the LGA, outlining our support offer and highlighting the programme of key mayoral events.

5.8 Meetings between LGA representatives and selected CA mayors.

## **Mayoral Support**

- 6. Support to coordinate joint Mayors and CA work:** In parallel to the support provided to CAs through the Chief Executive Network, we have established a Mayoral forum. The Mayors have currently met twice in this format. The first event was hosted in partnership with the Commonwealth Local Government Forum in London. This event brought the new mayors together for the first time and introduced the Mayors to the LGA support offer. The second forum was hosted in partnership with the University of Birmingham and the WMCA. This event was attended by seven government departments. Future mayoral forums will involve relevant Ministers as well as senior officials and will be focused on one or two key topics.
- 7. Bespoke political support:** available through the LGA group offices.
- 8. Leadership development and top team support:** the transition to a Mayoral CA has required new ways of working for mayors, council leaders, frontline councillors and partners. The LGA is working with combined authorities and LGA Principal Advisers on support in this area for some CAs. LCR are working with the LGA on a leadership support offer which involves a member conference for all councillors within the CA area. We hope to share the principles and learning of this approach with other CAs.
- 9. Members are asked to note the support provided to combined authorities and to elected mayors.**