

Moving the Local Growth Campaign forward

Purpose

For discussion and direction.

Summary

Members are asked to consider the draft programme for moving the Local Growth Campaign forward in 2012-13 and delivering the recommendations of the report presented at LGA Conference.

Recommendation

That a detailed report is developed from the recommendations and comments of members at the Board.

Action

To be taken forward by officers as directed by members.

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Background

1. The report from the first year of the Board's Local Growth Campaign was delivered at conference. Based on the council and think-tank contribution and our Town Hall debates, the report set out councils' ambition to support national economic recovery and established where more work needed to be undertaken.
2. The conference report was produced as a delivery plan for change rather than a policy orientated Green Paper. It set out ideas for delivery in a number of areas.
3. Based on our report, it is recommended that the next stage of the campaign is delivered under three broad headings:
 - 3.1 councils' ambition for growth
 - 3.2 removing barriers to local growth
 - 3.3 renewed local leadership for growth.

Councils' ambition for growth

4. One of the big messages from the Board's report was the think-tank/academic evidence that UK growth can be driven through devolution and action by local partnerships.
5. We need to maintain this argument with Government to support councils' case for more devolution and to ensure continued media coverage of councils' work continues.
6. The following work is proposed:
 - 6.1 A research report which analyses the increasing economic clout of local partnerships as the devolution agenda is embedded. The report would examine, for example, the increasing ability of local partners to lever new investment as a result of current devolution (TIF, Enterprise Zones, City Deals etc) and how local partnerships will be greater players in national economic life in the future. We would want to go on to examine how further devolution to cities/sub-regions (i.e. devolution that is the norm in across Europe and the Commonwealth) would create an even more effective local engines for national economic recovery.

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- 6.2 We will continue to collect and publish best practice stories on local economic development and ensure that these are published on our web, provided to Board members and councils, publicised in the media and used for training and development in the sector.
- 6.3 At conference, we published a “Growth offer” to councils to set out the calls councils could make on the LGA for support and development. This will be rolled out in 2012-13. Members have already made some comments on this programme, including joining up with the District Councils Network and providing more work on sources of new finance.

Removing barriers to local growth

- 7. Our report to conference set out a number of areas which had been identified as barriers to local growth by councils and partners. The objective in this area is to ensure that these barriers are removed.
 - 7.1 We have called for the City Deals to be made available for any council or group of councils that has a transformational idea that can deliver growth. This message has already been delivered to ministers and we need to continue to press the case. There is a separate report on the agenda which deals with this issue.
 - 7.2 The national programmes which governed transport and skills policy were the two “big issues” that were identified as barriers to local growth. We have a number of councils who are working with us to demonstrate what further devolution of decision-making could deliver for the national growth agenda. These will form the basis of an evidence-based submission to Government in the next year which will be published at proposed “summits” with relevant ministers. We already have a commitment from the Secretary of State for Transport to hold a joint summit on devolution at which we present our findings. On the skills issues, we are developing work around services to young people - through the Hidden Talents campaign - and service to adult learners - through a secondment to the LGA from National Institute for Adult Continued Education (NIACE). We have no such commitment from Government departments for a summit on skill issues.

Renewed local leadership for growth

- 8. Our report examined levers for economic development which were well-established in other developed nations, but where the UK appeared to be lagging behind. As such we will concentrate on three areas where renewed national partnerships are required.

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- 8.1 Based on a challenge from Commonwealth LGAs and German cities, councils' role in forging relationships with foreign investors and marketing their place abroad was under-valued in national growth strategies. Whilst councils are "just doing it" in their localities, there is a need to translate into an offer to UK Trade and Investment (UKTI). Early research from a think-tank seems to show that councils could play a pivotal role in work in developing links with emerging economies. This research and evidence of successful work by councils will be developed into a clear offer from councils to support national economic recovery.
- 8.2 At our Cambridge Town Hall debate, we were challenged that the link between Higher Education and local economic development is under-developed in the UK. A report by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) to Universities UK (UUK) has also challenged university Vice-Chancellors to embrace civic leadership in the UK. Whilst much good work is already being developed in this area, we have approached UUK to develop a more detailed programme to see how the local role can be developed in comparison to other developed economies. We are proposing a launch summit in early 2013 to start this work.
- 8.3 In 2012-13, the LGA was approached by a number of large companies - through Business in the Community (BIC) to examine how localism could be developed jointly and to look at how corporate responsibility programmes could be localised. Officers are scoping this work with BIC at the moment and members' advice/views would be welcome.

How we deliver

9. Whilst the 2012-13 campaign is based on trying to deliver solutions to barriers to local growth rather than developing a debate on key issues with councils, our series of out-of-London Town Hall debates were popular and ensured that a range of views informed the Board's debate.
10. In order to keep the momentum generated from these debates, it is proposed that in 2012-13 we hold a series of "Town Hall Summits" to support the delivery of our programme.
11. Based on the issues set out in this report, we are committed to developing new work in the following areas: transport, young people's skills, adult skills, higher education and trade. We also need to ensure that good practice on new ways of delivering economic development is profiled.

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12. It is recommended that a series of “Town Hall Summits” is developed from October - March, based on the above issues to support the Board’s work.
13. As in 2012-13, these would be delivered in partnership with business, think tanks, regional associations and individual councils and we will ensure that there is a good geographical spread of venues.