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## **Governance of Cities and the Growth Agenda**

### **Purpose of Report**

For noting and consideration of proposed nominations referred to in the report.

### **Summary**

This reports sets out issues for the LGA to consider in its response to the 3 May mayoral referendums and other developments in city governance.

### **Recommendations**

That the LGA Leadership Board notes the report and considers the proposed nominations referred to in sections 4.B and 4.C

### **Action**

Officers to progress in accordance with the Board's decision/s.

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**Background**

1. On 3 May there were referendums in our major cities about whether or not to establish a system of a directly elected mayor. One city has already established this (Leicester), whilst another city (Liverpool) was voting to select a mayor, following a vote by that city council to create the post of directly elected mayor. In Salford(also a city, but not one of those where the Government required a referendum) there was also be a mayoral election, following a referendum earlier this year when there was a vote in favour of establishing the post of directly elected mayor.
2. The outcome of those referendums was as follows. Birmingham 57.8% against; Bradford 55.1% against; Bristol 53.3% for; Coventry 63.5% against; Leeds 63.3% against; Manchester 53.2% against; Newcastle 61.9% against; Nottingham 57.5% against; Sheffield 65% against; Wakefield 62.2% against.
3. There was also a referendum in Doncaster about whether to maintain the mayor model. This received support, with a much higher turnout than in the other cities and with the vote for being 44571 against 23506.
4. Bristol will vote for its directly elected mayor on 15 November (the same date as that for the election of Police and Crime Commissioners)
5. Those cities with directly elected mayors were offered a twice yearly cabinet chaired (initially) by the Prime Minister. Whether this offer remains on the table we will find out in due course.
6. Given the consistency of these results we can assume that the model of city mayors will no longer be on the table for any significant further roll out (not least because there is now a ten year period before there could be further referendums in those cities which voted against the change).
7. The LGA still however needs to consider its response to these referendums and other developments in city governance.

**Emerging Issues**

8. Whilst there is now a limited pool of directly elected mayors, they are still significant in number. From November 14 unitaries or London/metropolitan boroughs will now have directly elected mayors. This is in addition to the districts which also have elected mayors (Watford and Mansfield).
9. In parallel with the referendums for Mayors the Government has been proceeding with its city deals. Of those we know the details so far one key

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new element has been the stress on combined authorities. The Greater Manchester city deal has been based around the combined authority already created (Greater Manchester Combined Authority). We know the outlines of the West Yorkshire deal - and this will be finalised in the near future. We know that this too is predicated on the creation of a combined authority.

10. Many of the critics of the city mayors argued that the individual authority was the wrong unit to base the mayoralty on, and instead it should be for the city region. The emergence of combined authorities gives the Government two options to progress this agenda. First it could consider mayors for the combined authorities, and secondly from November we will have elected Police and Crime Commissioners. There is therefore the potential to begin to extend their powers. This may not be through any direct radical move (we might assume a diminished appetite for local constitutional innovation during this Parliament). But consider an approach whereby a Police and Crime Commissioners joins the board of the LEP and we are on the path to what could be a de facto city region mayor.
11. Historically there has been very little direct engagement with the LGA by the leaders of the big cities. Indeed for most big city leaders the Core Cities group has been their prime route for national engagement.

**Proposed LGA response**

**A. For directly elected mayors**

The LGA will offer to recreate the mayors forum (previously run by NLGN) to provide an opportunity for mayors to share experience and ideas. Whilst the referendums results show there is clearly little public appetite for constitutional change here, the Doncaster result also show little appetite to unpick the arrangements. We should therefore assume that we will continue to have a significant group of authorities with directly elected mayors.

**B. For our major cities**

The city deals take on extra significance, given the increasing public attention on stimulating the economy. We now have government recognition of the importance of cities in stimulating growth. The LGA needs to position itself as the key provider of support to those cities/city regions with the city deals. In so doing the LGA will also re-establish better working relationships with the core city leaders.

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**C. Cities plus**

Given the focus on growth it is likely that the Government will not wish to see the city deal approach limited only to the core cities, but will see to expand them to other areas, and not only those counties with a significant urban core (Cornwall for instance has developed a significant growth argument, which is very similar in approach to some outline city deals). The LGA should start a series of conversations in those areas, so we have a second wave of proposals ready for Government for later this year.

The Leadership Board might wish to nominate lead members to take forward both the city deal conversations and those with counties.