

Key Cities Group – Application to form a Special Interest Group

Purpose of Report

For decision.

Summary

The Key Cities Group comprises 21 mid-sized cities in England with populations of between a quarter and half a million, based on the definition and population bands published by the Centre for Cities. Each city in the Group is represented by its Leader and Chief Executive.

Councillor Paul Watson (Leader, Sunderland City Council and Chair of the Key Cities Group) and Dave Smith (Chief Executive, Sunderland City Council and Chief Executive Lead for the Group), have written to the LGA Chief Executive formally requesting that an application to form an LGA Special Interest Group be considered by the Board.

Recommendation

That the Leadership Board approves the application by Key Cities Group to form an LGA Key Cities Special Interest Group.

Action

Officers to action in accordance with the Board's decision.

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Key Cities Group – Application to form a Special Interest Group

Background

1. The LGA Constitution provides for 10 or more member authorities with common features, interests or concerns to form a Special Interest Group (SIG). The LGA's Statement on Special Interest Groups is attached at **Appendix A**.
2. The **attached** letter, received from the Chair and Chief Executive Lead for the Key Cities Group, acting on behalf of 21 authorities in membership of the LGA, proposes to establish a SIG to better represent the interests of authorities in their Group.

Purpose of the Group

3. There are 26 mid-sized cities in England with populations between 500,000 and 250,000, based on the definitions and population bands published by the Centre for Cities. They represent 14% of England's economy, in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA) and total population.
4. The purpose of the SIG will be to provide focus and a unified voice to ensure that those cities within the group are more visibly and consistently represented in economic policy-making at a national level in order to help create vibrant cities which can compete across the globe for business and growth.
5. All 26 mid-sized cities, as well as a small number of cities which may not fit into the population band but which are significant to the wider area in their local economy and to the UK as a whole, are eligible to join the Key Cities Group

Financial/ Resource Implications

6. There are no unbudgeted financial implications in this report.

Statement on Special Interest Groups

Introduction

1. The LGA Constitution provides for 10 or more member authorities with common features, interests or concerns to form a Special Interest Group (SIG). Under exceptional circumstances, the LGA Leadership Board may agree for smaller groups of councils to establish a SIG.

LGA Constitution – clause 16

- 16.1 *If ten or more full member authorities with common features, interests or concerns so request by formal notice to the Chief Executive, the Association, acting through the LGA Leadership Board, may establish a Special Interest Group (SIG) for such authorities. Membership shall be open to all member authorities with such common features.*
- 16.2 *In any case of doubt as to whether an authority is eligible for membership of a SIG, the LGA Leadership Board shall determine the matter.*
- 16.3 *The Association may provide secretarial services to SIGs, having regard to the overall level of resources available to the Association, provided it is satisfied that the SIG's activities accord with the strategic direction and interests of the Association as a whole. SIGs may provide their own, or augment Association support, through resources raised from member authorities.*
- 16.4 *Special Interest Groups shall develop their own rules of procedure subject to the approval of the LGA Leadership Board. Each Special Interest Group shall report annually on its activities to the LGA Leadership Board.*

Rules of Operation of SIGs

2. If requested, and subject to the availability of resources, the LGA will provide:
 - ✓ secretarial support to Special Interest Groups for up to a maximum of 3 meetings per year in London;
 - ✓ accommodation in Local Government House, free of charge, subject to availability of rooms;
 - ✓ catering at normal LGA rates, printing and mailing subject to the LGA's own policies on use of printed documents.

3. The LGA will not make any payments to members attending SIGs, including
 - × Attendance allowances
 - × SRAs
 - × Subsistence

These expenses remain the responsibility of member authorities.

4. SIGs are permitted to raise any resources they might need to support their activities and running costs from their member authorities.
5. SIGs are able to make representations direct to Government and elsewhere on matters arising directly from their special interest, and to obtain LGA assistance in doing so. However those representations must not conflict with or undermine LGA policy as a whole or damage the interests of other member authorities. The LGA has agreed protocols relating to local government finance and other distributional issues.
6. All SIGs are required to submit a full report at the end of April each year to the LGA Leadership Board covering such matters as their dealings with Government Departments. The Leadership Board reserves the right to invite the Chairman of a SIG to discuss an Annual Report or issues arising from it.
7. SIGs may also be required to report to the appropriate board, whose remit covers the SIG's particular area of interest.
8. The LGA will review support for SIGs annually.

Application to set up a SIG

Applications to establish a SIG should be made in writing and sent to

Chief Executive
LGA
Local Government House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ

Applications should

- define the purpose of the SIG and the nature of the common feature or interest
- include the names of at least 10 authorities who have committed to join the SIG
- undertake to admit to membership all authorities who share that interest.