

City Regions Board

Agenda

Wednesday, 27 January 2021
1.00 pm

Online via Microsoft Teams

City Regions Board
27 January 2021

There will be a meeting of the City Regions Board at **1.00 pm on Wednesday, 27 January 2021**
Online via Microsoft Teams.

Apologies:

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting.

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Conservative: | Group Office: 020 7664 3223 | email: lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk |
| Labour: | Group Office: 020 7664 3263 | email: labour.grouplga@local.gov.uk |
| Independent: | Group Office: 020 7664 3224 | email: independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk |
| Liberal Democrat: | Group Office: 020 7664 3235 | email: libdem@local.gov.uk |

LGA Contact:

Emma West (emma.west@local.gov.uk)

Carers' Allowance

As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of £9.00 per hour or £10.55 if receiving London living wage is available to cover the cost of dependants (i.e. children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.

City Regions Board – Membership 2020/2021

| Councillor | Authority |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Conservative (5) | |
| Cllr. Abi Brown (Vice-Chair) | Stoke-on-Trent City Council |
| Cllr. Robert Alden | Birmingham City Council |
| Cllr. Donna Jones | Portsmouth City Council |
| Joanne Laban | Enfield Council |
| Toby Savage | West of England Combined Authority |
| Substitutes | |
| Cllr. Barry Anderson | Leeds City Council |
| Daniel Fitzhenry | Southampton City Council |
| Julia Lepoidevin | Coventry City Council |
| Labour (14) | |
| Sir Richard Leese CBE (Chair) | Manchester City Council |
| Cllr. Susan Hinchcliffe (Vice-Chair) | Bradford Metropolitan District Council |
| John Merry | Salford City Council |
| Cllr Shaun Davies | Telford and Wrekin Council |
| Cllr. Martin Gannon | Gateshead Council |
| Mayor Marvin Rees | Bristol City Council |
| Cllr. Timothy Swift MBE | Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council |
| Danny Thorpe | Royal Borough of Greenwich |
| David Mellen | Nottingham City Council |
| Sean Fielding | Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council |
| Cllr Shama Tatler | Brent Council |
| Anthony Hunt | Torfaen County Borough Council |
| Elise Wilson | Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council |
| Vacancy | Labour Group |
| Substitutes | |
| James Swindlehurst | Slough Borough Council |
| Jason Brock | Reading Borough Council |
| Graeme Miller | Sunderland City Council |
| Cllr. Samantha Dixon | Cheshire West and Chester Council |
| Liberal Democrat (2) | |
| Anita Lower (Deputy Chair) | Newcastle upon Tyne City Council |
| Gareth Roberts | Richmond upon Thames London Borough Council |
| Substitutes | |
| Independent (1) | |
| Gillian Ford (Deputy Chair) | Havering London Borough Council |
| Substitutes | |
| Cllr Phelim MacCafferty | Brighton & Hove City Council |

Agenda

City Regions Board

Wednesday 27 January 2021

1.00 pm

Online via Microsoft Teams

| Item | Page |
|---|---------|
| 1. Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes and Declarations of Interest | |
| 2. Urban Growth and Recovery | 1 - 6 |
| 3. Youth Employment and Skills Update | 7 - 20 |
| 4. Local Government preparedness for EU Exit | 21 - 26 |
| 5. UK Shared Prosperity Fund | 27 - 30 |
| 6. Update on health devolution and NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) consultation on integrated care systems (ICSs) | 31 - 36 |
| 7. Mid-Year Review | 37 - 42 |
| 8. Spending Review: Key Issues | 43 - 48 |
| 9. Equalities Advocate update | 49 - 50 |
| 10. City Regions Board Update | 51 - 54 |
| 11. Note of the Previous Meeting | 55 - 62 |

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 24 March 2021, 1.00 pm, Venue TBC

Urban Growth and Recovery

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

This paper provides an update on the “Vision for Urban Growth and Recovery” work which was agreed at the meeting of the City Regions Board on 30 September. It sets out the progress of the project to date, and there will be a presentation from Cambridge Econometrics, with the opportunity to ask questions. The meeting presents a key opportunity to consider the emerging findings and provide direction on the next phase of research.

Recommendation/s

That Members:

1. Note the update in the report.
2. Provide any additional direction on the next phase of the research

Action/s

1. Officers to continue to work with Cambridge Econometrics to deliver a final report in March.

Contact officer: Ellie Law
Position: Policy Advisor
Phone no: 07584 273764
Email: Eleanor.law@local.gov.uk

Urban Growth and Recovery

Background

1. At the City Regions Board on 30 September, the board considered the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on urban areas and agreed to commission external support to develop a vision for urban growth and recovery.
2. Following that meeting, Cambridge Econometrics were commissioned to carry out the project, and presented their initial thoughts and proposals to the City Regions Board on 18 November.
3. Since that meeting, Cambridge Econometrics have carried out literature review, data analysis, and arranged interviews with stakeholders to progress the project. This meeting presents a key opportunity to consider the emerging findings and provide direction on the next phase of research. Glenn Athey, the Project Director, will attend the Board, give a short presentation and answer any questions.

Issues

Project progress overview

4. The project is proceeding well. To date, Cambridge Econometrics have:
 - 4.1 completed the literature review
 - 4.2 are about 75 per cent through the data analysis
 - 4.3 have a draft report structure, into which they are beginning to write up findings
 - 4.4 have contacted 14 local authorities for consultation, with 4 interviews arranged
5. The project is on schedule to be completed by mid-March, as planned, and will be presented to the next meeting for Board for review and sign off.

Key findings from literature and reports:

6. Cambridge Econometrics have reviewed 30 sources and publications so far. The main findings are that:
7. The true impact of Covid-19 is yet to be revealed. Overall impacts of Covid-19 have been masked by furlough and support schemes. These have helped to support jobs and businesses, but once the vaccine helps restore the economy and the nature of recovery is understood, there will be restructuring.
8. Covid lockdown has hit sectors such as retail, hospitality and leisure hard, with a particular impact on city centres, and urban authorities with economies reliant on the

visitor economy. The future of high street is uncertain due to impacts on retail and leisure.

9. There is an emerging digital divide: Covid-19 has accelerated adoption of digital technologies and remote working. Those firms most effectively adopting these already have a track record in quickly adopting and adapting to new technology. People in the top skilled occupations are far more likely to be able to work from home than lower skilled occupational groups. Some studies and business surveys suggest that home/remote working will be more popular and persistent once the Covid-19 crisis ends than it was before the pandemic.
10. Unemployment: Constrained labour demand is fuelling unemployment. There is a rise in unemployment due to lack of vacancies and job opportunities. The 'in-flow' of those entering unemployment is not as big as in past recessions. Normally those becoming unemployed would 'off-flow' back into jobs, but in the current crisis there are less job openings. Youngest and oldest workers are more likely to have been furloughed and/or lost their job during the pandemic.
11. The self-employed have been hard hit: 58 per cent of self-employed reported having less work than usual in September 2020. One-fifth of self-employed workers are considering leaving self-employment.
12. Lessons from previous pandemics: Perhaps the key takeaway message is the enduring impact of the 1918 flu pandemic, where surviving flu victims often faced debilitating illness and elevated mortality risk, and the impacts on young or unborn children were significant, due to economic impact on family (e.g. loss of earners, loss of earnings, destitution). Another feature was loss of trust in politicians and leaders in areas where the pandemic hit hardest.

Review of evidence on urban performance leading up to and during Covid-19 crisis

13. Cambridge Econometrics have started by briefly looking at the recent economic performance of urban areas, and provide an overview of inequality and inclusion and its general trend prior to the pandemic:
14. General economic performance: cities are vital for our economic welfare; between 2010-19, urban areas accounted for almost 80 per cent of economic growth, 3 out of 4 newly created jobs, and three quarters of productivity improvements. As of 2019, 64 per cent of the population resides in urban areas.
15. State of inequalities: despite these positive attributes, accompanying benefits have not always accrued evenly, whilst some members of society have been left behind:

- 15.1 *Worklessness*: urban labour markets have improved markedly, with worklessness declining as a record number of people are in work, yet a persistent performance gap remains. This is driven by the exclusion of certain groups including women, the young, black and minority ethnic persons, the disabled, and the unskilled.
- 15.2 *Earnings*: earnings are typically higher and growing faster in cities. The distribution between the highest and lowest earners is larger though, with an above average share of workers earning below the national living wage, particularly those on part-time and flexible contracts, who are often young and lower-skilled.
- 15.3 *Poverty*: positive progress in reducing poverty has stalled over recent years. This has implications for urban areas, with almost two-thirds of city neighbourhoods experiencing above-average levels of poverty. This has been a particular problem for child poverty, which is highly concentrated in cities.
- 15.4 *Skills and education*: people living in urban areas are often highly skilled (4 in 10 residents are educated to degree level), driven by skilled inward migration and good-performing schools. Yet an above average number of residents are unskilled, and the gap between the best and worst schools and students is largest in urban areas.
- 15.5 *Health*: ill health and poor healthy lifestyles are most prevalent in urban areas and play a vital role in wider inequality challenges. After decades of progress, life expectancy improvements have stalled, which has been most keenly felt by those in the poorest urban neighbourhoods.
- 15.6 *Housing*: buying a home is costly and less affordable in urban areas, and has deteriorated further over recent years, particularly at the lower-quartile range. Rough sleeping is twice as likely in urban areas, with the number of rough sleepers in cities tripling over the past decade.
16. *Incidence of Covid*: the pandemic has been most keenly felt in urban areas with current caseloads around 40 per cent higher than non-urban areas. 64 per cent of excess deaths have been recorded in urban areas. There are a number of causes, including urban density (particularly the incidence of multi-unit and multi-generational housing), occupational structure, public transport usage and ethnic profile.
17. *Economic impact*: urban areas have potential to show greater resilience to the relative economic headwinds, with a lower share of jobs in sectors that are vulnerable and high remote working potential. Forecasts show the output and employment hit will be lower in urban areas over 2020. Yet urban unemployment has already increased at an above average rate, as reduced footfall and spending impact city centre retail and leisure hardest.
18. *Implications for inequalities*: looking at the economic implications for certain age groups, genders, ethnic minorities and neighbourhoods, building on the existing state of inequalities analysis:

- 18.1 *Young people:* 1 in 5 of those unemployed because of Covid in urban areas are young (16-24), twice their population share, with young people overrepresented in vulnerable industries and occupations.
- 18.2 *Skills and education:* urban schools have seen persistently lower attendance than non-urban ones over the past year. The challenge of remote studying and home learning will be greatest for disadvantaged students.
- 18.3 *Ethnic minorities:* black and ethnic minority persons in urban areas are not only at a greater health risk to Covid, but also at greater economic risk, with the majority working in vulnerable industries and occupations. Those that remain in work are largely in lower-paying, higher Covid risk occupations.
- 18.4 *Areas:* no city will be immune to the effects of the pandemic-related recession. The uneven distribution of the impacts will be greatest within - rather than between - urban areas, with richer, suburban neighbourhoods potentially emerging better off.

Issues for members to consider

19. Members might wish to consider whether these initial findings are in line with what they would expect from the experiences that they have gained from their local areas, and whether there are any topics missing from the above lists identified by Cambridge Econometrics. It would also be helpful to understand if members feel any of the areas warrant a greater focus or more investigation in the next stages of the work.

Next steps

20. Cambridge Econometrics will continue to arrange and carry out interviews with key stakeholders, and develop five case study areas to look at in greater detail. Work will continue on data analysis, and this, combined with the findings of the interviews and the existing work to date will be used to identify and discuss the key future challenges and opportunities for urban areas. The main risks, challenges and opportunities will be turned into priorities and constructive statements and shape the vision for urban growth and recovery that is the focus of this work. This will be tested through a focus group of urban authorities and the City Regions Board, and the final report will be published in March.

Implications for Wales

21. The LGA has worked closely with the Welsh Local Government Association and the associations of the other devolved administrations throughout the coronavirus pandemic and will continue to do so through the process of recovery.

Financial Implications

22. The costs of commissioning Cambridge Econometrics and any further costs will be met from the board's policy budget.

Youth employment and skills update

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction on the development of a youth participation policy.

Summary

The youth participation policy work is jointly developed by City Regions, People and Places and Children and Young People Boards to ensure read-across.

This paper provides an update on the development of a youth participation and employment and skills policy relating to young people.

Recommendation

That the Board note the report and consider the following to provide comments/steer:

1. Update and plans for progressing this policy.
2. Councils statutory responsibilities discussion paper Annex A
3. T Levels discussion paper Annex B.

Action

Officers to progress in line with Members' comments/steer.

Contact officer: Bushra Jamil
Position: Adviser
Phone no: 020 7664 3357
Email: Bushra.Jamil@local.gov.uk

Improving youth participation

Background

1. Councils, alongside their role in helping economies to thrive, have several statutory duties relating to youth participation; to ensure all young people up to the age of 18 (25 for those with learning difficulties) participate in education or training. Despite having these responsibilities, councils have very few formal levers over commissioning or coordination of provision to meet them, resulting in a centralised and fragmented system.
2. In September 2020, the Board approved the publication of the improving youth participation report, which concluded our initial youth work, started last year. The report set out our vision and recommendations, providing us with the narrative and framework on which to base our discussions with government, parliamentarians, stakeholders and the sector.
3. This paper provides an update on how our ambition for young people is being progressed along with the wider youth employment and skills policy work.
4. The continued presence of COVID-19 and further national/regional restrictions has meant that young people, and those facing disadvantage, will be disproportionately impacted; therefore, it is important that the focus on this work remains a priority to ensure that relevant support is in place for these groups.

Youth participation campaign

5. The report [Re-thinking youth participation for the present and next generation: education to employment](#) was launched early October 2020 with a [press release](#) calling for COBRA-style action to save the 'lost generation' of young people. The publication received good traction. A number of stakeholders, including the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), Employment Related Services Association (ERSA), Social Mobility Foundation and Youth Employment UK, have shown a particular interest in the contents and recommendations of the report. Consequently, the LGA was invited to present the report to the [Youth Employment Group](#) (YEG), which has over 170 member organisations. The LGA has also taken part in an ASCL roundtable event in November 2020 to discuss the challenges and improvements to the system for supporting young people from education to employment. Therefore, **our youth ambition has reached a broad range of stakeholders and further work is in train to ensure better stakeholder alignment with the LGA position.**
6. To sustain the momentum on our youth campaign and shine a light on the work more widely, we are publishing a series of First articles from Autumn 2020 to Spring 2021. **The introductory feature appeared with a by-line from the Chairs of the three boards** (CYP, P&P and CRB), demonstrating the importance of a joined-up education and employment and skills policy. The [feature](#) (First November 2020 p11) highlighted the plight of young people and the job crisis. It set out the reports recommendation, including LGA's calls for a youth, employment and skills taskforce

and a youth minister. The next article, a case study on Derbyshire County Council's 'I-Step up Re-engagement Programme', will be published in the New Year edition. This case study also featured in our youth report to demonstrate how the Council has developed a programme to improve youth participation. The initiative addresses a gap in transition support and provides the wraparound provision for young people.

7. We are working with colleagues in the media team to make the most of any future influencing opportunities.
8. The LGA Chairman wrote to several Ministers about the report, including Mims Davies, Minister of State for Employment, DWP; Gillian Keegan, Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills, DfE; Luke Hall, Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government, MHCLG. The Chairman has received a response from Mims Davies. Separately, the LGA initiated and organised a roundtable session in December with the Minister for Employment and P&P and CR Lead Members to discuss how local government could support DWP COVID-19 related employment support schemes. We are also exploring an APPG on Youth Employment with parliamentarians in the Spring. **A member steer is welcome on how best to progress our youth ambitions further with relevant Ministers.**

Collaboration with other organisations

9. Maintaining relationships with other organisations has been important to ensure the LGA youth ambition is embedded across the employment and skills sector. The LGA has continued to work closely with a broad range of stakeholders on this agenda, including:
 - 9.1. The Learning and Work Institute's (LWI) commission on education and employment opportunities for young people ([Youth Commission](#)). **The Commission will publish its final report in the New Year with a suite of recommendations for skills and participation.**
 - 9.2. YEG and its founding organisations [Impetus](#), [Youth Futures Foundation](#), [Youth Employment UK](#), [the Institute for Employment Studies](#) and [The Prince's Trust](#). The YEG recommendations [report](#), launched in September 2020, has some alignment with the LGA youth report.
10. We will continue to explore further opportunities to engage with influential research and policy development.

Councils statutory responsibilities

11. To enhance our youth participation work, we will be developing our policy relating to councils statutory responsibilities for young people and those not in education, employment or training (NEET). **We have drafted an initial discussion paper (Annex A) highlighting the current issues and challenges. The aim is to develop this further through discussion with the sector and stakeholders to form a policy position; inform the improvement project (see below for details) and dialogue with DfE officials. Members are invited to comment on it and provide a steer on further issues/challenges that should be included. Officers will amend its scope**

accordingly. Members can also provide comments by 31 January 2021 to bushra.jamil@local.gov.uk.

Young People and NEETs

12. The [data release](#) in November 2020 was expected to show the number of NEETs rising but in fact **there was a slight drop from 765,000 to 757,000 young people (aged 16 to 24 years) in the UK who were NEET** in July to September 2020. A possible reason for this is that many young people, in response to COVID-19, have entered full time education, or are protected by the job retention scheme. **It is expected that there will be a sharp rise in young people who are NEET after the job retention scheme ends** and a fall in those in full time education, with a decrease in retention after the first term.
13. The next official ONS NEET UK data will be released in March 2021 and the DfE participation in education, employment and training for 2020 annual data release will not be until June 2021. However, we are working with the Department to see if any early unofficial data can be shared with the LGA. It is anticipated that these figures will show the real impact of COVID-19 on young people's education and employment opportunities and will be useful to develop appropriate support programmes.
14. Following the Ministerial roundtable in September 2020, Gillian Keegan MP, Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills, the Department for Education (DfE) was invited to the People and Places board. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, the Minister was unable to attend. However, the **Minister is keen to engage with the LGA and council representatives to learn about issues young people are facing and how that can result in becoming NEET, and solutions to address these**. The LGA and council/combined authority representatives have continued to maintain dialogue on young people and NEETs through regular meetings with officials. The first meeting took place in September 2020 and the discussion focussed on appropriate careers advice and guidance, relevance and sufficiency of provision and funding. The next meeting is scheduled to take place in January 2021.

Improvement work

15. Improving youth participation in education, employment and training (EET) as part of their statutory duties is key for councils. The COVID-19 crisis has had an adverse effect on young peoples' ability to transition into education or employment effectively. Therefore, the improvement support budget has been allocated to better understand the barriers/challenges for councils in fulfilling their statutory duties for young people, for instance, in relation to NEETs and to explore solutions. We commissioned a project in November 2020 and the successful bidder is York Consulting. **The project aims to support the sector (eight areas) through action learning to support the sector to deliver effective support for NEETs and those at risk of becoming NEET**. A report with case studies will capture the learning and a subsequent online resource will support councils to commission and deliver services and an enhanced offer for young people. We have had a good response from areas interested to be involved in the project. Twelve areas will be taking part in the discussions at an initial workshop in January 2021. **The report will be presented to the board at the March 2021 meeting.**

A coherent offer of all post-16 options

16. The increased focus on apprenticeships and the roll-out of technical levels (T Levels) provides young people with more options for their career pathways. Having greater choice is positive, but it is vital for young people to have a coherent picture of all available pathways and how they relate to the world of work or further learning. This is essential to improve participation in education and training, particularly for disadvantaged young people or those with special educational needs and disability SEND or complex needs.
17. To progress our post-16 policy work and to support councils and combined authorities plan for a post-16 local offer, so young people have a coherent picture of locally available options, we have developed a **T Levels discussion paper (Annex B)**. **This paper sets out the guiding principles for making T Levels implementation a success for young people, employers and the economy.**
18. **Members are invited to provide comments and a steer on the issues and guiding principles: a) are there any further issues that should be included? b) are the guiding principles, right? c) is there any further intel from local areas?**
19. **Members can also provide comments by 31 January 2021 to bushra.jamil@local.gov.uk**

Post-16 SEND

20. Last month the LGA published a [report](#) on planning, commissioning, funding and supporting post-16 high needs students. The report was commissioned by the LGA children and young people's (CYP) team along with the Association of Colleges (AoC) and Natspec. (The CYP board has an interest in this issue and responsibility for those with SEND or complex needs.) The purpose of the review was to provide a better understanding of how local authorities and providers can work together to manage an increased demand for support for high needs students with limited resources. **The findings of the report conclude that the system is overly complicated**, resulting in young people, their parents, councils and colleges facing challenges which have a detrimental impact on those students in further education with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). **It also suggests that a more radical re-working of the whole system** is required, including changes to the funding model so that councils can plan provision more effectively for young people within their local area. Key findings and recommendations from the fieldwork include:
 - 20.1. Strategic planning - Each local authority should take a strategic view of emerging needs for post-16 provision and the providers best placed to meet these and develop its provision accordingly in anticipation of identified future needs.
 - 20.2. Development of new provision – Through improved strategic planning, identified areas where new provision is needed, local authorities should play a more active, innovative and creative role with providers, existing and new, in the development of that provision.

20.3. Transitions into post-16 provision - Securing better transitions between life stages and settings, including from secondary to further education should be a key focus.

- 21. Members are invited to give their view and steer on how post-16 employment and skills and SEND policy should be developed.**

Employment and skills update

22. The [latest ONS labour market statistics](#) (UK) released in November 2020, show a fall in youth employment, with **youth unemployment level now at 14.6 per cent compared to 4.8 per cent of all age groups**. Though it is a varied picture across England, as the effects of the pandemic is felt differently in different parts of the country. The Centre for Cities have developed a useful tool [UK unemployment tracker](#) that show how the Coronavirus pandemic is affecting unemployment, including youth unemployment, in large cities and towns. This highlights that local solutions are needed to tackle local youth unemployment challenges. **Members are invited to highlight any specific issues/challenges contributing to youth unemployment in their localities.**

Enhanced Youth Offer

23. In view of rising youth unemployment, the LGA have maintained a dialogue with DWP officials to influence the planning, coordination and delivery of initiatives for young people, along with other measures. The DWP enhanced youth offer commenced in September 2020. Essentially, the youth offer has three elements:

23.1. **Youth Employment Programme**, a 13-week programme with referral to the most appropriate support: a traineeship, work experience, mentoring circles, careers advice, Kickstart or an apprenticeship.

23.2. **Youth Hubs** provides young people access to up to six months of wider support to meet any skills gaps to bring them closer to the labour market. These are co-located and co-delivered with local partners, including local government. **The programme aims to deliver a hundred new Hubs**. These are being rolled out nationally and where this is not possible due to COVID-19 restrictions a virtual service is currently being offered. **Many of the key elements of the Hubs (for example, collaborative culture, data sharing) resemble previously 'tried and tested' local models**, including Suffolk County Council's MyGo and Liverpool City Region Youth Employment Gateway. At DWP's request, many local authorities have been asked to find suitable physical premises to host Youth Hubs locally and act as accountable bodies. The sector backs more targeted support for young people, but new physical centres are not always necessary, and in some cases are hard to find and require investment.

23.3. Our youth report called for an integrated youth employment and skills service with local government having a central role. **It is vital that councils/combined authorities are able to influence the planning and delivery of Youth Hubs in local areas.**

23.4. **Youth Employability Coaches** focus on young people who have significant complex needs and barriers and offer flexible support to help them move into and sustain employment.

24. **The Kickstart Scheme**, Government's £2 billion work placement programme for young people started in November 2020. DWP reports the scheme is progressing well and **by mid-November a total of 4,783 applications, covering 23,934 vacancies had been approved for funding.**
25. Local government representative bodies have developed a guide to [Kickstart: what good looks like for young people, employers and the economy](#). This highlights the need for Kickstart to be part of a wider local offer, effective outreach and engagement, quality jobs and support, and an integrated offer for employers. The LGA [Councils' Kickstart offer for non-devolved England](#) sets out how, with the right level of resource, local government can add value to the scheme.
26. Councils and combined authorities are working hard to encourage local businesses to participate in the scheme, as well as offering opportunities themselves; for instance [Leicester City Council](#) have created 70 Kickstart placements as part of its economic recovery plan; Suffolk County Council have provided 42 placements and Norfolk County Council 72 respectively.

Apprenticeships

27. **Apprenticeship starts (October 2020) showed that starts had halved during lockdown.** The proportion of starts by age group was: 16-18: 23.7 per cent (75,500); 19-24: 29.5 per cent (94,200); 25 and over: 46.8 per cent (149,300). The Government's employer incentives to recruit more apprentices are welcome along with the support for those who have been made redundant. Unfortunately, **more young apprentices will become unemployed in the New Year, especially in the leisure and hospitality sectors, as the furlough scheme unwinds.**

Parliamentary Committee Inquiries

28. The House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee published its inquiry into Employment and COVID-19 [report](#) last month. The LGA submitted written evidence earlier in the year. **The report has been positive about our work, particularly the green jobs research and that more programmes and resources should be devolved to local areas.**
29. A new House of Lords Special Inquiry Committee was [announced](#) (December 2020) to consider youth unemployment, education and skills. Its scope is wide ranging and will include risk associated with high levels of unemployment, under-employment and insecure employment, challenges posed by COVID-19 and Brexit. It is expected that once the Committee's members are appointed a formal inquiry will be launched in the New Year. **Members are invited to give their views on this and provide an early steer on the direction we should take in any LGA submission.**

30. **Members are asked to consider, comment and provide a steer on:**

- **how best to progress our youth ambitions further with relevant Ministers (para 8)**
- **Councils statutory duties discussion paper (Annex A) – further issues/challenges to be included (para 11)**
- **T Levels discussion paper (Annex B) – further issues and guiding principles for implementation to be included (para 17-19)**
- **how post-16 employment and skills and SEND policy should be developed (para 20-21)**
- **the direction we should take in any LGA submission for the potential House of Lords Special Inquiry Committee on youth unemployment, education and skills (para 29).**

Next steps

- 31. Following the Board's considerations and comments on the contents of this paper, officers will provide regular updates on the development of this policy/ activities at future boards meetings.**

Financial implications

32. To be covered through the existing Budget.

Implications for Wales

33. Skills and employment are devolved matters. The LGA liaises with WLGA colleagues.

ANNEX A

Councils statutory duties issues/challenges

Appropriate provision

It is challenging at the moment to keep young people in full time education. There is a growing number of young people with complex needs that require a significant level of support. Councils have to ensure that the breadth of support needed by all learners is effectively commissioned.

The challenge is that current provision is quite rigid and not flexible to meet the specific needs of different learners. The structure of learning, for example, the traditional year-long programmes, are not suitable for many students. The programmes need to be shorter, flexible and include employability skills.

A tailored programme that delivers employability resilience with short stepping-stones for progression is required; a number of local initiatives provide such support. For those who are NEET, care leavers and hard to reach groups with complex needs, a pre-offer is needed that responds to their specific needs, as the mainstream provision is often not suitable for these particular groups.

Councils are able to offer an enhanced service by connecting with other local services to provide the necessary wider support that is vital to secure and sustain education, employment and training opportunities.

Sufficiency of provision

Some areas have lost some good specialist providers over the last couple of years, resulting in gaps in provision in the area. There is an assumption by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) that FE colleges will be able to plug the gaps with the right provision but this has not been the case.

Councils have statutory duties around sufficiency of provision but feel they are being hindered in this area as they have very little control over ESFA budget and therefore, unable to direct provision where it is needed.

There is a significant risk of more young people becoming NEET as more students are dropping out of year 12 and first year of college. Also, in some areas there has been a drop in apprenticeships which correlates with a drop in provision.

Careers, advice and guidance

The careers landscape is complex and fragmented and young people are often not getting the level of service required. A coherent offer of all the options is needed. Year 12 drop-out is an issue and there is an opportunity to address this challenge with the emerging FE White Paper by incorporating a careers element as part of FE reforms.

School leavers in the post-16 transition period are required to seek any careers advice and guidance from the education institution they previously attended. This is a real issue for students that were not fully engaged with the school whilst in education and therefore as a result risk becoming NEET.



Funding

A number of initiatives that provide the wider support to young people are funded through European Social Fund (ESF) and there is concern that much of this provision will be lost when the current European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) programme ends. This needs to be urgently addressed.

ANNEX B

T Levels: making implementation a success for young people, employers and the economy

Background

The [Sainsbury Report](#) (2016) recommended a new system consisting of a technical education option alongside an academic option for students aged 16 -19. The Government committed to these recommendations and published the [Post 16 Skills Plan](#). In 2017 the Government launched a new set of technical qualifications (T Levels) aimed at establishing parity between academic and technical routes, and to meet the current and future skills needs.

[T Levels](#) are a two year technical programme at level 3 and above for 16-19 year olds. The course provides a mixture of study and industry placement (approximately 45 days) in a chosen industry or occupation; supported by relevant Maths, English and digital skills.

These qualifications are being offered alongside apprenticeships, providing another route to a technical qualification, with the same set of employer- designed standards, approved and managed by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

T Levels are part of the Government's broader skills agenda that aim to meet needs of local employers and the economy.

The importance of a good quality technical skills offer

The traditional academic route is not appropriate for many post-16 students. Having alternative choice is vital for young people to ensure the right levels of skills and participation. Apprenticeships give young people the opportunity to combine earning whilst learning. T Levels are the other side of the same coin that offers learning with practical experience through an industry placement.

The current state of play

The introduction of the first three T Levels (Digital, Construction and Education and Childcare route) started last year (September 2020) at selected colleges, schools and other providers across England. A further seven T Levels will be available in September 2021 with the remaining courses starting in either 2022 or 2023. There will be a total of 24 T Levels in 11 routes by 2023.

COVID-19 impacting T Levels implementation

COVID-19 crisis has impacted both the supply and demand side of T Levels implementation. Students with lockdown restrictions and remote learning have missed out on key opportunities to gain information, advice and guidance on available vocational options, including T Levels. This has impacted recruitment of students for the September 2020 start as number are below targets: Digital 76 per cent and Education and Childcare 92 per cent; and surprising Construction 121 per cent against target respectively. Many providers have launched their own recruitment campaigns to secure viable numbers for courses. Employer

recruitment for Industry Placements has also struggled, particularly with the Education and Childcare and Digital T Levels.

LGA Workforce team update

The LGA recognises that T Levels are pivotal for councils and employers for addressing skills shortages/gaps and to develop a pipeline of a skilled workforce. The LGA workforce team secured DfE funding to deliver a pilot programme to promote T Levels industry placements within councils and also capture and share best practice on what works well and not so well in the sector.

It has launched the pilot programme with a media campaign (December 2020) that is aligned with the DfE T Levels national campaign. To raise awareness and promote a positive message in the sector there was a T Levels [feature](#) in the First magazine. The LGA campaign key messages include:

- promoting councils as career destinations for young people and developing the future workforce through a Technical Level skills pathway.
- LGA is working with and supporting councils to provide at least one T Level placement from September 2021.
- Sharing and learning from T Levels Industry Placements in councils; what works, what needs to be improved.

The workforce team has set up a sector focus group to inform and support its T Levels campaign. The initial feedback from the workforce focus group activities highlighted it was important to focus on three key areas: local political support; the role of the line manager and to provide one young person with an opportunity with a clear 'pathway'.

The LGA has engaged with our member authorities, in particular, areas where 2020 T Levels are being rolled-out to gather intel and inform policy. The workforce and policy teams are developing positions and supporting the sector as both councils as employers and economic development leads. This paper was developed on the back of those discussions and we will continue our work with the sector to enhance our policy position as T Levels are rolled out across England.

This paper sets out below what we would see as the **guiding principles** to ensure success of T Levels implementation for young people, employers and the economy.

Principle 1: School leaders and teachers should have greater awareness of T Levels

It is important for school leaders and teachers to have detailed knowledge of T Levels; as they can play pivotal role in raising careers awareness, both in their interactions with students as teachers and in pastoral roles, and also through their engagement with parents.

Although the [NexT Level awareness raising campaign](#) is welcomed, recent evidence from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) survey suggests that further work is needed to inform schools about T Levels. T Levels information gaps include course content, structure and assessment; target students; level of credibility with employers; entry requirements and identifying suitable pupils; local availability and institutions and progression routes.

Councils have existing relationships with schools and colleges in their areas and can support greater awareness as a trusted partner due to their impartiality but need resources to do this.

Principle 2: Students should have careers education and guidance on T Levels options

Good quality careers education, independent and impartial advice and guidance on T Levels should be available for students throughout their education, in particular, at key transition points of making important decisions, for instance: at 16 when taking key decision about KS5 routes and subjects, or vocational pathways. Students need clear information about course content, structure and assessment, progression routes to higher education, T Levels available.

The Youth Employment UK [Youth Voice Census](#) found that a T Levels option was only explored with 6 per cent of young people in the survey.

Principle 3: T Levels should be part of the coherent post-16 local offer

It is positive that young people have greater choice with a range of options (A levels, T Levels, Traineeships, Apprenticeships) to pursue their chosen career but this also creates a confusing picture. Young people need to have clear information on all options to make informed decisions on the best route for their career.

Councils are best placed to have a lead role in planning for a post-16 local offer given their statutory duties for young people. It is fundamental for young people to have a coherent offer of locally available options, including T Levels.

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) has created a website for students, Greater Manchester Apprenticeship and Careers Service ([GMACS](#)) which is populated with T Levels information for students and parents. GMCA have also created visual occupational maps for Construction and Digital as part of the Oldham Opportunity Area project to make technical education attractive.

Principle 4: T Levels offer should be differentiated from other initiatives

Employers are currently being bombarded with a plethora of government initiatives (T Levels, Traineeships, Apprenticeships) and there is a risk the T Levels messaging may get 'lost in the noise' as employers focus on the challenges currently facing them.

T Levels as well as providing very useful knowledge and experience for a student about a particular industry can also provide employers with a pipeline of skilled workers for the future. Consequently, there should be clear information on the merits of T Levels for employers as opposed to other initiatives.

Councils work with providers to ensure that local employers have the skills to meet their business needs, focussing on bringing the supply and demand sides of the labour market more closely together to improve the offer.

Principle 5: Employers should be incentivised to support Industry Placements



The challenge of delivering Industry Placements for T Levels on a national scale is immense. Many employers want to support T Levels but struggle, particularly SMEs, with the additional costs associated with providing a placement. Therefore, employers need to be incentivised with flexible funding for supervisory and other associated costs to offer more placements.

Local government has a vast range of different and diverse professions and can therefore provide a broad range of opportunities. It has the infrastructure to embrace the T Levels agenda as part of its wider workforce offer (Apprenticeships, Traineeships, Kickstart Scheme) and wants to support Industry Placements but it needs the resources to develop a comprehensive offer that meets the needs of individual, particularly for SEND and disadvantaged groups.

Local Government preparedness for EU Exit

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This report updates the Board on UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, and the work that the LGA has been undertaking to support councils in preparing for Britain's exit from the EU and the end of the transition period.

The report sets out our forward work priorities as we seek to address the risks and opportunities for councils.

Recommendation

That members:

- Comment on current work being undertaken by the LGA.

Action

Officers to take forward any actions identified.

Contact officer: Paul Green
Position: Policy Adviser
Phone no: 07787154047
Email: paul.green@local.gov.uk

Local Government preparedness for EU Exit

Background

1. On Christmas Eve, the Prime Minister and the President of the European Commission announced the outcome of the negotiations between the UK and the European Union and a deal on future trade arrangements. The [full text of the agreement](#) has been published along with a [summary of its content from the Government](#).
2. The deal was agreed by the UK Parliament on 30 December and has been provisionally implemented from the 1st of January. . The European Parliament and Council are expected to give it final endorsement around March.
3. Since the referendum on EU Membership in 2016, the LGA has taken a neutral stance on the issue of EU exit. We have worked consistently with Government highlighting both the opportunities and risks of EU exit for our diverse, local communities on behalf of councils. Our work has been led by the all-party LGA EU Exit Taskforce. They met with the Secretary of State and other Government Ministers and officials in early January where LGA leaders raised the key issues in this report.
4. This report sets out the headlines of the deal, the biggest issues for councils and the challenges and opportunities that we have consistently raised with Whitehall.

The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement

5. The headlines of the agreement are:
 - 5.1. No tariffs or quotas on UK/EU trade, but new paperwork and checks at ports
 - 5.2. A new agreement on fisheries, with the UK's departure from the Common Fisheries Policy
 - 5.3. State aid and procurement policies becoming UK domestic policies
 - 5.4. An agreement to join some future EU funding programmes (e.g. the Horizon Europe research programme) and to leave others (e.g. the Erasmus student exchange scheme).
6. There will be a number of outstanding issues for local government arising from the Agreement which we are monitoring. These include:
 - 6.1. The impact of the framework for mutual recognition of professional qualifications
 - 6.2. There is a decision still to be made about data adequacy in the next six months.
 - 6.3. Whether new checks and paperwork at ports in relation to Port Health functions can be further streamlined within the parameters of the deal.

7. The LGA will continue to monitor these issues and is engaging with government regularly to monitor the impact of the immediate changes, including concerns from some business organisations. We will ensure that any concerns from local government are raised, including

Local Government issues

8. Before the agreement, the LGA had provided advice for councils on preparation for the end of the EU transition period (via its web), signposting to all relevant Government guidance. MHCLG had also written to all councils in November outlining what they needed to do to prepare for the end of the transition period.
9. Following the agreement, the LGA has been in discussion with the Government about the challenges and opportunities for local government.
10. The biggest issue that the LGA has been raising with government is that councils face many challenges in the coming days and weeks. The start of the new trade arrangements will take place amongst multiple pressures on councils over the winter months. Our support for local communities against COVID and our statutory services (such as children's services) are the priority, and we have stated that the capacity to undertake additional new work during this unprecedented period is severely limited.
11. Most of the immediate council responsibilities will fall on our regulatory services as a result of some new checks on goods and the support needed to business (for example, new export certificates). Controls will now be applied to EU imports not previously subject to inspection, with physical checks taking place from July 2021. These members of staff are at the frontline of our work in the pandemic. They are also having to deliver important statutory services such as food hygiene and trading standards.
12. There are already skills shortages in these professions and councils are reporting severe difficulties in recruiting new staff. In order to address some of the skill shortages in the longer term, the LGA has worked closely with Government to set up the [Environmental Health Together](#) initiative, to provide a mechanism for councils to recruit qualified environmental health staff.
13. The LGA will monitor the pressures that regulatory service and port towns may experience and continue to raise any issues with Government. There will be longer term lessons undertaken regarding border preparedness.

Specific policy issues to be pursued

14. In early January, the LGA met with ministers to discuss the specific immediate and longer-term issues facing councils. These issues include the UK replacement for EU

funds and, as set out above, the responsibilities of regulatory services staff to undertake more checks and to support business with exports.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund

15. The Heads of Terms for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was announced at the Spending Review. This includes a £220 million pilot for 2021/22 before the fund will be introduced fully. We are expecting in the coming weeks a prospectus for the fund to be launched.
16. The LGA has been lobbying since the referendum for a replacement for EU funds. Whilst we secured a commitment to a new UKSPF and a promise that there would be no change in quantum, details are still to be developed. There is now an urgency to this issue as we approach the end of the current EU funding programmes.
17. The LGA has offered to help speed the development of the detail and to codesign the new fund by offering to set up task groups with Government departments to help codesign the fund. We understand the Government has agreed in principle to this and we are working to determine how this will operate.

UK immigration policy and the consequence for key local government services such as social care

18. Social care is one of the sectors most affected by migration rule changes as a significant proportion of the workforce are not UK nationals. It is a largely commissioned service with relatively few direct local government employees. As the main commissioners of services, councils have a strong interest in ensuring workforce stability as a key factor in good quality social care provision. Recruitment is already difficult in this sector. 7% of the social care workforce have been EU nationals and not subject to any migration rules to date.
19. The EU Exit Taskforce has raised concerns with ministers about the implications of the new points-based system for the social care workforce and stressed the need for parity with NHS workers. We will continue to raise this issue with Government.

Data Protection

20. The Government continues to seek an “adequacy” decision from the EU under both the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Law Enforcement Directive (LED) which the Christmas Eve trade agreement has provided an additional six months for the EU to make that decision. It will allow for the free flow of personal data between the UK and the EU to continue uninterrupted.
21. The LGA has been asking Government to ensure they provide the right guidance mitigating actions councils should take in case the free flow of personal data is interrupted.

22. New Government guidance was then sent to all Chief Executives on the 9th October, and we are expecting further advice from MHCLG very soon. There will continue to be uncertainty in this area until there is an “adequacy” decision.

Opportunities to reform procurement

23. Councils’ procurement rules have been based on EU law. Whilst these EU rules have been converted into UK law, there is the opportunity now to reform the rules to allow more flexibility to support local economies. Government [Guidance](#) for Public Sector bodies was pushed in December. Following LGA asks, it underlines the possibility for low value contracts to be reserved to business in the local area (county etc), and/or to SMEs and voluntary and community social enterprises (VCSEs).
24. The Government has launched a **public consultation by a Green Paper on ‘Transforming Public Procurement’**. The Green paper sets out long-planned changes to UK’s procurement rules, putting value for money and transparency at the heart of the new approach and includes plans to promote wider social benefits from public spend, building on the Public Services (Social Value) Act that councils have been following since 2012.
25. The proposals also include measures that councils have been calling to assist them with their procurement:
- 25.1. providing more scope to exclude suppliers for poor past performance, and corruption-related matters
 - 25.2. reforming the remedies system, through making the court review process faster and less costly, capping damages, and further investigating the feasibility of tribunals.
26. The LGA’s Procurement team and National Advisory Group (NAG) for Procurement has worked to ensure the issues and concerns of the sector were raised and included in the proposed changes to the way we procure as a sector. We therefore encourage all those involved in public procurement to have their say and respond to the consultation by the 10 March 2021.
27. To note, the LGA has been working with Cabinet Office to allow access to contract management training for council officers. More than 1000 local government employees have undertaken the free training so far. LGA is promoting the training to councils and anyone interested can contact productivity@local.gov.uk for more details.

Opportunities to reform state aid

28. The LGA has stated that EU exit provides an opportunity to reform how grants and public subsidies work. Any new state aid rules must be based on local government’s experience of what works on the ground.
29. Processes can be simplified by introducing flexibilities for councils. A flexible regime allowing councils to tackle the impacts of COVID and support economic recovery continues to be essential, as does the ability to support public service delivery in areas

which might otherwise go unserved. Any future changes to the UK state aid policy could also allow support for non-profit-making activities or social enterprises who reinvest surplus back into the local community. Organisations operating in the culture, heritage, arts, or non-profit sports sectors may also merit a more flexible approach.

UK legacy of the Committee of the Regions to ensure councils have a continued formal role in law-making (ie transfer of councils' EU legal rights to UK).

30. The new trade agreement creates a new UK/EU institutional framework. Based on recent LGA lobbying, ministers have agreed to a UK non-statutory replacement for the work that was developed by the EU Committee of Regions – ie local government's ability to comment on draft laws that impact at a local level and to advise Parliament on those issues. We understand their intention is to incorporate this as part of the Devolution White Paper later in the 2021.
31. Members of the Executive are asked to comment on the report and offer any other issues that need to be raised with Government.

Wales

32. We continue to develop our work on Brexit in partnership with the Welsh Local Government Association, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and Northern Ireland Local Government Association, ensuring a united UK local government voice in the debate.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This paper updates Board Members on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and seeks their steer on engagement with the Government in shaping the fund.

Recommendation

Members are invited to:

- Review the UK Shared Prosperity Fund pilot projects and Heads of Terms (para. 4 – 7)
- Discuss the key issues for local government outlined in this report (para. 8 – 13)

Action

- Members to discuss the next steps in lobbying and engagement for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Contact officer: Paul Green
Position: Adviser
Phone no: 07787154047
Email: paul.green@local.gov.uk

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Background

1. This paper sets out the latest developments in the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and outlines the opportunities available for local government to influence the design of the fund.
2. In March 2020, the Board refreshed the LGA's lines on the UKSPF to be which includes:
 - 2.1. Councils and combined authorities should be the vehicles to drive the fund.
 - 2.2. The fund should be driven by locally determined outcomes and need.
 - 2.3. It should be aligned with other growth funding to move towards a single pot of funding.
3. At the November Spending Review, the Government announced the [Heads of Terms](#) (page 37) for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This outlined the £220 million that will be allocated for pilot projects and gave limited detail of the UKSPF.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Spending Review

4. At the November Spending Review, the Government announced the Heads of Terms for the UKSPF. The UKSPF will be the domestic replacement for the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and the European Territorial Cooperation Fund.
5. £220 million will be allocated to pilot schemes for the new fund in 2021/22 with a prospectus being launched in January setting out the details of the pilots. Questions remain how this will be allocated, what it will be piloting and how it relates to the remaining unspent European Structural and Investment Fund Programme.
6. The UKSPF will be introduced in 2022 and will, on average, ramp up to £1.5 billion a year. There remains uncertainty how long the fund will last for and whether it meets the quantum of the ESIF programme.
7. Places will agree specific outcomes to target within a wider UK framework. The fund will cover three themes, which covers a much wider remit than the ESIF programme:
 - 7.1. **Investment in people:** skills programmes tailored to local needs, such as work based training as well as local support services, such as early years
 - 7.2. **Investment in communities and place:** including culture and sporting facilities, civic, green and rural infrastructure, community owned assets, neighbourhood and housing improvement, town centre and transport improvement and digital connectivity
 - 7.3. **Investment in local businesses:** supporting innovation, green and tech adoption, tailored to local need.

Key issues

8. There remains a number of unanswered questions and issues that are not addressed by the Heads of Terms. We understand that some of these will be addressed at the next Spending Review.
9. The Government announced in the Spending Review that £220 million will be allocated to pilot projects in 2021/22. There is no detail of what or who will be trialling these projects and how the funding will be allocated. It is also unclear how this will work with current ESIF programmes as local ESIF committees work to determine how the remaining ESIF programme will be spent.
10. There is no detail of the governance or decision making, and it remains essential that local government is the vehicle driving the fund. The themes of the UKSPF are wider than the ESIF programme, with a greater emphasis on place-based projects and programmes. The Heads of Terms includes new areas that the fund intends to support, including neighbourhood and housing improvement, sport and cultural facilities and early years provision. It is therefore essential that local government lead so there is a joining up of wider strategies, such as housing, public health and early years.
11. The Heads of Terms outlines that places will be agreeing the outcomes of the fund through a UK investment framework, without making clear the linkage with local plans and strategies. There are concerns that this could be a roll back of devolved decision making that was agreed for the ESIF programme in some parts of England, such as Cornwall and Greater Manchester. It may also have implications for devolution in Wales.
12. The UKSPF announcement was made in the context of wider regeneration announcements, including the Levelling Up fund, Towns Fund, Freeports and Green Book reforms. There is still no detail of how the UKSPF will be aligned to these initiatives. There is also no detail of how the fund will work with the £1.1 billion allocated to farmers, land managers and the rural economy.
13. It is unclear whether the fund will be allocated or competitive bidding, nor the mixture between capital and revenue. Clarity on these issues is expected to be announced at the 2021 Spending Review.

Engagement with Government

14. The LGA has raised the need for a locally driven UKSPF through the EU Exit Taskforce, member representation on the Growth Programme Board and through engagement with officials.

15. Following the November Ministerial EU Exit Local Delivery Board, the Chair of the EU Exit Taskforce, Councillor Kevin Bentley wrote to the Minister of Regional Growth and Local Government, Luke Hall MP, proposing that the Government work with local government and develop a taskforce, at both the member and officer level.
16. The Minister has since responded indicating that they are keen to set up a taskforce of some kind at an official level. Members are asked to provide a steer on further engagement and lobbying on the UKSPF.

Implications for Wales

17. The Government have said the UKSPF will be used to reduce inequalities across the four home nations, including Wales. Through the EU Exit Ministerial Local Government Board, the LGA has been working closely with the WLGA in lobbying for a localised replacement for EU funding. We continue to work closely with the WLGA on the details of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Financial Implications

18. Work has been carried out from within existing budgets.

Update on health devolution and NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) consultation on integrated care systems (ICSs)

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper provides an update on the joint meeting of the People and Places, City Regions, and Community Health and Wellbeing board Lead Members, and the LGA's response to the NHS England and NHS Improvement consultation on integrated care systems.

Recommendation

That Members note the update in the report.

Action/s

Officers to continue to work with councils and NHS England/NHS Improvement to look in detail at options proposed and continue to update members on the outcome of the consultation.

Contact officer: Ellie Law
Position: Policy Advisor
Phone no: 07584 273764
Email: Eleanor.law@local.gov.uk

Update on health devolution and NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) consultation on integrated care systems (ICSs)

Background

1. On 26 November, Lead Members of the People and Places board, City Regions board, and the Community Health and Wellbeing board met to discuss the LGA's lines and current position on health devolution. Lead Members heard about the experiences of Manchester and Cornwall as areas which have had some responsibility for health devolved to them, with Jessie Hamshar, Strategy and Engagement Service Director, Cornwall Council, and Warren Heppolette, Executive Lead, Strategy & System Development, Greater Manchester Health & Social Care Partnership from Manchester speaking.
2. At this meeting, the LGA's current lines on health devolution were agreed (see appendix 1 below), and there was also a brief discussion of the NHS England and NHS Improvement consultation on integrated care systems that had been launched that day. Alyson Morley, Senior Adviser on Adult Social Care and Health, agreed to circulate the LGA's draft response to Lead Members of all three boards for comment.
3. Lead Members commented on the draft submission before Christmas and comments were fed back to Alyson, who incorporated them into the LGA's final submission.

Issues

Summary of LGA response to NHSEI consultation on integrated care systems

4. Placing ICSs on a legal footing will affect existing partnerships, and it is essential that NHSEI engages councils as equal partners in developing the proposals.
5. The LGA supports the direction of travel of the proposals - joining up health and care support, with collaboration and locally led decision making is in line with our principles around devolution. However, the proposals are missing out on the opportunity to develop real collaborative place based policy, which could look at the wider determinants of health to address health inequalities and improve population health.
6. The LGA supports the objectives of the NHS Long Term Plan but would like to see greater clarity in how this will work in practice – for example, whether this is really a step change in the NHS away from a very centralised system to one with greater devolution,

or whether national level decisions being delegated to ICSs will result in replacing or bypassing existing accountable place-based partnerships.

7. It is essential that there is local government representation on ICS boards, although it seems that at the moment ICSs as they are currently proposed will be NHS bodies will local government representation rather than a true partnership of equals.
8. There were a range of opinions from councils on the legal basis of ICSs, with some councils expressing concern that creating ICSs as a statutory corporate NHS body will be a retrograde step and damage the collaborative and equal partnerships in many STPs and ICSs.
9. Some councils favoured option 1 (that ICSs will be a statutory joint committee), on the basis that a joint committee has the benefit of being able to act as a strategic partnership body for the whole system. Other councils favoured option 2 because there is value of having a single corporate body across NHS organisations in a health economy, which could plan strategically and deploy resources to best effect across an area. Given these differing views, the LGA has not argued for either option, but stressed that there should be system level partnership where local government can work with the NHS to drive real change and improve health incomes. A number of other local authorities stressed the importance of co-terminosity between local authorities and ICSs, and how difficult it is to plan with health systems whose footprints bear no relation to identifiable place and communities.
10. The LGA emphasised that most commissioning should still take place at a neighbourhood/primary care network level, and that it should only be undertaken by ICSs when there is need or benefit in doing so. ICSs should not result in the withdrawal of commissioning capacity at a local place-based level. It is disappointing the proposals do not discuss the value of joint commissioning between the NHS and local government.
11. The LGA strongly calls for the whole of the public sector to operate within the same legal framework wherever possible, so have concerns about the proposal to remove NHS services from the scope of the Public Contracts Regulation 2015, as this could create a barrier to joint commissioning arrangements.
12. The LGA's full consultation response can be found here:
<https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/lga-response-nhs-england-and-nhs-improvement-consultation#summary-of-the-key-lga-messages-questions-and-concerns>.

Implications for Wales

13. Health is a devolved matter, but LGA officers remain in contact with colleagues from the WLGA and other stakeholders to explore areas of shared interest.

Financial Implications

14. Any further work on this area will be met from the LGA's existing programme budget.

Next steps

15. Officers will continue to work with councils and NHS England/NHS Improvement to look in detail at options proposed, as well as other options, to understand how they could improve health and wellbeing, and the implications for future working between local government and the NHS.

Appendix 1: LGA position on health devolution

1. **Health devolution is not an end in itself.** It is a means of securing local freedom, responsibility and accountability to achieve improved health and wellbeing outcomes, better health and care services and better use of resources. It has also been seen as a key driver for the integration of health, social care and wellbeing care and support. The LGA has a long-standing commitment to moving the integration of health and social care from marginal activity to the main way of planning and providing services.
2. **There is no one model or governance that is right for every area,** and where health and local government leaders agree that greater local freedom and flexibility is needed, it is for the area to develop its own proposals. The decision to propose health devolution sits with local authorities to make with
3. **Decisions should be taken as close as possible to the communities they affect.** Local government and the NHS do not always share a common understanding and narrative on health devolution. The LGA continues to work with national partners to build a common understanding of the importance of devolving real power and resources as close as is appropriate to local communities, and will work with partners to ensure that notions of devolution within the NHS and local government are consistent with each other and have subsidiarity as a founding principle.
4. **ICSs and STPs must be accountable to local places.** The LGA will continue to work with NHSEI, DHSC and MHCLG to ensure ICSs fully understand the importance of local government involvement in devolved decision-making structures for health and care, and that ICSs and STPs remain accountable through council overview, scrutiny and Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs). ICSs also have potential to be genuine strategic partnerships between councils, the NHS and other sectors, and the LGA will continue to work to identify the vital components that all ICSs need to have in order to achieve genuine health devolution.
5. **The LGA supports a joined-up approach to improving population health, but have concerns that the national priorities of NHSE will dominate ICSs.** Many ICS leaders strongly underline our message that local government leaders need to be at the heart of ICS leadership, in order to achieve their objectives of improving health, improving health and care support, and addressing inequalities, but some ICSs are still strongly focussed on the NHS rather than wider population health, and need to have a wider and more inclusive approach.
6. **The one size fits all approach expected from the NHS Long Term Plan on CCG mergers is not appropriate for all areas.** All decisions about the merger of CCGs should be taken in partnership with councils and HWBs, and CCGs that merge onto a larger footprint need to ensure that they are able to contribute to the HWB.

7. **The LGA supports the broad objectives of the NHS Reform Bill** to remove barriers to collaborative working, but the reforms need to strengthen and embed a place-based approach. There is a danger that putting ICSs on a statutory footing will bypass and undermine place-based integration, led my HWBs.

8. **ICSs should be required to ensure meaningful involvement and an equal partnership with local government**, with a 'place by default' approach. ICSs required to involve local government and HWBs in the development of plans. This goes further than sign off of final plans and involves early and ongoing engagement in the development of plans. Furthermore, ICS plans to devolve the development of place or locality plans to HWBs, based on JSNAs and joint health and wellbeing strategies. CCGs to continue to have a strong place-based focus. In larger CCGS, for the CCG to ensure that they play a strong and proactive role in HWBs. HWBs should have a statutory sign off and veto on all ICS plans.

Mid-Year Review

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

The report enables members to review the current work programme. It outlines the key issues which are likely to influence the work areas of the City Regions Board in 2021 and provides members with an opportunity to flag up future areas of interest or any additional focus which they would like within the current work programme.

Recommendations

Members to consider:

1. Are members happy with the current work programme, are there any gaps which need to be highlighted?
2. Taking into consideration the work of the board in 2020, what issues would members like greater focus upon in 2021?

Actions

Officers to follow up on any issues raised by members, and to use feedback to shape the future work programme.

Contact officer: Sonika Sidhu
Position: Principal Policy Adviser
Phone no: 077752802327
Email: Sonika.sidhu@local.gov.uk

Mid-Year Review

Background

1. 2020 has been a difficult and unpredictable year for the sector. At the outset of the pandemic in March councils took a leadership role in ensuring their communities were supported and safe. Councils continued providing frontline services whilst standing up completely new forms of support, being developed in real time with direction from central government. The sector moved seamlessly onto an emergency footing which for many councils has lasted longer than originally anticipated.
2. Back in March 2020 it had been hoped that if the nation locked down for an extended period, we would be able to ease out and start thinking about what recovery would look like. However, the reality has been the introduction of a tiering system which has meant that different parts of the country have found themselves at different points in the cycle of lockdown. A full focus on recovery is still not yet possible as many councils are in a response phase and will be in this position well into the New Year.

Issues

3. As the new board cycle began in August the City Regions Board set its workplan for the year. The focus for the boards work was to be:
 - Within the context of COVID-19 and the forthcoming English devolution white paper the board will pursue a programme of engagement with Government and stakeholders to ensure councils in urban England have the powers and resources to lead a successful and sustainable recovery and drive improved outcomes for their communities.
 - The Board will continue to take forward the LGA's lobbying work on skills, making the case for the Work Local model and continuing to engage with key stakeholders.
 - The Board may want officers to focus on the role employment and skills will play in the Government's recovery plans.
 - The Board will seek to ensure the key elements of place-based growth – fiscal devolution, public service reform, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, trade and investment fit with the priorities and ambitions of urban areas.

- Reflecting on feedback from lead members the Board will identify cross cutting policy issues which it would like to work on with other boards in order to help shape LGA lobbying lines e.g. planning, transport, housing, health
4. Based on further discussion with members the following pieces of work have been commissioned to support the broader lobbying work of the board. This compliments the regular programme of work officers are undertaking on the key work areas. Members have been provided updates on this through the various reports officers have brought to the board meetings.

| Subject area | Project | Completion |
|------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Local Recovery | Urban growth and recovery | March 2021 |
| Jobs and skills | Mapping employment and skills provision | March 2021 |
| Jobs and skills | Unemployment predictions in local areas | February 2021 |
| Local recovery (RSG funded) | Jobs and skills planning – 1) development of 'how to / top tips' to support the sector lead / contribute to local jobs and skills recovery 2) case material on local government's role to support jobs and skills during the Covid-19 crisis and as they plan for recovery | Both March 2021 |
| Local recovery (RSG funded) | Supporting the UK tech sector and digital economy - forecasting advanced digital skills demand at a local authority level | March 2021 |
| Devolution (RSG funded) | Devolution explainers | February 2021 |
| Devolution (RSG funded) | Combined authority governance network support | March 2021 |
| Devolution (RSG funded) | Lessons learned from devolution deals | March 2021 |
| Post 16 (RSG funded) | Supporting youth participation | March 2021 |
| Jobs and Skills (RSG funded) | Councillor Handbook on adult and community education services | Completed 2020 |
| Jobs and Skills (RSG funded) | Evolving employment and skills commissioner role of Combined Authority | Completed 2020 |
| Growth (RSG funded) | Councils Guide to supporting exports | April 2021 |

5. This is an opportunity for members to review the direction of travel for the board and to indicate whether there are any gaps which they would like to flag up. **Are members**

happy with the current work programme, are there any gaps which need to be highlighted?

Moving forward – 2021

6. Early 2021 will continue to be dominated by COVID19 and the progression in and out of the tiering system. The rollout of the vaccine programme brings hope that in 2021 there will be some sort of resolution to the pandemic. However, there is no real timescale to predict when this will be, and the focus of councils will continue to remain on the management of the pandemic.
7. 2021 will immediately reveal the impact of EU exit. There will be a differential impact from this across the country with port authorities potentially facing additional burdens. We await the outcome of the trade talks and are emphasising that new LG responsibilities must be seen in the context of all the winter pressures on councils. The early part of the new year brings potential capacity issues for local government as EU transition plans will be in addition to the work to support communities against the virus. The confluence of issues needs attention, especially the capacity of public services in port towns.
8. March will see the Chancellor presenting the budget. The furlough scheme will be coming to an end and it will provide a clear opportunity to understand what the long-term unemployment situation looks like. The skills landscape will need to change significantly, and we will need investment in long term job creation. It is anticipated that the Chancellor will at this point provide some further indication around the government's approach to the long-term economic recovery of the nation. A Higher Education White Paper has also been suggested which will provide further opportunity to address skills issues.
9. By this point we should have further detail about how both the Levelling Up Fund and the UKSPF pilots will be operating. There could also potentially be further detail around the industrial strategy and post May we anticipate the Economic Recovery and Devolution White Paper being published. This will all be taking place whilst the government plans for the UN Climate Change Conference – COP26, in Glasgow on 1st November 2021.
10. The board is asked to take this opportunity to consider the issues it will be facing in 2021 and to flag up any gaps there may be. Moving forward members may want to indicate to officers any key areas of work they would like additional focus on. This could potentially be around:
 - Economic recovery and accessing funding
 - UN Sustainable Development Goals and COP26
 - What is the urban vision of the future?

Taking into consideration the work of the board in 2020, what issues would members like greater focus upon in 2021?

Implications for Wales

11. Officers from the LGA are in regular contact with the WLGA on shared policy areas. We will continue to consult WLGA colleagues on issues which haven't been devolved to the Welsh Assembly.

Financial Implications

12. There are currently no direct financial implications of this report.

Next steps

13. Officers will factor in any comments from members into the future development of the board's work programme.

Spending Review: Key Issues

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The 2020 Spending Review took place on 25th November, outlining the Government's spending plans for 2021/22. The LGA published a full response to the Spending Review. This report focuses on the elements of the Review which are of particular interest to the City Regions Board – UKSPF, freeports, levelling up and jobs and skills.

Recommendations

Members consider the announcements made by the Chancellor and any specific impact on the key policy areas of the Board.

Actions

Officers to take forward any actions arising as a result of member feedback

Contact officer: Sonika Sidhu
Position: Principal Policy Adviser
Phone no: 07775802327
Email: Sonika.sidhu@local.gov.uk

Spending Review: Key Issues

Background

1. The Government's Spending Review (SR) took place on 25th November 2020. The 2020 SR outlines the Government's spending plans for 2021/22 by setting budgets for each central government department. The full set of documents is available on the [Treasury website](#).
2. The LGA [published a media statement](#) responding to the announcements. This highlighted that the announcements at the Spending Review went some way towards meeting core spending pressures and estimated COVID-19 costs next year, but only if councils made full use of council tax raising powers. However, the one-year Spending Review has not addressed the underlying pressures and urgent need for investment in early intervention, adult social care and public health.
3. The LGA's full SR on the day briefing is available at <https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/spending-review-2020-day-briefing>. This report focuses on the aspects of the SR which address key issues of concern for members of the City Regions Board:
 - UK Shared Prosperity Fund
 - Freeports
 - Levelling Up Fund
 - Jobs and Skills

Issues

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

4. The Chancellor set out how the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will help to level up and create opportunity for people and places across the UK by providing £220 million additional funding to help local areas prepare over 2021/22 for the introduction of the UKSPF. The fund will target places in most need such as former industrial areas, deprived towns and coastal communities.
5. The LGA response was:
 - 5.1. Having lobbied since the referendum for a domestic replacement for EU funds, we welcomed the clarity this announcement had brought to local government.
 - 5.2. The SR contains the "Heads of Terms" for the UKSPF (the Government's replacement of the European Structural and Investment Funds) and confirms that the fund will be at least £1.5 billion a year.
 - 5.3. Local government has made an offer to co-design the programme with Government and the investment framework for local areas that sits behind this. Councils have a

democratic mandate to represent their communities, as well as respect current local decision making and devolution agreements.

- 5.4. The additional £220 million to help local areas transition to the UKSPF in 2021/22 by running pilots and new approaches is welcomed. The Government must now work with all local areas to ensure there is a smooth transition to the new funding regime.
- 5.5. We will be working with the Welsh LGA to ensure that the new funds meet the needs of councils in Wales.

Freeports

6. The Chancellor announced a minimum of 10 Freeports across the UK – at least one in each of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – to bring jobs, investment and prosperity to some of the most deprived communities. The programme aims to establish Freeports as national hubs for global trade and investment across the UK, promote regeneration and job creation and create hotbeds for innovation.
7. The LGA response was:
 - 7.1. Following our calls to Government, we welcomed its commitment in the Freeports Bidding Prospectus to consider more than 10 freeports if bids are particularly strong. It is also positive that seed capital will be provided to winning areas to address local infrastructure constraints. It will be vital that freeports create new jobs and opportunities for local people. We have therefore asked that Government remains alive to the risk of domestic economic displacement of UK domestic businesses in its assessment of bids and as it progresses with winning areas.

Levelling Up Fund

8. The Chancellor announced that a new Levelling Up Fund worth £4 billion will be launched for England. Moving away from a fragmented landscape with multiple funding streams, this new cross-departmental fund for England will invest in a broad range of high value local projects up to £20 million, or more by exception, including bypasses and other local road schemes, bus lanes, railway station upgrades, regenerating eyesores, upgrading town centres and community infrastructure, and local arts and culture.
9. It will be open to all local areas in England and prioritise bids to drive growth and regeneration in places in need, those facing particular challenges, and areas that have received less Government investment in recent years. Spending Review 2020 makes available up to £600 million in 2021/22. The Government will publish a prospectus for the fund and launch the first round of competitions in the New Year.
10. The LGA response was:
 - 10.1. It is good news that this fund moves to tackle our complex and fragmented funding system, which we have long warned about. However, we are concerned by the prospect of a competitive bidding process at a time when councils want to be fully

focused on protecting communities and businesses from the impact of the pandemic.

- 10.2. The best way to make decisions about local investment is by working with councils, who know the needs of their areas best. We want to work with the Government to ensure this fund produces the best possible outcomes for local communities.

Supporting Jobs

11. The Chancellor announced that:

- 11.1. £2.9 billion Restart programme will provide intensive and tailored support to over 1 million unemployed people and help them find work, with approximately £0.4 billion of funding in 2021/22
- 11.2. Funding the £2 billion Kickstart scheme which will create hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people at risk of long-term unemployment across Great Britain. The SR20 settlement includes £1.6 billion in 2021/22 which will ensure funding for over 250,000 Kickstart jobs.
- 11.3. Investment of £375 million from the National Skills Fund in 2021/22, which will provide £138 million for the Government's commitment to fund in-demand technical courses for adults, equivalent to A level, and to expand the employer-led boot camp training model.
- 11.4. On Apprenticeships, the Government is:
 - making available £2.5 billion of funding for apprenticeships and further improvements;
 - 11.4.1. allowing levy paying employers to transfer unspent levy funds in bulk to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) with a new pledge function from August 2021.
 - 11.4.2. confirming unspent Levy funds will continue to expire after 24 months;
 - 11.4.3. introducing a new online service to match levy payers with SMEs that share their business priorities for the purposes of Levy transfer from August 2021;
 - 11.4.4. allowing employers in construction and health and social care to front-load training for certain apprenticeship standards from April 2021 and explore whether this offer can be extended to other sectors;
 - 11.4.5. testing approaches to supporting apprenticeships in industries with more flexible working patterns in 2020/21, including considering how to best support apprenticeship training agencies;
 - 11.4.6. extending incentive payments for hiring a new apprentice introduced in the Plan for Jobs to 31 March 2021.

12. The LGA response was:

- 12.1. National and local government should combine resources and expertise to deliver for people and businesses hard hit by the crisis and co-design the solutions.
- 12.2. In 2030 across England there could be as many as 694,000 direct jobs employed in the low-carbon and renewable energy economy, rising to over 1.18 million by 2050.

13. On Restart:

13.1. Support to the long-term unemployment needs to be as close as possible to local communities and the local services they rely on including housing, health, training and debt management. Local government offers to work with the Government to plan, commission and deliver Restart so it can align with local services and training opportunities and deliver optimal impact for people and places.

14. On Kickstart:

14.1. We believe this next phase of Kickstart should be extended to 16-17 year olds at risk on unemployment, and that local government should be able to refer this group into the Scheme.

14.2. Kickstart will work best for young people, businesses and communities if it is planned and delivered in partnership locally. DWP must build local government into the further iterations of the Scheme as we have already set out.

15. On In-demand technical courses for adults:

15.1. Using the National Skills Fund to fund free Level 3 courses for adults not yet qualified to these levels is welcome. We encourage the Chancellor to go further by devolving and localising this support so that it is customised to local need and can offer a clear pathway to further learning and work in places where people live.

15.2. We continue to recommend the Government at least doubles funding for the Adult Education Budget to increase support for the nine million people across England that lack basic literacy and numeracy skills.

16. On Apprenticeships

16.1. The Government has listened to employers and is introducing some long overdue reforms to the apprenticeship levy.

16.2. Local government should be offered more local freedom and flexibility to maximise the use of these funds, for example to widen participation to disadvantaged groups. We look forward to receiving more information on the Government's plan to allow employers to make levy transfers to SMEs enabling local government to work with employers to take a more strategic approach to apprenticeships locally

16.3. We urge the Treasury to reconsider and pause the 24 month expiry policy for unspent levy funds, to prevent employers from losing funds through no fault of their own. The Government should also introduce a levy payment holiday of up to six months for businesses struggling with cashflow problems.

Implications for Wales

17. Local government funding is a devolved matter and the Welsh LGA is undertaking its own work programme. We are in regular contact with the Welsh LGA and the other local government bodies in the devolved nations to exchange intelligence, ideas and consider joint work.

Financial Implications

18. The provisional 2021/22 local government finance settlement was announced on 17th December 2020. Officers are working through the detail.

Next steps

19. The Chancellor announced that the next Budget will be taking place on 3 March 2021, with a deadline for representations of 14 January. This timescale is without recent precedent. Officers in the finance team have been working with group leaders on the LGAs submission over the Christmas period.

Equalities Advocate

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The LGA is developing its approach to equalities issues through the work of its boards. Equalities advocates are being identified for each board in order to drive the equalities work. Cllr Abi Brown is the equalities advocate for the City Regions Board. Members are invited to provide a steer around how they would like to see equalities issues addressed throughout the work of the City Regions Board.

Recommendation

Members to provide a steer around how they would like to see equalities issues addressed throughout the work of the City Regions Board.

Action

Officers to follow up on any member recommendations.

Contact officer: Sonika Sidhu
Position: Principal Policy Advisor
Phone no: 07775802327
Email: Sonika.sidhu@local.gov.uk

City Regions Board Equalities Advocate

Background

1. The Executive Advisory Board have asked each Board to identify a member to be an Equalities Advocate within each Board to raise the profile of any equalities issues within the Board's workstream, to contribute to the cross-cutting work around equalities, and to report into the Executive Advisory Board on equality issues relating to their Board.
2. The nature of this may vary between different policy areas, but the Advocates aim across all Boards will be to help the Board embed equalities into the work of the Board.

Issues

3. Within the Board the Advocate will be expected to:
 - 3.1 Encourage the Board to consider equality issues in all their work
 - 3.2 Challenge the Board to embed equalities into the work of the Board
 - 3.3 Hold the Board to account around equalities issues.Outside of the Board the Advocate will be expected to:
 - 3.4 Collaborate with other Equality Advocates from other LGA Boards on cross-cutting equalities issues
 - 3.5 Provide input into and feedback to the LGA equalities work programme.
4. Support: The role will be supported through the normal officer structures which support each Board as we aim for equalities to be embedded in our policy work.
5. Time commitment: Members may be asked to attend additional meetings to contribute to the cross-cutting equalities work and the development of the equalities policy work programme. Otherwise this is a role that should be performed within the role as member of the Board.
6. Cllr Abi Brown is the equalities advocate for the City Regions Board.

Next steps

7. Members to provide a steer about how they would like equalities addressed throughout the work of the board.

City Regions Board Update

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper provides members with a brief update on issues and policy areas not covered by other items on the agenda.

Recommendation

Members are to note the contents of the report.

Action

Officers to take forward any comments from members.

Contact officer: Sonika Sidhu
Position: Principal Policy Adviser
Phone no: 07775802327
Email: Sonika.Sidhu@local.gov.uk

City Regions Board Update

Employment and skills update

Adult skills and lifelong learning

1. On 18 December, the Education Select Committee released its [recommendations](#) from its adult skills and lifelong learning inquiry. The LGA submitted written evidence and provided follow up material at the request of the Committee. The report recommends that there should be a community learning centre in every town and singles out providers of adult and community learning as “the jewel in the crown of the nation’s adult education landscape”. ACL providers include many councils, who either directly deliver or commission this provision, so this is a positive endorsement of councils’ work. Building on this momentum, we will now take forward discussions with the Government and the Education Committee and use the content of the LGA councillor handbook on making the best of its adult learning service (launched in October 2020) to support these discussions. [Learning for Life: the role of adult community education in developing thriving local communities - A handbook for councillors | Local Government Association.](#)

Restart employment support for long term unemployed people

2. Our member authorities are concerned about the impact unemployment will have on their residents, communities and wider local economy as the Covid-19 crisis continues to unfold. This is why the LGA and our member authorities proactively engaged DWP since last summer to put forward practical suggestions on how employment support for the long term unemployed (12 months plus) could be delivered to best effect. We suggested this could be done by contracting at a local level, working with the grain of local service provision and devolved / local programmes, using a multi-agency referral system recognising not everyone out of work will use JCP, and that other organisations should be able to deliver it alongside ‘prime providers’.
3. In November, the Chancellor announced a three-year, £2.9 billion, national [Restart programme](#) to support long-term unemployed (LTU) people back to work, and DWP launched a national procurement exercise for it through its prime provider framework on 11 December. Restart is likely to commence in the summer.
4. While it remains a national programme, there are signs that DWP has listened to some of our calls and recognises the added value of local government input. For instance, the procurement document states that providers should engage local government, not duplicate existing activity, and work with local employers to create local jobs. In addition, on 21 December, DWP issued a letter to the LGA and other local government representatives seeking input on the national procurement exercise. For each Restart contract package area (CPA), it has invited one tender question for each area (end

January 2021), plus two nominated external assessors per CPA (end February) to review bidders' responses to the question to inform DWP's evaluation and selection.

5. The LGA will help the sector engage with Restart and continue to make the case to DWP to engage with the sector early on as it develops further support programmes. This point was made at the LGA convened roundtable session bringing together CR and P&P Lead Members with the Minister for Employment, Mims Davies MP, on 21 December. An oral update will be provided.

Support the sector to lead / contribute to the Covid Response

6. Dealing with the economic and social implications of the Covid-19 pandemic and minimising the knock-on effects on communities is a priority for local government, as well as putting plans in place for recovery. How areas will deal with it depends largely on their unique economic and social conditions, the extent to which the Government engages the sector in developing flexible policy responses, and the action local government itself can take, working alongside its partners at a national and local level.
7. The sector has, and continues to do, incredible work to lead or contribute to local jobs and skills recovery efforts, but capacity and resource constraints offer little opportunity for the sector to share learning and ideas with each other. To save the sector time and resource and facilitate knowledge transfer, the LGA initiated two projects to be delivered by the end of March. These include:
 - 7.1. an online 'how to / top tips' resource. This will focus on five themes critical to jobs and skills recovery, drawing on the knowledge and expertise of a representative group of twelve member authorities. The Learning and Work Institute (L&W) has been commissioned to deliver this for us.
 - 7.2. Enhancing our existing online case study resource with new material that demonstrates local government's role to support jobs and skills within their local area during the Covid-19 crisis and as they plan for recovery. Rocket Science will deliver this project.

West Yorkshire Devolution deal

8. The [Devolution Deal for West Yorkshire](#) has reached a significant milestone, with the Order establishing a Mayoral Combined Authority for the region being laid in Parliament. If approved, the deal will unlock a new single pot of funding for economic growth in the region, worth £38 million a year for the next 30 years. This is alongside new powers over transport, education and housing and on top of further investment including, £317 from the Transforming Cities Fund and £3.2 million to support the development of housing sites across West Yorkshire.

9. The Mayor of West Yorkshire will also become the region's Police and Crime Commissioner. The region's first Mayoral elections are scheduled to take place next year. While the deal is similar to previous devolution agreements, £101 million government funding for flood management and the piloting of green infrastructure benchmarks appear new.

Note of last City Regions Board meeting

Title: City Regions Board
Date: Wednesday 18 November 2020
Venue: Online via Zoom

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

| Item | Decisions and actions | Action |
|----------|--|--------|
| 1 | Welcome, Apologies & Declarations of Interest Cllr Sir Richard Leese (Chair) welcomed members to the meeting and gave a brief reminder of etiquette in remote meetings. The following apologies were noted: Cllr Anita Lower, Cllr Iain Malcolm There were no declarations of interest. | |
| 2 | Business Plan 2019/22 - 2020 Review & Update The Chair explained that the update reflected changes to the Business Plan as a result of the ongoing COVID pandemic. Decision The members of the City Regions Board noted the update. Action Officers to proceed with delivery of Business Plan | |
| 3 | COVID Headlines The Chair invited Sonika Sidhu (Principal Policy Adviser) to discuss the report. In her update, Sonika noted that the document is updated on a weekly basis and outlines the COVID related issues that the LGA are currently lobbying the Government on. In the subsequent discussion the following points were raised by members; <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Concerns were raised with poor coordination between the local and national testing systems.- Ensuring that individuals and households contacted through the Tracing system apply for and receive the financial support they are entitled to. | |

- Members questioned the criteria that will be applied to determining the risk level of individual areas.
- Members noted that the use of terminology around mass testing was somewhat inaccurate. It was stressed that Lateral Flow testing would provide an additional tool rather than an outright solution given the targeted approach used so far and technical skill of those expected to administer it.
- Children's Services was highlighted as an area for further lobbying, particularly the provision of judicial capacity. A deal of staff and member capacity is being absorbed by custody arrangements that would normally be handled in private court.
- Continued uncertainty around financial support for businesses was highlighted. Members noted concerns with the short-term nature of funding and access to discretionary funding based on COVID alert level at the end of the national lockdown.
- The Chair added that conversations with the Government held locally have suggested powers for inspection and closure of non-COVID compliant businesses could be available to local authorities.

Decision

The members of the City Regions Board noted the report.

Action

Officers to proceed in line with members comments.

4 Devolution Update

The Chair Invited Philip Clifford (Senior Adviser) to discuss recent work and announcements on devolution. In his update, Philip noted the following points;

- Further delays are being seen to the Devolution White Paper, wouldn't expect publication until after the 2021 Local Elections.
- Noted that it is the role of the LGA to push for an ambitious settlement through on devolution. Given such Philip asked for specific comments on the following;
 - o a steer on whether there are any significant gaps in the list of existing devolution asks
 - o comment on the proposal to consider whether these powers might be devolved to a single or multi-council area;
 - o reflect on the potential to develop a 'recovery deal' model; and, how best to expand the menu of devolution asks to take account of the unfolding national context.
- Noted that the APPG on Devolution was due to sit on 18/11/20 with Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe (Vice-Chair) due to give evidence on

behalf of the LGA.

- Gave further details on the upcoming Health Devolution Workshop

In the subsequent discussion the following points were raised by members:

- Members discussed the Government's preference for the creation of combined authorities. The Chair added that the combined authority model used in Greater Manchester was tailored to very specific considerations on the local economy, community, geography and governance structures.
- Members stressed the importance of engaging local authorities and communities in negotiations around the devolution process. It was suggested that such enabled greater buy-in and the creation models tailored to local needs. The need to ensure powers are distributed correctly was also noted.
- Comments were also made on the engagement and enthusiasm within central Government for local devolution.

Decision

The members of the City Region Board noted the report.

Action

Officers to proceed in line with members comments.

5 Board Update

The Chair invited Sonika Sidhu to introduce the update. Sonika noted that the update discussed work not covered in the substantive reports including planning reform and the EU Exit process.

In the subsequent discussion the following points were raised by members;

- Concerns were noted with the guidance being provided to local authorities ahead of Britain leaving the EU.
- It was also felt that authorities had not been regularly contacted by MHCLG for assurances purposes on the preparations for the EU Exit.
- Significant concerns were highlighted by members on the impact of the EU Exit on Port Authorities. It was noted that the guidance received by authorities had been confusing and subject to significant delays. Paul Green (Adviser) added that current guidance for Port Authorities would be circulated to members after the meeting. Paul urged members of raise specific concerns with officers for liaison with MHCLG.
- The Chair requested for a written update on planning reform and proposed changes to the new homes allocations to be circulated to the Board's Lead Members.

Decision

The members of the City Regions Board noted the update.

Actions

- Officers to proceed in line with members comments
- Port Authority guidance to be circulated to members
- Planning Update to be shared with City Regions Board Lead Members

6 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

The Chair invited Sonika Sidhu to provide a verbal update on recent activity. In her update Sonika noted the following;

- LGA has adopted a broader approach to tackling inequalities across the organisation, political groups and wider sector.
- Cllr Abi Brown has been appointed as the Equalities Advocate for the City Regions Board.
- Welcomed feedback and input from members on EDI matters in the policy development process.

7 Update on "A Vision For Urban Growth and Recovery"

The Chair invited Eleanor Law (Adviser) to discuss recent activity and introduce the provider who will be taking the work forward.

Eleanor gave a brief overview of the tender process followed since the last meeting, noting that the tender had been won by Cambridge Econometrics. Eleanor then introduced Glenn Athey (Cambridge Econometrics) to discuss the next steps.

In his presentation Glenn raised the following points;

- The main goals of the project are to: understand the impacts of the COVID pandemic, review past policy creation & delivery and set a vision for recovery & renewal.
- Glenn outlined the project timeline up to the publication of the final report expected in March 2021.
- Provided an overview at the rates unemployment and furlough during across the UK during the COVID pandemic based on employment type, sector, age, gender. Added that young people, ethnic minority groups and low skilled workers have been disproportionately affected.
- Explained that the research will consider and report on Urban-Local Trends before, during and after the COVID pandemic, and

how such links into more long-term trends being seen globally.

- Will put forward reasoned considerations on making policy fit for post-COVID, assisting recovery and setting a new urban agenda. The City Regions Board will be given a significant consultative role.
- Gave a brief overview of the background, values and mission of Cambridge Econometrics. History of working with the LGA and partner organisations.

In the subsequent discussion the following points were raised by members:

- A question was raised on how the impact of Britain leaving the European Union would be accounted for. Glenn explained that CE have previously done dedicated work on this topic for the Mayor of London, the same modelling and analysis will be applied.

The Chair thanked Glenn for his time and presentation.

Decision

The members of the City Regions Board noted the report.

8 Employment & Skills Recovery

The Chair invited Jasbir Jhas (Senior Adviser) to discuss recent activity around employment. In her update Jasbir noted the following points;

- Noted that Paragraph 1 of the report alongside Annex A outline the current LGA position. Jasbir requested specific comments from members on this.
- Discussed the development of a DWP led programme for Long Term Unemployed people, which is expected to override a range of programmes run at a local level.
- Noted that the LGA submitted evidence to a consultation process but is still awaiting a formal response from the DWP. The submission emphasised the importance of appropriate contracting areas to enable proper integration of provisions for LTU.
- A joint meeting between the Minister for Employment and the Lead Members of the People & Places and City Regions Boards.
- Existing Adult Education budgets need to be maximised to provide greatest value for money.
- Further Education White Paper has been slightly delayed. Expected to propose a greater role for local colleges, including an accountability role for other community providers.
- Asked for comments from members on the specific actions recommended on paragraphs 7-9.

In the subsequent discussion the following points were raised by

members;

- Members broadly expressed support for the actions recommended by officers in Paragraphs 8 and 9.
- Importance of local involvement in delivery to communities was highlighted, with concerns expressed that the Government are not considering such.
- The Chair stressed that health should be given equal importance to skills training in considerations around LTU programmes.
- Members agreed that the LGA should lobby for a greater role for local authorities in the commissioning and accountability of Adult Education provision.
- While members voiced support for an expanded role for colleges within Adult Education, it was noted that accountability should sit with democratically accountable councils.
- Determining which sectors would see skills investment was seen to be important in order to support existing and emergent industries.
- Engaging with innovative funding models was emphasised, with the Social Impact Bond model and DfE Innovation Fund highlighted as examples.

The Chair summarised noting that there was broad agreement with the approach presented by officers in the report.

Decision

The members of the City Regions Board noted the report and agreed with the approach presented by officers in paragraphs 7-9.

Action

Officers to proceed in line with members comments.

9 Note of the Previous Meeting on 30th September 2020

The Chair asked members to approve the note of the previous meeting as an accurate record.

Decision

The members of the City Regions Board approved the note of the meeting on 30th September as an accurate record.

Appendix A -Attendance

| Position/Role | Councillor | Authority |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Chairman | Sir Richard Leese CBE | Manchester City Council |
| Vice-Chairman | Cllr Abi Brown | Stoke-on-Trent City Council |
| | Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe | Bradford Metropolitan District Council |
| Deputy-chairman | Cllr Gillian Ford | Havering London Borough Council |
| | | |
| Members | Cllr Robert Alden | Birmingham City Council |
| | Cllr Donna Jones JP | Portsmouth City Council |
| | Cllr Joanne Laban | Enfield Council |
| | Cllr Toby Savage | West of England Combined Authority |
| | Mayor Joe Anderson OBE | Liverpool City Council |
| | Cllr John Merry CBE | Salford City Council |
| | Cllr Shaun Davies | Telford and Wrekin Council |
| | Cllr Martin Gannon | Gateshead Council |
| | Mayor Marvin Rees | Bristol City Council |
| | Cllr Timothy Swift MBE | Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council |
| | Cllr Danny Thorpe | Royal Borough of Greenwich |
| | Cllr David Mellen | Nottingham City Council |
| | Cllr Sean Fielding | Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council |
| | Cllr Shama Tatler | Brent Council |
| | Cllr Anthony Hunt | Torfaen County Borough Council |
| | Cllr Elise Wilson | Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council |
| Cllr Gareth Roberts | Richmond upon Thames London Borough Council | |
| | | |
| Apologies | Cllr Anita Lower | Newcastle upon Tyne City Council |

