

People & Places Board

Agenda

Tuesday, 10 November 2020
1.00 pm

Online via Zoom

People & Places Board

10 November 2020

There will be a meeting of the People & Places Board at **1.00 pm on Tuesday, 10 November 2020**, Online via Zoom.

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
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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.

Social Media

The LGA is committed to using social media in a co-ordinated and sensible way, as part of a strategic approach to communications, to help enhance the reputation of local government, improvement engagement with different elements of the community and drive efficiency. Please feel free to use social media during this meeting. **However, you are requested not to use social media during any confidential items.**

The twitter hashtag for this meeting is #lgapp

People & Places Board – Membership 2020/2021

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (12)	
Cllr Kevin Bentley (Chairman)	Essex County Council
Cllr Morris Bright MBE (Vice Chairman)	Hertsmere Borough Council
Cllr Rachel Bailey	Cheshire East Council
Cllr Marc Bayliss	Worcester City Council
Cllr Hilary Carrick	Cumbria County Council
Cllr Neil Clarke MBE	Rushcliffe Borough Council
Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Diane Marsh	Gravesham Borough Council
Cllr Eddie Reeves	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Bradley Thomas	Wychavon District Council
Cllr Rob Waltham MBE	North Lincolnshire Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Colin Davie	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Jane Murphy	South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council
Labour (5)	
Cllr Simon Henig CBE (Vice-Chair)	Durham County Council
Cllr Sue Woodward	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Leigh Redman	Somerset County Council
Cllr Kyle Robinson	Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
Cllr Doina Cornell	Stroud District Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Alan Waters	Norwich City Council
Cllr Peter Moss	Preston City Council
Cllr Rosanne Kirk	Lincoln City Council
Liberal Democrat (3)	
Cllr Heather Kidd (Deputy Chair)	Shropshire Council
Cllr Sarah Osborne	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Stan Collins	Cumbria County Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Allan Knox	Ribble Valley Borough Council
Independent (2)	
Cllr Bob Jennings (Deputy Chair)	Epping Forest District Council
Cllr Helen Grant	Richmondshire District Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Kevin Etheridge	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Cllr Emily O'Brien	Lewes District Council
Cllr Geoff Knight	Lancaster City Council

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Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 12 January 2021, 1.00 pm

Business plan 2019-22 - 2020 review and update

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

In October 2019, following a series of consultations and discussions, the LGA Board approved a new 3-year [business](#) plan, built around the United Nations sustainable development goals and comprising:

- six policy priorities with supporting targets
- a Supporting Councils priority with associated improvement targets and
- our internal/operational plan

Whilst the six policy priorities agreed at the time continue to reflect the sector's priorities, LGA Board resolved at their September meeting to add one additional priority – "*Narrowing inequalities and protecting communities*" – to reflect events over the past 8 months and the range of actions arising from them.

The business plan has now been revised and updated to include the additional priority and is attached at **Appendix 1**. It will be published as an interactive PDF with the design as in the current plan.

Recommendation

That the People and Places Board note the 2020/21 update of the 3-year business plan as the basis for work programmes over the coming months.

Action

The updated plan will be published on the LGA website

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LGA business plan 2019-2022

2020 update

Introduction

2020 introduction to LGA Business Plan 2019-2022

Every day councils make a difference, delivering essential services that improve the lives of millions. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the value of local leadership like never before, by providing much-needed support to people, businesses and communities that have protected lives and livelihoods.

We know that residents trust their councillors, as democratically elected leaders, to make the right decisions for them and their families, now and in the future. The Local Government Association's (LGA's) polling shows that [73 per cent of residents trust their local council](#) to make decisions about how services are provided in their local area.

These services assist vulnerable people, support the homeless into safe accommodation, deliver new homes, give children and young people with the best start in life, providing dignified care for vulnerable people, help local businesses, and combat climate change. Just a few of the everyday examples of councils supporting our nation where they need it most.

As we look forward, there is an important opportunity to address the inequalities the pandemic has exposed and that have remained entrenched for too long, to connect with people's identities and sense of community, and to rebuild the economy so that it benefits all of our residents.

It is therefore vital that we support councils to ensure they are equipped to meet the challenges we face today, are empowered to innovate and create services that are tailored to their localities, and are resilient to navigate what the future may bring.

This updated business plan sets out how the LGA will continue to support and be an advocate for councils. Our priorities have been reviewed and reshaped this year, to recognise the uncertainties facing local government and us as your membership body. We recognise that we will need to remain flexible, shifting our focus as the need arises.

Through our [#CouncilsCan](#) campaign we will make the case for a new settlement for English local government that gives councils and councillors the powers, freedoms, certainty and sustainable funding to transform our communities for the better.

Promoting the value of local government and supporting councils in their roles as community leaders remains our central mission. Alongside the challenges that a global pandemic brings, we

are moving into a critical period for local public services. This could include a three-year Spending Review, greater devolution of powers to local areas, significant planning reforms and the opportunity to make the case for a long-term settlement for social care. We will continue to be flexible, promoting councils' priorities on emerging issues such as new measures to coincide with the end of the EU transition period and on proposed changes to areas that are delivered locally, such as public health.

Our lobbying work will always centre around the things you tell us are important to you, as we work with government and Parliament to ensure that councils' ambitions for our communities are reflected in national decision-making. Through our sector-led improvement work, we have further developed our offer to provide councils with the support to assist the challenges of COVID-19 and its consequences while working closely with the Government on priority issues. We will continue to offer a helping hand to councils as they improve, innovate and seek to demonstrate their resilience now and into the future.

This business plan sets out the priorities that councillors and officers have told us you want us to focus on. It will be continually reviewed and tested out with our membership to ensure we are always providing the best possible support to councils.

Councillor James Jamieson
Chairman

Mark Lloyd
Chief Executive

Working for councils

The LGA is the national membership body for local authorities. Our core membership is made up of English councils and Welsh councils through the Welsh LGA.

We are politically-led and cross-party and we work on behalf of councils to give local government a strong, credible voice with national government.

We aim to influence and set the political agenda on the issues that matter to councils so they can deliver local solutions to national problems. We fight local government’s corner, supporting councils through challenging times and focusing our efforts where we can have real impact.

We also provide membership services to other organisations through our associate scheme, including fire and rescue authorities, national parks authorities, town councils, police & crime commissioners and elected mayors of combined authorities.

Our vision for local government

Our vision for local government is one of a vibrant local democracy, where powers from Westminster are devolved to local areas, and citizens have a meaningful vote and real reason to participate in civic and community life.

A return to economic growth offers prosperity to every place, with well-targeted and planned investment in infrastructure, training and housing that leads to jobs and a supply of affordable homes.

Public services focus on preventing problems as well as picking up the pieces, delivering positive outcomes for people of all ages in an environmentally sustainable way. Joined up services are built around people and their needs, enhancing the lives of individuals, families and communities and continuing to make local areas better places to live now and for future generations.

Our purpose and priorities

Our work on behalf of local government falls under two overarching themes

National voice of local government – we campaign to influence the political agenda and secure funding and powers on behalf of councils and we promote and defend the reputation of the sector

Supporting councils - we support councils continuously to improve and innovate through our programme of practical peer-based support underpinned by strong local leadership, through our support for collective legal actions and through our service delivery partnerships.

Our business – underpinning our work on behalf of councils is an efficient, cost effective and forward-thinking business; we are politically led, committed to equalities and diversity and we aim to operate in an environmentally and financially sustainable way.

Our three-year rolling business plan sets out our key priorities and commitments and demonstrates how our work will contribute to the delivery of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The national voice of local government

We lobby and campaign to influence the political agenda and secure funding and powers on behalf of councils and we promote and defend the reputation of the sector

Over the next 12 months we will focus on the seven areas that councils tell us matter most to them:

Funding for local government

Fair and sustainable funding enables councils to plan and deliver essential public services beyond the short term, to raise more funds locally and to promote greater collective working across local public services.

Adult social care, health and wellbeing

Sustainable funding and better integration with health services enable councils to continue to support people to live safe, healthy, active, independent lives and to promote wellbeing and resilience for all ages.

Narrowing inequalities and protecting communities

Councils lead and work with diverse communities and partners to address inequalities and build safe, cohesive and resilient communities.

Places to live and work

Councils lead the way in driving inclusive and sustainable economic recovery, building the homes that people need and creating places where they want to live.

Children, education and schools

Councils have the powers and resources they need to bring partners together to deliver inclusive and high-quality education, help children and young people to fulfil their potential and offer lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Strong local democracy

A refocus on local democratic leadership, and a shift in power post-Brexit from Whitehall to local communities, leads to greater diversity of elected representatives, high standards of conduct and strong, flexible local governance.

Sustainability and climate action

Councils take the lead in driving urgent actions in their local areas to combat climate change and its impacts and to deliver zero net carbon by 2030.

17 Goals to Transform Our World

The Sustainable Development Goals are a call for action by all countries – poor, rich and middle-income – to promote prosperity while protecting the planet.

They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Funding for local government

Fair and sustainable funding enables councils to plan and deliver essential public services beyond the short term, to raise more funds locally and to promote greater collective working across local public services.

CAMPAIGN - #CouncilsCan

With the right funding and powers, councils can continue to lead their local areas, improve residents' lives, reduce demand for public services and save money for the taxpayer.

The benefits to the country of investing in local government are clear and understood – we will:

- continue to highlight the pressures on all services and press for funding that reflects current and future demand, particularly for housing, homelessness, adult social care and children's services
- lobby Central Government to fully meet all costs and income losses arising from COVID-19 in 2020/21 and beyond
- continue to emphasise and evidence the impact, value and efficiency of local government services
- work with central and local government to identify a wider range of suitable and sustainable funding sources for council services in the future
- work with local and central government on a distribution mechanism for local government funding that supports long-term planning, is evidence-based, simpler and more transparent with appropriate transition mechanisms.

People have a meaningful local voice on a wide range of tax and spending decisions – we will:

- press for freedoms that lead to greater local financial autonomy with a view to achieving local control over both council tax and business rates
- lobby for improvements to business rates to help tackle business rates avoidance and develop proposals to improve the system, including valuation and the appeals process
- press for legislation to allow councils to raise more funds locally including new local taxes and set fees and changes which fully recover costs.

Councils are able to access a range of sources of finance to encourage investment and create jobs, supported by an appropriate financial framework – we will:

- further develop policy on capital financing and investing and contribute to national reviews in these areas so that they support and enable prudent investment and financial management
- contribute to reviews of the accounting and financial regulatory framework for councils to ensure it is appropriate, not over restrictive and balanced with local freedom and accountability
- support the United Kingdom Municipal Bonds Agency to deliver cheaper debt financing to councils, through the sale of bonds in the capital markets.

Fair and affordable pay awards enable councils to recruit and retain good staff – we will:

- convene the employer side of the collective bargaining arrangements to agree equitable and affordable pay awards for more than two million local authority and related employees, including fire and rescue authorities.
- provide evidence to the schoolteachers' pay review body and Low Pay Commission in relation to the National Living Wage.

Adult social care, health and wellbeing

Sustainable funding and better integration with health services enable councils to continue to support people to live safe, healthy, active, independent lives and to promote wellbeing and resilience for all ages.

SDG 3 – Good health and wellbeing

Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages

CAMPAIGN - The lives we want to lead

We want to build a society where everyone is supported to live a healthy, fulfilled and independent life, staying at home and contributing to family and community life for as long as possible - but escalating funding pressures and increasing demand are threatening that ambition. Our campaign calls for sustainable long-term funding that gives people the care and support they need now and in the future.

Councils secure sufficient resources to deliver effective, integrated social care services – we will:

- continue to lobby for the short, medium and long-term financial sustainability of adult social care and support, arguing that all options, including national taxation, should be considered
- work with government to agree a sustainable, long term funding deal for public health.
- press for an independent review of adult social care pay and full funding for subsequent changes.

Councils lead the debate on the future vision for health and social care – we will:

- promote a clear vision of councils' role in planning and delivering integrated health and care; continue to promote health and wellbeing boards as leaders of health and care and support councils and their partners to develop and deliver place-based person-centred support.
- continue to press for a long-term policy framework for the Better Care Fund (BCF), with lighter touch reporting and greater emphasis on local targets
- continue to lobby for councils and councillors to have a key role in sustainability and transformation partnerships, integrated care systems and wider NHS planning arrangements.

Councils support older people, disabled people and people in vulnerable circumstances – we will:

- support councils to tackle the challenges and exploit the opportunities of a population with increasingly complex needs, including improving dementia and mental health services, carers' support and support for those with autism and/or learning difficulties
- continue to support councils to deliver the Armed Forces Community Covenant.

Councils work actively with the NHS to build health and care services around the needs of local populations – we will:

- work with NHSEI and other national partners to ensure that councils and health and wellbeing boards, are meaningfully engaged in developing integrated care systems and their implementation plans
- work with national partners to increase the understanding of, and commitment to, planning and delivery at place level and the leadership role of councils
- support councils to work with NHS and other partners to ensure that implementation plans build on existing priorities to improve health and wellbeing and are subject to democratic oversight and scrutiny
- work with the NHS to manage the pandemic, learning the lessons and promoting local accountability and closer working through the NHS bill and wider work.

Councils have a central role in promoting health and wellbeing locally – we will:

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- work to strengthen the position of councils as public health leaders.
- continue to make the case for long-term financial sustainability of public health services and support councils to understand the importance of preventative approaches.
- work with the NHS and partners to develop a system-wide approach to public health workforce planning and address urgent staffing issues in children's public health.
- lobby for long-term sustainable funding for leisure, culture and park services which play an important part in people's physical health and mental wellbeing and tackling health inequalities.

Narrowing inequalities and protecting communities

Councils lead and work with diverse communities and partners to address inequalities and build safe, cohesive and resilient communities.

SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities
Reduce inequalities within and among countries
SDG 11 – Sustainable cities and communities
Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Councils lead and work with diverse communities and partners to address inequalities and build cohesive and resilient communities – we will:

- review and strengthen the LGA’s work on reducing inequalities, promoting equality through our policy messages and lobbying and our improvement and leadership support to councils.
- promote and support councils in developing the diversity of their candidates, elected members and senior leadership
- underline the need for a strong commitment to tackling health inequalities and ensure that local government concerns and priorities resulting from the impact of COVID-19 on their communities are heard by government
- support councils as they address the inequalities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, with particular regard to those from ethnic groups most affected by the virus and to children and young people whose development and futures will be affected by the containment measures.

Councils lead the way in shaping communities where people feel safe – we will:

- lead the debate on councils’ role in building safer and resilient communities and support them to reduce serious violence, domestic abuse, female genital mutilation and anti-social behaviour
- represent councils’ interests in the UK’s developing modern slavery policies, as we work collaboratively with partners to tackle this
- contribute to the independent review of Prevent and the counter-extremism strategy, ensuring that councils are supported to build community cohesion, promote integration, tackle extremism and deliver the Prevent duty.
- lobby for the resources, powers and data councils need to manage local outbreaks of COVID-19, including shielding the clinically vulnerable, and support them in their test, trace and outbreak management response through a sector-led improvement support programme.

Councils continue to play a leading role in the design and delivery of blue light and other services that help protect local communities – we will:

- work with the HSE and government to establish an effective, professional and fully funded system for regulating building safety
- lobby for sustainable funding for fire and rescue authorities and support them to become more inclusive and representative of their communities and to strengthen their leadership and governance.
- support the fire and rescue sector’s response to Phase 1 of the Grenfell Inquiry and strengthen their ability to take forward the fire reform agenda and the findings from Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)
- support police and crime panels and share best practice
- work with councils to review and share learning from the COVID-19, to help strengthen community resilience and future emergency responses.

Children, education and schools

Councils have the powers and resources they need to bring partners together to deliver inclusive and high quality education, help children and young people to fulfil their potential and offer lifelong learning opportunities for all.

SDG 3 – Quality education

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities

Reduce inequalities within and among countries

CAMPAIGN - Bright Futures: children’s social care and mental health services

Helping children and young people to fulfil their potential is the ambition of all councils, but services that support them to do so are under increasing pressure. Our campaign calls for the services that change children’s lives to be properly funded so that all children can have the bright futures they deserve.

Councils lead the way in driving up educational standards – we will:

- set out a clear vision for councils’ role in promoting high educational standards, with the resources, powers and flexibilities to give every child access to a place at a good local school
- lobby for a stronger role for councils in investing in schools - ensuring new schools are high quality, fit for and value for money- and a lead role in decisions about new free schools
- press for a stronger council role in ensuring admissions are fair for all pupils across the school system.

Schools have the funding they need to deliver the best education for all pupils – we will:

- lobby to ensure the national funding formula for schools retains an element of local flexibility to allow councils and schools to reflect local needs and priorities
- highlight the growing pressures on the high needs budget and lobby government to provide councils with sufficient funding and flexibility to meet rising demand and eliminate High Needs deficits
- lobby for flexibility in use of the apprenticeship levy and work with partners to increase take up of quality apprenticeships in schools.

Councils have the flexibility and resources to deliver services that meet the needs of children and young people – we will:

- encourage councils and the Government to put children at the heart of policy making
- continue to paint a positive vision for local children’s services, calling for adequate funding for services, that change children’s lives through our Bright Futures campaign,
- support councils to take a preventative and place-based approach to children and young people’s health, including early years, childhood obesity and support for children's mental health
- work in partnership to improve life chances for disadvantaged households, particularly those with young children, making the case for early intervention and improved integration of services for families.

Councils protect children’s wellbeing and keep them safe – we will:

- support councils to protect children and young people from harm and improve outcomes for all children, in particular children in care and care leavers
- work with government and councils to support child refugees and unaccompanied asylum seekers safe, pressing for improved funding to better cover costs, including for those leaving care
- support councils to tackle the challenges of child criminal exploitation and county lines issues.

Places to live and work

Councils lead the way in driving inclusive and sustainable recovery, building the homes that people need and creating places where they want to live.

SDG1 – No poverty
End poverty in all its forms everywhere
SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth
Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
SDG 9 – Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

Councils drive the increase in housing supply the nation needs – we will:

- continue to press for additional powers for councils to increase housing supply, promote both affordable and carbon-free homes and make more effective use of surplus public sector land
- support consortia of councils to access significant housing development funds through the creation of new partnership models
- press for powers for councils to ensure the provision of homes integrated with health and care that positively support us to age well
- lobby for a well-resourced and locally responsive planning system, funded by locally set fees with the tools to ensure developers build quality homes that meet local need.

Councils have access to funding to create communities where people want to live – we will:

- continue to press for additional infrastructure funding, including a review of the rules governing developer contributions
- support councils to work with partners to maximise the value of local and national infrastructure investment, including in road, rail, broadband, culture, heritage and recreation
- work to secure the £5 billion of regeneration investment guaranteed to local economies from EU structural funds to 2020 and lobby for alternative UK sources after we leave the EU.

Councils continue to drive higher safety standards across the housing sector – we will:

- lobby for resources and tools to enable councils to shape a good quality private rented sector that meets the needs of their local communities
- work with government and councils to identify high-risk, high-rise residential buildings and lobby for support for councils to make changes and take urgent remedial action
- respond to government consultations, including on the new building safety regulatory framework.

Councils lead the way in ending homelessness through prevention – we will:

- lobby for the resources to enable councils to manage the housing impacts of welfare reform and achieve the ambitions of the Homeless Reduction Act and Rough Sleeping strategy
- make the case for adaptations to welfare reform and for the powers and funding that councils need to meet local needs
- with the Chief Executives' and Home Office group on asylum dispersal, inform the development, delivery and funding of support for asylum seekers and refugees and share good practice.

Councils support strong communities through risk-based business-friendly regulatory services – we will:

- press for powers and resources where councils take on additional legal liabilities such as building regulations post-Grenfell and proposed new air quality requirements
- support councils to demonstrate the value of regulatory services and lobby for sustainable funding
- lobby government to bring forward taxi licensing legislation as soon as possible
- press for greater flexibility in the licensing system, including the localisation of licensing fees.

Councils are key partners in delivering the government's national economic strategy – we will:

- support city regions and non-metropolitan areas to deliver effective local economic strategies
- advocate for a voice for councils in the development of a new English land management policy, and for communities to be involved in deciding how their local natural assets are managed
- support local innovation to deliver a better digital infrastructure and continue to press for a regulatory framework that will deliver the best deal for customers
- continue to press for strong local government representation on Local Enterprise Partnerships and improved oversight and scrutiny of them
- support councils to maximise the impact of their cultural, sporting and heritage assets to drive growth in their local visitor economy.

Councils match education, training and skills with business needs – we will:

- continue to press for powers, funding and lead responsibility for councils to integrate and commission back to work, skills, apprenticeships and welfare support under the *Work Local* model.
- campaign for people of all ages to be supported to participate in quality skills development and training and lifelong learning with independent careers advice and guidance
- promote good employment practice that helps young people and adults secure, sustain and progress in work, including Apprenticeships.

Strong local democracy

A refocus on local democratic leadership and a shift in power to local communities post Brexit leads to greater diversity of elected representatives, high standards of conduct and strong, flexible local governance.

SDG 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions

Councils as leaders of good conduct in public and political discourse and debate – we will:

- clearly articulate the standards expected for anyone engaging in public and political discourse and debate and what is needed to achieve those standards, underlining that intimidation and abuse of those in public office is unacceptable
- review the member model code of conduct and support our member councils in addressing intimidation and abuse of those in public office
- support to councils to explore ways of engaging with their local community and voluntary sector in local service delivery, enhancing places and local decision making.

Elected members and officers are empowered to tackle incidents of public intimidation – we will:

- explore the practicalities and support the adoption of an informal ‘duty of care’ for councillors
- seek to better understand the scale and impact of the intimidation and abuse our membership is experiencing and promote a new offence for intimidation against a person in public office
- engage with police forces and associated agencies to ensure the impact and seriousness of the public intimidation of local councillors and employees is understood and acted upon.

EU exit and constitutional reform – we will:

- interact with Whitehall on all EU Exit negotiations, articulating councils’ needs and concerns and taking advantage of the opportunity to entrench local government within our new constitutional settlement
- continue to support councils to prepare and deliver a successful transition for EU Exit, with a robust evidence base setting out the risks and opportunities across the country
- press for quick and decisive responses and for all Government communications to councils to be focused, clear, and direct
- ensure that repatriated laws and regulations are not centralised in Whitehall, working on a revised legal framework for those services currently based on EU laws such as air pollution, energy, waste and procurement and redefining regional aid and state-aid rules.

Continued devolution of powers and funding to local areas drive strong and responsive local democracy and greater engagement with communities – we will:

- refresh the case to demonstrate to government how devolution leads to more inclusive and sustainable growth, better public services and improved outcomes for residents
- work with government, business and others to give communities in England and Wales greater responsibility to make decisions on the issues of importance to them.

Sustainability and climate action

Councils take the lead in driving urgent actions in their local areas to combat the negative impacts of climate change and to deliver zero net carbon by 2030.

SDG 13 – Climate action

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Councils have the powers and resources they need to lead the way in combatting the effects of climate change – we will:

- lobby for a joint taskforce with relevant Whitehall departments including Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Defra to consider the most appropriate actions, funding, coordination and collaboration
- press government for the funding and policy changes needed to deliver zero net carbon by 2030
- work with government to address the need for greater energy efficiency in the built environment and how this can be achieved through planning practice and changes to Building Regulations
- work with government, as it implements the Waste and Resources Strategy to identify ways to reduce waste and levels of unrecyclable waste and the investment priorities for waste disposal and processing of recyclates.

Councils lead the way in researching and developing alternative transport options – we will:

- establish the resources and regulatory changes needed to support a move to electric vehicles, including provision of charging points on new housing developments and electrification of council and council-contracted vehicle fleets
- identify the incentives and investment required to support a shift towards public transport and walking and cycling, as part of the solution to reducing carbon emissions.

Councils work with partners and stakeholders to implement short, medium and long term strategies to reduce carbon emissions in their areas – we will:

- develop guidance and share best practice, including identifying the top 10 actions councils can take to address carbon emissions in their areas, recognising that one-size does not fit all
- drawing on international experience, develop an evidence base and framework to understand the main carbon sources and the impact of councils' activity
- identify the opportunities of a shift to a low carbon economy as a basis for immediate and effective action
- ensure that the LGA as the membership body for local authorities is modelling best practice in the way it conducts its own business.

Supporting Councils

We support councils continuously to improve and innovate through a programme of practical peer-based support underpinned by strong local leadership and through our service delivery partnerships.

The LGA's sector led improvement programme continues to provide a responsive and flexible offer and remains in a strong position to respond and adapt to councils' needs as circumstances evolve, particularly in the context of COVID-19.

We work closely with councils to understand their future support needs with a view to developing a longer-term offer. Our offer will continue to adapt as the opportunities and challenges facing councils change within the current context

Our core offer is funded by MHCLG grant and has been rapidly refocused to support councils in their response to COVID-19 as well as identifying longer term support needs. We also receive funding from the Department of Health and Social Care for our Care and Health Improvement Programme, whilst our children's improvement programme is funded by the Department for Education (DfE).

We have developed a new offer linked to climate change and the challenges and opportunities of moving to a zero-carbon economy.

We also receive funding from other government departments for specific sector-led improvement activities, including:

- One Public Estate – funded by Cabinet Office and MHCLG
- Cultural services and sport – in partnership with Arts Council England and Sport England
- Planning Advisory Services – funded by MHCLG
- Return to Work programme – funded by the Government Equalities Office
- Cyber security – funded by the Cabinet Office.

Our commitments will continue to be updated to ensure they match councils needs across the period of this business plan.

Challenge and support from peers – we will:

- maintain an overview of councils' performance to drive improvement, manage the risk of significant underperformance, provide support for councils facing the greatest financial challenges (particularly in the light of COVID-19) and minimise government intervention
- create dedicated programmes in response, including Recovery and Renewal panels, among other forms of remote support in response to COVID-19.
- deliver peer challenges to all councils who request them, including corporate, service specific, financial and place-based. The format will be continually reviewed in light of COVID-19.
- provide member peer support for councils under a change of political control, including new e-learning opportunities, mentoring and advice
- support councils to resolve issues between political and managerial leadership
- support councils in engaging with their communities in light of COVID-19
- provide free council and public access to transparent performance information through LG Inform and LG Inform VFM, with additional charged access for councils to small area data reports and improvement tools through LG Inform Plus
- support councils to develop scrutiny skills and expertise through the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny.

Strong and resilient political and officer leadership – we will:

- support many hundreds of councillors through our leadership programmes both remotely and through onsite learning. Will continue to review the suite of programmes to ensure councillors and officers have the skills they need to respond to the challenges of COVID-19.
- support councillors with the potential to progress in their political careers through our Next Generation programme
- support the leadership development of chief executives, managers and rising talent in councils, in partnership with SOLACE
- help councils, political groups and national parties to attract new talent into civic life through our Be a Councillor programme
- recruit high calibre graduates to the National Graduate Development Programme, working with councils to secure challenging placements
- help councils to address inequalities, gender pay gap, ethnicity gap and support the roll out Disability Confident
- maintain national negotiating machinery on pay and workforce issues
- provide specialist advice and support for the Local Government Pension Scheme
- deliver comprehensive practical support to help councils provide apprenticeships and maximise their levy investment
- support councils to transform their workforces and modernise the way they are managed
- support councils to promote wellbeing, diversity and inclusion in the workplace through information, guidance and bespoke support and work with them to address issues around gender pay gap, representation and recruitment challenges
- attract qualified staff in hard-to-recruit areas back to local government through the Return to Work programme, including social workers, town planners and IT staff.

Councils supporting growth – we will:

- provide practical support to help councils deliver economic growth in their areas in a COVID-19 context, become more efficient and improve outcomes for communities
- in line with the revised national procurement strategy, deliver a support programme to help councils improve their procurement arrangements
- capture and share intelligence about major suppliers to reduce the risk from suppliers getting into financial difficulty in the current uncertain economic circumstances
- support councils to develop a more commercial approach to their activities within the COVID-19 context, through a series of courses, events and sharing good practice
- provide expert financial support, expertise and advice to councils to address specific issues, particularly in relation to COVID-19
- equip more councils with the skills and confidence to use design and behavioural insights to improve public services and respond to COVID-19
- support councils to exploit the opportunities of digital tools and solutions to enable local residents and businesses to access council services online
- with councils, sector representative bodies, MHCLG, Cabinet Office and the National Cyber Security Centre, highlight the importance of cyber security and cyber resilience to protect data and systems
- share best practice of councils who are finding new and effective ways of working to secure outcomes for their communities
- with Local Partnerships, support councils to make savings by providing commercial advice and support on matters of legal and contractual complexity.

Strong communities with excellent public services – we will:

- through practical bespoke support, help councils deal with the housing, planning and homelessness challenges through the Housing Advisers programme and other sector-wide projects

- provide peer focused support to the Next Steps Accommodation Programme to support interim accommodation for vulnerable people.
- offer a mixture of generic and bespoke support for combined authorities, elected mayors and those areas in the process of developing their devolution arrangements
- support councils to counter extremism and contribute to a multi-agency approach to preventing and tackling serious violence
- strengthen fire and rescue authorities' ability to take forward the fire reform agenda by strengthening their strategic leadership
- support councils to prepare and deliver a successful transition for EU exit
- support councils to embed strengthened approaches to civil resilience and mutual aid through working with MHCLG team to develop training, guidance and other materials for councils

Improving health and care service – we will:

- co-produce with ADASS the sector led improvement programme for care and health
- support social care and health integration and the transforming care programme for people with learning disabilities and/or autism
- support councils to use technology to improve joint working between councils and health partners to enable people to live independently
- help councils develop innovative, efficient and sustainable approaches in care and health services
- work with partners to support councils to develop and improve local services and offer a programme of leadership development
- develop and deliver a support offer to help councils and their partners embed the Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) approach
- support councils and their partners to identify and manage sustainability and delivery risks
- work with partners to develop a new suicide prevention sector-led improvement offer
- work with partners and DfE to deliver a sector-led approach to improving children's services.

Improving children's services – we will:

- provide nationally accredited and quality assured courses for practitioners and associates engaging in peer review, challenge or diagnostic activity
- run Leadership Essentials courses for members with lead responsibility for children's services
- publish a series of 'must know' packs for councils, including on corporate parenting
- develop and/or broker a flexible offer of diagnostic or peer review tools either bespoke to individual authorities, as part of a regional offer or commissioned by the DfE for authorities in intervention
- offer mentoring support for councillors with lead responsibility for children's services.

Combating climate change – we will:

- bring together local authorities, universities and other stakeholders to address climate challenges at the local level
- incorporate climate change issues into core leadership programmes for councillors and officers
- develop a package of communications support including how to engage with local activist groups
- help councils build capacity to effectively respond to climate change challenges, including support around leadership, behaviour change and collaboration
- support long term action-planning and setting strategic objectives, including through webinars and bespoke projects

Our Business

We are committed to providing the best and most cost-effective services to councils and councillors across England and Wales. We are politically led, committed to equalities and diversity and we aim to operate in an environmentally and financially sustainable way.

The national membership body for local government – we will:

- develop maintain membership levels amongst local authorities in England and Wales by continuing to offer membership benefits that meet the sector's changing needs and expectations
- launch a new online membership resource, setting out the benefits of membership with councils and councillors
- offer a range of flexible options for councils to participate actively in our work including through an extensive programme of virtual and hybrid events and meetings
- seek to attract organisations with an interest in local government into our associate scheme.

A politically-led organisation – we will:

- reflect the overall ambitions of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the motion passed by the 2019 General Assembly, in the way that we work and ensure that our own organisation reflects best practice
- ensure our member governance arrangements continue to reflect and respond to current priorities and the expectations of our membership
- offer political support to individual councillors and council administrations through our political group offices
- ensure that combined authorities, authorities with devolution deals and elected mayors are appropriately represented on our governance arrangements.

Using communications to persuade and influence and support councils – we will:

- deliver first class communications that are highly valued and respected by local government and our stakeholders, to influence the issues that matter to councils, their residents and their communities
- through our communications improvement work, support councils and help to raise the standard of public sector communications.

Financially sustainable – we will:

- continue to develop existing and new income generation opportunities in order to diversify our sources of funding and ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the organisation
- complete the refurbishment of Layden House in Farringdon to increase its capital value and maximise our income from commercial letting of here and 18 Smith Square.
- review options to maximise income from 18 Smith Square in the light of COVID-19 restrictions and the risks, constraints and potential new opportunities that presents.
- invest responsibly and seek to ensure that our contractors, joint ventures and pension funds have in place investment policies that further our objectives
- continue to progress the transfer of pensions from Camden to Merseyside scheme.

Efficient business management – we will:

- continue to streamline our company structures to deliver a solid and tax-efficient base from which to run our business, including the transfer of 18 Smith Square and Layden House to the LGA and the winding up of LGMB and LGA Properties.
- enter into a new ICT contract with Brent Council/Shared Services and with them, continue to develop our ICT to support improved efficiency and our new culture of flexible working.

- equip our 18 Smith Square meeting rooms with the technology to support a culture of flexible working for both employees and members.
- ensure that the suite of policies and procedures that underpin our business are comprehensive, clearly understood, updated regularly and reflect best practice.

Supportive people management – we will:

- continue to roll out the leadership development programme for our current and aspiring managers as part of our wider commitment to develop our employees, including virtual and hybrid options to allow everyone to participate
- deliver our employee health and wellbeing strategy
- monitor staff wellbeing and feedback through our regular “temperature check” surveys and put in place support and policies that reflect our new more flexible working practices
- embed equality, diversity and inclusion into our core values, our policies and our practices.

Collective legal action – we will:

- support groups of councils to mount collective legal actions or fight actions against them where we believe that they have a strong case, commissioning expert legal advice and sources of funding where appropriate
- prepare New Burdens submissions on behalf of the sector where new legislation or regulations result in additional duties or costs to councils.
- provide legal advice on strategic issues with sector wide implications, including commissioning expert legal advice where appropriate.

Committed to a sustainable future – we will

- keep our policies and practices under review to ensure that they reflect the ambitions of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and contribute to combatting the adverse effects of climate change
- encourage sustainable travel practices through our expenses policy, our flexible working practices and our continued participation in national sustainable travel initiatives including the Cycle to Work scheme
- minimise the environmental impact of our two central London buildings and the way that we use and manage those buildings, including ensuring that our facilities management and catering contractors have environmentally sustainable policies and practices.

Our service delivery partnerships

Local Partnerships

Local Partnerships is a joint venture between the LGA and HM Treasury, formed in 2009 to help the public sector deliver local services and infrastructure. It offers support to local authorities in the following areas:

- developing and reviewing strategic business cases and business plans
- service transformation and change
- modelling and legal frameworks for alternative service delivery models
- options appraisal and assurance of chosen approaches or options
- forming effective partnerships (inter-agency brokerage)
- sourcing and commissioning, contract negotiation and management
- economic development and planning
- delivering infrastructure.

GeoPlace

GeoPlace is a joint venture between the LGA and Ordnance Survey, formed in 2010 in response to a government call to bring together existing creators and suppliers of addressing data to one central place and to build a single, definitive address database. It works in close collaboration with local authorities to:

- cleanse and validate the address and streets data produced by councils
- create and maintain national “gazeteers” - registers of address and streets data
- provide support and training to councils ensure that they are able to produce high quality, and timely data in the most cost-effective way.

Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA)

PSAA is an independent company limited by guarantee incorporated by the LGA in August 2014. The Secretary of State for MHCLG has specified PSAA as an appointing person under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. PSAA appoints an auditor to relevant local government bodies that opt into its national scheme and sets a scale of fees for the work which auditors undertake.

Local Government Mutual Limited and Local Government Mutual Management Services Limited

The Mutual is a shared ownership company between the LGA and a number of local authorities. Membership is only open to councils in membership of the LGA. The Mutual provides:

- indemnity to local authorities in England and Wales as a cost-effective alternative to the traditional insurance market, including cover for all classes of business
- risk management services to its member local authorities.

LGMMSL is a joint venture between the LGA and Regis Mutual Management that provides services to the Local Government Mutual.

United Kingdom Municipal Bonds Agency (UKMBA)

The LGA is a major shareholder in the local government-owned UKMBA, which delivers cheaper debt financing to councils, through the sale of bonds in the capital markets. We support and provide client side services to the Agency, as it works through its managed service provider to aggregate borrowing requirements and issue bonds.

Minimising the impacts of climate change

The LGA is committed to minimising the environmental impacts of its activities, reducing pollution and CO2 emissions and contributing to a healthy future for all. These are some of the ways that we deliver on that commitment.

Flexible working

Our flexible working policy allows staff to balance working from home with time spent in the office, subject to the needs of the business. This means less journeys to work and a better work-life balance for our staff and their families. It has also enabled us to reduce by a third the amount of office space that we occupy.

Our ICT is designed to support flexible working, enabling staff to log into their LGA accounts from home on the days when they are not in the office or from trains when they are on the move.

Travel

Our expenses policy encourages staff to use public transport wherever practicable to help reduce the impact of the LGA's business travel arrangements on the environment. The Members' Scheme of

Allowance stresses that wherever possible, councillors are expected to travel by public transport when on LGA business.

Meetings

All meeting rooms at 18 Smith Square have access to video conferencing facilities. This enables members and staff to join and participate in meetings remotely, reducing the need for lengthy journeys to Westminster.

18 Smith Square

Secure cycle facilities and showers are provided in the basement of 18 Smith Square for those who prefer to cycle or run to work.

All lights in the building are energy efficient LEDs, with motion sensors that ensure they are switched off when not needed. Windows on the south and west of the building which are not part of the conservation area are double glazed to reduce energy loss. Recycling bins are provided on every floor.

Procurement

The LGA has a robust procurement policy and process, which underpins the importance of all our contractors being able to demonstrate a commitment to sustainability and combatting climate change. Our procurement documentation states

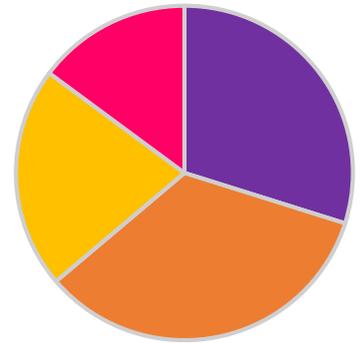
“In adhering to our commitments, the contractor should have systems in place to account for and minimise environmental impacts in all areas of contract delivery”.

Our budget 2020/21

Funding sources and forecast expenditure (Budget) (£'000)

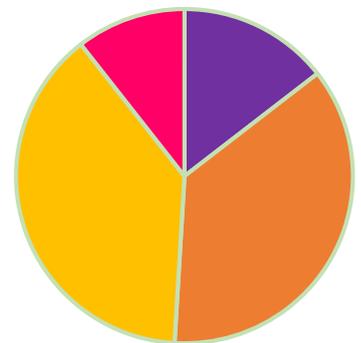
¹Income LG Group 2020/21

- CLG, £19,200 (29.9%)
- Other grants and contracts, £21,799 (33.9%)
- Other income, £13,751 (21.4%)
- Subscriptions, £9,525 (14.8%)



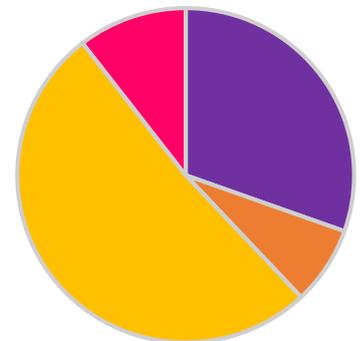
Other income LG Group 2020/21

- Dividends, royalties and interest, £1,992 (14.5%)
- Rental Income and external room hire, £5,014 (36.5%)
- Services, consultancy and other subscriptions, £5,296 (38.5%)
- Conferences, events and sponsors, £1,450 (10.5%)



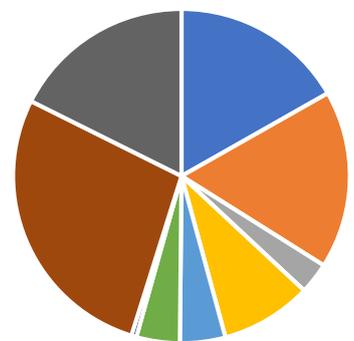
Grant and contract income (including CLG) LG Group 2020/21

- Adult social care, health and wellbeing, £12,477 (30.4%)
- Children, education and schools £3,099 (7.6%)
- Supporting councils, £21,126 (51.5%)
- Places to live and work, £4,297 (10.5%)



Expenditure LG Group by business plan theme 2020/21

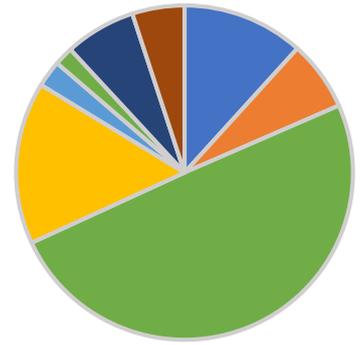
- Funding for local government, £10,652 (16.7%)
- Adult social care, health and wellbeing, £10,961 (17.2%)
- Narrowing inequalities and protecting communities £1,927 (3.0%)
- Places to live and work, £5,591 (8.8%)
- Children, education and schools, £2,773 (4.4%)
- Strong local democracy, £2,652 (4.2%)
- Sustainability and climate action, £311 (0.5%)
- Supporting councils, £17,546 (27.6%)
- Internal & property costs, £11,195 (17.6%)



¹ Design team to amend pie charts

Expenditure LG Group by service group 2020/21

- Business support, £7,434 (11.7%)
- Communications, £4,291 (6.7%)
- Governance and project support, £31,595 (49.7%)
- Finance and policy, £9,976 (15.7%)
- Member services, £1,629 (2.6%)
- Political groups, £1,157 (1.8%)
- Property costs, £4,337 (6.8%)
- Workforce, £3,187 (5.0%)



Our governance

From April From April 2019, the LGA’s responsibilities, assets and liabilities transferred from the previous unincorporated Association to a new company, whose Board of Directors – the LGA Board – is elected annually by the General Assembly. The General Assembly comprises representatives of every council in full membership of the LGA, or in corporate membership through the Welsh LGA. Further information on the company and the way it operates can be found in our Articles of Association and our Governance Framework.

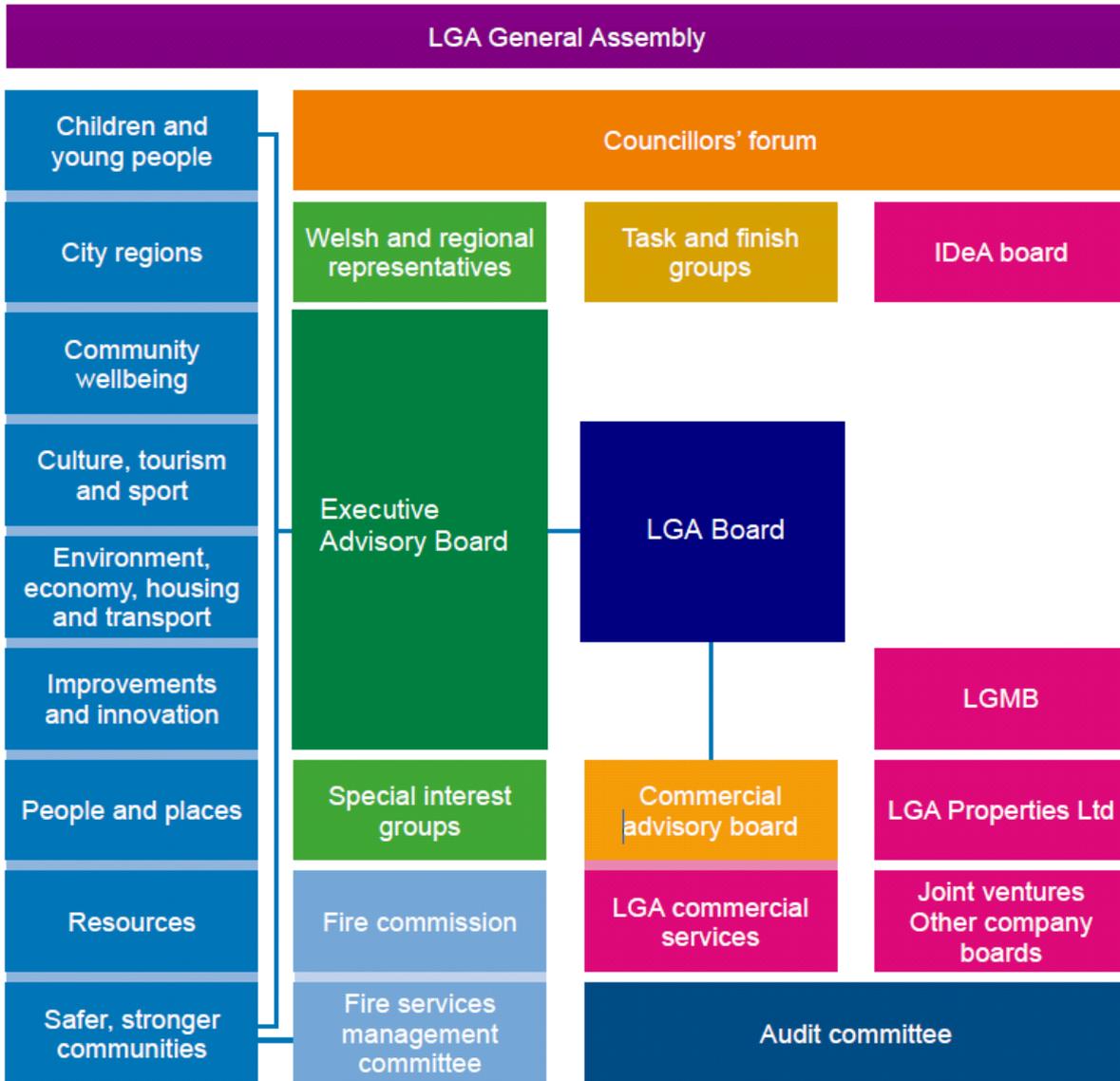
The LGA Board is supported by nine policy boards who together are responsible for developing our policies and campaigns, and for overseeing our extensive programme of sector-led improvement services, across every area of local government activity. The Fire Commission and Fire Services Management Board look after the interests of fire and rescue authorities,

The LGA Board and the chairs of the policy boards meet every six weeks as the Executive Advisory Board and are joined by representatives from Wales and the eight English regions and from three of our special interest groups – the County Councils’ Network, District Councils’ Network and Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities.

The two property boards – LGA (Properties) Ltd and LGMB – are currently responsible for 18 Smith Square, our Westminster HQ, and Layden House, our investment property in Farringdon. However these are in the process of being transferred to the LGA company after which the two property boards will be wound up.

The Commercial Advisory Board is responsible for overseeing the LGA’s income-generating activities to make us financially sustainable now and in the future. That will include overseeing the management and operation of 18 Smith Square and Layden House and reporting back to the LGA Board.

The LGA's governance arrangements



Our major contracts

Catering – Bartlett Mitchell

Bartlett Mitchell (BM) provide all catering services at 18 Smith Square.

BM have been named Sustainable Caterer of the Year for three years in succession. Their policy is to source ingredients locally, regionally and seasonally from farmers who produce food to high environmental standards, reducing the impact of climate change and helping to protect the landscape and our farming heritage. BM use high-welfare meat, poultry, eggs, cheese, and dairy produce and sustainable seafood.

Overseas produce is sourced from ethical suppliers, including coffee from the Soppexcca co-op in Nicaragua which supports women farmers in the region. BM use the 'Free Wheeling' initiative to reduce the number of deliveries to their kitchens.

Total Facilities Management – Bouygues

Bouygues environmental policy recognises that the company's activities and services have the potential to impact on the environment. The policy sets out Bouygues' commitment to minimising the environmental impact of its operations in every way it can and is supported by 'live' environmental improvement plans at all levels.

The company is triple certificated to ISO9001, ISO14001 and OHSAS18001 and the environmental management standard ISO 14001 is fully integrated into its everyday activities.

Bouygues' Facilities Management business was the first in the UK to achieve Energy Management Standard ISO50001. They are currently focusing on reducing carbon impact, minimising waste, diverting waste from landfill and reducing energy.

Pensions – Merseyside Pension Fund and Camden Pension Fund

The LGA's main pension provider, Merseyside Pension Fund, has a policy of responsible investment. The policy has three components: exercise of voting rights; engagement with companies on environmental, social and governance issues & collaboration with like-minded investors. The Fund is active in the work of the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum whose work covers a range of corporate governance and corporate social responsibility issues, and the Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change.

Some employees belong to the Camden Pension Fund, who like all pensions funds, are bound by the law relating to Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) policy. The Fund believes that 'robust' engagement with companies is a better approach than placing restrictions on particular types of investment. It also believes that companies conforming to high ethical and social standards will produce shareholder returns that are at least comparable to those produced by other companies.

Devolution Update

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

This paper briefly describes two areas of activity, research currently underway by the LGA into existing proposals for devolution and non-legislative opportunities for economic recovery and the potential to align health devolution as defined by the NHS with devolution to local government.

Recommendations

Members of the People and Places Board are asked to

1. **Consider** work to review the range of existing devolution asks summarised at **Appendix 1** and identify any other aspects that might be captured as part of this research.
2. **Note** that a joint meeting between Lead Members of the City Regions, People and Places and Community Well-Being Boards has been arranged for 26 November.

Action

Officers to take forward work subject to the comments of members.

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Position: Senior Adviser
Phone no: 07909 898327
Email: philip.clifford@local.gov.uk

Devolution Update

Background

1. It is understood that the Local Economic Recovery and Devolution White Paper has been delayed until the New Year. It has also been suggested that the importance placed by Ministers on a process of widespread local government reorganisation as a precondition of further devolution has diminished. That said, three areas, Somerset, North Yorkshire and Cumbria have been invited by Government to develop proposals for local governance reform and at least five other areas are understood to be considering further work.
2. The LGA has long called for greater local devolution and the People and Places Board has played a key role in shaping policy in this area. We are well placed to respond to the White Paper should it emerge sooner rather than later and have a depth of research to support our arguments. However, the delay creates the possibility of further exploring two lines of argument, the focus of future devolution asks set alongside non-legislative support to boost recovery and renewal in the short to medium term and the potential to align health devolution as defined by the NHS with devolution to local government.
3. This paper provides an update on research by the LGA into existing proposals for devolution and other potential opportunities to support economic growth and recovery in the short to medium term. Following discussions with both the City Regions and People and Places Boards it has been agreed that a joint session of Lead Members will be convened to explore the topic of health devolution with Lead Members from the Community Well-Being Board. The date for this meeting has been scheduled for 26 November and an agenda will be circulated to participants shortly.

Issues

4. The previous wave of devolution undertaken between 2014 and 2017 largely ran to a standardised model: areas were invited to bid for the chance to strike a devolution deal; the government pursued those that warranted the greatest support; and, with the notable exception of Cornwall, those areas that were successful in capturing ministers' attentions were required to establish a (mayoral) combined authority in order to complete the deal.
5. Consequently, one of the key fault lines surrounding this process was to be found on the issue of governance. Many non-metropolitan areas were either unconvinced of the need or unable to agree to establish a mayoral combined authority in order to access greater powers and resources. Conversely, many of those areas that had gone through the process of setting up a mayoral combined authority, were more sympathetic to the Government's concerns regarding accountability and institutional standardisation.
6. A mayoral combined authority is a non-trivial institution. It has staff, it has a legal identity, it has resources and it exercises powers. It provides a robust platform for cross-administrative collaboration. It is not dependent on devolution and, likewise, there is nothing in law to prevent devolution to a non-combined authority.

7. However, even without the delay to the White Paper, combined authorities take time and resources to establish. While there is a clear case for existing combined authorities to receive devolved powers and resources to support recovery, this is not a solution for those areas without a combined authority or for those powers and resources which might be better exercised by local authorities.
8. Recognising both the national context and the challenges identified above the LGA is currently in the process of conducting research into existing devolution asks. The initial stage of this research is a mapping exercise that sets out the policy areas with detailed proposals for devolution, summarised at **Appendix 1**.
9. It will be clear from this list that most of these devolution asks centre on economic interventions. As part of the next stage of this work, we will be considering which of these areas might require new legislation and, separately, which relate to functions that might be operated on a single or multi-council footprint. For example, while it might make sense for strategic infrastructure planning to operate on a sub-national basis, it would seem to be less sensible to restrict planning fee flexibility or the introduction of a local tourism levy to those authorities that have established a mayoral combined authority or other form of multi-council partnership.
10. Work is also underway to explore the potential of a future wave of City or Growth Deals to support economic recovery alongside non-structural or structural devolution. **Appendix 2** sets out an overview of the Wave 1 City Deals. Over the next few weeks, we will start to explore the potential to advocate for a similar 'Recovery Deal' model.
11. Given the rapidly evolving national context we also in the process of considering the case for developing devolution and localisation asks outside the framework of economic intervention and recovery. For example, by looking at the balance of central and local relationships in urban areas that have been placed into a local lockdown.
12. In reviewing this work, Members are asked to: provide a steer on whether there are any significant gaps in the list of existing devolution asks; comment on the proposal to consider whether these powers might be devolved to a single or multi-council area; 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.

Next steps

13. Members of the People and Places Board are asked to
 - 13.1. **Consider** work to review the range of existing devolution asks summarised at **Appendix 1** and identify any other aspects that might be captured as part of this research.
 - 13.2. **Note** that a joint meeting between Lead Members of the City Regions, People and Places and Community Well-Being Boards has been arranged for 26 November.

Implications for Wales

14. 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. Councils in Wales are on a different devolution journey to those in England.

Financial Implications

15. Project costs related to the commissioning of any external support will be met from the board's policy budget.

APPENDIX 1 – DEVOLUTION THEMES AND SUB THEMES

Theme	Sub-theme
Skills and Employment	Mapping and Planning
	Increasing Employment
	Worklessness
	Adult Skills
	SME Skills Support
	Apprenticeships
	Careers and Advice
	Post-16 Skills
Transport	Bus Services
	Rail
	Parking
	Local Road Network
	Transport Infrastructure Funding
Housing, Planning and Homelessness	Reform Right to Buy
	Homelessness Funding
	Planning Fees
	Scrap national Permitted Development Rights
	Revoke National CIL
	Local Licensing Schemes
	Spatial Development Strategies
Economic Growth	UKSPF
	State Aid
	Procurement
	Trade and Investment
	Infrastructure
	Business Support
Environment	Flooding Finance
	Biodiversity
Health and Wellbeing	Health Services
	Integrated Care Systems
Education	Schools Capital Funding
	Academies
Finance	Business Rates
	Fees and Charges
	Council Tax
	Other Taxes
Culture, Tourism and Sport	Destination Management
	Tourism Zone
	Tourist Levy
Climate Change	Energy Efficient Housing
Fire	Police and Crime Commissioners
Low Income Households	Welfare Reform

APPENDIX 2 – CITY DEALS WAVE 1 OVERVIEW

Bristol and West of England LEP

What was provided/initiated	Outcomes
Financial powers to invest, 100% business rates retention for 25 years for 1bn economic development fund	40k jobs, revolving investment programme
10-year allocation of local majors funding, ability to recycle savings locally, powers over rail planning and authority	Greater Bristol Metro, Bus Rapid Transit Network
Public Property Board	More land for economic growth and housing; leveraging other public and private sector investment
City Growth Hub	One stop shop for foreign investors and exporters to boost trade
Business community influence over Skills Funding Agency	Skills investment plan linked to jobs strategy; 5% increase in apprenticeship starts for 16-24 year olds over 3 years

Birmingham and Solihull LEP

What was provided/initiated	Outcomes
Investment fund of 1.5bn	Deliver LEP’s infrastructure priorities, self-sustaining 15 bn of private sector investment over 25 years
Skills for Growth Compact	Recruit 25% of local business to Compact, deliver 3560 new apprenticeships
Joint investment plan incorporating HCA and city assets	2800 new homes by 2022 and 100% return on current value of public assets
Institute for Translational Medicine	25m of investment into sector, 2k high value jobs
Expanding green deal	15k houses, 40 public buildings, 8k jobs, 1.5bn investment programme

APPENDIX 2 – CITY DEALS WAVE 1 OVERVIEW

Greater Manchester

What was provided/initiated	Outcomes
Raise 1.2bn to invest in growth projects	'earn back' share of national tax take from this growth
Greater Manchester Investment Framework	Prioritise projects high in GVA and jobs per pound of public funding
City Apprenticeship and Skills Hub	10% per year increase in apprenticeships 16-24 year olds, 6k apprenticeships over 2 years
Expand Greater Manchester's Business Growth Hub, Government investing 4.4m into the hub	Hub to become self-funding, 3800 new jobs created and 2300 safeguarded
Beacon of inward investment	For developing markets in China, India and Graphene technologies
Develop a carbon plan and Joint Ventures Company between UK Green Investments and Greater Manchester	Emissions reduced by 48% by 2020, 34,800 jobs and 1.4bn GVA
Joint investment programme with the Homes and Communities Agency	5-7k homes by 2017
Package of transport proposals including devolution of Northern rail franchise, local transport majors funding and local bus improvement measures	

Leeds Region LEP 'Guarantee for the Young'

What was provided/initiated	Outcomes
Skills and worklessness: 14-24 Academy, Apprenticeship Training Agency, Employment and Skills Board	20k new jobs, support small businesses in apprenticeships, local influence over the skills system
Transport: local levies on individual councils, co-investment from DfT, joint proposal for devolution of Northern Rail	1 bn transport fund, 2% uplift in economic output and 20k jobs, transport devolution
Investment: investment fund backed by 200m of local resources and business rates matched from central government	
Trade and Inward Investment: Government will support a delivery and investment plan	Trade surplus of 600m by 2015, 1.7 bn by 2018, GVA increase by 1.1% annually, 7.4k jobs by 2018

Liverpool: Liverpool City Region LEP

What was provided/initiated	Outcome
Finance: new and wider Enterprise Zone	Help deliver 10 bn Liverpool and Wirral Waters Project
Economic Investment: Liverpool Mayoral Investment Board, 75m endowment fund to Mayoral Development Corporation	Oversight of economic and housing strategy, deliver critical economic development projects
Employment: cooperate with DwP	Support those leaving the Work Programme and alt to national 16-17 youth contract programme

APPENDIX 2 – CITY DEALS WAVE 1 OVERVIEW

Skills: Secondary School Investment Plan (council funded)	6 new academy schools, 12 new secondary schools
Trade: international business festival	New business opportunities, increased exports to Europe, Asia and North America
Low Carbon: low carbon red tape pilot	Greater share of offshore wind market, increasing jobs and investment pipeline of over 100m in 5 years
Skills and Employment: Skills for Growth Bank, Youth Unemployment Task Force	Unifies public and private skills investments, half youth unemployment in 3 years, support 17400 new jobs, 6k new apprenticeships
Transport: new strategic transport body establishing an 800m transport fund	Critical infrastructure to the Port of Liverpool, Northern Hub and 15k jobs, greater local transport decisions
Investment: Investment Fund combining streams	Local control to invest
Knowledge Economy: utilise science and knowledge assets	Generate job growth and realise knowledge potential

Newcastle: North Eastern LEP

What was provided/initiated	Outcomes
NewcastleGateshead Accelerated Development Zone, 4 key sites retaining business rate income for 25 years	1bn boost to NE economy, 92m investment programme, 2k jobs in 5 years, 13k jobs in 25 years
Energy, Marine and Low Carbon: secure 500m private sector investment into marine and manufacturing sector	8k jobs, carbon reduction of 34% by 2020
Employment and Skills: co-location and integration of national and local services, Skills Hub, model for delivery of Youth Contract	Increase apprenticeships by 15%, skills system tailored to employers
Housing: Joint Investment Plan with HCA	15k homes, improve housing market
Transport and Connectivity: investment programme with Gov	Reduce congestion, investing in broadband infrastructure

Nottingham

What was provided/initiated	Outcomes
Enterprise support: establish incubator in Creative Quarter; trial SME finance products; Technology Fund; 45m venture capital fund; Generation Y Fund	Boost high tech start ups; equity in high tech businesses; exploit intellectual property; grads to start businesses in Nottingham
Employment and Skills: apprenticeship hub, Youth Employment Hub	1k apprenticeships, reduce youth unemployment by 25% over 4 years
Connectivity and infrastructure: package of transport measures, 8m New Development Deal scheme, joint investment from Nottingham and commercial broadband providers	Improved connectivity to other cities, reduced congestion, improve links through Creative Quarter, provide super-fast broadband connectivity
Low Carbon: Green Deal strategy	Move to a low carbon economy

APPENDIX 2 – CITY DEALS WAVE 1 OVERVIEW

Sheffield City Region

What was provided/initiated	Outcomes
Skills: local skills funding model, 44.4m of local public and private sector, 27.8 m of devolved funding over 3 years, Skills for Growth and Employment Partnership	Improve skills, colleges to respond to emerging needs of sectors, 4523 apprenticeships and 2k skilled jobs over 3 years
Finance: Sheffield City Region Investment Fund 700m	New freedoms and financial powers for growth, infrastructure and jobs
Transport: 10 year devolved majors funding, devolution of Northern rail, local management of tram trains project, Better Bus Area Pilot	Improve connectivity, power and tools to improve local bus network
Nuclear Advanced Manufacturing Supply Chain: national centre for procurement	Improve national procurement, speed up innovation and help build advantage in manufacturing and nuclear industries

People and Places 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
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People and Places Board Update Paper

EU Exit and Transition

1. Since the referendum in 2016, the LGA has taken a neutral stance on the issue of EU exit. We have been consistently working with Government on the opportunities and risks of EU exit to local areas on behalf of councils and the communities they serve.
2. The LGA has been clear that councils face multiple challenges in the coming months. Councils are ensuring that their communities are as safe as possible from the COVID virus. Council capacity will be stretched, and we have highlighted this issue in our conversations with Government.
3. As we head to the end of the transition period, the below provides a summary of the current key issues for councils, highlighted below, that the LGA is raising through its lobbying including to the Delivery Board: both those issues directly related to the end of EU transition on 31 December 2020 and those issues that became domestic policy when the UK left the EU in January 2020.
4. Consequences of the end of transition:
 - 4.1. Autumn/winter pressures and capacity to prepare
 - 4.2. Preparedness of regulatory services, including demand on regulatory services
 - 4.3. officers and the new IT, infrastructure and training needed to support them
 - 4.4. Increase infrastructure demands for port towns, including transport links and the designated transit inland port sites
 - 4.5. Costs of any new tariff regime introduced
 - 4.6. Opportunities to reform state aid and procurement
 - 4.7. Data protection issues.
5. Post EU Exit policies:
 - 5.1. EU funding and the UKSPF
 - 5.2. EU Settlement Scheme and the focus on vulnerable people to apply to the scheme
 - 5.3. UK immigration policy and the consequence for social care workforce
 - 5.4. UK legacy of the Committee of the Regions
 - 5.5. Freeports.

Digital Connectivity

6. Following on from BDUK CEO Raj Kalia's visit to the People and Places Board, the LGA have been pressing for clarification on councils' role in the future gigabit-broadband roll out programme. The Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee raised our calls for funding to employ a digital champion within each council, with the Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman MP, who welcomed our position, although did not clarify the Government's position on funding.
7. In the last month via lead members, officers responded to the Government's [Gigabit Take Up Advisory Group](#) in which we called for funding for councils to run demand stimulation initiatives, and to the Public Accounts Committee's Inquiry [on improving broadband](#) which we used to push our calls for a greater role for councils in the future roll out of gigabit-broadband.
8. Finally, Cllr Mark Hawthorne met senior Ofcom Director Lindsey Fussell on 4 November to discuss our calls relating to mobile connectivity, the universal service obligation and the fairness of the broadband marketplace.

City Regions Board Update

9. The City Regions Board has been proceeding according to the agreed work programme, the priorities of which are:
 - 9.1 To engage with Central Government and stakeholders to ensure councils in urban areas have powers and resources to lead a successful recovery.
 - 9.2 To continue to take forward the LGA's work on skills and make the case for the Work Local model.
 - 9.3 To ensure that 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.
 - 9.4 To identify cross-cutting policy issues to work on with other boards in order to help shape LGA lobbying lines
 - 9.5 To ensure that the work of the Board addresses inequalities and promotes equality and inclusion through all its work.
10. The City Regions Board has agreed to commission a piece of work looking at "A Vision for Urban Growth and Recovery". This work will look at the challenges specific to urban areas, how urban areas have been affected by this pandemic, and draw on this and evidence from Local Industrial Strategies, Local Recovery Plans and other national policy announcements to create a report that sets out a vision for urban recovery. This

will identify the key interventions to lead towards recovery and quantify the benefits of a successful recovery.

11. This report, to be completed in the spring, will be used to inform and advise councils, combined authorities, the LGA and central government on both the long-term direction and the more immediate, practical steps that urban areas can take to build a strong and sustainable economic recovery.

Freeports

12. The Government has now published its response to its freeports consultation which the LGA responded to on behalf of the Board. In it they made clear:

- 12.1. Government will consider approving more than ten Freeports in the event of a large number of high-quality proposals;

- 12.2. Seed capital will be provided to address infrastructure constraints relevant to Freeports and their surrounding area;

- 12.3. Existing zonal planning tools like Local Development Orders (LDOs) have a role to play in delivering residential and commercial development in local areas around Freeports;

- 12.4. To combat economic displacement, bids will be invited to provide evidence and proposed mitigation activities as part of their bids;

- 12.5. The government is evaluating options for local authorities to retain business rates as part of the Freeports programme;

- 12.6. Bidders will be expected to have fully engaged the relevant local authority and have its full buy-in to proposals to be a Freeport.

13. Government is aiming to launch the bidding prospectus in time for the process to have finished before local election purdah kicks in ahead of local elections next year.

Housing and Planning Update

14. The LGA, through the work of the EEHT Board, has been lobbying Government for some time on changes to the planning system that would improve the ability of councils to shape their areas for the benefit of communities, as well as supporting the Government's aim of building 300,000 homes per year. The Board re-confirmed its positions on housing planning [at its meeting on 19 May](#). This includes:

15. Lobbying for increased flexibilities for local planning authorities to ensure continued delivery of effective planning services during the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak
16. Pursuing options for: strengthening the local plan process; giving councils greater powers to act where housebuilding has stalled; an 'infrastructure first' approach; removal of national permitted development rights; removal of sanctions where councils do not meet 5 year housing land supply or Housing Delivery Test requirements; locally-set planning fees.
17. Continuing to influence the Planning White Paper
18. Working with Homes England and other stakeholders on skills and capacity issues that are slowing housing growth
19. Making the case for councils to have the powers and funding to deliver more homes that are affordable, sustainable and meet the needs of communities
20. Making the case for right to buy reform and flexibilities including 100% retention of receipts and the ability for councils to set discounts locally
21. Working with councils to understand the impact of income and cost pressures resulting from COVID-10 on council housebuilding programmes
22. We also launched our ['Keep Planning Local' campaign](#) in July, which was supported by a large number of signatories and received national media coverage. Our press releases on the [impact of removing the requirements for developers to build affordable homes on small sites](#) and the [impact of proposed new housing targets](#) were also widely reported in both local and national media.
23. We have also [published a report](#) outlining the tools, powers and flexibilities that councils need to plan for and deliver the quality homes and infrastructure that communities need. A second report details our proposals for a [housing stimulus package](#) that would enable councils to build more affordable, high-quality and sustainable homes at scale, and at pace.
24. On 6 August, the Government published the [Planning for the Future White Paper](#) consultation paper with proposals for long-term fundamental structural changes to England's planning system. The consultation period closed on **29 October**. A copy of the LGA's response can be sent to Board members.
25. Alongside this, they also published the consultation paper [Changes to the current planning system](#) which includes proposals for more immediate amendments to existing

processes. The consultation period closed on **1 October** and we await the Government's response. [The LGA has responded to the consultation.](#)

26. Councillor David Renard, the Chairman of the EEHT Board had the opportunity in September, alongside LGA Chairman, Councillor James Jamieson, to brief over 20 MPs and peers at a parliamentary briefing session on housing and planning. We have also briefed MPs for parliamentary debates on [planning reform and housebuilding targets](#) and [motions related to planning](#) and have recently submitted evidence to the Housing, Communities Local Government Committee for their [new inquiry into the future of the planning system](#).
27. LGA officers have been working with councils to develop the detailed responses to both planning consultations. This includes: working with our planning officers' steering group to better understand the implications of the reforms and holding webinars for members and officers (in conjunction with the District Councils' and County Councils' Network) to gather views. EEHT Board members have provided input into both responses. We have also gathered feedback from other LGA Boards, including both the People and Places and the City Regions Boards.
28. We will be continuing our engagement with both parliamentarians and officials to ensure that the concerns of councils and our key asks are heard in Government. We have also indicated that we want to work pragmatically with officials to try and design any reforms to the planning system, so we can seek to ensure they are introduced in the best interest of councils and communities.

Heads of Place Pilot

29. The Cabinet Office has launched a new pilot initiative - Heads of Place. Its aims are to better coordinate UK Government presence and action in each of the regions and nations of the UK, providing stronger, visible leadership for the civil service, and a more consistent and streamlined engagement for partners. Twelve interim Heads of Place have been appointed from within the civil service at Director level. Each Head of Place has been appointed to cover a specific region.
30. The Cabinet Office see Heads of Place as "better joining up the work of central government so we can be a better partner to you and colleagues in your places." The longer-term purpose of Heads of Place in a more ambitious model will be threefold; to work with the Places for Growth reforms to support fulfilling careers across the UK; to work with local partners to tackle the challenges and grasp the opportunities present in each place; and to use their learning and perspective to influence national decision making, driving wider transformation across how Whitehall currently works.

31. The LGA will be engaging with this initiative to ensure that the voice of local government is clearly heard by the Heads of Place. An initial workshop has taken place to hear feedback from councils, combined authorities and LEPs. All groups have welcomed the opportunity to have greater direct links into Government. We will also work to further understand how this new initiative can support more localised recovery across the country.

Strengthening Rural and Coastal Resilience

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

Rural and coastal areas across England and Wales have long grappled with issues of poverty and uneven prosperity. Building on the Board's previous work in this area, this paper asks members to approve the commissioning of external support to develop an evidenced case in favour of greater powers and resources for councils to strengthen rural and coastal resilience.

Recommendation

That members of the People and Places Board agree, subject to their comments, to the commissioning of external research into strengthening rural and coastal resilience.

Action

Officers to proceed with procurement, subject to member direction.

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Strengthening Rural and Coastal Resilience

Background

1. Rural and coastal areas across England and Wales have long grappled with issues of poverty and uneven prosperity, with the contribution of predominantly rural areas to the national economy declining by 1.4 per cent¹ between 2001 and 2018.
2. These issues were recently highlighted in an article published in the Journal of Rural Studies² '*Variegated geographies of austerity and food banking in rural England and Wales*'. This research found evidence of the 'hollowing out' of rural local government highlighting the ways local authority spending power has been cut by the merger of district councils and creation of unitary authorities. For example, the establishment of Dorset Unitary Authority in 2019 amounted to a loss of £21.7 million (-6.59 per cent) in 2019-20 core spending power and the creation of West Suffolk District Council in 2019 amounted to a loss of £3.3 million, or 16.8 per cent.
3. In addition, this research shows that rural authorities are far more likely than their urban counterparts to have closed their Local Welfare Assistance Schemes, with just under one in three (9 of 28) having done so, compared to one in seven urban authorities (16 of 116). It also highlights that higher level sanctions for Job Seekers Allowance claimants (the loss of a person's main or only source of income for 13, 26 or 156 weeks) made up a higher proportion of the total sanctions made in predominantly rural local authorities than they did in urban areas.
4. Crucially, many of these challenges have persisted despite intervention from Whitehall and recent months have only served to further underline the existence of severely disadvantaged communities in both rural and urban areas.
5. A recently completed 'grey literature' review of newspaper articles, select committee response, government documents and speeches by relevant ministers carried out by LGA officers found evidence to suggest Government economic policies have often focused on urban and suburban economies. Consequently, there has been a gap in appropriate policies for rural and coastal areas. Furthermore, the fragility of some rural and coastal areas has been partially 'hidden' by the fact that they are surrounded by relatively affluent areas.
6. The common themes of the literature reviewed focus on poverty and poor infrastructure in rural and coastal areas, particularly regarding transport and digital connectivity. The issue of poor infrastructure relates to a large portion of rural and coastal pressures. For

¹

² <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0743016719308083?via%3Dihub>

example, the literature notes that social isolation increases with an ageing population but is exacerbated by poor transport and digital connectivity. Similarly, food poverty and poor provision of health services are exacerbated by the difficulty in reaching food banks and services in rural areas. The literature also relates poverty, poor infrastructure and health services to drug and suicide issues which are prevalent in coastal communities.

7. The underlying issues emerging from the literature on rural and coastal areas relate to the lack of funding/investment and inappropriate governance. As noted, Government policies have been perceived to be inappropriate for rural areas. For example, the use of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) failed to account for rural economic interests, while Government funding does not sufficiently consider that population sparsity increases costs in rural areas. The consensus that emerged from the literature is that rural and coastal pressures must be acknowledged and a subsequent increase in investment/funding would increase the social and economic resilience of these areas. Many articles also argued that rural areas must not miss out on the next round of devolved powers, so rural areas can decide on the appropriate solutions to these problems.

Issues

8. The Government has committed to 'levelling up' the entire country. What this means in practice is uncertain. However, there is already a sense that the phrase has started to become polarised around the argument that historic patterns of investment and power have largely favoured London and the Greater South-East and that these decisions have disadvantaged urban communities in the north of England.
9. Furthermore, the Government's previous policy for driving place-based growth – Local Industrial Strategies – were often seen to be a poor fit for rural areas, with issues around economic evidence, business representation and the priority attached to the relatively narrow measurement of productivity raised frequently.
10. As a result, there is an opportunity to undertake a piece of work to consider how best to strengthen rural and coastal resilience within the context of national recovery, the UK's transition from the European Union and the long-standing issues outlined above.
11. The People and Places Board has a key responsibility to consider the long-term issues facing rural and coastal areas. Between February 2017 and July 2019, the Board led the Post-Brexit England Commission, which gathered evidence from across non-metropolitan England and proposed a range of freedoms and flexibilities to support councils' role as leaders of place.³

³ <https://www.local.gov.uk/devoforall>

12. Some of the arguments advanced in those reports such as lower levels of productivity in rural areas, shortages in the right mixture of homes, insufficient transport and digital infrastructure and a mismatch between skills provision and employer demand continue to be relevant within the current context and will provide a useful base from which to build on.
13. However, the Post-Brexit England Commission did not specifically explore issues of rural and coastal poverty, advance the case for funding to councils, or undertake an assessment of Government policy to address these issues. The significantly altered context provided by a new Government, EU Transition and the Coronavirus Pandemic also adds weight to the case for considering how these challenges might be addressed in substantially different circumstances.
14. It is therefore proposed that further research is carried out with a specific focus on strengthening rural and coastal resilience and taking full account of the context and previous work in this area. If members are agreed to this course of action it is suggested that the following areas are used to frame the scope and scale of the commission:
 - 14.1. Recognise and respond to the distinct inequalities facing rural areas
 - 14.2. Take account of the spatial and demographic factors that might constrain or enhance future opportunities for rural and coastal recovery and growth
 - 14.3. Quantify the benefits and/or opportunity cost of failing to fully support the future prosperity of rural and coastal areas
 - 14.4. Identify the key interventions for local and national government for building more resilient rural and coastal areas.
 - 14.5. Align any proposals within the context of the Government's commitment to levelling up and the new focus on economic and social resilience.

Next steps

15. The People and Places Board is asked to consider and agree to the proposal to commission external support focused on the development of an evidenced case for strengthening rural and coastal resilience.

Implications for Wales

16. 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

17. Project costs related to the commissioning of any external support will be met from the board's policy budget.

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Note of last People & Places Board meeting

Title: People & Places Board
Date: Tuesday 15 September 2020
Venue: Online via Zoom

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions
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1 Welcome, introductions and declarations of interest

The chairman welcomed members to the first People and Places Board of the 2020/21.

2 People and Places Board 2012/21: Terms of Reference and Membership

Thomas French introduced the Terms of Reference for the People and Places Board 2020/21 and asked members to note the continuing membership of the board.

Decision

Members noted the membership and agreed the Board's Terms of Reference for 2020/21.

Action

Officers to refer the Equalities Advocate position back to the political groups.

3 Board Work Programme 2020/21

Sonika Sidhu introduced the Board Work Programme and stated that the report reflects on the major policy developments which have taken place over the past year and anticipates the key areas of focus for the future work of the LGA.

Decision

Members agreed the Board Work Programme 2020/21.

4 Building Digital UK

Raj Kalia, Chief Executive, Building Digital UK updated the board on government work on connectivity. Raj Kalia highlighted the following government projects:

- Local Full Fibre Network programme (now UK Fibre)
- Superfast Broadband Programme
- Rural Gigabit Connectivity programme
- Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme

Members made the following comments:

- Rural areas need to understand that to get better connectivity, this also comes with increased infrastructure in their local area.
- Local Plans may see a cost to local authorities in the procurement stage. Local plans need to consider local knowledge from local councils on digital connectivity.
- Reliability in the local infrastructure and being able to respond to local concerns as projects go on is important for government to consider.
- This has been the first that many leaders have heard of many of these projects, this shows a lack of true engagement with local government and partners. It is hard to pass on news to residents about better connectivity when leaders feel unconnected.

Raj Kalia responded:

- There are different solutions for rural areas to see an increase in connectivity without having large scale infrastructure.
- There will be increased engagements with local government and as these projects expand, staff will be based all over the UK not just working from Westminster.
- Connectivity and access to networks is a concern, which can be result of bad local services when setting up infrastructure.
- Super-fast teams within authorities have been engaged with, which should have seen information on projects being spread to members. However, more engagement is coming to stakeholders.

Decision

Members noted the presentation

Action

Building Digital UK to attend a future board and detail where future engagement with local government will be implemented.

Officers to draft a guide about connectivity for members.

5 Devolution Update

Philip Clifford updated the People and Places Board members on the policy work around Devolution and local government reform. Philip Clifford highlighted that LGA work would be informed by these key themes:

- Devolution deals should be locally led
- Devolution deals should leave nothing off the table
- Devolution must be backed by adequate resources:
- Individual devolution deals must form part of a new push towards localisation
- English councils must have a stronger voice on the national stage

Cllr Martin Tett discussed experiences from Buckinghamshire on the process around unitary status.

Members made the following comments:

- Parish Councils have been efficient in the response to Covid-19, and are at the heart of the community, and any devolution plans needs to consider parish, city and town councils.

- Government wants councils to run services in a more far-reaching way and devolution is the way to achieve that.
- The conditions that the government currently allows for greater devolution is very strict and government needs greater explanation to justify this. Population also seems to be a concern from government to allow for devolution, which affects rural councils. Councils should decide when they want greater devolution.
- The principles behind the white paper and suggested responses all make sense. The problem is that the creation of huge councils with mayors does not fit well with the concept of localism. Forcing the unitary concept doesn't necessarily fit with allowing regions to determine their own destiny under the heading of locally led.
- Devolution needs to allow for councils to set their own local taxes to fund services, not just towards residents, but also businesses and organisations.

Officers responded

- Once the white paper is out, board work can be refreshed on what the government asks are of devolution.

The chairman stated that Devolution will be an ongoing board issue and members should be raising concerns to officers and within their political groups as the board year goes on.

Decision

Members noted the report and agreed the response to the white paper.

Action

Officers to consider a member meeting on the devolution white paper, as the timeline allows.

6 Youth participation update

Bushra Jamil introduced the report and provided an update on the development of a youth participation policy and an employment and skills update, including the impact of Covid-19 on young peoples' employment and skills.

Members made the following comments:

- The signposting in this report will be important for members and needs to be seen by key workers who support families.
- Government needs to recognise that local government is best placed to support families in their communities.

The chairman suggested Gillian Keegan, Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills should be invited to a future board meeting.

Decision

Members noted the progress of the report

Action

Officers to invite Gillian Keegan MP to a future board.

7 Cross Cutting Policy Issues

Jo Allchurch presented the report on National planning reforms, highlighting the two separate government consultations:

- The Planning for the Future White Paper
- Changes to the current planning system

Members made the following comments:

- Affordable housing is a welcome focus for the board to consider.
- Neighbourhood plans could see greater design for affordable housing, but there is a risk it will have no local input. Who will enforce the design standards if local government has no say?
- On area zonal planning, there needs to be assurances that residents impacted by development will see increased infrastructure and not just more housing.
- When multiple developments are agreed on small amounts of housing stock, this will mean little affordable housing will be developed.
- Small communities often don't see affordable housing, and this leads young people being economically pushed out of their local area.
- Infrastructure needs to be constructed at earlier stages than at present. After the 500th house has been completed is not soon enough,

Kamal Panchal presented the report Home to school transport, summarising LGA work on home-to-school transport as part of the post lockdown return to school process

Members made the following comments:

- Supporting SEND children has come with increased pressures around Covid-19 and transport is a key area.

Decision

Members noted both updates.

Actions

Officers to provide anonymised numbers of affordable housing across authorities.

Officers to provide the LGA response on the two housing consultations to the board.

8 Board Update Paper

Sonika Sidhu provided members with a brief update on issues and policy areas not covered by other items on the agenda, including:

- Skills and employment
- Freeports
- The UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- Economic Recovery

Members made the following comments:

- One of the positive sides of the Covid-19 Pandemic has been the positive community cohesion that members have seen across their authorities.

Decision

Members noted the contents of the report.

9 Minutes of the last meeting

Members agreed the sets of minutes from Wednesday 10 June 2020 and Wednesday 24 June 2020.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
Vice-Chair	Cllr Simon Henig CBE	Durham County Council
Deputy-chair	Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
	Cllr Bob Jennings	Epping Forest District Council
Members	Cllr Rachel Bailey	Cheshire East Council
	Cllr Marc Bayliss	Worcester City Council
	Cllr Hilary Carrick	Cumbria County Council
	Cllr Neil Clarke MBE	Rushcliffe Borough Council
	Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
	Cllr Diane Marsh	Gravesham Borough Council
	Cllr Eddie Reeves	Oxfordshire County Council
	Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council
	Cllr Bradley Thomas	Wychavon District Council
	Cllr Rob Waltham MBE	North Lincolnshire Council
	Cllr Sue Woodward	Staffordshire County Council
	Cllr Leigh Redman	Somerset County Council
	Cllr Kyle Robinson	Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
	Cllr Doina Cornell	Stroud District Council
	Cllr Sarah Osborne	East Sussex County Council
	Cllr Stan Collins	Cumbria County Council
	Cllr Helen Grant	Richmondshire District Council

