



# **City Regions Board**

Agenda

Friday, 30 September 2022  
2.30 pm

Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and  
Online

There will be a meeting of the City Regions Board at **2.30 pm on Friday, 30 September 2022** Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online.

### **LGA Hybrid Meetings**

All of our meetings are available to join in person at [18 Smith Square](#) or remotely via videoconference as part of our hybrid approach. We will ask you to confirm in advance if you will be joining each meeting in person or remotely so we can plan accordingly, if you wish to attend the meeting in person, please also remember to confirm whether you have any dietary/accessibility requirements. 18 Smith Square is a Covid-19 secure venue and measures are in place to keep you safe when you attend a meeting or visit the building in person.

[Please see guidance for Members and Visitors to 18 Smith Square here](#)

### **Catering and Refreshments:**

If the meeting is scheduled to take place at lunchtime, a sandwich lunch will be available.

### **Political Group meetings and pre-meetings for Lead Members:**

Please contact your political group as outlined below for further details.

### **Apologies:**

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

<b>Conservative:</b>	Group Office: 020 7664 3223	email: <a href="mailto:lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk">lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk</a>
<b>Labour:</b>	Group Office: 020 7664 3263	email: <a href="mailto:labgp@lga.gov.uk">labgp@lga.gov.uk</a>
<b>Independent:</b>	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: <a href="mailto:independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk">independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk</a>
<b>Liberal Democrat:</b>	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: <a href="mailto:libdem@local.gov.uk">libdem@local.gov.uk</a>

### **Attendance:**

Your attendance, whether it be in person or virtual, will be noted by the clerk at the meeting.

### **LGA Contact:**

David Pealing  
[david.pealing@local.gov.uk](mailto:david.pealing@local.gov.uk)

### **Carers' Allowance**

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

## City Regions Board – Membership

[Click here for accessible information on membership](#)

Councillor	Authority
<b>Conservative ( 5)</b>	
Cllr Toby Savage (Vice Chairman)	West of England Combined Authority
Cllr Robert Alden	Birmingham City Council
Cllr Barry Anderson	Leeds City Council
Cllr Joanne Laban	Enfield Council
Cllr James Moyies	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
<b>Substitutes</b>	
Cllr Simon Bennett	Wolverhampton City
Cllr Liam Billington	Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Lewis Chinchen	Sheffield City Council
<b>Labour ( 13)</b>	
Mayor Marvin Rees (Chair)	Bristol City Council
Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe (Vice-Chair)	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Cllr Bev Craig	Manchester City Council
Cllr Nazia Rehman	Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Graeme Miller	Sunderland City Council
Cllr Kerrie Carmichael	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Jason Brock	Reading Borough Council
Cllr John Merry CBE	Salford City Council
Cllr Anthony Hunt	Torfaen County Borough Council
Cllr Ian Ward	Birmingham City Council
Cllr David Mellen	Nottingham City Council
Cllr Denise Scott-McDonald	Royal Borough of Greenwich
Cllr Satvir Kaur	Southampton City Council
<b>Substitutes</b>	
Cllr Elise Wilson	Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Chris Penberthy	Plymouth City Council
Cllr Bob Cook	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Cllr Brenda Dacres	Lewisham London Borough
<b>Liberal Democrat ( 2)</b>	
Cllr Gareth Roberts (Deputy Chair)	Richmond upon Thames London Borough Council
Cllr Carl Cashman	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
<b>Substitutes</b>	
Cllr Greg Stone	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
<b>Independent ( 2)</b>	
Cllr Gillian Ford (Deputy Chair)	Havering London Borough Council
Cllr Martin Fodor	Bristol City Council

<b><i>Substitutes</i></b>	
Cllr Phelim Mac Cafferty	Brighton & Hove City Council
Cllr James Giles	Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

# Agenda

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## City Regions Board

Friday, 30 September 2022

2.30 pm

Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

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**Date of Next Meeting:** Wednesday, 23 November 2022, 10.30 am, Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online



## Note of last City Regions Board meeting

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<b>Title:</b>	City Regions Board
<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday 15 June 2022
<b>Venue:</b>	Hybrid meeting (via Microsoft Teams & Victoria Room, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ)

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### Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#) to this note.

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Members, officers, and guests to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Cllrs Bev Craig and Robert Alden.</p> <p>Cllrs Liam Billington and James Swindlehurst attended the meeting as substitutes.</p> <p>Cllr Gillian Ford declared an interest as she was a Facilitator at Shared Service Architecture.</p> <p>The Chair congratulated Cllr Samantha Dixon on her inclusion in the Queen's Birthday Honours list, in recognition of her services to local government both in her role as a Councillor in West Cheshire and Chester Council and on her work as a Member of the City Regions Board.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the last meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Business in the Community Update</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Lord Steve Bassam, Chair of the Business in the Community (BITC) Place Taskforce, and invited Esther Barrott, Adviser, to introduce the report.</p> <p>Esther introduced the report which provided Board Members with a brief overview of the BITC Place Taskforce and the Board's involvement to date to support a discussion with Lord Steve Bassam.</p> <p>Lord Bassam set out the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background information which related to the report and the work of</li> </ul>	

the taskforce to date.

- The need to emphasise the importance of business engagement to ensure that resources were allocated to achieve the targets set out in the 12 missions that government had established for levelling-up.
- The 14 recommendations set out within the report, which focused on:
  - Collaboration
  - Business leadership driving successful partnership and place-based
  - The unique resources of each partner and the need for leveraging
  - Government's approach to ensuring that businesses were involved in relation to levelling up.

Board Members made a number of comments and asked questions which related to the following points:

- The Chair welcomed government's acknowledgement of local authorities being leaders of place and their role as convenors.
- The importance of appropriate access to resource was emphasised.
- A question was asked which related to BITC activity and projects.
- A question was asked which related to point 7.2 within the report.
- The Chair asked Lord Bassam for three key asks from BITC to local government.
- The Chair emphasised the importance of government recognising the present challenges within cities, specifically in relation to inequalities.

Lord Bassam responded to Board Members' comments, setting out the following points:

- Lord Bassam provided some background information in relation to the BITC Place Taskforce.
- BITC worked with local authorities and other partners to deliver specific projects, focusing place activity on a number of communities.
- In response to a question which related to point 7.2 within the report, BITC established a Strategic Board within each area and worked closely with local authorities to create Business Connectors, Champions and Ambassador Roles to establish and maintain place-based partnerships. A Business Connector would typically be appointed if adequate funding was available. It was expected that once established, the Strategic Board would create a group of Ambassadors to work with businesses to ensure that they were engaged in advocacy work within communities.
- The three key asks from BITC to local government were:
  - Ensuring that government recognised the value of strategic partnerships in place and within communities, working with levelling-up directors and recognising the value of funding connectors.
  - For Town Deal Boards to be further utilised to deliver levelling-up missions.
  - Levelling-up funding needed to be flexible, long-term, localised



and aligned with the levelling-up missions to maximise the engagement of business and deliver transformative change.

- The Prince's Seeing is Believing Programme, established in 1990 by HRH The Prince of Wales, had played a vital role in shaping the BITC's place-based approach. The Seeing is Believing programme would take place again in 2022, offering a powerful experience for senior business leaders, showing the unique challenges faced by local communities.

Lord Bassam thanked both the LGA for their continued help and support also Cllrs Abi Brown and Simon Henig, for their invaluable contributions to the report.

**Decision:**

- Board Members noted the report.

**Action:**

- Officers to continue to work in partnership with BITC to make the case to government, particularly in relation to local government being place-based leaders.

#### **4 The role of councils in addressing the rising cost of living**

The Chair welcomed Rose Doran, Senior Adviser in the Children, Welfare, Equality and Democracy (CWED) officer team, and invited Esther Barrott, Adviser, to introduce the report.

Esther introduced the report which provided an overview of the LGA's current work on support for low-income households, led by Rose and the Resources Board.

Rose set out the following points:

- Background information which related to the Resources Board and policy join-up.
- Council finances being impacted by the rising cost of living was being considered.
- Work in relation to addressing the rising cost of living had increased significantly as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and continued to increase post-pandemic.
- The need for a positive narrative was emphasised, as well as highlighting the challenges and the need for a properly resourced welfare system to ensure a sustainable approach to having greater resilience within communities.
- The need to better protect communities in the future was emphasised and would be a key theme at the LGA annual conference 2022.
- A workshop had been set up which focused on council's engagement with service users in relation to anti-poverty.
- At a recent Resources Board meeting, it was suggested that a steering group be set up to discuss the role of councils in addressing the rising cost of living. Input would be required from a

representative from each Board.

- The steering group would deliver action learning and bring together key focuses and specific issues.

Board Members commented on the issues that the rising cost of living had brought, including:

- The need for well-targeted government support schemes.
- The need to retrofit properties to reduce bills and create green employment opportunities.
- Ever-increasing council tax bills.
- Health inequalities.
- The need for local authorities to have access to the resources necessary to allow them to take ownership of local issues and support residents.
- Fuel poverty.

Rose noted all of the points raised by Board Members and confirmed that she'd continue to link in with Board Members and other Boards in relation to the rising cost of living issues.

The Chair encouraged all Board Members to send summaries to Rose related to the work which continued to take place within each local authority in addressing issues related to the cost-of-living crisis.

Cllr Ford to represent the City Regions Board on the LGA's cost of living steering group.

**Decision:**

- Board Members noted the report.

**Action:**

- Officers to contact Board Members once there were opportunities to lead on other workstreams.

## **5 The Future of Cities**

The Chair invited Philip Clifford, Policy Adviser, to introduce the report.

Philip introduced the report which provided an update on progress towards an urban fringe event focused on the future of cities at LGA Conference and sets out plans for further work on the same topic.

Board Members made a number of comments and asked questions which related to the following points:

- Reference was made to a fringe event organised by Key Cities taking place at the LGA's Annual Conference which related to the future of urban government with Lord Kerslake.
- The Chair also added that Core Cities were looking to work with the RSA to consider these issues.
- The need to include the voice of the public was emphasised in

relation to the future of cities.

The Chair encouraged all Board Members to use their various contacts and connections to ensure that government better understood the role and work of cities and how better to leverage urban areas.

**Decision:**

- Board Members noted the report.

**Action:**

- Officers to liaise with Key Cities in relation to the Fringe Event which was taking place with Lord Kerslake.

## **6 Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill Update**

The Chair invited Esther Barrott, Adviser, to introduce the report.

Esther introduced the report which provided an overview of provisions within the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill related to devolution and levelling up missions.

Board Members made a number of comments and asked questions which related to the following points:

- The potential levelling-up opportunities present for county-combined authorities where large towns were surrounded by rural areas, and the need for government to recognise that particularly unitary authorities were already fairly well-placed.
- Cities and towns of all sizes needed a fair share of the resources that were available.
- Greater flexibility was welcomed.

**Decision:**

- Board Members noted the report.

**Action:**

- Officers to continue to feed Board Members' comments back to government colleagues.

## **7 Levelling Up Locally**

The Chair invited Esther Barrott, Adviser, to introduce the report.

Esther introduced the report which provided a short update in relation to the Levelling Up Locally inquiry.

A question was asked which related to communications between the LGA and both The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS). Esther

confirmed that conversations had taken place.

**Decision:**

- Board Members noted the report.

**8 City Regions Board Annual Report**

The Chair invited Rebecca Cox, Principal Policy Adviser, to introduce the report.

Rebecca introduced the report which summarised the Board's activity over the past year. It set out key achievements in relation to the priorities for the City Regions Board in 2021/22 and looked forward to next year's priorities.

**Decision:**

- Board Members noted the report.

**9 Forward look on employment and skills**

Please refer to the confidential minutes document for more information related to this item.

**10 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Future of Growth Funding**

Please refer to the confidential minutes document for more information related to this item.

**11 Any other business**

The Chair, on behalf of the Board, expressed his thanks to all LGA officers for their reports and the hard work that they had undertaken this year. He also thanked Board Members for their contributions and reminded them to contact their political groups to express interest in remaining on the City Regions Board for the 2022-23 cycle.

**Appendix A - Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Mayor Marvin Rees	Bristol City Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Abi Brown	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
	Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Gareth Roberts	Richmond upon Thames London Borough Council
	Cllr Gillian Ford	Havering London Borough Council
Members	Cllr Barry Anderson	Leeds City Council



	<p>Cllr Joanne Laban                      Cllr Toby Savage                      Cllr Samantha Dixon                      Cllr Graeme Miller                      Cllr Elise Wilson                      Cllr Jason Brock                      Cllr John Merry CBE                      Cllr Anthony Hunt                      Cllr Shama Tatler                      Cllr David Mellen                      Cllr Carl Cashman                      Cllr Martin Fodor</p>	<p>Enfield Council                      West of England Combined Authority                      Cheshire West and Chester Council                      Sunderland City Council                      Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council                      Reading Borough Council                      Salford City Council                      Torfaen County Borough Council                      Brent Council                      Nottingham City Council                      Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council                      Bristol City Council</p>
Apologies	<p>Cllr Robert Alden                      Cllr Bev Craig</p>	<p>Birmingham City Council                      Manchester City Council</p>
In Attendance	<p>Cllr Liam Billington                      Cllr Bob Cook                      Cllr James Swindlehurst</p>	<p>Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council                      Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council                      Slough Borough Council</p>





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30 September 2022

## City Regions Board terms of reference

### Purpose of report

For decision.

### Summary

This paper sets out the City Regions Board terms of reference.

Is this report confidential? Yes  No

### Recommendation/s

Members are asked to review the terms of reference for the Board.

### Action/s

Officers to publish the finalised terms of reference.

**Contact officer:** Rebecca Cox  
**Position:** Principal Policy Adviser  
**Phone no:** 0207 187 7384  
**Email:** rebecca.cox@local.gov.uk

## City Regions Board terms of reference

### Terms of reference

1. The purpose of the City Regions Board is to represent the interests of urban areas and city regions, including those which are part of Combined Authorities or seeking devolution deals. Its remit includes devolution, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, skills and employment support and wider public service reform. It will also consider the role of urban leaders in responding to the climate and ecological emergencies, working with the Economy, Environment, Housing and Transport Board, and the opportunities within the Board's work programme to promote improved health and wellbeing.
2. The Board should seek to involve councillors in supporting the delivery of these priorities (through task groups, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), regional networks and other means of wider engagement); essentially operating as the centre of a network connecting to all urban councils and drawing on the expertise of key advisors from the sector. This includes working closely with relevant LGA Boards.
3. The City Regions Board's responsibilities include.
  - 3.1. Ensuring the priorities of councils are fed into the business planning process.
  - 3.2. Developing a work programme to deliver the business plan priorities relevant to their brief, covering lobbying campaigns, research, and improvement support in the context of the strategic framework set by Improvement & Innovation Board and events and linking with other boards where appropriate.
  - 3.3. Sharing good practice and ideas to stimulate innovation and improvement. Representing and lobbying on behalf of the LGA including making public statements on its area of responsibility.
  - 3.4. Building and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders.
  - 3.5. Involving representatives from councils in its work, through task groups, Commissions, SIGs, regional networks and mechanisms.
  - 3.6. Responding to specific issues referred to the Board by one or more member councils or groupings of councils.
4. The City Regions Board may:
  - 4.1. Appoint members to relevant outside bodies in accordance with the Political Conventions.
  - 4.2. Appoint member champions from the Board to lead on key issues, with responsibility for liaising with portfolio holders on key issues that require rapid response/contact with councils.





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30 September 2022

### **Quorum**

5. One third of the members, provided that representatives of at least 2 political groups represented on the body are present.

### **Political Composition**

6. Membership of the City Regions Board is drawn from the Core and Key cities, SIGOMA and London Boroughs, and is reflective of those in Combined Authorities or seeking devolution deals.
7. The Board has 22 members and its make-up reflects the political proportionality of the wider group of councils from which the membership is drawn. This differs from the seven policy boards, whose make-up reflects the political proportionality of the Association as a whole.
8. The chair has been appointed from the largest group on the Board and falls within the LGA's own proportionate allocations. In line with the LGA's political conventions, the remaining groups each have a vice or deputy chair.
9. The composition by political party is recalculated each year and reflects the political proportionality of the wider group of councils from which their membership is drawn. The current composition is:
  - 9.1. Conservative group: 5 members
  - 9.2. Labour group: 13 members
  - 9.3. Independent group: 2 members
  - 9.4. Liberal Democrat group: 2 members
10. Substitute members from each political group may also be appointed.

### **Frequency per year**

11. Meetings to be held five times per annum.

### **Reporting Accountabilities**

12. The Board will report annually to the LGA Executive at the July meeting.





**Meeting:** -

**Date:** -

## City Regions Board Work Programme

### Purpose of report

For direction

### Summary

This report sets out a draft work programme for the City Regions Board for members' comment

### Is this report confidential?

Yes

### Recommendation/s

Members are asked to comment on and agree the overall shape and direction of the draft work programme.

### Contact details

Contact officer: Rebecca Cox

Position: Principal Policy Adviser

Phone no: 0207 187 7384

Email: [rebecca.cox@local.gov.uk](mailto:rebecca.cox@local.gov.uk)

# City Regions Board Work Programme

## Purpose and outcome

1. The Board's work programme reflects the remit set out in the terms of reference, with particular projects develop in response to national policy changes and the challenges and opportunities facing councils and combined authorities. Taken as a whole, it should enable city regions to deliver better outcomes for their communities and create the conditions for sustainable and inclusive economies. Note that at the time of writing, details of the new Prime Minister's policy programme were still emerging. Members might wish to reflect on recent announcements (such as the suggested investment zones) as they discuss the programme.

## Background

2. The City Regions Board has a wide remit, as set out in its terms of reference. This paper sets out a proposed framework for the Board's work in the forthcoming year. Within the broader framework will be opportunities for the Board to respond to new issues as they arise, and the Board is free to amend the framework during the year should the local or national policy context change.
3. The framework also contains a number of projects that were agreed in the previous Board cycle and will complete in the coming months. This gives the Board more flexibility when considering how it might like to use its resources in the second half of the cycle. See Annex A for a proposed overview of the Board's work.
4. Following the LGA's annual conference and the publication of [Signals of the Future](#), which was commissioned from Ipsos MORI, the LGA will be taking a fresh look at the long term issues facing the country and what local government's role is in addressing them. This will also support our work to influence manifestos in the lead up to the next general election. The City Regions Board is already well positioned in this space, thanks to its foresight in commissioning the Future of Cities, Levelling Up Locally Inquiry, Work Local refresh and other projects. In their consideration of the work programme, members might wish to consider how the Board's findings and recommendations might feed into the LGA's wider work.
5. Members will want to ensure that the Board's work programme speaks to the cost of living crisis which is set to severely impact communities, businesses, and public services. Aspects of this are woven through our work programme, albeit with a stronger emphasis on long-term preventative work. The City Regions Board will also feed into the LGA's wider cost of living work through participating in the steering group. Any further views from members about how the Board should engage on this issue are welcome.

## Proposal

6. Five themes for the Board's work programme are set out below. Where these are supported by briefing papers, these are mentioned in the text.

7. **Theme 1: Future of Cities**

The [Future of Cities collection](#) was launched at LGA Annual Conference in June 2022. This collection brought together city leaders, academics, think tanks, urban artists and writers to provide a response to the question "What do we want our cities to be, and how do we get there?". This question aimed to develop further the discussions held at the Board's first Urban Summit in March, which posed three questions: "What are cities?", "What do we need our cities to be?" and "What is the difference and how do we get them there?".

The following Board paper sets out more detail of the activity in this workstream, including bringing in the voices of people living in cities and proposing a second urban summit linking with the RSA and Core Cities work in this space. The Future of Cities project will provide a platform to make a strong and positive offer to government of the role cities can play and what is needed to deliver on this.

8. **Theme 2: Levelling Up**

Despite the uncertainty surrounding the future of the levelling up agenda in its current form, we are hopeful that the incoming government will continue to see reducing regional inequalities as a priority. In the last Board cycle, members commissioned a number of areas of work jointly with the People and Places Board to position councils at the heart of levelling up, which are set out in more detail in the following Board paper:

- a. The Levelling Up Locally Inquiry, looking at funding and alignment, leadership, productivity and prosperity, and place and identity. Its initial roundtables have been completed and the inquiry will bring contributors together in October for two sense-making sessions. The final set of findings and recommendations will be brought to the November Board meeting.
- b. We will continue to lobby on the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, particularly with regard to the Missions.
- c. Our Work Local proposals for a more localised employment and skills system were launched in the summer. Officers are focussing on engaging stakeholders, especially businesses and employers, and laying the groundwork for engaging Parliamentarians from all parties and new Ministers in the autumn. In addition, we are continuing work agreed in the previous Board cycle to understand the role of councils and combined authorities in addressing inequalities in skills and employment (see accompanying Board paper).

- d. In the last Board cycle, members worked with the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board to consider potential issues for health devolution in the move to Integrated Care Systems. The Board will maintain a watching brief on this issue.

## 9. **Theme 2: Urban resilience**

The City Regions Board is asked to provide direction on the scope and scale of new work to identify the challenges and opportunities facing leaders in urban areas looking to build resilient communities.

This work would sit alongside the LGA's existing programme on climate change resilience, led by the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, and activity related to the development of a new national resilience strategy, which is being led by the Safer Stronger Communities Board.

## 10. **Theme 3: Green jobs**

At the last Board meeting, members identified the need for there to be a step change in retrofitting homes to support councils to deliver net zero commitments, tackle the cost-of-living crisis and fuel poverty and keep homes warm. Members directed officers to focus on ensuring there is the qualified workforce available to deliver the scale of retrofit needed, and that this needs to be developed at the local level. Local government has real ambition to deliver on its net zero commitments, and therefore needs a localised, place-based approach to deliver retrofit, which should include an integrated employment and skills offer that is tailored to local need.

The accompanying paper sets out activity to strengthen our relationships with stakeholders, including SMEs where there is less understanding of the role of local government, and to influence Government through the Green Jobs Delivery Group and other channels.

## 11. **Theme 5: Growth funding**

At the final board meeting of the last political cycle, members of the City Regions Board agreed to the preparation of a report for the LGA Executive proposing to consider the future of growth funding. There is already an immediate focus on ensuring vital local services can keep pace with rising inflation and increased demand from residents, and in the longer term, a need to ensure councils have greater ability to boost productivity and strengthen sustainable and inclusive growth across the country. The accompanying paper sets out a proposal to commission some technical analysis to allow us to better make the case for the relative efficiency of local investment.

The Board also shares with the People and Places Board the responsibility for the LGA's work on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and any issues arising from this over the course of the year will be brought to the Board under this heading.

### **Implications for Wales**

12. Many policy areas are devolved, however where the topic allows we will work with the WLGA and other bodies, such as Core Cities, to ensure issues relating to Welsh councils are properly represented.

### **Financial Implications**

13. Work commitments can be met from the Board's policy budget.

### **Equalities implications**

14. We strive to reflect equality, diversity and inclusion issues throughout the work programme, whether through the focus of the project; the scope, design and research, or our engagement with stakeholders. More detail is included in the background papers.

### **Next steps**

15. Members are asked to comment on:
  - The overall balance of the work programme
  - Any gaps or other issues that should be considered, particularly with regard to the rising cost of living
  - Any considerations arising from the new Prime Minister's policy priorities.





LGA long term policy-making and other milestones				Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23							
				Board meeting Letters to new Ministers Government Growth Plan statement Party conferences Chairman and CX visits (throughout)	Party conferences Smith Square debate (levelling up)	Board meeting Possible Budget (tbc) Smith Square debate (climate change)	Smith Square debate (tbc)	Board meeting		Board meeting Spring statement tbc End of financial year			Board meeting	Annual conference and report							
Theme No	Theme	Importance	Key political targets	Project	Aim	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Notes				
1	Future of Cities	Leaders of our city regions will have a key role to play in the shaping of cities in the future. The success of the UK's city regions will be key to determining the success of the UK as a whole. This work will inform their ability to transform urban areas, while also seeking to inform and influence Government and political manifestos, giving places the financial and policy support and governance space needed to deliver flourishing city regions.	* Jeremy Pocklington - Perm Sec (DLUHC) * Will Garton - Director General, Levelling Up (DLUHC) * Catherine Frances - Director General, Local Government, Resilience & Communities (DLUHC)	a) Digital hub b) Urban conference with RSA	To inform the wider future of cities work, which looks to influence the next political manifestos by bringing in a diverse range of voices into the conversation. To reach an agreed set of asks and offers around the future of cities to feed into the LGA's lobbying to Government and political manifestos ahead of the next general election			Citizen voices videos			Summit tbc										
2	Levelling Up	To demonstrate local government's place leadership role in strengthening communities, reducing inequality and building opportunity.	* Jeremy Pocklington - Perm Sec (DLUHC) * Will Garton - Director General, Levelling Up (DLUHC) * Catherine Frances - Director General, Local Government, Resilience & Communities (DLUHC) * Susan Acland-Hood - Perm Sec (DIE) * Peter Schofield - Perm Sec (DWP)	a) Levelling Up Locally Inquiry	To lobby Government and feed into political manifestos in advance of the next general election.		2 x workshops	Draft report	Report complete	Comms ongoing											
				b) Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill	To sense check any changes with the sector, and where appropriate table amendments to the Bill as it passes through Parliament.	Parliamentary work	Parliamentary work		Get in on the Act' guide published tbc												
				c) Work Local - employment and skills devolution	Work Local: Secure buy-in from the Govt, opposition and stakeholders to empower local gov't to have power and funding to coordinate local employment and skills offer. Alongside Work Local, work is ongoing to influence range of live national policies (further education reforms, DWP policy)	Stakeholder engagement Responded to LSIP guidance	Stakeholder engagement		Work Local Summit tbc		Economic development skills - improvement work complete										
				d) Supporting economic inclusion	To examine the role of councils in supporting economic inclusion, and shine a light on the disparities, alongside the good practice that exists, to develop 'what good looks like'.		Equalities survey	Roundtables	Webinar tbc	Case studies online EDI principles published											
				f) Health devolution	Strengthen alignment between NHS reform and local authority devolution to improve health outcomes and economic and social development.	Met with NHS Confed		Potential roundtable on promoting economic and social development through ICS													
3	Urban resilience	City regions face an increasing variety of physical, political, economic and social risks. We need to understand the nature of these risks, what it means to be resilient and how our city regions can become resilient. This work should underpin the Government's National Resilience Strategy.	TBC	a) b) c)	To explore gaps in national/local resilience as it applies to urban areas, within the context of the national resilience strategy, and with city heat as a possible first step.	Scoping paper to Board		Project focus agreed			Output launched										
4	Green Jobs	To demonstrate local government needs to develop the jobs, businesses and workforce needs to deliver a just transition to net zero.	* Julian Critchlow - Director General, Energy Transformation & Clean Growth (BEIS) * Amy Jenkins - Deputy Director, Net Zero Strategy, Green Jobs Delivery Group (BEIS) * Zoe Forbes - Deputy Director, Labour Market & Sectors (DIE) * Helen Edmundson, Deputy Director, Green Finance & Green Recovery, natural jobs work (DEFRA)	a) Skills for retrofit	To influence government policy to enable local government to achieve retrofit ambitions and develop the pipeline of skills needed. This includes develop the understanding of the need for a long term approach, the potential for developing good work and the need to develop the SME sector to support retrofit ambitions		Green Jobs Delivery Group meeting and joint Board meeting Stakeholder roundtables	Stakeholder roundtables			Retrofit report tbc										
				b) Influencing the Green Jobs Delivery Group	Work with the local government representation on the BEIS led Green Jobs Delivery Group to influence government policy to enable local government to develop net zero ambitions by developing green jobs and the skilled workforce needed to deliver it																
5	Growth funding	Growth funding plays a vital role in supporting economic growth through investment in infrastructure and people.	* Will Garton - Director General, Levelling Up (DLUHC) * Catherine Little - Director General, Public Spending and Finance (HMT) * Lynne Miles, Director of Policy, Cities and Local Growth Unit, UKSPF (DLUHC) * Saba Tahzib - Deputy Director, UKSPF (DLUHC)	a) Streamlining funding	To advocate for a new 'defragmented' approach to growth funding that strengthens alignment with local priorities, is more efficient and better matches need with funding availability.		Research commissioned														
				b) UKSPF	To influence the implementation and roll out of the UKSPF to confirm the central role of councils and maintain pressure on government to match the quantum of previous EU funding.		DLUHC approval														



## Theme 1: The Future of Cities

### Purpose of report

For direction.

### Summary

This paper provides an update on the commissioning of a series of videos of city residents as part of the future of cities work, with the successful supplier, *The means*, attending the Board meeting to hear from Board members and set out their plans for the project. It also sets out options for a future urban summit.

Is this report confidential? Yes  No

#### Recommendation/s

1. Members are asked to note that *The means* has been appointed to carry out the *Future of Cities: City Citizens* work, and hear at the Board meeting about their plans for the work.
2. Members are asked to comment on the proposal to host another urban summit early in 2023.

#### Action/s

1. Officers will work with *The means* to carry out the *Future of Cities: City Citizens* project, continue to liaise with the RSA and Core Cities on their work on the future of cities, and proceed as directed by Members on the hosting of a second urban summit in 2023.

**Contact officer:** Ellie Law

**Position:** Policy Adviser

**Phone no:** 07584 273764

**Email:** eleanor.law@local.gov.uk

## Theme 1: The Future of Cities

### Purpose and outcome

1. The purpose of the future of cities project is to reach an agreed set of asks and offers around the future of cities, which can be used to feed into the LGA's lobbying to Government and political manifestos ahead of the next general election. This will be achieved through bringing together the voices of city leaders, experts, and now urban residents, to draw on their understanding of how cities need to change to meet the needs of the future. It will be informed by, and compliment, work of other organisations in the same space, including the RSA, Core Cities, Key Cities, London Councils and 3Ci.
2. Key civil servants for this work are: Jeremy Pocklington, DLUHC permanent secretary; Will Garton, Director General for Levelling Up; Catherine Frances, Director General, Local Government, Resilience and Communities.

### Background

3. The [Future of Cities collection](#) was launched at LGA Annual Conference in June 2022. This collection brought together city leaders, academics, think tanks, urban artists and writers to provide a response to the question "What do we want our cities to be, and how do we get there?". This question aimed to develop further the discussions held at the Board's first Urban Summit in March, which posed three questions: "What are cities?", "What do we need our cities to be?" and "What is the difference and how do we get them there?".
4. Although all submissions are answering the same broad question, the contents cover a broad range of topics. From city governance structures to the opportunities presented by increased density, and from rewilding to devolving more powers to cities, the responses show the breadth of ideas around how cities can and should change.

### Issues

5. Following the launch at LGA Annual Conference, officers have continued to add to the collection, with new essays and a new section of videos from the Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network. Officers are still reaching out to potential contributors so that the collection will continue to grow.
6. Following previous conversations at the Board, officers commissioned work to capture and explore in more detail the views of city residents. Following a competitive selection process, *The means* have been awarded the contract, and will be attending the Board meeting to hear from members about what they would like to get out of the project, and set out their plans.

7. This project aims to supplement the existing contributions, highlight a broad range of perspectives and include voices not often heard in the debate around what cities of the future should be like. It will capture these views in a series of videos, where a diverse collection of urban residents talk about the challenges they face today, how cities could change to address these challenges, and what an ideal city which allowed them to fulfil their potential and meet their aspirations would look like.
8. Officers have also had initial conversations with RSA regarding a commission they have received from Core Cities. This project also looks at the future of cities, and officers are working with the RSA and Core Cities to identify how the Board can contribute to this work most effectively. We also continue to speak to Key Cities and London Councils about the role that they can play in the next stages of the work.
9. The Board has previously discussed hosting a second urban summit, to take place in early 2023. Members may wish to provide a steer on whether they would like another urban summit to take place, and if so, what they would like the contents of the summit to include.
10. It has been suggested that the next urban summit could bring together the RSA and 3Ci as a halfway point to reflect on the urban futures project that they have been working on with Core Cities. We would also consider it essential to have representation from Key Cities and London Councils as part of the summit. We could also use this as an opportunity to launch the collection of videos from city citizens, and hear in person from the residents interviewed as part of the videos.

### **Implications for Wales**

11. This work is being carried out within the context of the Levelling Up White Paper, which presents a vision for the UK. While many of the investment and policy levers are likely different within the Welsh context there will be value in drawing on the experience of Welsh cities.
12. In our discussion with *The means* we have stated that we would like at least one of the city residents to be drawn from a Welsh city to ensure that a Welsh perspective is included in the next stage of the work.

### **Equalities Implications**

13. The specification for the *Future of Cities: City Citizens* project explicitly stated that we expect the supplier to recruit a diverse group of people, and this was reiterated in the first meeting with *The means*. The specification also stated that the bidder must demonstrate an understanding of the equality and diversity issues relevant to the project. All bidders were required to provide a detailed explanation of how these equalities issues will be addressed in the design, implementation and evaluation of the project.

### Financial Implications

14. The cost of commissioning the series of videos capturing the views of urban residents, the cost of arranging an urban summit as well as any additional policy activity arising from this paper will be met from the Board's policy and research budget.

### Next steps

15. Members are asked to note that suppliers *The means* have been appointed through a competitive procurement process to carry out the *Future of Cities: City Citizens* work, and comment on the proposal to host another urban summit early in 2023.
16. Officers will work with *The means* to carry out the *Future of Cities: City Citizens* project, and continue to liaise with the RSA, 3Ci and Core Cities on their work on urban futures, along with Key Cities and London Councils on the role they can play in contributing to the future of cities work.
17. Officers will proceed as directed by members on an urban summit, including setting a date and bringing a draft agenda to the next board meeting if members agree to proceed.

## Theme 2: Levelling Up

### Purpose of report

For information.

### Summary

This paper provides a short update for members on the LGA's work around the levelling up agenda.

Is this report confidential? Yes  No

#### Recommendation/s

Members are asked to note the LGA's levelling up work to date and the ministerial changes at the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities.

Members are invited to comment on the proposed levelling up programme for 2022/23 including inviting Dehenna Davison (Appendix 1), the new Minister for Levelling Up, to a future Board meeting, and on the activity set out under our core employment and skills activity.

#### Action/s

Officers will continue their levelling up work throughout the 2022/23 board cycle as outlined in the paper, including inviting Dehenna Davison to address the Board.

**Contact officer:** Esther Barrott  
**Position:** Adviser  
**Phone no:** 07464652906  
**Email:** esther.barrott@local.gov.uk

## Theme 2: Levelling Up

### Purpose and outcome

1. The purpose of the LGA's levelling up work is to demonstrate local government's place leadership role in strengthening local communities, reducing inequality, and building opportunity which can feed into the LGA's lobbying to Government and political manifestos in advance of the next general election. This will be achieved through the LGA's levelling up locally inquiry and continued work on employment and skills reform.
2. Key civil servants for this work include: Jeremy Pocklington, DLUHC permanent secretary; Will Garton, Director General for Levelling Up; Catherine Frances, Director General, Local Government, Resilience and Communities; Susan Acland-Hood, DfE permanent secretary; Peter Schofield, DWP permanent secretary.

### Context

3. The Government's long awaited White Paper was published on 2 February 2022. As detailed in the [LGA's briefing note](#) the White Paper set out the Government's ambition to pursue 12 national missions across four broad areas: boosting productivity and living standards by growing the private sector; spreading opportunities and improving public services; restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging; and, empowering local leaders and communities.
4. The political context has since changed since its publication, with questions remaining around the new Government's plans for the levelling up agenda.
5. On 6 September 2022 Simon Clarke was appointed Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). He previously held the role of Minister of State at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in 2020. Paul Scully was reappointed as a Minister of State and Dehenna Davison appointed as Minister for Levelling Up. Lee Rowley and Baroness Scott of Bybrook were appointed as Parliamentary Under Secretaries of State at DLUHC.
6. Cllr James Jamieson, Chair of the LGA, has written to Simon Clarke welcoming him to the role and is writing a similar letter to Dehenna Davison which will include an invitation for her to attend future City Regions and People and Places Board meetings.
7. Given the changing political landscape, there is an appetite in the sector to have a further debate about the long term. Over the autumn the LGA will be leading a discussion about the shape and powers of local government in the future. The LGA will be taking the debate to regional meetings, holding town hall meetings and Smith



Square Debates. This will include further exploration into the future of the levelling up agenda and what it means for local communities in a [session](#) which will be held on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

### Levelling Up Locally Inquiry

7. In the last Board cycle members agreed to support a joint inquiry with the People and Places Board into Levelling Up Locally. Member agreed the inquiry would look at four aspects:
  - i. Funding and alignment – The practical questions about how levelling up in the broadest sense might be paid for and, at a more granular level, the opportunities to align policy and funding interventions at the local level to improve the quality of public service outcomes and address concentrations of deprivation.
  - ii. Leadership – The role of local leadership in binding communities and anchor institutions together to strengthen resilience, align national priorities, and articulate policy interventions necessary to support balanced economic growth.
  - iii. Productivity and prosperity – The role of the private and public sector in addressing inter and intra-regional inequalities and the shift towards sustainable and inclusive models of prosperity.
  - iv. Place and identity – The questions of place and identity within a post-pandemic context and the potential of local social and cultural infrastructure to strengthen inward investment, encourage entrepreneurialism and address economic inequalities.
  
8. The inquiry launched in February 2022 when [steering group](#) members met for the first time to agree on the terms of reference and reflect on the recent publication of the Levelling Up White Paper. The inquiry seeks to be inclusive of a range of views through the topics addressed and the people and organisations invited to participate. DLUHC officials have also observed the sessions as part of the Board's direction to officers to ensure we are bringing Government into the conversation. Given the LGA's ambition to influence the wider national debate, consideration could also be given to inviting policy makers or researchers from other political parties. Members' views on this approach would be welcome.
  
9. Following this, the LGA hosted four roundtables between March and July 2022 exploring the themes outlined in Paragraph 6. A [summary](#) from each of the sessions can be viewed on the inquiry hub on the LGA website. A series of think pieces and videos have also been published on the hub sharing the views from a range of organisations discussing how the levelling up agenda might better strengthen local communities.
  
10. The inquiry will hold two workshops at the beginning of October to discuss the emerging themes. There will be one in-person session held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> October 10am – 1pm and one virtual session on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October 10am – 1pm respectively and City

Regions and People and Places Board members are invited to attend alongside everyone who has contributed to the four roundtables of the inquiry (see Appendix 1).

11. A final set of recommendations will be taken to the November City Regions and People and Places Boards for sign off. Following this, officers will bring a detailed plan to the Boards outlining next steps for the promotion of the inquiry and landing the recommendations.

### **Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill**

12. The Queen's Speech on 10 May announced a Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, which was then presented to Parliament on 11 May. The Bill aims to drive local growth, empower local leaders to regenerate their areas, and ensure everyone can share in the UK's success. It will place a duty on the Government to set Levelling Up missions and produce an annual report updating the country of the delivery of these missions. The Bill is currently at committee stage in the House of Commons.
13. The [LGA responded to the announcement of the Bill](#) by welcoming the steps it takes to extend devolution, and make good on the commitment in the Levelling Up White Paper to offer all of England the opportunity to benefit from a devolution deal by 2030.
14. Ensuring communities everywhere benefit from the Government's levelling up agenda and further devolution has been a long running ask for the LGA. On 21 June LGA Chair Cllr James Jamieson gave [oral evidence](#) to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill Public Bill Committee. This provided an opportunity to welcome the move towards every part of the country having the opportunity to benefit from a devolution deal.
15. Officers continue to meet with District Councils Network and County Councils Network to understand their views on the Bill and implications for members.
16. It is not yet certain whether there will be any changes to the Bill, including its timetable, under the new Government. The LGA's letter to Dehenna Davison will ask for an update on the Bill alongside its expected timescale. We will keep Board Members updated on its progress.

### **Levelling up through employment and skills reform**

17. Skills, retraining and job creation are critical to the levelling up agenda. Investment and interventions to achieve this must connect up at a local level and for all places if they are to support people of all ages – learners, unemployed people, career changers – as well as businesses and other employers of all sizes – progress. A joined up and locally responsive employment and skills offer is critical to this. Earlier this summer, the LGA launched its *Work Local: Unlocking talent to level up* proposals. We make clear recommendations to Whitehall on ways it can improve its approach to employment and

skills for all places right now, and what is needed for a coherent framework for employment and skills devolution.

18. To successfully land our proposals we are engaging a range of stakeholders, including business and employer groups, to seek endorsements and identify opportunities for joint working. The Chairman, with the Chair of the City Regions Board wrote to the Minister for Employment, Julie Marson MP and the Skills Minister, Andrea Jenkyns MP in July. Following the appointment of new Ministers, we aim to secure a Work Local summit with relevant Ministers later this year. We are landing our proposals with the shadow Cabinet including Alison McGovern MP and Jonathan Ashworth MP and are seeking follow on discussions with the Liberal Democrat spokespeople on these issues.
19. Our project specific work is covered in detail elsewhere on the agenda, however officers also continue to drive forward our core employment and skills work. Some key issues for members to be aware of are set out below:
- Deliver a Work Local summit and related events to engage the Government and parliamentarians (end 2022)
  - Launch report by the Heseltine Institute on adult retraining (September 2022)
  - Ensure local government has a clear role in delivering the Government's FE reforms including Local Skills Improvement Plans (ongoing)
  - Support councils to deliver DfE's Multiply adult numeracy programme (by end March 2023 as part of the LGA's improvement offer)
  - Support local government's economic development cadre deliver the levelling up agenda (by end 2023 as part of the LGA's improvement offer).

### **Implications for Wales**

20. The Government has committed to levelling up the entire of the UK. While not all the policy and funding responsibilities covered by the inquiry are devolved matters, the Welsh Local Government Association has regularly attended the Levelling Up Locally Inquiry to share relevant lessons and ideas. As work to detail the scope and scale of powers needed to deliver the 12 Missions at a UK level unfolds the LGA will continue to look for opportunities to work with Welsh local government.

### **Financial Implications**

21. Any financial implications arising from this work will be met from the Boards' agreed programme budgets and the LGA's improvement grant.

### **Next steps**

22. Officers will continue their levelling up work throughout the 2022/23 board cycle as outlined in the paper, including inviting Dehenna Davison, Minister for Levelling Up, to address the Board.

## Appendix 1

### Dehenna Davison MP – Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Levelling Up)



Dehenna Davison was elected as MP for Bishop Auckland in the 2019 general election. Prior to becoming an MP, Davison was a research and development analyst for LUMO, a company which advises businesses on tax credits. Davison was a member of the Home Affairs Select Committee from March 2020 to November 2021, is a member of the European Research Group and a member of the parliamentary council of The Northern Policy Foundation. On 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022 Davison was appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at DLUHC. Davison's portfolio covers:

- Local growth funding design and simplification
- Local growth funding delivery – UKSPF, Levelling Up Fund, Community Ownership Fund etc
- Devolution deals and county deals
- Planning casework
- Legislation – Holocaust Memorial

**Appendix 2**

Organisations the LGA has engaged with as part of the Levelling Up Locally Inquiry:

<p>Acre Arts Council Association of Directors of Adult Social Services Bennett Institute for Public Policy Brap British Property Federation British Youth Council Carnegie Centre for Better Ageing Centre for Cultural Value Centre for Local Economic Strategies Citizens Economic Council Citizens UK Community Organisers COSLA Crafts Council E3G Eden Project Fabians Fair4All Funding Fields in Trust Friends Provident Institute of Fiscal Studies Institute of Directors IPPR North Justice Together</p>	<p>Kings Fund Learning and Work Institute London Councils MAIA Maslaha Mind National Council for Voluntary Organisations National Infrastructure Commission Neighbourly Lab New Philanthropy Capital One Public Estate Office for National Statistics Onward Policy@Manchester Policy Exchange ProBono Economics Reform Shared Intelligence Social Investment Business St Oswald's Hospice The Countryside Charity University of Sheffield Wates Group Welsh Local Government Association WPI Economics</p>
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## Theme 2: The role of councils in supporting ‘economic inclusion’

### Purpose of report

*For direction.*

### Summary

1. This paper provides an overview of the current picture of equality and diversity in employment and skills to demonstrate economic inclusion and key information for a discussion on the topic. Members are asked for a steer on LGA’s approach to this new area of work.
2. Is this report confidential? Yes  No

#### Recommendation/s

1. Members are asked to:
2. Consider this paper and provide a steer on the LGA’s approach to supporting the economic inclusion in employment and skills piece of work.
3. Agree the next steps to take this work forward (**para 18.0 -18.9**).

#### Action/s

Officers will use the discussion and members’ steer to progress our employment, skills and economic inclusion work.

**Contact officer:** Bushra Jamil  
**Position:** Adviser  
**Phone no:** 07881528420  
**Email:** bushra.jamil@local.gov.uk

## Theme 2: The role of councils in supporting ‘economic inclusion’

### Purpose and outcome

1. The aim of this piece of work is to examine the role of councils in supporting economic inclusion, and shine a light on the disparities, alongside the good practice that exists, to develop ‘what good looks like’. This will help councils to progress this agenda and support our Work Local and levelling-up ambitions.
2. The key audience for this work is councils and combined authorities.

### Background

3. Recent analysis of the employment and skills landscape reveals that equality and diversity is not completely reflected in jobs, skills, and training opportunities – stark inequalities are prevalent in both people and places. Economic inclusion – ensuring everyone has equal access to well-paid employment - is vital for a local economy to flourish.
4. Many councils are already tackling these inequalities and are working hard at the vanguard of this agenda; however, there is merit in the context of LGA’s [Work Local](#) and [Levelling up](#) ambitions to explore how the role of councils in supporting economic inclusion could be advanced to help unlock talent and level up local areas.
5. Two of the twelve levelling up missions specifically focus on improving employment, skills, and economic inclusion: Mission 1 relates to raising pay, employment, and productivity to close the gap between areas, and Mission 2 plans to increase high-quality skills in the lowest skilled areas.
6. This paper sets out how we intend to expand our employment and skills work to better understand and take account of impact on economic inclusion . A range of evidence highlighting inequalities and key issues are included. Member approval is sought on the suggested approach to progress this work.

### A new focus of our employment and skills work

7. This focus on employment, skills and economic inclusion aims to support our policy work relating to Work Local and levelling up. It will examine the inequalities such as access to sustainable employment or training opportunities and in-work progression. The project will:
  - 7.1. set out the evidence on most prevalent inequalities in employment and skills and reflect on the key protected characteristics (for example, gender, race, disability) and, where there is significant evidence, on other vulnerable groups as well;
  - 7.2. outline the challenges faced by specific cohorts and communities experiencing disadvantage (for example care leavers, white working class as well as those set out in more detail below);
  - 7.3. provide opportunities for councils to learn and share knowledge and experience through discussions, roundtables, and case studies;



- 7.4. identify and share best practice from the public sector, including innovative public/private sector collaborations;
- 7.5. gather the knowledge from discussions, roundtables, and councils to compile a compendium of case studies to showcase 'what good looks like'.

### The importance of improving economic inclusion

8. Recent events such as the COVID-19 pandemic have only exacerbated existing disparities and laid bare the entrenched inequalities in people and places, resulting in a social and economic imperative to tackle this issue. For many, this means equity and inclusion in education, skills and employment provision. Recent [figures](#) show there are significant variations in skills achievements and in regions. While post COVID-19 pandemic apprenticeship figures show an upward trend in many areas, important gaps and downward trend remain in others, for example, in Cumbria there were 2040 apprenticeship starts in academic year 2019/20 and 1880 in 2020/21 respectively.
9. Currently, employment and skills inequalities exist across many areas - age, disability, ethnicity, gender, and intersectionality. Due to the availability of current data and to demonstrate the stark differences a range of measures are used to reveal the scale of the challenge. A few examples of inequalities are given below, however, this is not definitive or exhaustive.
  - 9.1. Age
    - In May 2022 the unemployment rate for 16-24 year olds was **10.4 per cent**<sup>1</sup>, against **3.8 per cent** for the UK as a whole<sup>2</sup>.
    - The employment rate for people aged 50 to 64 has been steadily rising over the past twenty years, however, in December 2021 this stood at **70.9 per cent**, a drop of **1.8 per cent** from its peak of **72.7 per cent**<sup>3</sup>. The Centre for Ageing Better voiced concerns that this group is being left behind by the post-pandemic recovery and faces many barriers to re-employment. Its report also reveals large regional variation in how the pandemic has impacted older workers.
  - 9.2. Disability
    - The unemployment rate for disabled people was **8.4 per cent** in December 2020, almost double compared to an unemployment rate of **4.6 per cent** for people who are not disabled<sup>4</sup>.
  - 9.3. Ethnicity

<sup>1</sup> <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn05871/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/employmentintheuk/july2022>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ageing-better.org.uk/work-state-ageing-2022>

<sup>4</sup> <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7540/#:~:text=The%20unemployment%20rate%20for%20disabled,people%20who%20are%20not%20disabled>

- May 2022 figures show that the unemployment rate among Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) workers has more than doubled that of White counterparts. Also, the gap has widened significantly since the start of the pandemic with the unemployment rate for BAME workers standing at **7.7 per cent** compared to **3.5 per cent** for White workers<sup>5</sup>.
- With post-16 outcomes, nearly all (**94 per cent**) pupils go into employment, education or training (EET), except for Gypsy, Roma (**68 per cent**), and Irish Traveller pupils (**74 per cent**)<sup>6</sup>. The outcomes are similar for mixed White/Black Caribbean pupils at **76 per cent** and **77 per cent** for Black Caribbean pupils respectively.

#### 9.4. Gender

- The government's latest [gender pay gap](#) report shows that last year, women in the UK were paid **90p** for every **£1** earned by a man and demonstrate that even when women secure work inequalities continue to impact them in the workplace.
- Furthermore, according to recent research the employment rate of mothers is nearly **20 per cent lower (75.1 per cent)** compared to fathers, which stood at **92.6 per cent** in June 2019.<sup>7</sup>

#### 9.5. Intersectionality between different characteristics

- These inequalities worsen when looking at intersectionality (how interconnected social characterisations can create independent systems of disadvantage or discrimination). In December 2021 the unemployment rate was highest for women from a Pakistani or Bangladeshi (**11.7 per cent**) and Black (**10.6 per cent**) ethnic background, compared to an overall female unemployment rate of **4.2 per cent**<sup>8</sup>.
- Also, among young people aged 16-24, unemployment rates were highest for people from a Black (**31 per cent**) ethnic background. This was nearly three times higher than young people from a White ethnic background which stood at **11 per cent**.<sup>9</sup>

10. These statistics paint a concerning picture and show that large proportions of our communities and more importantly potential workforce are not active in the labour market. From a social and economic point this is wrong and every effort must be made to put this right.

### Local government's role in improving outcomes

11. Councils and combined authorities seek to ensure that individuals are equipped to achieve their full potential in education and employment, regardless of gender, age, disability, and ethnicity. They have been tackling inequalities as part of this role,

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/uklabourmarketmay202>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-education-outcomes-by-ethnicity-in-england>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.businessleader.co.uk/employment-rate-of-mothers-has-dropped-20-lower-than-fathers/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06385/SN06385.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06385/SN06385.pdf>

including promoting the economic inclusion agenda by creating job opportunities for all to benefit from; ensuring their workforce better reflects its local communities; and assisting businesses to provide training/skills opportunities.

12. In addition, councils have several statutory duties relating to youth participation; to ensure all young people up to the age of 18 (25 for those with learning difficulties) participate in education or training. Despite having these wide-ranging responsibilities that demand close working with local providers, partners and employers, councils have very few formal levers over commissioning or co-ordination of provision to meet them.
13. As stated in the [Government's Levelling Up White Paper](#) '*not everyone shares equally in the UK's success. While talent is spread equally across our country, opportunity is not.*' In [Work Local](#) we set out our ambition to work with Government to unlock talent by spreading opportunity to all parts of the country. This is critical for the economy and local areas as significant [skills gap are predicted by 2030](#).

### Promoting economic inclusion in employment and skills provision: an overview

14. Councils know their communities including those experiencing disadvantage or those that are more difficult to reach and therefore are best placed to address the local inequalities. A few examples are provided below to illustrate the current picture and showcase some of the innovative work that is taking place in local areas, including on making their own workforces more inclusive, working with employers, and procurement.
15. Councils are committed to supporting both businesses and individual to access the skills needed:
- Tees Valley Combined Authority is developing the [Teesworks](#) site. As it is an area with low skills and high unemployment, the CA is working hard to ensure employers recruit local people with the right skills and launched its 'Teesworks Skills Academy.
  - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority used its AEB (Adult Education Budget) £12 million allocation to increase participation by nearly 10 per cent (2020/21), targeting low-skilled residents in deprived areas (Fenland and Peterborough), and introduced a £1,200 bursary for Care Leavers aged 19-22, fully funded English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).
  - Durham County Council is addressing its skills needs through apprenticeships. They have specifically linked the council's ambition for a thriving economy with more and better jobs to an [Apprenticeship Strategy](#).
  - Bristol City Council's [employment, skills and learning service](#) (ESL) brings together apprenticeships, adult community learning, post-16 and employment support and '[Bristol One City](#)' is a multi-agency co-designed approach to tackling emerging local issues – needs and gaps. These initiatives have helped some of most vulnerable and those experiencing disadvantaged.
  - Nottinghamshire County [Futures](#) localised support offer helps young people through transitions in their lives. Recent [figures](#) show that **97 per cent** of young people who have left Year 11 continued into further education, training or employment, leaving **2.8 per cent** as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or

Training), while **just 0.2 per cent** of Year 11 leavers' status as 'not known'. These figures demonstrate a targeted and localised support offer works better than national provision.

16. Working with employers:

- the LGA commissioned [Good Work report](#) sets out that diversity and inclusion are key aspects of 'good work' with case studies demonstrating how councils and combined authorities are supporting good work. For example, North of Tyne Combined Authority developed a Good Work Pledge with businesses and other key stakeholders.

17. Councils recognise that a diverse and inclusive workforce is vital to designing and delivering services that meet the diverse needs of their communities:

- West Midlands Combined Authority's successful efforts have helped them to secure a coveted place on the list of [inclusive top 50 UK employers](#).
- [Birmingham City Council](#) and [Herefordshire County Council](#) (2 of 18 councils) that are taking part in the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) project to have a [Workforce Race Equality Standard in social care](#), which aims to achieve workplace equality.
- [Leeds Museums and Galleries](#) demonstrating the benefits of supporting those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

18. Public sector procurement is a useful tool to promote economic inclusion in local areas and maximise local benefit:

- [Southwark Council 'Framing the future of diversity in architecture'](#) provides an insight into the lessons learnt from their award-winning Architect Design Services Framework and also addresses the overall lack of diversity in the workplace.

19. As outlined above, there are many tools and levers available to councils to support economic inclusion, which many councils are using. However, this piece of work aims to share learning across councils and help them progress this agenda further.

### Next steps

20. Over the next few months, we will gather evidence to develop a better understanding of how councils are working with local partners to address employment and skills disparities and support economic inclusion. This will include work with the wider policy team as well as:

- 20.1. **local authorities equalities survey** that looks at equality post COVID-19 across different areas and will incorporate employment and skills questions. This will be sent out to all councils in the Autumn;
- 20.2. **regional roundtables** starting in the Autumn. The events will have a thematic focus on employment and skills;
- 20.3. **a roundtable/webinar event with councils** to share knowledge and experiences on employment, skills and economic inclusion;
- 20.4. The evidence from the project will be used to compile a **compendium of case studies** to showcase 'what good looks like';
- 20.5. To conclude, we will examine the learning from the project, case studies, and roundtable with councils to develop Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (**EDI**)

**principles** to guide the role of councils in supporting employment, skills and economic inclusion.

- 20.6. **Based on the evidence presented in this paper Members' steer and comments are welcome**, specifically
- 20.7. on the approach for this piece of work (**para 18**);
- 20.8. whether there are any local/regional specific issues that councils/Combined Authorities are dealing with;
- 20.9. whether there is anything else that members would like this work to explore.

### **Equalities Implications**

- 21. This piece of work aims to focus on the inequalities in employment and skills faced by specific cohorts and communities. It will set out how a more localised and partnership approach can be more effective.

### **Implications for Wales**

- 22. Employment and skills are largely devolved matters; however, the Local Government Association works closely with Welsh local authorities and the Welsh Local Government Association to share best practice and expertise on our programmes.

### **Financial Implications**

- 23. Any financial implications arising from this work will be met from the board's core policy budget.





**Meeting:** City Regions Board

**Date:** 30 September 2022

## Theme 3: Urban Resilience

### Purpose of report

For direction

### Summary

Lead Members have agreed that the Board oversee the development of a new programme of work related to urban resilience. Given the broad range of issues this work could include, this paper seeks direction from the City Regions Board as to possible avenues and aspects likely to be most fruitful.

### Is this report confidential?

No

### Recommendation/s

The Board is asked to provide direction on the scope and scale of new work to identify the challenges and opportunities facing leaders in urban areas looking to build resilient communities.

### Contact details

Contact officer: Philip Clifford

Position: Senior Adviser

Phone no: 07909 898 327

Email: [philip.clifford@local.gov.uk](mailto:philip.clifford@local.gov.uk)



## Theme 3: Urban Resilience

### Purpose and outcome

1. Lead Members have agreed that the Board oversee the development of a new programme of work related to urban resilience. Given the broad range of issues this work could include, this paper seeks direction from the City Regions Board as to possible avenues and aspects likely to be most fruitful. The chosen piece of work could: begin to illustrate the unique resilience challenges and opportunities for urban areas; share existing good practice; and/or make policy recommendations to support city regions in their aspirations in accordance with the Board's direction.

### Background

2. In order to support this process, the following paragraphs provide an overview of the key issues and policies around this topic.
3. There are many different definitions of the term 'resilience':
  - The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction ([UNISDR](#)) defines it as: *the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.*
  - The [OECD](#) defines it as: *the ability of individuals, communities and states and their institutions to absorb and recover from shocks, while positively adapting and transforming their structures and means for living in the face of long-term changes and uncertainty.*
  - The [European Commission](#) defines it as: *The ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country or a region to withstand, to adapt, and to quickly recover from stresses and shocks.*
4. However, as [government guidance](#) on this subject notes, these definitions are all quite similar.
5. While the City Regions Board has not directly considered the issue of resilience before, it has previously overseen the LGA's work on the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).
6. Goal 11 is defined as, [make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable](#), and is particularly relevance to local government with targets relating to housing, transport, culture and disaster preparedness. As part of the LGA's work on the SDGs in 2019 we facilitated a visit from Maimunah Mohd Sharif the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).



7. The UN is currently running a [City Resilience Programme](#), citing the increased risk facing urban areas from climate change, demographic shifts and aging infrastructure and the lack of capacity at a local level to meet these challenges.
8. In 2020 the Board commissioned WPI Economics to look at the drivers of urban cost pressures. As part of this research a framework was created to explore what made urban areas distinct in terms of:
  - Space: lack of land to build on; poor air quality; prevalence of high-rise housing stock; vulnerability of transport infrastructure; increased risk of pandemic
  - People: high turnover of residents; dense populations; unique and high levels of deprivation; higher levels of cultural and religious diversity
9. At the national level there are three document documents that inform the policy context for Government.
10. The [Integrated Review](#) published in March 2021, written in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic, identified four overarching trends likely to be of particular importance to the UK:
  - Geopolitical and geoeconomics shifts towards a multipolar world, including: China emerging as a systemic competitor; shifts in the global balance of economic power towards the Indo-Pacific region; future economic shocks driven by the uneven introduction of new technology; increased challenges to open trade; decreasing global poverty, but with Africa at risk of being left behind; demographic changes interacting with climate change, poverty and conflict and an increased percentage of older people in advanced political economies.
  - Systemic competition leading to a more contest international environment, including: competition between political systems; competition to shape the international order; a deteriorating security environment; economic statecraft; space; and cyberspace.
  - Rapid technological change as science and technology become a metric of power, including: a rapidly changing landscape leading to the introduction of novel technologies such as artificial intelligence; science and technology emerging as an arena of systemic competition; new challenges to security, society and individual rights; technology and data standards becoming detached from existing norms and governance structures regarding their use.
  - Transnational challenges, which will test resilience and international co-operation, including: climate change; biodiversity loss, which is already in unprecedented decline; global health, including the growth of deaths due to antimicrobial resistance; increased migratory flows towards Europe; radicalisation and terrorism; serious organised crime and illicit finance.

11. In response to these challenges the Government proposed to build a better understanding of the UK's strengths and weaknesses through the creation of a comprehensive national resilience strategy, to establish a 'whole-of-society' approach to resilience.
12. The [National Resilience Strategy](#) call for evidence was published in July 2021. It highlighted how the coronavirus pandemic had stretched governments around the world and in turn placed a premium on the value of a resilient society with well-developed plans and capabilities to support recovery.
13. It also set out the Government's vision for 2030 of a suite of systems, infrastructure and capabilities for managing risks, with fewer regional inequalities in the UK's resilience leading to a more cohesive society better able to resist future shocks.
14. The [LGA's response to the call for evidence](#), prepared by the Safer Stronger Communities Board, stressed the need to build local politicians into the emergency planning cycle, increase information sharing between central and local partners and highlighted the particular risks of climate change and cyber security.
15. At the LGA's Annual Conference in July, we published [Signals of the Future](#). This report, prepared by Ipsos Trends & Foresight considered future drivers for local government with the aim of proposing a likely set of challenges for councils by the year 2027.
16. It considered a wide range of relevant issues, such as urban ageing, the decline of retail footfall in city centres and the challenges of generating sufficient electricity in urban areas, given their high demand for energy and limited space. It also suggested the possibility of cooling centres for cities, an idea which has only gained traction over the hot summer.

## Proposal

17. The City Regions Board is asked to provide direction on the scope and scale of new work to identify the challenges and opportunities facing leaders in urban areas looking to build resilient communities.
18. This work would sit alongside the LGA's existing programme on climate change resilience, led by the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, and activity related to the development of a new national resilience strategy, which is being led by the Safer Stronger Communities Board.
19. As set out above, the question of resilience is an established field with many active participants. Councils in urban areas, like local authorities across the country will have officers dedicated to participation in local resilience forums, councillors deeply embedded and representative of their diverse communities and an array of strategies and policies focused on creating places that are stable, successful, and adaptable.

20. The experience of the coronavirus pandemic, the homes for Ukraine scheme and, more broadly, the period of economic turmoil following the financial crash of 2008 all demonstrate the ability of councils to work with their communities, businesses, public sector and other partners to withstand the impact of a shock and move towards recovery.
21. This aspect of local leadership, while highly valued is relatively well-rehearsed and understood. To make best use of the Board's time and resources it is proposed that any work on this subject is directed towards priorities and concerns that are specific to urban areas and focused on either improving best practice or developing a lobbying ask.
22. Within this context three approaches are suggested for the Board to consider:
  1. Identifying a specific risk, such as extreme heat due to climate change, international migration, public health, or economic disruption and undertaking a gap analysis of the vulnerability of urban areas to this risk and the availability of resources to mitigate and recover.
  2. Developing a risk matrix for urban areas, by looking at the specific qualities of their people and places, the overlapping incidence of different types of risk and the treatment of both within national policy development and resource allocation.
  3. Focusing on the management and interaction of response and recovery systems within urban areas, such as blue-light integration, public information and scrutiny, skills and governance structures.
23. Any additional suggestions for areas or approaches from Board members drawing on their experience as leaders of place would also be welcomed.

## **Implications for Wales**

24. At this stage in the project there are not believed to be any specific implications for urban areas in Wales. Depending on the direction of members regarding the approach and subject for consideration there may be specific issues relating to the configuration of local service responsibilities and the nature of devolved governance. For example, Wales had a distinct response to the coronavirus pandemic, with restrictions on household movement and other public health questions that differed to the rest of the UK.

## **Financial Implications**

25. Work carried out under this project will be supported by the Board's available resources.

## **Equalities implications**

26. Vulnerability to exogenous shocks and the capacity to recover from the impact of these shocks is not evenly distributed across people and places. Those groups already suffering disadvantage are more likely to be hit hardest and take the longest to recover. This can be clearly seen in coronavirus pandemic, where the elderly, particular ethnic communities, and people with underlying chronic health conditions experienced higher levels of infection, mortality and financial precarity. This project will look at the specific question of resilience in urban areas as it applies to their distinct people and places and will seek to capture and address any relevant equalities issues.

## **Next steps**

27. In line with the direction of the Board, officers will develop a workstream for consideration at the next meeting.

## Theme 4: Green Jobs - Retrofit Skills

### Purpose of report

For direction.

### Summary

This report sets out the current context of retrofit and the skilled workforce needed to reduce energy usage and tackle climate change. Local government has ambitions to achieve net zero and reduce the external impact of energy prices, especially for the most vulnerable communities. This work is the first part of the Board's focus on developing wider green jobs and skills as part of a just transition to net zero.

The report highlights the role of the Green Jobs Delivery Group and the intention for the LGA to develop partnerships with other sector bodies to influence government policy with the aspiration to develop a publication on progress on retrofit skills which has contributions from sector partners to influence future government thinking.

### Summary

Is this report confidential? Yes  No

### Recommendations

The report recommends the Board develop a retrofit jobs report to understand the progress of national government ambitions to develop the retrofit skills workforce. This would be informed by discussion and potential collaboration with relevant partners.

### Action/s

Members are asked to comment and agree the next step actions as summarised in paragraph 36.

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

## Theme 4: Green Jobs - Retrofit Skills

### Purpose and outcome

1. This report outlines the steps intended to influence government policy to invest in the skills system needed to develop the qualified workforce to deliver the level of retrofit needed. This is the first piece of work as part of the Board's wider green jobs workstream. The report includes opportunities for members to influence the BEIS led Green Jobs Delivery Group and bringing together relevant stakeholders to agree common lines. This approach will intend move government policy towards delivering the outcome of longer-term funded localised approach to the retrofit skills system, creating well paid career pathways and supporting the SME sector.
2. Key civil servants for this work include: Julian Critchlow, BEIS DG, Energy Transformation and Clean Growth; Amy Jenkins (Deputy Director Net Zero Strategy BEIS and Green Jobs Delivery Group); Zoe Forbes Deputy Director Labour Market and Sectors DfE; Helen Edmundson, DD, Green Finance and Green Recovery, DEFRA.

### Background

3. At the last Board meeting, members identified the need for there to be a step change in retrofitting homes to support councils to deliver net zero commitments, tackle the cost-of-living crisis and fuel poverty and keep homes warm. Members directed officers to focus on ensuring there is the qualified workforce available to deliver the scale of retrofit needed, and that this needs to be developed at the local level. Local government has real ambition to deliver net zero, and therefore needs a localised, place-based approach to deliver retrofit, which should include an integrated employment and skills offer that is tailored to local need.
4. This paper provides an update to members on the urgency of the situation as well as the activity councils and the LGA are undertaking to develop the investment structure and skills collaboration needed to address the retrofit challenge. This is the first element of the wider work on green jobs.
5. It sets out proposed next steps in developing a set of roundtables building on the Green Jobs Delivery Group, a BEIS led group of partner organisations to look at developing green skills and jobs. This would enable the LGA to collaborate with wider partners to try and shape any future government retrofit skills initiative to be localised and place based. In the longer term, we can utilise the work of the roundtable partners to understand the progress of developing the retrofit workforce, what barriers remain and how any future government initiatives are faring. It could build on the success of the [LGA green jobs report](#).

### The urgent need to address the retrofit challenge

6. With over 300 councils declaring a climate emergency, net zero has become a key priority for the sector, which is gaining more traction as the negative effects of climate change become apparent. As place leaders, councils have an influential role to support the reduction of carbon emissions, with the ability to impact on more than a third of emissions across villages, towns and cities in areas such as housing, transport and the natural environment.
7. Household energy bills have increased significantly with a 54 percent increase in the energy price cap in April 2022. This is expected to significantly increase energy bills in October to £3,250, moving an estimated 8.2 million households into fuel poverty<sup>1</sup>.
8. This will have a significant impact on household budgets at a time where there are wider inflationary pressures on food, transport and other essential commodities. Consumer Price Inflation is at 9.9%<sup>2</sup>, in the context that there has been 5.2% growth in regular pay<sup>3</sup>. The [cost-of-living crisis](#) will combine with existing disadvantage and vulnerability within our communities to put many households at greater risk of both immediate hardship and reduced opportunity and wellbeing.
9. To reduce energy consumption and tackle the rising energy costs in some of the most vulnerable households, there needs to be a step change in delivering retrofit measures. LGA research estimates there is the potential that over 1000 homes a day could be retrofitted<sup>4</sup>. This will help create the warm and comfortable homes that would reduce costs to the NHS by £1.9 billion and support almost 31,000 new, skilled jobs in the construction and retrofit industries.
10. A study by the Green Financing Institute and Bankers for Net Zero found that to achieve net zero by 2050, the retrofit industry will need to increase ten-fold<sup>5</sup>, therefore needing to ensure that there is a qualified and skilled workforce to deliver such change.

### **Local government leadership in addressing the retrofit challenge**

11. The local government family has ambitions to retrofit their communities to support net zero and reduce fuel poverty. For example, combined authorities, such as Greater Manchester Combined Authority's (GMCA) Skills for Growth Programme, which awarded

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<sup>1</sup> [8.2 million households could be in fuel poverty from October | NEA](#) Accessed 19/08/2023

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/august2022>  
Accessed 14/09/2022

<sup>3</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/averageweeklyearningsingreatbritain/september2022> Accessed 14/09/2022

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.local.gov.uk/delivering-local-net-zero>

<sup>5</sup> [Tooling-up-the-Green-Homes-Industry\\_FINAL.pdf \(volans.com\)](#)

[£1.1 million of ESF monies to North West Skills Academy](#) to upskill in retrofit skills over 1000 people in construction and other relevant industries.

12. Councils, such as Devon County Council and Chesterfield Borough Council, have utilised the Community Renewal Fund and other funding sources to develop models to provide the skills and employment pipeline needed to address the retrofit and wider construction challenges. Using the Community Renewal Fund, Devon has developed lecturer training, sector specific qualifications/units and employment programmes. Through the Staveley Town Deal, Chesterfield and partners will develop a Construction Skills Hub, which intends to offer training in retrofit and other green technologies<sup>6</sup>. However, the capacity to bid for and access funding is not equal across the country, and many funding sources are too short-term or not joined up.
13. As part of their [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#), the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) developed a [Green Skills Report](#), which included local [Retrofit Skills Market Analysis](#) and [Green Skills Market Analysis](#) to understand the supply chain issues and skills needs to deliver on their local net zero ambitions, as well as positive examples of action, such as the [Green Futures Fund](#), to support the education of green skills in schools and other academic institutions.

### **The LGA's work to support local government address the retrofit challenge**

14. The EEHT Board is commissioning two pieces of work. First, demonstrating the benefit of local leadership in decarbonising buildings and transport at the street or neighbourhood level. Second, the designing of an approach whereby local and national government work together to further enable decarbonisation of heat and buildings up to 2050, building on existing local strategies and bringing them together into a single national programme/framework.
15. The LGA is also providing significant improvement support for councils to step up to the retrofit challenge. Building on the [LGA green jobs report](#) (2020), [Leading and Learning sessions to create local green jobs](#) (2021) and [Building Housing Retrofit Skills Leadership](#) (2022), the Local Retrofit Action Planning programme will bring together retrofit leads from across local government, to deliver a package of training, resources and guidance, to support the development of localised action plans.

### **Government response to retrofit challenge**

16. In 2020, the government launched a £3 billion funding stream to retrofit homes and public buildings across the UK. £1 billion of this was allocated to improving the energy efficiency of public buildings, such as schools and hospitals through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.chesterfield.gov.uk/home/latest-news/staveley-town-deal-project-aims-to-build-skills-for-the-future.aspx> Accessed 14/09/2022



17. £2 billion of this was allocated to the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme. This offered homeowners the opportunity to apply for up to £5,000 funding (£10,000 for low-income households) to install energy efficiency improvements and low carbon heat measures in their homes. Homeowners were expected to identify a certified installer and apply for vouchers with the installer receiving the grant funding once they had fitted the measure.
18. However, the NAO has established that the Green Homes Grant Scheme has been underwhelming<sup>7</sup>. It showed the delivery and implementation of the scheme was rushed, reducing the intended benefits of the scheme. There was frustration for homeowners and installers with the scheme, and it had limited impact on longer term job creation. The fast-paced procurement process added with the short-term nature of the scheme made it harder for installers to mobilise to meet demand.
19. The experience of the scheme demonstrated challenges of investing in a new market without developing a skills pipeline and the investment to support it. In addition, it shows the lack of a strategic, long-term approach in developing the workforce needed. The independent Committee for Climate Change has recently raised concerns about the progress of developing the skills pipeline to meet the challenges ahead. The lack of a Net Zero Skills Action Plan, the need for improved data on workforce in relevant operations and the need to build confidence in the business sector<sup>8</sup>.
20. The multiple pressures identified above could see a greater emphasis on investment in retrofit from the next Prime Minister and the new cabinet. The approaches that have previously undertaken so far show there has been a centralised, short-term approach to developing the skills needed for retrofit, and not bringing together the supply chain, workforce and systems are in place that are needed. This can only be achieved through the collaboration of national and local government, as well as business and the voluntary sector, which will need to come together as quickly as possible to develop the workforce needed to deliver this priority.

### **Challenges and opportunities in rolling out retrofit**

21. Conversations with councils and stakeholders over the summer have supported the development of some draft policy positions the Board might wish to explore further. The topics listed below could also be included in the proposed roundtables as an opportunity to develop shared lines with partners.

#### *Managing capacity to meet the retrofit challenge*

22. There has been great movement towards place-based approaches led by local government to developing the workforce and supply chains needed to deliver retrofit and

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<sup>7</sup> [Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme - National Audit Office \(NAO\) Report](#)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/2022-progress-report-to-parliament/>

net zero ambitions. The York and North Yorkshire devolution deal includes a commitment to explore the potential benefits of and design options for a place-based approach to delivering retrofit measures, and we understand this will be likely included in other devolution deals. There is less clarity for non-devolved areas.

23. In a scenario where there is sudden investment in retrofitting homes from national government, it is likely that there will not be a large enough skilled workforce available to deliver the scale of investment, repeating the experience of the Green Voucher Scheme. This may undermine the local place-based model that local areas are keen to continue to develop.
24. The government should develop strategy and provide funding on a longer-term basis. This will enable local areas to use the current skilled workforce to prioritise those properties with the most vulnerable communities in the short term. But also have the time, space and resources needed to developing partnership, resourcing, private funding and careers pathways needed to develop the retrofit workforce for every household in their community.

*Developing good jobs through retrofit career pathways*

25. Developing retrofit skills provides an opportunity to develop clear career pathways that create employment routes into the sector and effectively reskill and upskill the current workforce. Current salaries in the sector show that there is an opportunity to develop highly skilled vocational roles which increase individual incomes above the average national salary<sup>9</sup>. These roles can help tackle the cost-of-living crisis and provide opportunities for individuals in communities that experience disadvantage and limited access to well paid jobs that are needed in the longer term to achieve net zero and support the delivery of levelling up aspirations.

*Supporting the private sector to develop retrofit skills*

26. In the UK, the market for retrofit mainly comprises of SMEs, which creates a fragmented market compared to other European countries<sup>10</sup>. Increasing the demand for retrofit could grow and investment in skills by companies will follow. With resource prices fluctuating and energy costs spiralling, the market is likely to concentrate on short-term issues.
27. Economic Growth teams and business support functions within local government could support local retrofit markets. The removal of funding silos between economic growth and skills and employment schemes will help as business support schemes that incentivises SMEs to upskill and develop workforce will support the supply chain issues. If the sector is developed using a place-based approach, economy, skills and

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<sup>9</sup> [Salary: Retrofit Assessor \(August, 2022\) | Glassdoor](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Tooling-up-the-Green-Homes-Industry\\_FINAL.pdf \(volans.com\)](#)

employment departments will be able to support businesses to effectively pivot into the market.

### *Greening the workforce*

28. In addition to the focus on retrofit, we are exploring the challenges to develop the local government workforce and skills needed to green local economies and places. This will cover a range of areas, including the development of the workforce for the natural environment, farming, and the planning function. Members may wish to explore the workforce needs to develop infrastructure to deliver net zero, as part of wider local infrastructure investment. For example, the investment in hydroelectric renewable energy as part of the development of free ports and how it can support job creation in coastal communities.

### **The Green Jobs Delivery Group**

29. One avenue available to influence government policy is the BEIS led Green Jobs Delivery Group which explores the skills and training needs to achieve net zero. Local government is represented on the Green Jobs Delivery Group through the Chief Executive of Cornwall Council, Kate Kennally. The organisations that participate in the group represent professional institutions, environmental groups, energy companies, business organisations, employee groups and education and training providers.

30. The Group has recently agreed their workplan and the issue of retrofit skills and the local approaches needed will be the focus of its next meeting in October. The LGA is supporting Kate at these meetings, which is a great opportunity to land key messages, including:

30.1. Local government has a unique leadership role to join up the collective action of partners, businesses and communities as 230 councils declared a climate emergency, and two-thirds of England's councils aim to be carbon neutral by 2030.

30.2. The Government should bring forward a place-based package of targeted public investment to decarbonise / retrofit social housing and public buildings alongside skills and employment funding to make this happen.

30.3. All of local government can work shoulder-to-shoulder with Government to join up careers advice and guidance, employment, skills, apprenticeships, and business support services to create an integrated skills and employment system tailored to local needs, as outlined in Work Local.

31. A meeting will be taking place between local government representative and lead members from People & Places, City Regions and EEHT Boards to discuss the broader green jobs work programme and the need for greater representation of local government. This meeting will be held in advance of the next Delivery Group meeting in October.

### **Retrofit Workforce Cross Sector Roundtables**

32. To take our work forward we are reaching out to the other partners of the group to expand our stakeholder network and explore collaboration opportunities. Throughout the summer, we have been strengthening connections with partners to take forward our aims. This includes Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, the Green Alliance, MakeUK and Federation of Master Builders.
33. We are also keen to explore how we can collaborate and share thinking within and beyond the Green Jobs Delivery Group, including with SMEs, with the possibility of developing collective messages through a set of member-led roundtables.
34. The roundtables could then be used to be used to assess what progress is being made to address the retrofit skills challenge in the longer term in order to:
- 34.1. Shape any new national government scheme or policy to develop the retrofit workforce, so it meets the needs and demands of local places.
  - 34.2. Identify areas that are not being addressed by any new national government scheme or policy.
  - 34.3. Consider the challenges and opportunities discussed earlier in this paper.
35. This would provide an opportunity to gather further evidence to develop a document that leads on from the [LGA green jobs report](#) with a particular focus on retrofit skills with the attempt to influence government thinking and encourage longer term planning. It will enable the sector to identify systemic issues that the government needs to address in advance of winter 2023, as well as explore the type of retrofit jobs that are available and if they meet the aspirations of local places.
- 36. We would welcome members' steer on the membership, format, purpose or content of the retrofit skills roundtable model outlined above.**

### **Next steps**

37. Officers will
- 37.1. Provide an opportunity for lead members to raise issues through the local government representative on the Green Jobs Delivery Group
  - 37.2. Develop a roundtable with relevant partners from the Green Jobs Delivery Group to explore collaboration in messaging to government.
  - 37.3. Support the ongoing collaboration with the roundtable stakeholders which could include exploring developing outputs such as a retrofit jobs report.
  - 37.4. Develop further policy lines incorporating any member feedback.

### **Implications for Wales**

38. This report highlights the activity of the LGA in relation to retrofit skills in England. The LGA will be working closely with the WLGA, as well as NILGA and COSLA on approaches to retrofit.



[Click here to enter text.](#)

23 September 2022

### **Financial Implications**

39. There are no additional financial implications as activity is funded through LGA work.

### **Equalities Implications**

40. Low-income households and those communities which are more likely to experience poverty are more vulnerable to the increase in energy costs which could have knock on effects for health inequalities. The characteristics of the most vulnerable households will vary between local areas with different implications for households in both urban and rural areas.

41. Developing a skilled vocational career pathway in retrofit will provide additional opportunities for individuals in lower paid jobs to access stable, well-paid careers. This will in turn will help reduce inequalities.

42. Through this work, we will recognise that some communities are less likely to work in the relevant industries or take up relevant qualifications. Local areas know their communities best and will explore where there may be barriers to enter professions for certain groups. This is a key strand of the work programme of the Green Jobs Delivery Group.



## Theme 5: The Future of Growth Funding

### Purpose of report

For direction.

### Summary

This report summarises proposals in relation to work regarding the future of growth funding and recommends that report is taken to the LGA Executive for approval.

Is this report confidential? Yes  No

### Recommendation/s

Members are asked to consider and review the questions identified at paragraph 9.

### Action/s

Based on this feedback and comments from the People and Places Board, a paper will be taken to the Executive Advisory Board for formal sign off.

**Contact officer:** Philip Clifford  
**Position:** Senior Adviser  
**Phone no:** 07909 898327  
**Email:** [philip.clifford@local.gov.uk](mailto:philip.clifford@local.gov.uk)

## Theme 5: The Future of Growth Funding

### Purpose and outcome

1. In order to address the ongoing cost pressures facing councils and combined authorities, and the UK's relatively low rates of productivity, and economic and social disparities, the LGA has long made the case for a more place-based approach. This project seeks to strengthen our evidence base with the aim of influencing Government's proposals to streamline funding and also making the case for more wide-ranging reforms.
2. Key civil servants include: Will Garton, DG Levelling Up; Nico Heslop, DG Local Government Finance; Catherine Little, DG Public Spending and Finance, HMT; Dharmesh Nayee, Director, Levelling Up Group.

### Background

3. At the final board meeting of the last political cycle, members of the City Regions Board agreed to the preparation of a report for the LGA Executive proposing to consider the future of growth funding.
4. Since then, further evidence regarding the complexity of growth funding has emerged in correspondence between [the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities](#) and the [Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee](#), indicating both wider interest in this subject and the scale of the task at hand.
5. Notably, the levelling up agenda has also been impacted by the resignation of the previous Prime Minister and the deteriorating economy poses significant additional challenges for people, businesses, and public finances.
6. With councils facing additional cost pressures of £2.4 billion in 2022/23 since they started to set their budgets in Autumn last year there is an immediate focus on ensuring vital local services can keep pace with rising inflation and increased demand from residents. [Recent press reports](#) have also suggested that allocations made under the various levelling up funding programmes are now likely to fall short, with a survey by the District Councils Network finding that 40 per cent of respondents would have to delay projects because of high inflation.
7. In the longer term, the only way to successfully navigate these headwinds is to boost productivity and strengthen inclusive and sustainable growth across the country. The LGA believes that the best way to achieve this goal is to cut Whitehall bureaucracy and allow communities to take control through place leadership and devolution.
8. Given this context, it is proposed that this work proceed on basis that a case will likely have to be made where the relative efficiency of local investment is at least as important as the scale of the resource required to meet local needs. In recognition of the need for



technical accuracy and independent credibility it is recommended that external support is sought to help complete this work.

### Issues

9. In September 2020, the LGA [published research](#) which revealed that local government received at least 448 unique grants from central government between 2015/16 to 2018/19. This creates [huge silos of central bureaucracy in Whitehall](#) and creates [significant costs for councils](#) that are forced to use scarce resource to bid for much needed money.
10. The Government's Levelling Up White Paper recognised this issue and proposed to set out a plan for streamlining the funding landscape this year. It remains to be seen whether the new Government will continue with this proposal, either way it would seem prudent for councils to develop a clearer understanding of the issues at stake and the potential opportunities for reform. By the time the Board meets, we expect to have more information about the Government's proposed investment zones and proposals for streamlining funding.
11. To do this, it is proposed that the People and Places Board works jointly with the City Regions Board to commission a piece of technical analysis that considers the following clusters of questions:
  - 11.1. What is the total quantum of 'growth funding' currently available, how much of this is under the control of local authorities, how do current levels of funding compare to allocations under previous spending cycles, how much of this money is allocated as a grant, rather than a loan or other financial instrument?
  - 11.2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies currently used to allocate resources from the centre to local projects, do competitively allocated pots engender better quality outcomes, how does capacity at the centre to review and approve expenditure impact on project delivery?
  - 11.3. How do other countries allocate investment to support growth at the local and subnational level, are there any lessons applicable to England within the context of the Government's levelling up agenda and the opportunities presented by devolution to better align resources with local outcomes and leadership?
  - 11.4. What are the opportunities to better connect funding in support of greater growth with the proceeds and consequences of that growth?

### Implications for Wales

12. Growth funding is largely a devolved matter; however the Local Government Association works closely with colleagues in Welsh local authorities and the Welsh Local



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Government Association to share best practice and expertise on UK Growth Funding programmes such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

### **Financial Implications**

13. Any financial implications arising from this work will be met from the boards core policy budget.

### **Next steps**

14. Members are asked to consider and review the questions identified at paragraph 9. Based on this feedback and comments from the People and Places Board Members, a paper will be taken to the Executive Advisory Board for formal sign off.