

## **City Regions Board Work Programme 2016/17**

### **Purpose**

For discussion and direction.

### **Summary**

This report sets out a proposed work programme for the City Regions Board for 2016/17.

The work programme seeks to:

1. Reflect the broad remit for the Board and provide continuity.
2. Provide space for the Board to provide leadership for city regions in the policy development for new issues in this Board cycle, such as the UK leaving the EU.

### **Recommendation**

The board are invited to comment upon and agree the draft work programme for 2016/17.

### **Action**

Officers to take forward actions in line with Members' steer.

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## **City Regions Board Work Programme 2015/16**

### **Background**

1. Established in February 2014, the City Regions Board represents the interests of cities and city regions at the LGA. Its membership is drawn from Core Cities, Key Cities, London Councils and SIGOMA.
2. To date, the work of the Board has covered devolution for economic growth and public service reform; skills, employment and welfare reform; and trade and investment. The Board has also worked closely with other relevant LGA Boards on shared organisational priorities (in particular the People and Places Board with which it develops the LGA's work on devolution) providing a united voice from the sector.
3. Over the course of the last Board cycle, a number of new devolution deals and extensions to existing deals were announced. More recently, preparations for the incoming directly-elected Mayors have begun to take shape and the design of a new business rates retention system has continued. Following the vote to leave the EU, a new Ministerial team is now in place and an Autumn Statement is expected in the coming months. New Government Departments to facilitate the UK's departure from the EU have also been set up and their work programme has begun.
4. It is in this context that the City Regions Board is asked to agree a draft programme for the year. **Members are asked to consider:**
  - 4.1. **Specific policy priorities based on the Board's remit.**
  - 4.2. **The balance and prioritisation of activity within the proposed work programme.**
  - 4.3. **Aspects of EU exit that will have a bearing on the Board's work**

### **Suggested priorities and work programme for 2016/17**

5. Since its inception the Board has bolstered the urban voice within the LGA and played an important role developing the LGA's recent devolution work and lobbying positions. The Board will have a particularly important role in influencing new Ministers on issues such as devolution and skills and employment support. Members will also have a view on how the Board will want to engage with the implications of leaving the EU.
6. The LGA's Leadership Board will meet later this month and will discuss the LGA's priorities and work programme in relation to EU exit. It is likely that policy boards will be asked to discuss and lead on aspects of work that fall within their terms of reference. For the City Regions Board, this could include the constitutional implications of leaving the EU, building on earlier devolution work and the report by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Reform, Decentralisation and Devolution for which the LGA is the secretariat. Subject to the Leadership Board discussion, members might like to request a scoping paper on this topic for the next City Regions Board. This could cover topics such as the powers and constitutional position of local governments in other non-EU European nations, and how the principles of subsidiarity and devolution could apply to UK public policy during and after the EU exit negotiations.

7. The previous Board agreed to support the new RSA Inclusive Growth Commission. The Commission has now developed its work programme in more detail, and has opened a call for evidence. Agenda item 3 updates the Board on recent activity and asks for a steer on the LGA's future engagement with the Commission.
8. Working with the People and Places Board, the Board supports the 'Leading Places' programme. Jointly with Universities UK and funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the pilot programme looks to strengthen the relationship between councils and higher education institutions. Item 4 updates on progress and asks for members' steer on proposals for a second phase of the programme.
9. The Board also expressed a strong interest in continuing its work on employment and skills and agenda item 7 gives members the opportunity to proposals in this area more fully. Particular areas of focus are likely to include the Work and Health Programme, Apprenticeship Levy, and further devolution of skills and employment support.
10. The Board's research and lobbying work on devolution has been critical in keeping up the momentum on this important agenda. The LGA also provides a comprehensive programme of support for areas considering and implementing devolution deals. Further information, and proposals for the further development of the LGA's devolution programme, are included at agenda item 8.

#### **Next steps**

11. Members are invited to comment on and agree the Board's priorities and scope of the work programme as outlined above.

#### **Financial implications**

12. The draft work programme can be delivered within existing resources.