

Inclusive Growth Commission Update

Purpose

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This paper updates members on the activity of the RSA Inclusive Growth Commission since the last Board meeting, outlines proposed next steps and asks members to reflect on how LGA officers might best support the Commission in the wake of a significantly changed national context.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. Note the Commission's activity and findings to date – paragraphs 6 – 10.
2. Provide an initial steer on the focus of the LGA's submission of written evidence to the Commission's 'Prospectus of Inquiry' – paragraphs 11 – 13.
3. Reflect on how the LGA might best support this work in light of a significantly changed national context and the emerging priorities of the City Regions board. – paragraphs 14 – 15.

Action

Officers to take forward their work as directed by members.

Contact officer:

Claire Hogan

Position:

Senior Adviser

Phone no:

07766 250347

Email:

Claire.Hogan@local.gov.uk

Inclusive Growth Commission

Background

1. On 28 April, the RSA launched the Inclusive Growth Commission, chaired by Stephanie Flanders and directed by Charlotte Alldritt, to understand and identify practical ways to make local economies across the UK more economically inclusive and prosperous.
2. The Commission is funded by the Local Government Association, Core Cities UK, London Councils, Key Cities, the Joseph Roundtree Foundation and PwC. Through a combination of formal evidence hearings, deep dive research visits, seminars and written submissions, it will seek to explore two questions as outlined in the [Commission's 'Prospectus of Inquiry'](#).
 - 2.1 Is there a model(s) of place-based growth that also addresses social and economic inclusion?
 - 2.2 What is this model(s) and how might it be implemented in a UK context?
3. Since the Commission's launch the RSA has held two open evidence sessions, conducted four deep dive research seminars and issued a formal call for written submissions. Further evidence-gathering sessions are planned for early autumn and the RSA is aiming to produce an interim report by the end September 2016, with its final report following in March 2017.
4. While members may have been involved either directly or indirectly with the activities of the Commission in recent weeks, this meeting of the City Regions Board is the first to take place following the result of the European Union referendum and the appointment of a new Prime Minister. It therefore presents an opportunity to consider the work of the Commission within the context of renewed calls to address regional economic inequalities and develop a more inclusive approach to growth.

Commission Activity to date

5. The Commission has held a number of formal evidence hearings, deep dive research visits and seminars.
6. Its first seminar was held in May and brought together over 30 experts, policymakers, academics and practitioners to discuss what local economies need in order to become engines of inclusive growth. Three speakers, focusing on work to explore inclusive growth in Greater Manchester, addressed delegates making the following points:
 - 6.1 Professor Ruth Lupton, Head of the Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit, summarised some of the emerging themes from her consultation on inclusive growth in Greater Manchester, suggesting that inclusive growth requires more effective and intensive joined up social and economic policies.
 - 6.2 Dr Carolyn Wilkins, Chief Executive of Oldham Council, highlighted the challenge of a growth and reform narrative strong on articulating city regions as functional economic entities, but largely silent on the societal links and social infrastructure of a place.

- 6.3 Alexandra Jones, Chief Executive of Centre for Cities felt that City regions' key challenges are to understand how to use their unique strengths, characteristics and resources to create local economies that work for them. Devolution deals can provide an important opportunity to begin to tackle some of these issues as long as they have the right flexibilities and opportunities to address skills challenges which impact the inclusiveness of a local economy.
 7. A detailed write up of the day is provided in **Appendix B**
 8. A second series of seminars was hosted in June to examine how new approaches to skills and labour markets might drive growth and productivity alongside greater inclusion and participation in local economies. Speakers with specific skills expertise addressed delegates making the following points:
 - 8.1 David Hughes, Chief Executive of the Learning and Work Institute, reflected on the extensive research on skills and labour markets conducted by the Learning and Work Institute. He outlined that the UK skills base is poor compared to international standards and that devolution of the adult education budget would help to better support and engage with people excluded in the labour market.
 - 8.2 Tony Tweedy Director of Lifelong Learning, Skills and Communities at Sheffield City Council spoke of the devolution deal secured by the Sheffield City Region. He outlined how it remains vital that areas have 'purposeful partnerships' between government departments, national and local authorities, and services based on constructive and neutral challenge.
 - 8.3 Delegates at the seminar shared their concerns that current approaches to skills and employment are too centralised, fragmented, confusing and unresponsive to the unique needs and resources of local places.
 9. A write up of the discussions is provided in **Appendix C**.
 10. Finally, the Commission has held deep dive research sessions in the cities of Sheffield, Bradford, Cardiff and Newcastle, involving private in-depth interviews and supplemented by analysis of public strategy documents, data and other available material. Write ups of these days will be shared with members when they are available.
- Call for Evidence**
11. In addition to the sessions outlined above the Commission has also launched a formal call for evidence inviting responses to a broad range of questions across three themes:
 - 11.1 Economy - creating more inclusive, productive labour markets;
 - 11.2 Place - developing dynamic, resilient places;
 - 11.3 Governance - catalysing system change.
 12. A full list of questions is provided at **Appendix A** and it is proposed that the LGA will respond to these on behalf of its members. A written draft of this response will be presented at the

next Board in November, in anticipation of submission ahead of the consultation's close on 31 December.

13. Members are asked to provide an initial steer on areas of particular focus or priority.

Planned future activity

14. The Commission has proposed to undertake a range of further activities throughout early autumn, these include:
- 14.1 Further evidence sessions in the cities of Plymouth (28 September), Nottingham (1 November) and the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (18 November)
 - 14.2 Workshops at the Labour Party Conference on 26 September and the Conservative Party Conference on 3 October. The LGA Public Affairs team will be liaising with RSA colleagues to ensure full briefings are provided to LGA speakers and details of the workshops are included in the LGA Party Conference Guides provided to councillors.
 - 14.3 The launch of an Interim Report by the end of September 2016.
15. **Members are asked to consider this programme of activity and reflect on how the LGA might best support this work in light of a significantly changed national context and the emerging priorities of the City Regions Board.**