

## **People & Places Board – report from Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE (Chairman)**

### **Brexit and the Industrial Strategy**

1. In light of the Government's recently published Modern Industrial Strategy and with a steer from the People and Places Board, the LGA has commissioned research into the development of a strengthened sub-national trade and investment policy.
2. The People and Places and City Region Boards have recently considered a set of draft principles to guide work on the future autonomy of local government as part of the LGA's co-ordinated response to Britain's impending departure from the European Union. In December, these were endorsed by Leadership Board and circulated to Parliamentarians.

### **Skills and Employment**

3. With the City Regions Board, the board continues to make the case for the current employment and skills service to be more integrated and localised and for the sector to benefit from a devolution deal process which offers more freedoms and flexibilities, and has commissioned research on a public employment and skills service.
4. The People and Places, City Regions and Community Wellbeing Boards and Cllr Claire Hudson, lead portfolio holder of the Resources Board jointly submitted a response to the wide-ranging Green Paper on Work, Health and Disability.

### **Leading Places Project**

5. On 28 March, representatives from each of the pilot areas and delegates from councils and higher education institutions will attend the national conclusion event for the first pilot phase of the Leading Places programme, facilitated by the consultants the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE). The event will showcase the work of the six pilot partnerships, conclude their formal involvement with the project and introduce Leading Places Phase Two.
6. On 31 January, I spoke at Inside Government's *Higher Education Community Engagement Event: Increasing Cooperation Between Higher Education and Local Economies*, where I reflected on the progress of the Leading Places Project.

### **Superfast Broadband and Mobile Connectivity**

9. I was delighted to welcome Sharon White, Chief Executive of Ofcom, to speak at the January board meeting and to discuss key issues with members, including the LGA's lobbying on the [Digital Economy Bill](#), the Universal Service Obligation and equality of access to broadband, and adequate mobile coverage in rural areas.
10. I look forward to opening the LGA local government digital connectivity summit: *Connecting the Nation*, on 16 March with Matthew Gould, Director General of Media and Digital at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. This event will bring together government, telecoms, regulators and business to discuss the role of local government in supporting both improved mobile and broadband connectivity across the country.

## Councillors' Forum

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**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)