

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

Post Brexit England Commission

1. At the last Councillors' Forum, Members were notified of the formation of the Post Brexit England Commission, which aims to highlight the opportunities as well as the challenges facing non-metropolitan areas in the period following Britain's departure from the EU.
2. An event to launch the Commission was held on the 28 February 2018 in London. It was well-attended by a wide range of stakeholders, MP's, Peers and Board Members and officers are now in the process of collating the feedback received from delegates, which is due to be presented at the next Board on 22 March.
3. In addition to this, officers are also busy preparing for the first two regional roadshows, which will place on 9 May in Taunton, and 11 May in Nottingham. These will help inform the publication of an Interim Report, due to be launched at Annual Conference in July.

Industrial Strategy – Local enterprise Partnerships

4. The Industrial Strategy White Paper stressed the key role of local leadership in driving economic growth, but noted that more needed to be done to strengthen this approach across the country. The subsequent LEP Review (led by Jake Berry MP and Andrew Griffiths MP, attended by Lead Member Cllr Western as the LGA's representative) presents an opportunity to shape thinking in this area and, with this in mind, a letter has now been sent to both Jake and Andrew (signed by Chair of the City Regions Board, Sir Richard Leese, the Chairman of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, Cllr Martin Tett, and myself), outlining the key issues which LGA Members would like to see addressed through the LEP Review.
5. In recognition of the vital contribution of both councils and Local Enterprise Partnerships to the success of the Industrial Strategy a roundtable event attended by Members of the City Regions, People and Places, and Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Boards and Chairs from three Local Enterprise Partnerships will be held on 15 March. This will seek to agree joint positions on how future local industrial strategies can match local ambitions for growth with proposals for skills devolution, devolved funding and a consistent national approach to transparency and governance.

Rural Digital Connectivity Task and Finish Group

6. Following on from the last Councillors' Forum, the Rural Digital Connectivity Task and Finish Group has now been formed to ensure a focused and sustainable approach to the LGA's work on digital and mobile phone connectivity. Members may recall that the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) have agreed to administer the Group at officer level.
7. Terms of reference for the group and membership have now been agreed by the Board and the inaugural meeting is due to take place on 7 March.

8 March 2018

Skills and Employment – Work Local

8. Following on from the last forum, Cllr Peter John (representing the City Region Board) and I met with the Rt. Hon. Anne Milton MP (Minister of State for Skills and Apprenticeships) on 5 February 2018 to discuss the LGA's vision for a more localised skills system. It was a positive and open meeting, which we hope will seed the foundation for a systematic relationship between the DfE and the LGA. Key issues we hope to work on together include skills advisory panels, SME engagement, post-16 routes and apprenticeships. A follow up letter has been sent to outline suggested next steps, signed by both Cllr Sir Richard Leese and myself.
9. Both the People and Places and City Regions Board and have now agreed to establish a new 'skills taskforce', whose purpose will be to dedicate specific time to, and have oversight of our employment and skills work, and re-focus LGA work to provide place-based solutions to Brexit and the Industrial Strategy. Both Boards have agreed it should draw in expertise from within the sector and engage a range of stakeholders. We will look to establish this over the coming months.
10. Preparations are being made for the Minister to attend a future Councillors Forum.

Contact officer: Alex Thomson
Position: Principal Policy Adviser
Phone no: 0207 664 3312
Email: alex.thomson@local.gov.uk