

## City Regions Board – report from Sir Richard Leese CBE (Chair)

### Urban Leadership

1. At its first meeting in October the City Regions Board agreed to assemble a coalition of interested and relevant parties to consider and re-articulate to a national audience the distinct concerns and opportunities that unite urban authorities – Core Cities, Key Cities, London Councils and SIGOMA (Special Interest Group of Metropolitan Authorities).
2. At Board meeting in November members agreed: there is interest in developing a joint platform to consider a broad sweep of urban policy issues on a long term basis; there is value in constructing a common evidence base for urban areas distinct from rural areas; work to advance the case for fiscal devolution should be prioritised in the short term.
3. Work to develop a campaign narrative and supporting evidence base is now underway and will be considered at the Board meeting in January.

### Industrial Strategy

4. Following the announcement from Government that every area would be invited to develop a Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), the LGA has commissioned a comprehensive improvement support offer to councils looking to play an active role supporting Local Enterprise Partnerships and Combined Authorities in the development of a LIS.
5. The City Regions Board has fed into the development of the offer which will include delivery of a series of LIS masterclasses, establishment of action learning sets to facilitate learning between council officers engaged in a LIS and the creation of a LIS online hub. Further details on this offer as it develops will be available at: [www.local.gov.uk/local-industrial-strategies](http://www.local.gov.uk/local-industrial-strategies)
6. In January, the Government published the National Local Growth Assurance Framework that seeks to address some of the recommendations of the Government's LEP Review. The LGA will continue to look at how our policy and improvement work can support the strengthened democratic accountability of LEPs, particularly in the context of changes to LEP Board composition brought about by the LEP Review.

### Skills and Employment

7. Last year the City Regions and People and Places Boards established an '**LGA skills taskforce**' in recognition that we need to do more to engage stakeholders and industry experts on our [Work Local ambitions for a place based approach to employment and skills](#). To do this, the co-chairs, Cllrs Sir Richard Leese and Mark Hawthorne, are convening three themed roundtables. The second roundtable **Careers and Retraining for a changing local economy** took place in February 2019, bringing together leading councillors and industry representatives. It was both a wide ranging and extremely positive discussion about how the current system around careers advice, apprenticeships and adult learning could be improved. Click [here for more information about the Taskforce and the roundtables](#).

7 March 2019

**Trade and investment**

8. The LGA has continued to engage with the Department for International Trade and key national stakeholders on the role for local government in future trade policy.
9. This included an invitation to provide evidence to the International Trade Committee's enquiry into trade policy transparency and scrutiny. In December, the Committee published its final report which recognised the important role for councils in this space and included the following recommendations<sup>1</sup>:
  - 9.1. A representative from each of the devolved administrations and the LGA should be included on the Strategic Trade Advisory Group, to allow Government to consult with them in detail throughout the trade negotiation process.
  - 9.2. Local government should have a voice in all aspects of the trade policy process, and the Government, in its response to this report, should set out how it plans to facilitate this.
10. In January, the City Regions Board and the People and Places Board agreed a set of objectives to help respond to national developments on trade and investment and to guide the LGA's work in this area over the coming year. The Boards also agreed next steps to advance these objectives and to build on the recommendations of the International Trade Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> [UK trade policy transparency and scrutiny](#), Sixth Report of Session 2017-19, House of Commons International Trade Committee