

## **People and Places – Policy Update**

### **Purpose of report**

For information.

### **Summary**

This paper provides an update on activity relating to a range of policy areas relevant to the People and Places Board.

### **Recommendation**

That the Board note the progress of the work being undertaken on behalf of the Board.

### **Action**

For members to note the update.

**Contact officer:** Rebecca Cox  
**Position:** Principal Policy Advisor  
**Phone no:** 020 7187 7384  
**Email:** Rebecca.Cox@local.gov.uk

## **1. Local Industrial Strategy**

- 1.1 Following additional funding provided by the Cities and Local Growth Unit, the LGA appointed two providers – Shared Intelligence and Metro Dynamics – to deliver an expanded Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) support offer.
- 1.2 Shared Intelligence are focusing on understanding and strengthening the role of councils in LIS development and their offer includes the delivery of action learning sets for council officers alongside cross-cutting engagement activity, including a LIS roundtable event that will be attended by national bodies representing local government, business and the wider public sector.
- 1.3 Metro Dynamics are focusing more broadly on the ‘key ingredients’ of LIS development and their offer includes the delivery of a fully-booked series of masterclasses on topics including developing a place narrative and producing a LIS evidence base.
- 1.4 The learning from both elements of this support offer will be captured and disseminated through an online LIS resource that the LGA is currently developing.
- 1.5 Members may also be interested in a recent report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), “How Local Industrial Strategies can deliver inclusive growth”.<sup>1</sup> The report clearly demonstrates the central role for councils in driving inclusive growth through a LIS and JRF recently presented their findings at the LGA’s LIS masterclass on inclusive growth.
- 1.6 Nationally, the first three trailblazer areas – Buckinghamshire, Greater Manchester and the West Midlands Combined Authority have now completed their public consultations and awaiting formal sign-off from Government.

## **2. Local Enterprise Partnerships**

- 2.1 The Government’s Review of Local Enterprise Partnership geography has yet to conclude with discussions still taking place in a number of areas. Officers have asked BEIS officials for an update on progress and will report back at the board meeting.

## **3. UKSPF**

- 3.1 There continues to be no further details on the consultation for UKSPF, and details are not expected until after the Parliamentary vote on the UK Exit from the European Union. The LGA will continue to make the case for a localised, place based replacement for EU funding that delivers outcomes for local communities.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/how-local-industrial-strategies-can-deliver-inclusive-growth>

#### **4. Digital Connectivity**

4.1 The Rural Digital Connectivity Working Group oversaw the LGA's response to two important Ofcom consultations. On the 'delivery of the broadband universal service obligation (USO)' the LGA outlined the need for Ofcom to ensure that broadband providers implement a social tariff to ensure no resident experiences hardship paying for broadband. On the award of the 700 MHz and 3.6-3.8 GHz mobile spectrum bands the LGA outlined its disappointment that Ofcom had rolled back on its original coverage obligations and increased the deadline to meet them to 4 years.

4.2 People and Places Board Chairman Cllr Mark Hawthorne was invited to a mobile connectivity roundtable hosted by consumer organisation Which? and attended by a range of business, rural and consumer stakeholders. There was consensus across the room for the Government and Ofcom to consider regulatory measures such as rural roaming (where a mobile can utilise the strongest signal from any mobile network operator) to incentivise the market to provide excellent coverage in rural areas. The LGA will continue to have conversations with stakeholders with an aim to join up on our lobbying efforts.

4.3 Finally, the ADEPT- Digital Connectivity Officers Working Group held a mobile connectivity roundtable with council officers and representatives of mobile network operators. Officers are due to feedback to the Rural Digital Connectivity Group on the results of the meeting.

#### **5. UPP Civic University Commission**

5.1 The UPP Civic University Commission was established to explore how universities can most effectively serve their place in the 21st century. The LGA submitted evidence to the Commission that drew on learning from our experiences delivering the Leading Places programme and the Local Growth Academy with national higher education partners.

5.2 The Commission, chaired by Lord Kerslake, published its final report in February.<sup>2</sup> The headline recommendation from the report was for universities to commit to produce a "Civic University Agreement" in partnership with local government and other major institutions in their area. Over 40 universities have now agreed to develop these agreements within their areas

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<sup>2</sup> <https://upp-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Civic-University-Commission-Final-Report.pdf>

## **6. Cultural Cities Enquiry**

6.1 The final report of the [Cultural Cities Enquiry](#) was published in February. Backed by urban authorities, the four UK Arts Councils and others, and chaired by Dame Jayne-Anne Gadhia, until recently chief executive of Virgin Money, the report aims to develop a new model to help culture flourish in cities. Alongside a 'Cultural City Compact' model (which would also be applicable in non-metropolitan areas), the report calls for a UK-wide review of how a tourist levy might work in the UK. This follows similar progress by Edinburgh in making the case for a consultation on the introduction of a tourist tax in Scotland.