

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

Devolution

1. Since the introduction of devolution deals, the City Regions Board has continued to build the case for greater devolution in those areas with a devolution deal and advance the case for devolution to be available to all areas that want it.
2. At its September meeting, the Board agreed its 2019-20 work programme¹ which will include a range of activity to progress the LGA's work on devolution, including:
 - 2.1. Working with the People and Places Board to influence the national devolution agenda, including the devolution white paper announced in the Queen's Speech.
 - 2.2. Undertaking research to demonstrate the impact of devolution on devolution deal areas since 2014.
 - 2.3. Pursuing a programme of Parliamentary activity, including through select committee evidence and the APPG on reform, decentralisation and devolution, for which the LGA is the secretariat. The work plan for the APPG developed over the summer includes a focus on key issues for the Board such as fiscal devolution and skills and employment.

Urban cost pressures

3. In the previous board cycle, the Board undertook work to explore how fiscal devolution might address cost pressures arising particularly in urban areas, to exemplify the case for wider reform across councils in England. Over the summer, the LGA has engaged with Core Cities, Key Cities and London Councils to consider how this work can be advanced and the Board will consider a proposal for further work in this area as its next meeting.

Devolution support

4. The Board has continued to oversee the LGA's devolution support offer in partnership with the People and Places Board. During the reported period, the LGA were represented at MHCLG roundtables on the future role of cities in economic growth and convened several meetings of the combined authority senior officer networks.

Employment and skills

5. The Board will continue to work with the People and Places Board to take forward the LGA's lobbying work on skills and employment over the coming board cycle. This will include an enhanced policy focus on youth participation, an issue discussed at the Board in September.

¹ <http://lga.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g4253/Public%20reports%20pack%2017th-Sep-2019%2013.00%20City%20Regions%20Board.pdf?T=10>

6. To highlight the importance of good careers advice and guidance and to make a case for improvements to the system, the LGA issued a [press release](#) ahead of the GCSE results day in August. This coincided with quarterly data release showing a spike in NEET figures, which gained traction from national press.

Industrial Strategy and local growth

7. Over the coming cycle, the Board will continue to seek to ensure the key elements of Government's national economic strategy – Local Industrial Strategies, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the LEP Review, fit with the priorities and ambitions of urban areas and that councils are well placed to support sustainable and inclusive growth.

Climate change

8. At its first meeting of the current cycle, the Board discussed the LGA's developing work on climate change and the role of urban authorities in tackling this agenda, within the context of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. The Board will continue to provide insight from urban areas to inform the LGA's wider climate change activity.

Contact officer: Rebecca Cox
Position: Principal Policy Adviser
Phone no: 020 7187 7384
E-mail: Rebecca.Cox@local.gov.uk