

People & Places Board – report from Cllr Kevin Bentley (Chairman)

Devolution

1. At its meeting before the General Election, the LGA's Group Leaders requested a Devolution Taskforce be set up to steer the LGA's work in this area in the early days of the new government. The Chairman of the People and Places Board will jointly chair this taskforce and will ensure through our wider work programme that the views of non-metropolitan areas are represented in the LGA's devolution work.
2. The Board has commissioned Localis to conduct research into international examples of fiscal devolution and growth funding to non-metropolitan areas and the learning that can be derived from these examples for local government in England.

Local growth

3. Following a recent shift in emphasis for national growth policy, the Board agreed in January to a reframed set of priorities for its work in support of the place-based growth agenda, including the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, exports and inward investment.
4. This Board, along with the City Regions Board, commissioned research into the lessons learned from the Local Industrial Strategy trailblazer areas and the implications for other areas developing local economic strategies. This is available on the LGA's [Local Industrial Strategies Hub](#).

Digital Connectivity

5. On behalf of the Board, officers worked in partnership Cambridgeshire County Council, Shropshire Council to issue a press release calling on Government and Ofcom to improve the way it measures the mobile connectivity mobile network operators provide to local communities. The release received coverage in The Independent, The Sun, The Daily Telegraph, The Daily Mail, BBC Radio 4 and ITV.
6. The LGA also [responded](#) to the Government's consultation on proposed reforms to permitted development rights to support the deployment of 5G and extend mobile coverage. The response argued that limiting planning control and increasing permitted development rights takes away the ability of residents, businesses and councillors to contribute in a meaningful way to the deployment of new or upgraded masts, sites and infrastructure and circumvents local plans preventing the properly managed development of a place.

Employment and Skills

7. This Board and the City Regions Board have initiated three employment and skills projects designed to share learning across councils and combined authorities. A summary of each is below. These are expected to be complete by Spring 2020.

8. The first, Place-based employment and skills commissioning improvement support, is being delivered by Shared Intelligence. They will work with eight councils and combined authorities and their local partners to address skills and labour market challenges or opportunities which the areas have identified need to be worked through in partnership. The second piece of work is to produce a case study report to chart how the combined authority commissioning role has developed through devolution of employment and skills responsibilities. Lastly, to highlight the role all local authorities play in commissioning or delivering support to improve adult skills, we have commissioned a Guide for Councillors on *The Role of Local Authority Adult and Community Education in creating thriving local communities*.
9. In November 2019, the LGA hosted a skills conference, [Thriving economies: focusing on people, places and partnerships](#). The event was well attended by 60 delegates and received a high-level of positive feedback. The sessions covered issues important to the sector including building inclusive economies, supporting youth participation and the future of adult skills. We are now planning to host a series of events to explore the how the youth angle in more detail.

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