

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

Local growth

1. Following a recent shift in emphasis for national growth policy, the Board agreed in January to a reframed set of priorities to guide its work on place-based growth. These included an enhanced focus on the role of local and combined authorities in driving clean and inclusive growth, working with other Boards as required. This will inform key growth policy areas linked to the UK's departure from the EU such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
2. Related to this, IPPR North has been commissioned to deliver an inclusive growth engagement programme and report detailing practical, evidence-based proposals for councils, which the Board will oversee.

Devolution

3. With the national spotlight back on English devolution, the City Regions Board will seek to advance our devolution work through advancing our thematic devolution policy work and through the soon-to-be-established LGA Devolution Taskforce.
4. In November, City Regions Lead Members agreed to support IPPR North in the development and publication of a research report: Devolving Power to England's Regions, Towns and Cities. Publication of the final report is expected before the end of February 2020.

Urban Cost Pressures

5. Members have agreed that the Board should undertake further work to produce more quantitative evidence on urban cost pressures. LGA officers have commissioned an external provider to support this work. As part of the initial scoping phase of this project a workshop with representatives from Core Cities, Key Cities, SIGOMA and London Councils was held in early December.
6. In anticipation that the identified pressure will potentially touch on the policy responsibility of another LGA Board, officers will take every step necessary to ensure that there is no duplication of effort and that the City Regions Board's work in this area adds to the body of knowledge already available to councils. The final report is scheduled for completion in March.

Employment and Skills

7. This Board and the People and Places 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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