

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

Local growth

1. Given the growing interest in the role of sub-national bodies, such as the Northern Powerhouse, in supporting place-based growth, the LGA has commissioned research on the progress made to date with these sub-national bodies and the lessons learned for future and existing regional structures.

Devolution

2. Within the context of a renewed focus on devolution and growth funding to non-metropolitan England, the Board has commissioned Localis to deliver research that will explore international examples of devolved growth funding, fiscal devolution and the interaction between them in non-metropolitan areas. Localis presented their emerging findings to the Board in January and will return to the Board in March to present their draft research report.
3. Later this month the LGA will host the first meeting of the Devolution Task and Finish Group which I will be co-chairing along with the Chair of the City Regions Board. This group will play a key role in informing the LGA's policy development in advance of the English Devolution White Paper.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

4. The LGA continues to lobby Government for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to be a localised, place based domestic replacement for EU funding. It is a key priority in the LGA's Budget Submission. Our principles for the UKSPF were reviewed by People and Places Lead Members and refreshed principles will be presented at the March People and Places Board.

Broadband

5. This month the Board will host the Chief Executive of Building Digital UK – the Government broadband delivery unit – to hear an update on the Government's plans to deliver gigabit-broadband to all by 2025. This will provide an opportunity for members to feed in their views on the future role of councils in the programme.

The future of land management

6. Following the Board's advocacy for a future role for councils in the design of any future land management policy framework, engagement with Defra has been positive with the Department adopting a co-design approach. The Board has also invited the

National Farmers Union to speak at its June Board to discuss the policy area in greater detail.

Employment and skills

7. Last year, a Skills Commission inquiry co-chaired by Sir John Hayes CBE MP and Barry Sheerman MP, was launched to design a blueprint for a skills ecosystem in England that can reflect both local need and future priorities. The LGA sat on the Commission's steering group and submitted [Work Local](#) as evidence. The Commission's final report, *England's skills puzzle: piecing together further education, training and employment* was launched in Parliament on Tuesday 3 March. The LGA was represented by Cllr Gillian Ford. The report recommend that devolution is the way forward, and that a local collaboration fund should be developed to test capacity and develop relationships, which align closely with our Work Local lines.
8. Youth Participation: Sector Roundtable in January 2020 engaged with lead employment and skills officers to better understand the issues and explore potential solutions in this area. This was the first in a series of engagement events and the findings from these will inform the final report in the Summer.

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