

## **City Regions Board – Report from Sir Richard Leese CBE (Chair)**

1. The City Regions Board had its second meeting in Liverpool on July 3, where the discussion focused primarily on two areas: trade and investment policy and employment and skills policy. Members scoped out the parameters for the work that the Board is undertaking to develop detailed propositions for reforming national trade and investment policy to better recognise the role that city regions can play in encouraging UK businesses to export and attract foreign investment.
2. The Board also discussed the findings of new research the LGA will be publishing at annual conference on the future skills and employment challenges that will hit the desk of an incoming (or returning) minister. Our analysis shows that there will be a significant and widening skills deficit by 2022 that will constrain local growth and potentially leave significant swathes of the population behind. Building on this work, the Board will be delivering a new localised model for skills and employment provision that can ensure that businesses have the skilled workforce that they need to grow and local communities can benefit from growth in their areas.
3. The City Regions Board and People & Places Board submitted a joint response to the Department for Communities and Local Government to amend legislation related to combined authorities and economic prosperity boards. We broadly supported the proposals, which would remove some of the technical barriers to formalising sub-regional arrangements, including enabling local authorities with non-contiguous boundaries to join and county councils to become members for a defined part of their areas.
4. However, our response also flagged up the more substantial changes that are needed in order for combined authorities to be able to deliver on their full potential to drive growth and public service reform, including expanding their functional scope, enabling them to borrow for housing and other growth-related purposes, and giving London boroughs the ability to join such arrangements. We have also signalled an urgent need to address the relationship of combined authorities with Local Enterprise Partnerships, as the current arrangements carry obvious risks of overlap and duplication in sub-regional governance. Read the full response [here](#).

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