

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

Ongoing Projects

1. Localis attended the Board in March to present the findings of their research into international examples of fiscal devolution and devolved growth funding in non-metropolitan areas. The report has now been finalised and is in process of being designed ahead of publication in mid-July.
2. The Board-commissioned research into district and county collaboration has now completed. However, following a discussion at the June Board and within the context of a renewed interest in local government reorganisation we are currently taking stock of how best to move forward in this area.
3. As part of the Board's digital connectivity remit, and in partnership with the ADEPT Digital Connectivity Working Group, officers have been working to collate evidence on the vital role that councils have played as part of the roll out of the Superfast Broadband Programme in order to feed in lessons to the design of the Government's full fibre roll out. Officers also submitted evidence to the DCMS Committee Inquiry into Broadband and the road to 5G. The LGA's digital spokesperson, Cllr Mark Hawthorne and the LGA Chairman, Cllr James Jamieson met with the Minister for Digital Infrastructure on 11 June to raise this concerns directly and a further meeting with senior officials from BDUK is being arranged to further explore these issues.
4. Work continues on research projects commissioned on behalf of the Board, including research into the role of councils in delivering the Sustainable Development Goals, which will be launched at an online event on 17 July, and the lessons learned from established sub-national bodies, such as the Northern Powerhouse and the Midlands Engine, which was discussed at the June board and will feed into the LGA's work to influence the devolution white paper.
5. The LGA has continued to engage as appropriate with public affairs work and government consultations relating to the Board's priorities, including the Government's freeports consultation and the MHCLG Select Committee inquiry into the progress of devolution in England.

Employment and Skills

6. We continue to engage our member authorities to shape our views and policy around the COVID-19 crisis and what is needed for the jobs and skills recovery. Most recently, officers discussed recovery issues with the Combined Authority Employment and Skills Network (3 June), and organised a roundtable between local authorities from non-

devolved areas with DfE, DWP and MHCLG officials (4 June). The People and Places, City Regions Board, and the Children and Young People Board all discussed a jobs and skills recovery paper at their June meetings. The latest LGA position can be viewed [here](#).

7. The Board also commissioned Ecuity to provide new analysis on projected low carbon jobs by local authority and by sector. The analysis revealed that in total there could be 700,000 jobs generated by 2030 and 1.18 million by 2050. LG Inform shows the data by local authority. This analysis has been useful to the sector and many have used it for their recovery plans. Our [green jobs web hub](#) hosts all the information in one place. It was launched on 11 June. Media interest has been high. There were 96 national and local media references. The LGA wrote to all relevant Select Committee Chairs, Government and Shadow Ministers and Secretaries of State, with some resulting in meetings (Luke Pollard MP, shadow environment secretary).
8. On 7 July the LGA and Connect organised a Devolution APPG session on skills and jobs. Key issues discussed were green jobs analysis (above), LGA's Work Local proposals, jobs and skills recovery, and the brilliant work of the local government sector. Cllr Kevin Bentley (People and Places Boards) and Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe (City Regions Board) spoke at the session with case studies from Blackpool, Greater Manchester (Cllr Sean Fielding), Portsmouth and Staffordshire. All Board Members were invited to join the call.
9. Cllr Abi Brown will be representing the LGA on a Getting Britain Back to Work panel session at the Learning and Work Institute's employment and skills convention on 9 July, speaking alongside Lord Jim O'Neill, the Resolution Foundation and the Association of College. Ministers from DfE (Gillian Keegan) and DWP (Mims Davies) will also speak.
10. Officers continue to engage with a range of stakeholders to progress the localist agenda on recovery, including the Institute for Employment Studies and Learning and Work, and focusing on older workers through the Centre for Better Ageing.
11. Young people's training and employment prospects are expected to be disproportionately affected by the economic fallout of the COVID-19 crisis. We therefore continue to focus on our improving youth participation work. Engagement with member authorities and stakeholders have continued to shape our views and emerging policy ahead of expected Government announcements on the Opportunity Guarantee for young people. We have been working closely with the LGA Workforce team, as many of the measures around apprenticeships, traineeships and T levels will involve the sector workforce.

12. Lead Members discussed LGA representation on the Youth Employment Group, set up in response to the COVID-19 crisis, to work with stakeholders to improve the offer for young people. The sector views for a local offer are continuing to be fed into the Group.
13. The Improving Youth Participation report, culminating our engagement work with the sector and stakeholders, is being finalised. This will now be reviewed with the impact of Covid-19 crisis on young people. The report will set out our recommendations to Government on improving the education, training and employment offer for the next generation.

EU Funding

14. The LGA sought intelligence from local and combined authorities on how current European Structural and Investment Fund activity has been impacted by COVID-19. This includes looking at ways to reduce the burdens on current project beneficiaries, so they can concentrate on COVID issues and be assured that their running costs will be continued to be met, as far as possible. We also sought ideas from member authorities on how current projects can be redirected and pivoted to COVID related activity, and what could be done with remaining funds to support those businesses and residents most in need within the ESIF framework.
15. We submitted a summary of the intelligence and ideas gathered to the Performance and Dispute Resolution National Sub-Committee. This has informed central government assurance that has been published.
16. £51 million of ERDF Reserve Fund monies has been secured to support councils implement social distancing measures for local high streets. The remaining parts of the ERDF Reserve Fund will be to support SMEs, including the Kickstart Tourism Package.
17. The LGA continues to raise concerns about DWP not fully utilising the ESF programme before we leave the ESIF programme. This includes the ESF Reserve Fund and the remaining funds that are stuck in the appraisal process. The LGA has called for the Government to urgently work with councils and combined authorities to ensure the remaining money is allocated quickly to support the national recovery from the pandemic, as well as the publication of the consultation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Contact officer: Sonika Sidhu
Position: Principal Policy Adviser
Phone no: 02076643076
E-mail: Sonika.Sidhu@local.gov.uk