

People and Places Board Update

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper provides members with a brief update on issues and policy areas not covered by other items on the agenda.

Recommendation

Members are to note the contents of the report.

Action

Officers to take forward any comments from members.

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People and Places Board Update Paper

Employment and skills update

Adult skills and lifelong learning

1. On 18 December, the Education Select Committee released its [recommendations](#) from its adult skills and lifelong learning inquiry. The LGA submitted written evidence and provided follow up material at the request of the Committee. The report recommends that there should be a community learning centre in every town and singles out providers of adult and community learning as “the jewel in the crown of the nation’s adult education landscape”. ACL providers include many councils, who either directly deliver or commission this provision, so this is a positive endorsement of councils’ work. Building on this momentum, we will now take forward discussions with the Government and the Education Committee and use the content of the LGA councillor handbook on making the best of its adult learning service (launched in October 2020) to support these discussions. [Learning for Life: the role of adult community education in developing thriving local communities - A handbook for councillors | Local Government Association.](#)

Restart employment support for long term unemployed people

2. Our member authorities are concerned about the impact unemployment will have on their residents, communities and wider local economy as the Covid-19 crisis continues to unfold. This is why the LGA and our member authorities proactively engaged DWP since last summer to put forward practical suggestions on how employment support for the long term unemployed (12 months plus) could be delivered to best effect. We suggested this could be done by contracting at a local level, working with the grain of local service provision and devolved / local programmes, using a multi-agency referral system recognising not everyone out of work will use JCP, and that other organisations should be able to deliver it alongside ‘prime providers’.
3. In November, the Chancellor announced a three-year, £2.9 billion, national [Restart programme](#) to support long-term unemployed (LTU) people back to work, and DWP launched a national procurement exercise for it through its prime provider framework on 11 December. Restart is likely to commence in the summer.
4. While it remains a national programme, there are signs that DWP has listened to some of our calls and recognises the added value of local government input. For instance, the procurement document states that providers should engage local government, not duplicate existing activity, and work with local employers to create local jobs. In addition, on 21 December, DWP issued a letter to the LGA and other local government representatives seeking input on the national procurement exercise. For each Restart contract package area (CPA), it has invited one tender question for each area (end

January 2021), plus two nominated external assessors per CPA (end February) to review bidders' responses to the question to inform DWP's evaluation and selection.

5. The LGA will help the sector engage with Restart and continue to make the case to DWP to engage with the sector early on as it develops further support programmes. This point was made at the LGA convened roundtable session bringing together P&P and CR Lead Members with the Minister for Employment, Mims Davies MP, on 21 December. An oral update will be provided.

Support the sector to lead / contribute to the Covid Response

6. Dealing with the economic and social implications of the Covid-19 pandemic and minimising the knock-on effects on communities is a priority for local government, as well as putting plans in place for recovery. How areas will deal with it depends largely on their unique economic and social conditions, the extent to which the Government engages the sector in developing flexible policy responses, and the action local government itself can take, working alongside its partners at a national and local level.
7. The sector has, and continues to do, incredible work to lead or contribute to local jobs and skills recovery efforts, but capacity and resource constraints offer little opportunity for the sector to share learning and ideas with each other. To save the sector time and resource and facilitate knowledge transfer, the LGA initiated two projects to be delivered by the end of March. These include:
 - 7.1. an online 'how to / top tips' resource. This will focus on five themes critical to jobs and skills recovery, drawing on the knowledge and expertise of a representative group of twelve member authorities. The Learning and Work Institute (L&W) has been commissioned to deliver this for us.
 - 7.2. Enhancing our existing online case study resource with new material that demonstrates local government's role to support jobs and skills within their local area during the Covid-19 crisis and as they plan for recovery. Rocket Science will deliver this project.

West Yorkshire Devolution deal

8. The [Devolution Deal for West Yorkshire](#) has reached a significant milestone, with the Order establishing a Mayoral Combined Authority for the region being laid in Parliament. If approved, the deal will unlock a new single pot of funding for economic growth in the region, worth £38 million a year for the next 30 years. This is alongside new powers over transport, education and housing and on top of further investment including, £317 from the Transforming Cities Fund and £3.2 million to support the development of housing sites across West Yorkshire.

9. The Mayor of West Yorkshire will also become the region's Police and Crime Commissioner. The region's first Mayoral elections are scheduled to take place next year. While the deal is similar to previous devolution agreements, £101 million government funding for flood management and the piloting of green infrastructure benchmarks appear new.