

People and Places Board Update paper

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.

Contact officer: Sonika Sidhu
Position: Principal Policy Adviser
Phone no: 07775802327
Email: Sonika.Sidhu@local.gov.uk

People and Places Board Update Paper

Project Updates

1. In anticipation of the Local Economic Recovery and Devolution White Paper, and to ensure members are well positioned to represent the interests of non-metropolitan councils in the coming months, the Board is overseeing a range of projects related to growth, devolution and recovery. A summary of these projects is provided below.

1.1. The Future of Parish and Town Council Devolution

Following discussions at the Board, and an emerging narrative from Ministers supporting greater devolution to parish and town councils, the Board approved the commissioning of research to explore the implications of operationalising “double devolution.” The project will provide a practical guide for councils and help ensure Board members are well placed to lead the policy debate on devolution and the future of town and parish councils at the most appropriate future point. The project will provide:

- **A framework for devolving services and funding** outlining the range of assets and services that are candidates for devolution
- **Recommendations on the support needed** to make a reality of double devolution opportunities
- **An assessment of value for money** from the costs involved in delegating services from principal to local councils
- **A series of case studies** to showcase how the vision described in the framework.

A mixture of People and Places Board members, as well as officers and clerks from both sectors attended a sense-making workshop earlier this month to feed into the findings of the work. The project will complete by the end of March and its authors, Shared Intelligence, have been invited to attend the June Board to present its findings. The final output will be published on the LGA’s Devolution Hub before the Summer.

1.2. Supporting the advanced digital skills pipeline

We have commissioned research to outline the interventions councils might take to support the future success of the tech sector, supported by a quantification of the opportunities for growth in this area and with a particular emphasis on addressing the perceived shortage in advanced digital skills. The project will:

- forecast the type of tech jobs, and skills need that will be emerging in the coming decade and how these might disperse across the country by local authority.
- provide a series of detailed local case studies which evidence the role councils have played to attract and retain tech firms with examples of how they have worked to understand and meet specialised digital skills demand in tandem with local partners.

The quantitative data will launch on the LGA's LG Inform platform and will be augmented by a qualitative report outlining key learning from local areas. Both outputs will be published online before the Summer.

1.3. Councils' guide to supporting exports

Trade in UK goods and services will continue to play an important part in the Government's ambitions to increase national growth and prosperity as part of its 'levelling up' agenda. Building on previously published guides for councils looking to attract foreign capital investment and drawing on lessons learned from established and emerging sub-national bodies, we have commissioned Value Adage to produce a guide to outline best practice, advice and assistance to councils looking to support local businesses to increase their exports.

The guide will include:

- An overview of the strategic and economic case for increasing levels of exports, particularly amongst small and medium sized enterprises
- A high-level summary of the support available from national government, business representatives and other key stakeholders
- Insight and guidance from businesses and business representatives as to the type of support they require from councils
- A selection of case studies drawing on best practice from across the UK and, where appropriate, international examples.

1.4. Analysis of Match Funding Sources for the European Structural and Investment Fund

To support our policy work relating to the UKSPF and wider growth funding streams, we have commissioned work to explore private and public funding which have matched EU funding from the ESIF programme. This will provide us with a great understand how much additional funding the ESIF programme has brought to local areas. This will help us understand the total quantum of the ESIF programme, as well as provide us with commentary on the outcomes, commissioning and decision-making process which will further support our policy development.

1.5. Employment and skills activity

Local government's role in jobs and skills recovery: The sector has, and continues to do, an incredible amount of 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, we initiated two projects. The material for both of these projects will be delivered by suppliers by the end of March, and hosted on the LGA website in April. They include:

- 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. We worked with a group of local authorities to test which themes to focus on and the agreed themes are: dealing with economic shocks and opportunities, improving basic skills and capabilities, retraining the local population, addressing long-term unemployment and youth unemployment.

- Enhancing our existing online case study resource with new material for fifteen local authorities 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.

Mapping national employment and skills provision: Most employment and skills provision is commissioned and procured nationally by Government departments or their agencies on different geographic boundaries. This can make it challenging for local government employment and skills teams (or similar) to know across their local authority area, what support is available and when. We would like to address that by mapping out national government procurement for existing provision to help improve conversations between local and national government on how to collaborate on existing provision by geography and any future opportunity, thereby making the best use of public funding. This will be an online resource. Research Matters will produce the data by the end of March, and we will look to host this on the LGA website during April.

Long term unemployment: We part funded the Learning and Work Institute to carry out analysis on projections for long term unemployment (LTU) in local areas. The report highlights how different local areas will be impacted by unemployment, the need for a tailored response and a renewed push for a co-design approach for recovery. The report was launched before the Spring Budget and can be viewed through the LGA website.

Youth participation in education, employment and training: York Consulting is undertaking a project for us to provide action learning for eleven areas (councils/combined authorities) to develop a better understanding of the barriers/challenges in fulfilling their statutory duties for young people, for instance, in relation to those not in education, employment or training (NEET) and to explore potential solutions. The first workshop took place in January and the second in February which focused on areas' action plans and examples of useful practice. The project will conclude by the end of March. A final report will outline what works in overcoming barriers to youth participation and showcase innovative approaches by the areas involved.