

Publications Update

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

Set out in this update paper is a brief overview of four reports that are due for publication in the coming weeks.

Is this report confidential? Yes No

Recommendation/s

Board Members are asked to note the information set out within the report.

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Publications Update

1. Over the course of the last year, a variety of reports have been commissioned by the LGA informed by the priorities of the People and Places Board. Set out below is a brief overview of four reports that due for publication in the coming weeks.

Councils Guide to Supporting Exports

2. Building on the Board's previous interest in this area, we have commissioned a councils' guide to supporting exports. This is a 'how to' guide for councils who want to play a greater role in supporting exporting businesses as part of the wider Levelling Up agenda. The guide includes case studies and good practice examples on how councils can advise and collaborate, develop export pathways and encourage diaspora links and cultural exchange. We are currently working with the Department of International Trade to finalise the project in advance of the launch of the Government's new exporting strategy. Publication is expected by early July.

Local government's role supporting the advanced digital skills pipeline

3. The UK is unparalleled in Europe in terms of the size and power of its tech industry and Government has earmarked the sector as a key pillar of the country's recovery and future growth, with ambitions to "make our country a science and technology superpower" set out in the Build Back Better plan for growth.
4. This project outlines the economic and employment contributions of the UK's digital tech sector and the key role that councils play in supporting local digital skills progression in the face of likely growth in the sector. It also highlights successful interventions undertaken to date and provides regional and national forecasts for digital employment which are available on LG Inform. The supplier is currently seeking final sign-off from local authorities who participated in the case studies, and the project will be published once these are approved, expected June 2021.
5. The key findings of the research are: Employment growth for tech specialist occupations will outstrip that for the workforce as a whole; Tech employment growth will be strongest outside of the traditional hotspots of London and the South East; Growth will be highest for management and development positions whilst tech support will see more modest increases.

Devolution deal to delivery

6. The LGA commissioned Shared Intelligence to carry out research with politicians, officers and external stakeholders in each combined authority area, looking at the process they had been on to secure a devolution deal, and what has worked well in the process of establishing a combined authority. The project has extracted learning from this process about the ways that each of the combined authorities function, what questions councils exploring becoming a combined authority could consider, and what

other options there are for collaboration if councils decide not to go down the route of a combined authority.

7. The research found that combined authorities vary significantly, with different geographies, powers, sizes, and styles of mayors, and ways in which devolution deals were negotiated, with the process becoming more formulaic over time. Although the landscape in which combined authorities are operating and their relationships with Government may be changing, participants highlighted the value of the soft powers of combined authority mayors and the importance of their enhanced profile, both in dealing with Government and as convenors. Shared Intelligence are now carrying out final changes to the report based on the discussions and feedback from the second sounding board meeting, and a final report will be published this summer.

A framework for supporting parish and town councils to play an increased role in local service delivery and place-shaping

8. Following a discussion at the People and Places Board the LGA commissioned a framework for principal local authorities looking to support parish and town councils to play an increased role in local service delivery and place-shaping. While it is aimed at principal authorities, the research has also been steered by interviews and discussion with representatives of the local council sector.
9. A key finding of the research is that principal authorities vary in their approach to working with parish and town councils. Some have been very proactive in working with the local council sector to build ambitious programmes of delegation and devolution. This document sets out a framework to guide principal authorities who are interested in supporting parish and town councils to play an increased role in local service delivery and place-shaping. It focuses on three areas: building trust; an implementation toolkit; and wider enabling factors. The report is current in the process of being design and is due to be published by mid-July.