

Update on LGA Economic Growth improvement support offer

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This report updates the Improvement and Innovation Board on the proposed LGA Economic Growth improvement support offer.

Recommendation

That the meeting considers the report and agrees any follow-up action.

Action

Officers to initiate any required action.

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Update on LGA Economic Growth improvement support offer

Updates

1. Promoting, supporting and enhancing the role of local authorities in delivering economic growth is a key priority for the LGA and forms part of our sector support work with MHCLG. As set out in the grant determination letter the LGA's economic support offer includes two key support programmes:
 - 1.1 an Economic Growth Advisers' Programme, which will boost council capacity and share learning at a corporate and political level; and
 - 1.2 an Economic Resilience Programme, which will support councils to promote economic resilience, by providing tools and resources to tackle unemployment; address skills shortages; respond to changes on the high street; provide support for SMEs; and use procurement and employment supply chains to restore and enhance local economies.
2. In 2021/22, these programmes will deliver:
 - 2.1 Economic Growth Advisors provided to support councils with COVID-19 recovery advice, guidance and support across a range of finance and economic issues.
 - 2.2 Guidance and support to councils in their convener role to deliver a coherent jobs and skills offer, particularly through collaboration with other councils and local institutions, through peer support, an online economic growth hub, toolkits, good practice and roundtables.
3. The KPI's for this programme are:
 - 3.1 At least 80 per cent of participating councils report that the Economic Growth Advisors Programme has provided skills to increase their capacity to address local economic challenges.
 - 3.2 At least 80 per cent of participants using the tools say that they have had a positive impact.
 - 3.3 3 economic growth roundtables (6 in total).
 - 3.4 50 case studies on the Economic Growth Hub.
4. Based on feedback from our member councils and the Principal Advisors we have designed the following improvement support offer to councils to develop economic resilience in their local area. Two clear improvement support needs have emerged in the feedback from councils. Firstly, the importance of building capacity and skills in terms of economic growth in councils and secondly the role that the LGA can play in sharing learning and helping councils to replicate what has worked well in other areas.
5. In terms of improvement support offers to building economic growth capacity and skills, we plan to deliver the following improvement support offers:

Economic Growth Advisors

- 6 The productivity team are leading the Economic Growth Advisors programme to provide bespoke advice and capacity to local authorities to help them deliver economic growth in their area. The Advisors role includes helping councils to deliver a specific project, help to bring local partners together or assisting with the development of a strategic approach to economic recovery. The LGA have a cohort of Economic Growth Advisers available who have a proven track record in their field.
- 7 For the 2021/22 programme the LGA will be supporting ten councils with an adviser. Working with the LGA research team we have undertaken research to identify those councils at most need of the support and capacity of an advisor. This has then been cross-referenced with the regional insights from the Principal Advisors. We will also ensure that the list of councils comprises a good mixture of different types of councils to ensure that learning is applicable across the sector.
- 8 The LGA will then undertake the work to procure the advisers so that the support can be directly provided to the council with no extra work required from them.

Economic Growth Leadership Essentials Course

- 9 The LGA is offering two Leadership Essentials programmes in Economic Growth for 2021/22. This course will provide leadership training around economic growth, development, and resilience. The aim is to give councillors the confidence, capacity and skills to lead the response to building back local economies post the pandemic. The offer will comprise of four masterclasses delivered online, and topics could include:
 - 9.1 Principles of economic growth and the councillor role within them
 - 9.2 How to engage local communities in economic growth
 - 9.3 Green industrial revolution
 - 9.4 Inclusive growth in local economies
 - 9.5 Building a local Cultural and hospitality offer
 - 9.6 Social value – what is the council impact on the local economy?
 - 9.7 Designing the high streets of the future

Economic Growth E-Learning Module

- 10 Building on the leadership essentials training we will be providing to councillors, there is a need to provide truly universal support to councils on the principals of economic growth. We intend to develop an e-learning module which will cover a brief introduction to economic growth, alongside the basic principles that underpin the role of the councillor in this area. This will be hosted in the LGA e-learning platform for councillors. The content will cover:
 - 10.1 Principles of economic growth and the cllr role within them
 - 10.2 how to better engage communities on economic growth
 - 10.3 Inclusive growth and economies

10.4 Business engagement and retention

Economic Growth Design Skills Training

11 An offer to provide training for teams of economic development officers in design thinking and skills to apply to their local economic growth challenges. This training will provide councils with a structured framework to design, for instance:

- 11.1 their approach to the use of UK Sustainable Prosperity Fund
- 11.2 their future high streets
- 11.3 an approach to attracting inward investment in the future
- 11.4 their approach to Good Work Charters
- 11.5 a local green economic recovery

12 In addition to the design skills training universal webinars will be made available to all councils showcasing the latest examples of how councils can use design to respond to their local economic growth challenges.

13 In terms of sharing learning we propose the following support offers:

LGA Economic Growth Roundtable Series

14 The LGA have been organising a number of roundtables to explore the challenges and opportunities for local economic growth and provide a forum for councils to share learning and grow their networks. So far, we have delivered five sessions covering the following topics:

- 14.1 How can councils save and retain jobs in their economic recovery?
- 14.2 The green recovery
- 14.3 The impacts of remote working
- 14.4 Town and city centre regeneration
- 14.5 What are the opportunities and challenges of inclusive growth?

15 We will organise a minimum of three further round tables before the end of the financial year.

Case studies on the Economic Growth Hub

16 The case studies produced through the Economic Growth Advisors programme and also through the roundtables will be shared with all councils via the [Economic Growth Hub](#). We will deliver 50 case studies this year.

17 In addition, the productivity and policy teams are collaborating to formulate a joint economic resilience support offer for councils that will cover the following projects:

- 17.1 Public - private partnerships post pandemic growth – a project to look at options for business models that bring together councils and the private sector to deliver services and stimulate economic growth
- 17.2 Business engagement – this project will look at lessons learned during the pandemic and also look ahead at how councils may want to engage with business and LEPs and where the role of LEPs has changed.
- 17.3 Good work charters – to produce a Councillor’s handbook to assist in developing Good Work charters.
- 17.4 Planning for the long-term resilience of our high streets and town centres - the project will focus on lessons from the pandemic and what may make town centres more resilient and how councils can better react to future shocks or emergencies.
- 17.5 De-mystifying skills system for councils – this project will seek to understand what the sector is doing to access and interpret skills supply/demand data, share learning about what innovation is out there, for example new tools that have been developed.
- 17.6 Addressing the impact of COVID-19 on young people’s employment - to explore how councils can support NEETs and disadvantaged groups possibly through ring-fenced opportunities within local government.

Equalities implications

- 18 Our targeted, data-based approach for the Economic Growth Advisors programme will ensure that LGA support is provided to councils in most need of this support.

Implications for Wales

- 19 We will continue to share and learn from case studies from the Welsh LGA and Welsh councils supporting the role of local authorities in delivering local economic growth.