

## **Business in the Community Update**

### **Purpose of report**

For information.

### **Summary**

This paper provides members with a brief overview of the Board's work with Business in the Community including a summary of the recently published 'Partnerships in Place: The Business of Levelling Up' report. This information will help support a discussion with Chair of the Business in the Community Place Taskforce, Lord Steve Bassam (Appendix A).

Is this report confidential? Yes ☐ No ☒

### **Recommendation/s**

Board members are asked to consider as background reading Business in the Community's recently published report 'Partnerships in Place: The Business of Levelling Up' ahead of the meeting.

### **Action/s**

Officers will use the discussion and the findings from the report to shape the Board's future levelling up work and will take forward any opportunities for future collaborative work with Business in the Community.

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## **Business in the Community Place Taskforce**

### **Background**

1. Business in the Community's (BITC) Place Taskforce set out to capture and showcase 'what works' in transforming the prospects of a place, creating a blueprint for business engagement in place-based transformation. The findings were shared in a [report](#) titled 'Partnerships in Place: The Business of Levelling Up' launched on 11 May 2022 to coincide with the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BITC.
2. The report provides practical recommendations to business, local government and national government on the role that business can play in delivering the 'how' of the Levelling Up White Paper as well as the foundations that are needed, both nationally and locally, to truly transform communities. A summary of the recommendations can be seen in paragraph 7.

### **LGA's involvement to date**

3. The Place Taskforce ran a call for evidence which closed in December 2021 and received 34 written submissions. The Place Taskforce ran an additional eight verbal evidence sessions with 17 speakers, conducted three formal interviews, visited Wisbech and Grimsby where there were discussion sessions with local stakeholders and visits to local regeneration initiatives and the LGA hosted a roundtable. These all informed the final report.
4. On 1 November 2021, the LGA hosted a roundtable providing an opportunity to bring the voices of local government leaders from across the country together on this agenda. The roundtable was co-chaired by Cllr Abi Brown and Cllr Simon Henig who were members of the Place Taskforce representing the LGA's People and Places Board and City Regions Board. The roundtable focused on three themes: collaborative and partnership working, levers and measuring impact and developing a strategy and vision.
5. The LGA used the evidence gathered from the roundtable to inform their submission to the Place Taskforce's Call for Evidence. In January 2022, Lord Bassam attended the LGA's People and Places Board to discuss emerging findings and the LGA's call for evidence submission with members.
6. To coincide with the launch of the report, 'Partnerships in Place: The Business of Levelling Up', Business in the Community held a webinar in May 2022 to discuss the recommendations in further detail. Cllr Henig represented the People and Places Board and was a panel member at the event. Cllr Henig highlighted the importance of councils working in partnership with business as well as the need for early engagement between local government and the private sector to create a joined-up vision of a place owned by all the actors involved. Cllr Henig drew on examples from Durham and reinforced the

importance of long-term and joined-up funding to enable more effective place-based regeneration.

## **Report summary**

7. The following list is a summary of key findings and recommendations identified in the report, 'Partnerships in Place: The Business of Levelling Up'. The full report provides an explanation and context for each which is important for understanding their application.

### **Collaboration is essential**

- 7.1 Recommendation 1: All sectors need to work together to form place-based collaboration.
- 7.2 Recommendation 2: The Business Connector, Champion, and Ambassador Role are crucial in establishing and maintaining place-based partnerships.
- 7.3 Recommendation 3: All partnerships need to deliver early action, understand the local issues and opportunities, develop a vision and action plan, and measure their impact.

### **Business leadership drives successful partnerships and place-based**

- 7.4 Recommendation 4: Partnerships need to be driven by an independent chair transformation.
- 7.5 Recommendation 5: Businesses need to secure senior-level buy-in to effectively participate in partnerships.
- 7.6 Recommendation 6: Business should play a key role in tackling the key issues in a place.

### **The unique resources of each partner need to be leveraged**

- 7.7 Recommendation 7: Business, civil society organisations, and local government should each play a key role in setting a strategy for a place.
- 7.8 Recommendation 8: Business should utilise its knowledge & assets to benefit the partnership and the wider community.
- 7.9 Recommendation 9: Businesses should advocate for their place on a national level.
- 7.10 Recommendation 10: Businesses should harness their supply chain to engage more organisations in a partnership.

### **Government needs to do more to involve business in levelling up**

- 7.11 Recommendation 11: Central government needs to facilitate effective local partnerships, that will work closely with Levelling Up Directors, through funding Connectors.
- 7.12 Recommendation 12: Town Deal Boards have the potential to be further utilised to deliver the levelling up missions, but central government needs to ensure they are truly business led and give them increased revenue funding to enable them to operate as an effective place-based partnership.

- 7.13 Recommendation 13: Levelling up funding needs to be flexible, long-term, localised and aligned with the levelling up missions to maximise the engagement of business and deliver transformative change.
- 7.14 Recommendation 14: A place-based approach by business could be empowered by incentives that direct attention and resources to places.

### **Next steps**

8. The Board meeting is an opportunity for members to discuss with Lord Steve Bassam (see Appendix A for biography) the recommendations presented in the final report in greater detail. Lord Bassam will share the findings and comment on opportunities for future collaboration with the People and Places Board.
9. Members are invited to comment on the final report and have a further discussion with Lord Bassam considering how the recommendations can inform the Board's wider levelling up work programme.

### **Implications for Wales**

10. While the UK Government has committed to level up the UK, economic development is a matter devolved to the Welsh Assembly.

### **Financial Implications**

11. The Board's activities are supported by budgets for policy development and improvement. The LGA's financial contribution to the Taskforce was funded through the budget for policy development.