

Cost of Living summary

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper gives a brief overview of our developing and ongoing work on the cost of living, to accompany a verbal update. This highlights developments since the last Board

Is this report confidential? Yes ☐ No ☒

Recommendation

That the LGA continues to develop a cross-cutting and collaborative approach to developing the evidence base, supporting councils and informing policy development to ensure we are responding as effectively as possible to cost of living pressures

Actions

As directed by the Board

Contact officer:	Rose Doran
Position:	Senior Adviser
Phone no:	0207 6643073
Email:	rose.doran@local.gov.uk

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1. Rose Doran and Esther Barrott presented a joint paper to People and Places Board (07/06/22) and City Regions Board (15/06/22) to seek members' view on priorities for a cross-cutting approach across the LGA
2. People and Places members nominated Cllr Emily O'Brien to contribute to an LGA member advisory group. They identified a number of key priorities for rural areas including:
 - 2.1. The importance of collaboration between councils and the voluntary and community sector
 - 2.2. Sufficient, affordable rural transport, in particular bus services; recognition of impact of fuel costs for those who need to drive e.g. for work
 - 2.3. The role of the agricultural sector and impacts on food security; planning and councils' role in decisions on land use – e.g. sustainable farming, renewables, green development
 - 2.4. The importance of linking cost-of-living with climate change and net zero – in particular support for retrofitting to improve energy efficiency, prioritising vulnerable groups
 - 2.5. The need to recognise that rural poverty exists, particularly in coastal towns, and can exacerbate isolation and social exclusion
 - 2.6. Digital divide and inequality of access to rural broadband – especially now we have a shift to people working from home
 - 2.7. Housing affordability and availability, which can be exacerbated in some areas by second home ownership
 - 2.8. Low pay in the rural economy e.g. in retail, care-work and hospitality
3. City Regions Board proposed Cllr Gillian Ford to contribute to an LGA member advisory group. Several other members expressed an interest in being directly engaged in policy and improvement work going forward.
4. City Regions members identified similar themes to those identified by the People and Places Board, in particular the links between economic and environmental sustainability and reducing poverty.

5. They emphasised the importance of greater freedom and flexibility through devolution to creating inclusive local economies, and the role of councils as leaders of place.
6. Both Boards welcomed the emphasis on building long-term financial wellbeing and resilience
7. Cost-of-living is a key theme at this year's LGA Annual Conference. We have developed some web content to set out the LGA's developing position and share case studies on local approaches
8. Effective local approaches to levelling-up should contribute to alleviating cost-of-living pressures in both the medium and long term
9. The LGA has put together proposals for improvement work that could be delivered via this year's Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) grant determination. These include:
 - 9.1. Building on the action learning sessions delivered with Shared Service Architecture to further develop and explore proposals developed within the workshops with groups of councils and key partners
 - 9.2. Development and delivery of the debt maturity framework
10. A further update on these discussions should be possible by the time of the Board