



People and Places Board – Report from Cllr Kevin Bentley (Chairman)

Levelling Up

1. The [Levelling Up Locally Inquiry](#) has now completed all four roundtables, and officers are working to synthesise the themes and ideas from the discussions. The emerging themes of the roundtables will be used in conjunction with previously commissioned research on place and identity, looking at how a local sense of pride in place can be formed as part of the levelling up agenda, and research into how the pandemic may have affected demographic trends and what the implications are for levelling up of any demographic shifts. These results will then be presented to the Inquiry's steering group, with final recommendations being published later this autumn.

Digital infrastructure and inclusion

2. The Board has agreed a new commission exploring the intersection between digital inclusion and infrastructure to inform the Board's lobbying positions related to the scale of the challenge of digital exclusion, its link to digital infrastructure, and the role of local government in supporting the agenda. The final report will include recommendations for Government about how councils can be the link to make infrastructure rollouts more equitable and inclusive.
3. The Board continues to raise concerns about the integration of all analogue lines (PSTN) to digital internet-based infrastructure. A local authority readiness survey was conducted in September and a press release will be distributed highlighting the results. Following a steer from the Board Cllr Mark Hawthorne, the LGA's digital connectivity champion will be holding an event with Mobile UK, County Councils Network and District Councils Network to highlight the importance of local authority digital champions.

Employment and skills

Green Jobs

4. In collaboration with the City Regions Board, the Board has agreed the priority of developing green jobs and skills needed to deliver net zero and green growth in local economies. With the EEHT Board lead members, lead members met with Kate Kennally, the local government representative on the BEIS led Green Jobs Delivery Group. They raised a number of suggestions and issues on how support the skills and business support system to develop green jobs and the pipeline of skills to support them.



5. The Board has prioritised the skills and jobs needed to deliver retrofit in the context of rising energy bills, the evidence of climate change and the general cost of living crisis. The Board has identified the need for the longevity of funding certainty, the potential to develop the right qualifications to develop the skilled workforce needed and the support to businesses. Members will be hosting roundtables, starting later in the autumn, to explore retrofit issues with key partners to develop shared principles needed to address the retrofit challenge.

Economic and social inclusion

6. The boards (People and Places and City Regions) have agreed to examine the role of councils in supporting employment, skills, and economic inclusion. This piece of work will shine a light on the disparities that exist within people and places which impact economic inclusion. It aims to showcase the good practice in local areas through case studies and 'what good looks like' publication and will culminate with Employment, skills, and economic inclusion principles. A series of activities are planned to include an equalities survey and a roundtable.

Further Education reforms

7. The DfE is reforming further education (FE) through legislation and a range of measures which will put employers in the driving seat to determine local skills priorities. This means that Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) will design Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) which will be rolled out across England. We have lobbied through the [Skills Bill](#) (now enacted) and through several consultations for local government – both councils and devolved authorities - to have a clear and strategic role in supporting ERBs to deliver LSIPs. Our [response](#) to the DfE statutory guidance on LSIPs can be found, in which we set out why and how the sector needs to be involved.
8. A DfE consultation is currently running until 12 October on the future of adult skills funding and accountability. This affects both the wider skills system at a local level and specifically council-run adult and community learning. Feedback from the local government sector suggests this could have a significant impact on local deliver. A response is being developed.

Ministerial engagement

9. In August, Board Chairs wrote to the new Ministers for Skills (Andrea Jenkyns MP) and Employment. After positive responses, we are seeking meeting dates.

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Meeting: Councillors' Forum

Date: 20 October 2022



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