

## **City Regions Board – report from Sir Richard Leese CBE (Chair)**

1. The Board is one of the sponsors of the City Growth Commission, which is due to publish its final report on October 22. Gr. Uff. Marco Cereste and I gave evidence to RSA Commissioners on 17 September and further discussions with LGA members took place during the party conference season. LGA evidence highlighted that those places that are ready to run must be given an early opportunity (included some counties), the role of smaller cities needed to be considered and the urgent need to reform our skills and employment system to adopt more effective locally-led approaches. Jim O'Neill, the Chair of the Commission, will be attending the Board meeting on 20 October to discuss the final recommendations.
2. The LGA held a Chatham House seminar with senior government officials who were joined by the City Regions Board's Chief Executives advisor and representatives of the LEP Network. The LGA presented headline issues on behalf of the sector which included the need for continued delivery at sub-regional level. However, we set out a case for reform which included a consideration of overlapping boundaries and the need for LEP institutional reform to be accompanied by further decentralisation and review of wider government's own overlapping geography.
3. I met with the outgoing Chief Executive of the British Property Federation in September to discuss potential joint working. The inward investment agenda was seen a strong area of common ground as the BPF have been promoting the attractiveness of city regions outside London and the SE to property investors.
4. The Board has appointed Oxford Economics to deliver new analysis on future projections related to trade and investment across English city regions. This research is expected to be completed by the end of November, and will lay the groundwork for the development of more detailed proposals for an enhanced city region role in future policy and delivery arrangements.
5. The Board is working collaboratively with the People and Places Board to make the case for locally-led approaches to skills and employment services. New analysis has been commissioned from the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (CESI), looking at the current employment programmes from the perspective of individuals. We have also commissioned National Institute of Economic Research (NIESR) to analyse a number of local employment schemes. This research is designed to cover the effectiveness of each scheme, based on outcomes and the factors driving it, and comparative success rates with national programmes.
6. Finally, the next meeting of the City Regions Board on October 20 promises to be very lively indeed, with discussions about future devolution at the heart of the agenda. In addition to Jim O'Neill, Lord Adonis will also be attending to share his own reflections about what ambitious devolution within England might look like, in light of developments following the Scottish referendum.



**Councillors' Forum**

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