

## City Regions Board – Report from Cllr Satvir Kaur (Chair)

### Future of cities

1. Building on the success of the City Regions Board's Urban Summit, the Board organised a Future of Cities drinks reception at the LGA's annual conference. This brought together urban leaders from across the country and all those with an interest in the UK towns and cities to hear an update from the RSA on their Urban Futures Commission and an overview from 3Ci on their work to support long-term finance for achieving net zero.

### Levelling up

2. Following the launch of the LGA's [Levelling Up Locally Inquiry report](#) the Board continues to work to share and disseminate its recommendations. A devolution APPG session took place 3.30pm to 4.30pm on 13 September covering the topic of the 'Levelling Up Locally Inquiry'. It provided an opportunity for speakers Cllr Kevin Bentley (Former People and Places Board Chair, LGA Conservative Group Chair and Leader Essex County Council), Professor Michael Kenny (Director of the Bennett Institute for Public Policy) and Osaro Otobo (British Youth Council Trustee) to reflect upon their involvement in the inquiry and speak to the recommendations for Government.
3. The NHS Confederation, through its Health Economic Partnerships work programme and ICS network, has established a time-limited health and devolution working group. The aim of the group is to understand the priorities, opportunities, and challenges for ICS leaders, how this intersects with English devolution to date and the emerging devolution deals. The Board is co-sponsoring the group alongside the People and Places and Community Wellbeing Boards. To date, four meetings have taken place in April, June, July and September and officers from the LGA and NHS Confederation are working on a final report.

### Urban resilience

4. The Board welcomed Joe Fyans, Head of Research at Localis, to discuss their proposals for a Local Resilience Act and the implications for city regions and urban areas.

## Employment and skills

5. The Board, together with the People and Places Board commissioned Shared Intelligence to work closely with the sector to produce a report on the [role and future skills needs of councils' economic development teams](#). The report makes recommendations for economic development teams, portfolio holders and national organisations. For the latter, these include LGA working with partners such as the Institute of Economic Development, the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport, the Chief Economic Development Officers Society and the What Works Centre to coordinate their individual support offers and explore how best to promote the profession and provide clearer pathways, including through apprenticeships. The report, good practice and next steps were discussed with the sector at a webinar (July 2023).
6. As we move towards a General Election in 2024, our aim is that a returning Government or new administration will adopt LGA's Work Local proposals for employment and skills devolution, which was jointly developed by the People and Places and City Regions Boards. The LGA is working with councils, devolved authorities and local government partner bodies to develop the finer detail.
7. DWP prioritised through the 2023 Spring Budget support to help economically inactive people back into work. We have supported discussions between councils and the Government on the design phase of Universal Support set to be rolled out in 2024. Discussions have been positive, representing a step change in DWP's relationship with local government on employment support, but key decisions are outstanding including the extent to which it will be delivered through local government.
8. At the LGA annual conference in July, we held a policy session on skills at which Cllr Kevin Bentley, Mayor Marvin Rees (previous chairs of the People and Places and City Regions Boards) and Cllr Lucy Nethsingha (Children and Young People Board) debated the role of local government can have working with employers to bring together the education and skills system. Panellists also included Jane Gratton, Head of People Policy at the British Chambers of Commerce and we heard first-hand from adult learner, Vicky Seagers, who won an award for overcoming barriers to learning and accessed her local council's adult learning services, which enabled her to pursue her vocation in nursing.
9. This Board and the People and Places board developed principles suggesting how local government could promote economic inclusion through better access to training and employment opportunities. The work concluded in June and can be viewed on our website [LGA Economic Inclusion Principles paper](#) Cllr Gareth Roberts chaired a webinar on 3 October reflecting on learning from this work.

## Green jobs and skills

10. The Government's Green Jobs Delivery Group Local Capacity and Capability sub-group runs between March and September. The LGA has been engaging with the partners to support the sub-committee as well as develop our own policy work, outlining the need for a [Green Jobs framework](#), based on the principles of the LGA's [Work Local model](#). The group met in June to commence shaping the recommendations.

## Growth funding

11. The Board, alongside the People and Places Board, held a session at the LGA's annual conference exploring whether growth should be a statutory responsibility. The session also looked at what kind of economy local leaders would seek to create if they had more powers to do so. The session was chaired by Cllr Kevin Bentley (Chair of the People and Places Board) and speakers included Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe (Bradford City Council and Vice-Chair of the City Regions Board), Steve Hughes (WPI Economics), Antony Lockley (Blackpool Council) and Lee Rowley MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, DLUHC).
12. The Board, alongside the People and Places Board commissioned Shared Intelligence to provide support for councils and combined authorities undertaking Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) integration and to share good practice and learning. This resource, which includes a self-assessment tool, is now [available on the LGA website](#).
13. Earlier this year, we commissioned Shared Intelligence to undertake action learning sets to support lead authorities with the development of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment plans and early stages of delivery. Using the results of the learning, we have refreshed the LGA's [UK Shared Prosperity Fund Hub](#) which provides the learning from the action learning sets and additional resources to support lead authorities. This has been shared widely through the UKSPF Officer Network.

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