

## People and Places summary work plan

### Purpose of Report

For direction.

**Is this report confidential? No**

### Summary

This report summarises the Board's projects and programmes for the 2023/24 cycle.

**LGA Plan Theme:** Stronger local economies, thriving local democracy

### Recommendation(s)

**That the Board comment on and agree the activity, including the proposals in paragraphs 24, 25 and 29.**

### Contact details

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# People and Places summary work plan

## Background

1. Following discussions with the Board and Lead Members, officers have refined the Board's work plan to reflect members' priorities under the Board's over-arching themes.
2. Within each theme, the Board will advocate for the particular needs and opportunities of non-metropolitan areas.
3. Where the workstream is 'ongoing', we will use a variety of channels to promote our messages, including responding to inquiries; commenting on announcements and media stories; briefing for meetings and events, and contributing to corporate activity such as Budget submissions.

## Local economic growth

### Councils' role in growth and prosperity

4. Working with WPI Economics to develop proposals to strengthen councils' role in local economies. **November 2023**

### Funding for growth

5. Lead members of the People and Places and City Regions Boards agreed a proposal to commission research on alternative models for local growth funding to inform national policy development and the LGA's Local Government White Paper. **March 2024**
6. Continuing to make the case for reducing the number of competitive, short-term funding pots, including through the Government's funding simplification plan. **Ongoing**

### Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) integration

7. Lead members of the People and Places and City Regions Boards agreed a proposal to commission peer support and shareable findings for those councils currently working to integrate their LEP. The work is intended to support councils to reduce risks and maximise opportunities in integrating LEP functions. **March 2024**
8. Making the case for adequate funding to accompany new responsibilities. **Ongoing**

## Skills and employment

### Entrenching our Work Local proposals with political parties and stakeholders

9. Building on our Work Local campaign to expand the detail of how our proposals would work in practice (**March 2024**) and embedding our proposals in party manifestos (**ongoing**).

### The importance of transport for skills and employment

10. Examining how the transport system impacts people and places by limiting or enabling access to skills, training, and the labour market and making recommendations for change. **Summer 2024**

## **Sector-specific skills policy: future of energy; nature recovery; food and farming**

11. Building on our green jobs framework to make the case for a more localised skills and employment systems that can develop the necessary skills pipelines for particular industries or sectors as directed by the Board. **March 2024**

## **Influencing Youth Employment UK's Youth Commission on the impact of the DfE's reforms to post-16 qualifications**

12. Influence the Commission's findings to ensure the role and needs of local authorities are effectively represented. **January 2024.**

## **Devolution and levelling up**

### **Best practice in health devolution**

13. Through the joint LGA and NHS Confederation working group, share good practice and emerging recommendations for how devolution policy areas and Integrated Care Systems can best work together. **November 2023**

### **Making the case for further devolution to non-metropolitan areas**

14. Building on the Levelling Up White Paper and emerging deals with non-metropolitan areas, continuing to highlight the LGA's view that all areas that want it should be able to benefit from devolution, and that this should not be contingent on having a directly elected Mayor. **Ongoing**

### **Highlighting councils' role in levelling up**

15. Through the LGA's 'Make it Local' campaign, Local Government White Paper and other channels, highlight councils' contributions to levelling up through their existing powers and functions. **Ongoing**

## **Digital connectivity**

### **Councils' role in digital connectivity (mobile and broadband)**

16. Engaging with Government and other stakeholders to promote councils' role in improving digital connectivity, including through the creation of local digital champions. **Ongoing**

### **Councils' role in digital inclusion**

17. Engaging with Government and other stakeholders to promote councils' role in digital inclusion, including the need for a new Government strategy. **Ongoing**

### **Digital switchovers: PSTN and 2G/3G**

18. Raising awareness with Government, stakeholders, and the public of the risks associated with the upcoming digital switchovers, including taking forward work resulting from the 2G/3G survey of councils. **Ongoing**

## **Artificial intelligence**

19. Develop a discussion paper for Board members to give their steer on priorities in this area. **January 2024**

## Strategic housing and transport

20. The LGA Board agreed that the People and Places and City Regions Boards' existing remits be expanded to include "strategic housing and transport," in particular the powers and functions associated with devolution deals. This is complementary to the Local Infrastructure and Net Zero Board's remit.

21. Members of this Board have been clear that their interest in housing and transport is wide-ranging and they wish to ensure that the needs and opportunities of non-metropolitan areas are well represented in the LGA's wider work. This Board has done so in the past, for example in contributing to the then Economy, Environment, Housing and Transport Board's work on nutrient neutrality. Officers will always endeavour to work with policy teams across the LGA to bring a non-metropolitan perspective; Board members are also encouraged to make use of their political group offices and colleagues on other LGA Boards to contribute to discussions.

## Strategic housing

22. The LGA, led by the EEHT/LINZ Boards, has a strong track record of advocating for councils on matters such as social housing, planning reform, homelessness, and building safety. These policy areas continue to form a core part of the LINZ Board's work programme.

23. The People and Places and City Regions Boards' new remits allows members to take a more joined-up approach. Building on these individual policy areas, the Board will take responsibility for promoting councils' role in integrating housing with wider growth, regeneration and place-shaping outcomes; identifying barriers to doing so; and making the case for the devolution of necessary powers and funding. The Board will also have responsibility for identifying and responding to the challenges and opportunities for non-metropolitan areas, including commissioning research and making policy recommendations.

24. In discussions, members have shared their firm views on the importance of housing to underpin inclusive and sustainable growth; regeneration, and wellbeing. While the LGA's argument for local government being at the heart of the housing solution is well-established, People and Places and City Regions members might wish to commission a new piece of work that sets out the importance of housing to place-shaping and levelling up; articulates councils' role as leaders of place to convene different partners and services in an area and makes recommendations for where further change is needed. This would complement the LGA's existing [six-point plan for housing](#).

25. The research could also include a review of the particular challenges and opportunities for rural, coastal and non-metropolitan areas. This could build on the Board's 2021 [Rural recognition, recovery, resilience and revitalisation report](#), which found that affordability of housing was a key issues for rural workers in local jobs; and the findings of Localis' [Brightness on the Edge of town](#) report which was supported by the Board and which

examined the pressures on housing arising from second homes and holiday lets. Members' views on this proposal would be welcome.

### **Strategic transport**

26. As with strategic housing the new strategic transport remit allows the People and Places and City Regions Board to take a holistic approach to how places can meet the current and future transport needs in an area. In particular the remit covers those transport powers included in devolution deals: control and integrations of local transport functions through local transport plans; bus franchising; consolidation of transport funding, and places' relationships with Great British Railways. The Board will also have responsibility for identifying and responding to the particular challenges and opportunities for non-metropolitan areas, including commissioning research and making policy recommendations.
27. In discussions, members touched on the challenges of providing bus services, particularly in more rural areas; the importance of transport connectivity for job seekers and those accessing training, and the challenges of decarbonising transport systems in rural areas with higher car use.
28. This Board, City Regions and the LINZ Board have jointly commissioned an investigation into the importance of transport system to skills and employment support (par. 10). The LINZ Board recently [published a report](#), commissioned by the then EEHT Board, proposing a review of legislation to allow all areas of England have the powers to decide the way bus services are delivered and a greater long-term investment in local bus services.
29. Should members wish to undertake further work in this area, they might consider commissioning an analysis of the particular issues for decarbonising transport in non-metropolitan areas and proposals for options to address this. This could include refining the LGA's ['routemap' setting out options for decarbonising transport](#) more generally, and where examples are largely drawn from more urban areas. Members' views on this proposal are welcome.

### **Implications for Wales**

30. Most areas of the Board's work are devolved, but officers will share learning with the Welsh Local Government Association as needed.

### **Financial Implications**

31. All commitments can be met from the Board's policy budget; some new proposals may have to be considered for the next financial year.

### **Equalities implications**

32. The Board has sought to reflect the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion throughout its work programme, including the particular needs of communities in non-metropolitan areas. An equalities champion is due to be centrally appointed to the Board in the autumn.

## Next steps

33. Officers will progress the activities as set out above.