

## **Work programme updates**

### **Purpose of Report**

For information.

**Is this report confidential? No**

### **Summary**

This paper provides members with an update of activity across the Board's work programme. Members might like to note the priorities agreed by lead members for the Board's work on strategic housing and transport.

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

### **Recommendation(s)**

**That the Board notes the updates.**

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## Work programme updates

### Background

1. This paper outlines the work undertaken since the last Board meeting across the Board's work programme. It also shares with members the priorities agreed by lead members for the Board's work on strategic housing and transport.

### Strategic housing and transport

2. Lead members discussed the thoughtful and ambitious proposals put forward by members, which covered a wide range of topics. They agreed that the Board's next two meetings will be used for an in depth discussion of these policy areas, today's meeting on transport being the first. For the housing-themed meeting in March, the follow themes were agreed:
  - 2.1. How to maintain/increase social housing in cities, particularly supported housing – including the role of developers.**
  - 2.2. The previous LGA Chairman, Cllr James Jamieson OBE, is a member of the Government [Older People's Housing Taskforce](#), which was launched in May 2023 to look at options for the provision of greater choice, quality and security of housing for older people. Cllr Jamieson will attend the March Board meeting to update members on the Taskforce's emerging findings and members will have the opportunity to influence its recommendations.
  - 2.3. Good practice in successfully building communities (not just housing). Estate renewal, including the difficulties of doing so in places with low land values.**
  - 2.4. Lead members were minded to invite speaker(s) to the March Board. Speakers from [Poundbury](#) and the [Castle Vale Community Housing Association](#) were mentioned as possibilities. Other suggestions from members are welcome, particularly from coastal areas.
3. In response to other proposals raised by members, there are opportunities to take forward work alongside other LGA Boards. For example, this Board and the People and Places Board will be invited to contribute to work led by the Economy and Resources and Local Infrastructure and Net Zero Boards on support for low income households, including temporary accommodation costs. In addition, the People and Places Board and LINZ Boards have indicated an interest in local government's relationship with Homes England. Elements of Homes England's

work are included within devolution deals and policy work in this area should sit with City Regions and People and Places to progress; a meeting of lead members from all three Boards might be a useful first step.

4. Officers have kept a record of all members' suggestions and will review them with lead members as the work programme progresses.

## Local economic growth

5. **Growth funding:** The Board, alongside the People and Places Board, has jointly commissioned Athey Consulting to carry out a piece of technical analysis of previous and current growth funds, identify the benefits and challenges of the methodologies used and lessons learned, and explore an alternative future model of growth funding which provides certainty and flexibility for councils which can be used to influence the next or successor government in their preparation for successor growth funds.
6. Officers have met with DLUHC officials to discuss their early thinking on the capacity and capability elements of the government's funding simplification plan.
7. Following comments from the Board and People and Places Board members, the report 'Devolution First: a five-point plan to support local growth and prosperity' has been signed off. Officers are now preparing for publication and a press launch.
8. The LGA also submitted [evidence on levelling up funding](#) in response to a short-notice request from the Public Accounts Committee.
9. **Local Enterprise Partnerships:** The Board, alongside the People and Places Board, has also commissioned Henham Strategy to develop a series of action learning sets to provide an opportunity for local areas to work through the challenges and opportunities of integration, with the findings published quickly for other areas to benefit too. The findings from this research will be used to support the LGA's lobbying of central government to provide further support to councils and combined authorities with next steps following LEP integration.

## Skills and employment

10. **Transport and skills:** To build on the City Regions and People and Places Boards' joint work to ensure economic inclusion, we have commissioned Pragmatix Advisory to examine how the transport system impacts people and places by limiting or enabling access to skills, training, and the labour market.

11. The research aims to illustrate challenges in coastal, rural, and urban areas, as well as groups and communities experiencing disadvantage. The evidence will examine six case study local authorities to show the impact of transport challenges. Each case study area represents one of the six DEFRA rural/urban classifications: East Lindsey, Northumberland, South Staffordshire, Southend-on-Sea, Nottingham, and Lambeth. The common themes emerging from the research so far demonstrate that there are barriers to travel especially challenging for disadvantaged demographics; transport affordability is a problem for many people; reducing the cost of travel opens up choices in education and employment opportunities.
12. The final report will make a set of short- and long-term policy recommendations. Pragmatix Advisory will be invited to present the findings and recommendations to the board in March.
13. **Green Jobs:** The LGA has been supporting Kate Kennally, Chief Executive of Cornwall Council, who is the local government lead on the cross departmental ministerial Green Jobs Delivery Group and the local capacity and capability sub-group. We have been engaging the local government sector such as ADEPT, the Mayoral Combined Authorities network and UK100, as well as representatives of industry, business and training providers, developing recommendations for Government to consider as they draft a green jobs action plan expected after Spring 2024.
14. This has been an opportunity to work with partners and incorporate the principles of Work Local into the recommendations and develop the LGA's [Green Jobs Framework](#). We have engaged members and sought feedback from the City Regions, People & Places and the then EEHT Boards throughout this process during the 2022/23 Board cycle, with lead members of the three Boards providing additional feedback to the final draft of recommendations in December 2023.
15. We are also undertaking research into the role local government can play in supporting local food and drink supply chains. It will identify good practice in ensuring the local food and drink production, retail and tourism is central to delivering jobs and business growth. We are also seeking a supplier to provide additional research to support this work.
16. **Youth Employment UK Commission:** The LGA has been supporting the Youth Employment UK Commission on Level 2 and 3 Pathways for young people. The Commission aims to understand the impact of the Department for Education's decision to remove funding and support for some Level 2 Apprenticeships and for some Level 2 and Level 3 vocational qualifications, and to propose solutions that will 'allow all young people to flourish'.

17. Councillor Robert Alden along with Councillor Louise McKinlay from the People and Places Board continue to support the work of the Commission. A number of meetings have taken place between June 2023 and December 2023 and have involved young people, colleges, employers, and experts in youth employment and economics. The commission has also undertaken some 'deep dives' into local areas to demonstrate and evidence the impact of reforms on local areas.
18. The Commission is now moving into the final phase of developing short-term and long-term solutions. The LGA is continuing to engage with the Commission to ensure that the sector's views are reflected in the recommendations.
19. The Commission has agreed that the recommendations should be based on the following principles: a) inclusion, aspiration, appropriate, holistic; b) sufficiency and efficiency; c) equality and quality; d) flexibility; e) integration and clarity; f) clear and stable signalling of the skills value of qualifications. The Commission is due to produce a final report in early 2024 with policy recommendations.
20. **House of Lords Public Services Committee inquiry into the transition from education to employment for young disabled people:** Last year the House of Lords Public Services Committee launched an [inquiry into the transition from education to employment for young disabled people](#).
21. The inquiry aims to examine young disabled people's experiences of the transition from education to employment. This will include career and employment support and advice young disabled people receive throughout this transition; how far public services demonstrate best practice on employing young disabled people; support for employers; and enforcement of the rights of young disabled people in the workplace.
22. As part of this inquiry, the Committee is examining the role of local government during this transition, for example, the provision of employment support, training, and opportunities, and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). The LGA has been invited to give [written and oral evidence to the Committee](#)..

## Devolution and levelling up

23. **Health devolution:** The NHS Confederation, through its Health Economic Partnerships work programme and ICS network, established a time-limited health and devolution working group. The aim of the group was 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 co-sponsored the group alongside the People and Places and Community Wellbeing

Boards. Four meetings took place in April, June, July and September and officers from the LGA and NHS Confederation are finalising the report encapsulating the findings from the working group so that it can be considered by members.

24. **UKSPF Webinar:** In December 2023, Cllr Martin Tett chaired a webinar to share learning from the UKSPF. The webinar received 196 viewers and included the learning from the [commissioned action learning sets](#) from Shared Intelligence, as well as the experiences of combined authorities, district and unitary councils. The webinar particularly focused on partnership working, social value and the delivery of both the People & Skills priority and the Rural England Prosperity Fund.

## Urban Summit

25. Work continues to develop an agenda for the third urban summit. The date has been set for the 18 June 2024 and the LGA's headquarters at Smith Square in London have been booked as the venue. Conversations are underway with Core Cities, Key Cities and London Councils and a draft agenda will be brought to the March Board for comment and consideration.

## Implications for Wales

26. Officers work with all UK Associations to share good practice and learning.

## Financial Implications

27. All activity described can be met from the Board's policy budget.

## Equalities implications

28. The Board's work programme includes consideration of equalities implications, both explicitly as part of individual projects and throughout all our policy work. We anticipate confirmation of the Board's Equalities Champion shortly.

## Next steps

29. Officers will progress work as described above.