

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

### Future of cities

1. Building on the success of last year's Urban Summit, and the Future of Cities drinks reception at the LGA's conference, the Board has agreed to host a third Urban Summit on 18 June 2024. Members have agreed that as we look to the next general election, the third urban summit will have a more focused agenda to give the Board and its partner Special Interest Groups a platform to engage key national decision makers and politicians, to amplify our offer: that, with the right policies, finances and space to deliver, cities can produce better outcomes, not just for urban areas, but for the whole country.

### Strategic transport

2. The Board met in Manchester to discuss our new strategic transport remit, without which we cannot ensure local people benefit from local growth. We heard from Jason Prince, director of the Urban Transport Group; Henri Murison, Northern Powerhouse Partnership chief executive and Councillor Bev Craig, Leader of Manchester City Council. Councillor John Merry, Deputy Mayor of Salford then hosted us at their 100 Embankment development. The Board is clear that greater local leadership of transport planning and investment must be underpinned by a clear vision and integrated into the wider economic agenda for cities. We will now develop a work programme to progress this agenda.

### Levelling Up

3. 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.

### Employment and skills

4. The LGA has submitted written evidence to the House of Lords [Public Services Committee inquiry into the transition from education to employment for young disabled people](#). In addition, Councillor Martin Tett along with two sector colleagues gave oral evidence [to the Committee](#) highlighting the role of councils in supporting young disabled people and funding pressures, and our Work Local model for improving the system.
5. To build on the City Regions and People and Places Boards' joint work to ensure economic inclusion, Pragmatix Advisory has been commissioned to examine

how the transport system impacts people and places by limiting or enabling access to skills, training, and the labour market. The project has engaged with the sector and will present its draft findings/report in March 2024.

6. The LGA continues to support discussions between councils and the Department for Work and Pensions on the design of Universal Support, a new employment support programme to be grant funded to (clusters of) councils and devolved authorities. Designed to help people back into work, including people with health conditions, the programme is set to be phased in across areas later this autumn. We have secured a meeting between LGA politicians and Mims Davies MP, the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work to ensure there is a clear understanding and joint commitment to delivering this, as well as to negotiate any outstanding issues. It is likely to take place during the next month.
7. As we move towards a General Election in 2024, all political parties are interested in ensuring investment for infrastructure, jobs and skills gets to places. Our aim is that a returning Government or new administration will adopt policies to improve public employment and skills services, so they work better for people, places and local employers, and which take us towards our Work Local employment and skills devolution ambitions. The LGA has established a working group of officers from councils, devolved authorities and local government partner bodies to develop finer detail.

### Contact details

Contact officer: Philip Clifford

Position: Principal Policy Adviser

Phone no: 07909 898 327

Email: [philip.clifford@local.gov.uk](mailto:philip.clifford@local.gov.uk)