
Responsibilities Working Group Update

1. Since the last Steering Group meeting the Responsibilities Working Group has had one meeting. This paper provides a summary of the issues discussed by the group and outlines a proposed forward look for the group's work.
2. The Responsibilities Working Group was held on 19 September 2016, where the main agenda item discussed was how to take forward the Steering Group's commission to develop options on the responsibilities/functions which could be included within an integrated employment and skills package to be funded through retained business rates. This fed into a broader discussion about the group's work plan over the coming months.
3. The Working Group agreed that sector expertise would be necessary, and to lever that knowledge in through the creation of a sub-group. The remit of the sub-group would be to explore the options available in the areas of employment and skills and make recommendations to the working group on system redesign and whether this is appropriate for funding from business rates. The deep dive workshops identified four broad areas which local government could have responsibility for in relation to employment and skills, including:
 - Preparing people to take advantage of the education system,
 - Preparing people for the world of work/ transitions,
 - Helping people reconnect with employment and learning to support progression, and
 - Working with employers to foster business growth.

The group agreed that these four areas could create a framework for the sub-group to identify suitable responsibilities to devolved within the economic growth sector.

4. Going forward, the group recognised that there is further work to be carried out to identify additional responsibilities to put forward for consideration. At the same time, the group would like to explore in detail the existing items under consideration in Chapter 3 of the consultation paper, focusing in particular on the implementation issues associated with each. Our work over the coming months will therefore fall broadly into one of the following packages:
 - Developing options on an employment and skills package of responsibilities to be devolved and funded through business rates,
 - Implementation issues of any responsibilities confirmed for devolution.
5. Initially, and in advance of any decisions about the content of any package of responsibilities, the implementation work strand will consider the practicalities of devolving the particular grants or responsibilities listed in the consultation paper in turn. The work programme would however be revised as necessary following any confirmation by Government of responsibilities or grants to be included. A summary of the working group's quarterly plan is attached.