

LGA Special Interest Group Annual Report to LGA Leadership Board

SIG Name:	Key Cities
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Membership

The Key Cities Group is a cross-party partnership of mid-sized city councils, acting as a united voice for working with Government. Our membership currently consists of local authorities in 25 cities. These are: Blackpool, Bournemouth, Bradford, Carlisle, Coventry, Derby, Doncaster, Gloucester, Hull, Kirklees, Lancaster, Medway, Newport, Norwich, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Preston, Salford, Southampton, Southend-on-Sea, Sunderland, Swansea, Tees Valley Mayoral Combined Authority, Wakefield, and Wolverhampton. The group is currently chaired by Cllr Peter Box CBE, Leader of Wakefield Council.

Eligibility to Key Cities is extended to mid-sized cities included in the Centre for Cities 'Cities Index' as well as other areas which do not fit into this population band but are significant to the wider area in their local economy and to the UK as a whole.

Aims

The Key Cities Group aims to provide focus, collaboration of learning and a unified voice to ensure that those cities within the group are more visible and are consistently represented in policy-making at a national level. We are working to lobby Government and engage with critical Government Ministers based on a clear and consistent set of key asks and messages which are unique to our group – in order to influence sufficient influence over the national agenda.

WHAT IS THE GROUP'S PURPOSE?

- To provide a united voice for mid-sized cities
- To make the case for greater investment in our cities
- To share expertise and promote collaboration between cities, sectors and industries to seize post-Brexit opportunities
- Develop policy to strengthen resilience, and improve economic performance and social cohesion in our cities

WHAT MAKES KEY CITIES UNIQUE?

- Available land with room to expand
- Diversifying economies
- Reduced dependence on single industries
- Targeted and sophisticated strategies to support economic development
- Major strengths in manufacturing and exports

WHAT DO KEY CITIES OFFER?

- Strong returns on public investment to boost productivity
- 'Test beds' for innovative government policies
- Agility to respond quickly to new opportunities
- A strong partnership with central Government

Key Activities / Outcomes of work

Group Meetings

The Key Cities Executive Group meet on average 6 times a year, with Full Group meetings taking place quarterly.

APPG

We are supported by an All-Party Parliamentary Group in Westminster. Our APPG was re-launched on the 28th April 2018.

- The next APPG meeting has been scheduled to take place Wednesday 10th July 2019 with a focus on bridging the skills gap through the Industrial Strategy.

Conferences and Events

- Young People's Conference held in Huddersfield (hosted by Kirklees Council) on 25th July 2018.
- Beyond Brexit event held in London (hosted by Sunderland) on the 20th November 2018.
- Future of City and Town Centres conference on 29th January 2019. This conference was fully booked and exceeded the venue capacity of 250 people.
- NLGN "Cities in Action" parliamentary launch on 5th February 2019.
- Key Cities and Core cities "Cultural Cities enquiry" launch on 5th February 2019.
- Fringe event at the LGA's annual conference in Bournemouth 6pm-7pm 3rd July 2019.
- Joint Fringe event between Key Cities and Core cities 3rd July 8am-9am at the Marriott Hotel, Highcliffe, Bournemouth. Focus to be on tourism levies.

Media activity

- Significant press coverage around the Key Cities Future of City and Town centres conference including Open Access Government and the Guardian.
- Significant press coverage and media activity/commentary across a range of issues effecting local government from the perspective of the medium sized city – coverage across trade and national and local press – including the Guardian, The

Times (Raconteur), First and MJ.

Collaborative partnerships

- Developing relationships and linkages with think tanks, (including Onward) and universities (including Leeds Beckett University) to develop policy positions on a range of issues relevant to local government.
- Working in collaboration with other local government networks including the Core Cities, County Council's Network, SIGOMA, and the Industrial Communities Alliance.

Other projects

- Commissioned a research report on Economic Growth to be completed in partnership with New Local Government Network (NLGN).
- Commissioned a research report on Cities in Action to be completed in partnership with New Local Government Network (NLGN).