

Key Cities partners with the BSA to address UK skills shortage

09 April 2018 – [Key Cities](#), a collaboration of 20 mid-sized cities across the UK, has agreed a partnership with the Business Services Association (BSA) to deliver a range of initiatives to promote current and future skills development – a key driver of the UK’s economic growth.

The BSA and Key Cities will deliver three regional workshop sessions in Bradford, Coventry and Southampton, as well as working together on seminars on local industrial strategies and business services with a particular focus on skills development. The seminars are being arranged with local enterprise partnerships, combined authorities and other stakeholders, starting in April 2018.

Key Cities was founded in 2013 and now represents 20 cities across England and Wales. It seeks to promote mid-sized cities and urban areas as engines of economic opportunity and inclusive growth for the UK, and ensure local areas across Britain are empowered to deliver greater opportunities and public services for their residents.

The agreement with the BSA represents a shared commitment to strengthening skills in the cities in which they operate, and the organisations will explore further areas for cooperation including on policy issues.

Councillor Peter Box CBE, Chair of Key Cities and Leader of Wakefield Council comments: “The skills gap is one of the main barriers to improved productivity across industries throughout the UK. Fast-moving policy changes in this area, such as the introduction of the apprenticeship levy and the devolution agenda, as well as the implications of Brexit for future labour availability, make this a complex topic to address.

“The Key Cities members have identified current and future skills requirements as a priority issue across all our regions, and we’re looking forward to working closely with the BSA to help shape a skills system that works for communities, cities and industry now and in the future.”

Peter Campbell, Director of Corporate Affairs at the BSA, comments: “The business services sector employs over three million people, spread across every community in the UK. The sector therefore has a vital role delivering skills and training, helping people develop their careers, and making sure economic growth is truly inclusive and benefits everyone.

“The skills businesses will need in the future is a vital issue for BSA members. This initiative is one way in which the sector can work with Place leaders to help put these skills in place.”

Key Cities and the BSA are currently exploring further opportunities for joint working, which will be discussed during regional workshops and internal forums in the coming months.

-ENDS-

About Key Cities

During the summer of 2013 we officially brought together the Key Cities Group, comprising 20 of the UK’s cities. Cities with a GVA £149 billion and population of 7.2 million when combined, and ones which play a key role in their regional economy: some are centres of innovation, some are centres for production, whilst others may be the focus for trade.

The attributes of Key Cities are by no means uniform, but the diverse nature of the individual cities’ heritage and assets, when brought together, offers a significant combined presence.

We feel that the Key Cities Group is an essential step forward in capturing and representing an important element of the debate on behalf of all member cities, and indeed others who are not represented now.

It is our strong belief that Key Cities presents us with a significant opportunity. We see ourselves as very much part of the agenda for promoting economic growth nationwide. The Key Cities Group is about providing our cities with more opportunities to boost the economic prosperity of the country.

<https://www.keycities.co.uk/>

About BSA

The BSA brings together those interested in delivering efficient, flexible and cost-effective service and infrastructure projects across the private and public sectors.

‘Business services’ in this context comprises ICT, business process outsourcing, facilities management, managed public services and construction and infrastructure services.

Background information on the sector, including a regional and constituency breakdown of employment, turnover and GVA is here: <http://www.bsa-org.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/OE-BSA-report.pdf>

Background information on the BSA, including a list of BSA members, is here: <http://www.bsa-org.com/>

A recent BSA paper on Place-based inclusive growth, including the role of skills and training, is here: <http://www.bsa-org.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Business-Services-and-Place-Based-Inclusive-Growth.pdf>