

Note of last City Regions Board meeting

Title: City Regions Board
Date: Thursday 15 March 2018
Venue: Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest	
	<p>The Chair welcomed Members to the Board.</p> <p>The Chair noted the Apologies.</p> <p>No declarations of interests were made.</p>	
2	Trade and International Update	
	<p>The Chair invited Philip Clifford, Senior Adviser, to introduce the item. Philip updated Members on the progress, focus and direction of work to advance the position of local government in relation to trade and inward investment policy. Philip stated that a main goal within this work-stream is to engage the Department of International Trade (DIT), along with linking them with the Department of Business, Energy and industrial Strategy (BEIS). Philip concluded that the complexities of Brexit was dominating DIT's policy.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Philip for his update and opened the discussion out to Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members made reference to the recent trade visit to Japan, made by Mayor Ben Houchen (Tees Valley), and commented that trade-talks direct from local government being undertaken, but questioned where this information and progression was going.• Members stated the need to ensure the right headway was made with the correct Ministers, who understood local government. Members agreed that it is crucial to employ the correct lobbying tactics.• Members discussed the need for more focused messaging around this work from the LGA.• Members discussed the need to ensure that DIT undertake visits out to the regions across England and Wales, and talk with business leaders and manufacturers.• Members discussed the need to ensure local government representation are included during trade talks and deals.	

The Chair stated that previous asks around this work were quite broad, and that a sustainable, one-voice effort is made. The Chair concluded that it was important to let Ministers know that local government is in this space.

The Chair thanked Members for their comments.

3 Industrial Strategy Update

The Chair invited Alex Thomson, Principal Policy Adviser, and Daniel Gardiner, Adviser, to introduce the item.

Daniel began with an update regarding the current LEP review, being lead by Jake Berry MP. Daniel reminded Members that Cllr's Judith Blake of the LGA's Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT) Board, and Cllr Anne Western of the LGA's People and Places Board both sat on the review, who were feeding back to officers regarding the Review's progress. The fourth and final meeting was to be held in the coming weeks, and officers would update Members once the review publishes its findings and outputs (believed to be in early Spring). Daniel also concluded that a joint letter – submitted on behalf of the Chairs of the city Regions, People and Places and EEHT Boards was sent to the Review, highlighting key areas local government would like to see addressed.

Alex Thomson then updated Members regarding the recent roundtable event, hosted by the LGA and attended by three of the LEP Network Chairs. Alex stated that the meeting was productive and positive. Attendee's at the roundtable finalised wording of the key output of the meeting; a letter to the Secretary of State for the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), cc'ing the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Chancellor of the Exchequer Phillip Hammond MP. The letters three key asks are; unified funding via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF); local leadership and greater local flexibility.

The Chair thanked Alex and Daniel for the update and invited Members to comment:

- Members commented on the different priorities for local government and the LEP Network, but praised the success of the roundtable. Members noted how important it was for local government and the LEP Network to work in partnership, despite these differences.
- Members commented that central government listens more to the LEP Network than to local government.
- Members discussed the importance of the LEP Network to be key stakeholders in the LGA skills and employment work, particularly for the Work Local Campaign.
- Members expressed their confusion of the rollout-dates for the Local Industrial Strategies (LIS) pilots, along with the governments lack of clarity over the selection process of this.
 - Daniel Gardiner stated that currently the Midlands, Manchester and Cambridge had been selected by

government to pilot the first round of the LIS.

- Members discussed the governments vagueness over both timeframes and guidance for the selection of the LIS pilots.
 - Officers suggested inviting Alexandra Jones, Director of Industrial Strategy at BEIS to the next round of Board meetings in June.
- Members discussed the need for a strong unified voice throughout local government regarding improvements to the LEP Network, and LIS pilots.
- Members discussed the disparity of the LEP Networks funding, remit and geography.
- Members stated that the roundtable was the start of a good working partnership.

The Chair concluded the importance not to adopt a one size fits all approach, and to ensure localisation within the LEP Network is at the core of the Review. The Chair also stated that democratic oversight and responsibility was also vital. The Chair thanked Members who attended the roundtable.

Action:

- Invitation extended to Alexandra Jones of BEIS to the next Board.
- a) Letter to LEP Review from Lead Members of the City Regions, People and Places and Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Boards

4 Fiscal Devolution Update

The Chair invited Daniel Gardiner, Adviser, to introduce the Item. Daniel updated Members with the current fiscal devolution work being undertaken with the two commissioned external partners:

- WPI Economics carried out analysis of the:
 - advantages and disadvantages of modelling a tourism tax;
 - devolution of all or part of income tax;
 - a localised payroll levy; and
 - an examination of the contribution of HE to local public services.

Daniel stated that at the previous meeting of the Board's Lead Members, Lead Members recommended that the research should focus on a local tax on tourism and the devolution of all or part of income tax. Daniel stated that their findings will be presented in either June or July.

Daniel then went on to update Members that Public First, who had been commissioned to undertake the Board's Fiscal devolution Messaging work, were finalising the scripts to be used in the upcoming focus groups. The first two of these eight focus groups were due to take place on the week commencing Monday 19 March in Derby and Darlington. Findings from these focus groups will be given to Lead Members for their comments and steer.

The Chair thanked Daniel for his feedback and invited Members to comment:

- Members discussed the idea of video feedback, with the view to present this to the Board.
- Members also requested more information on the selection of people in the focus groups.
- Members discussed with officers the details around the scripts being used in these focus groups.
- Members expressed their disappointment that HE contributions was not shortlisted at this stage.
 - Officers fed back that this will be presented to the Board in the future.
- Members discussed the difference between students paying tax, or student accommodation business (including landlords)/HE institutes paying tax. Members widely agreed that a start with HE institutes and student landlords being taxed more would greatly help this problem faced by many local areas.
 - Officers stated that the work WPI Economics are carrying out need further instruction around this areas of work, which officers will steers following the Board.
- Members discussed the differences in raising and retaining local taxes, or the equalisation and redistribution of a localised tax. Members broadly agreed that the latter benefits local government more.
- Members supported the idea of a local income tax paying for local vital services.
- Members discussed how interesting the differences will be seen in local areas, which are dependent on local politics, ages and population differences.
- Members stressed the importance of not too loose sight of the bigger picture – funding localised services and improving the quality of life for residents.

5 Employment and Skills

The Chair invited Jasbir Jhas, Senior Adviser, to introduce the item.

- Jasbir updated Members regarding the open and positive meeting with the Minister for Skills and Apprenticeships, Rt. Hon Anne Milton MP with Cllr Mark Hawthorne (Chairman of the People and Places Board), and Cllr Peter John (Member of the City Regions Board, in place of Sir Richard Leese).
- Notified Members that the teleconference between LGA Chairman Lord Porter and the new Secretary of State for the Department for Work and Pensions the Rt. Hon Ester McVey had been rescheduled for the 27 March.
- Updated Members that the first set of case studies was now online.
- Updated Members on the progress of the Skills Taskforce, whose first meeting will be summer 2018. Jasbir stated that the Membership was still in progress.

Jasbir reminded Members of the three main Work Local objectives:

closing the skills gap, the creation of local, sustainable jobs, and to review and recommend changes to apprenticeships. Jasbir also proposed that the Task Force meetings adopt an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) style format to focus on the three campaign objectives, inviting key stakeholders to debate issues and develop relationships.

The Chair thanked Jasbir for the update and invited Members to comment:

- Cllr John (who attended the meeting with the Skills Minister), reflected on the positive meeting, and how the MP would like to meet more to build on the systematic partnership with the Department of Education. Cllr John also informed the Board the MP recognises the role local government play in this work.
- Members stated the need to include HE institutes on the list of suggested themed roundtables, including different regional institutes and FE colleges.

The Chair thanked Members for their comments.

a) LGA letter to Rt. Hon Anne Milton MP

6 Note of last City Regions Board meeting

Members agreed to the Note of the last City Regions Board meeting on Monday 29 January 2018.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman		
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Robert Light	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
	Cllr Liz Hazell	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Members	Cllr Robert Alden	Birmingham City Council
	Cllr Samantha Dixon	Cheshire West and Chester Council
	Cllr Jean Stretton	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Jon Collins	Nottingham City Council
	Cllr Peter John OBE	Southwark Council
	Cllr Timothy Swift MBE	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Simon Letts	Southampton City Council
	Cllr Debbie Wilcox	Newport City Council
	Cllr Sue Jeffrey	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
	Cllr Paul Crossley	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Apologies	Cllr Abi Brown	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
	Cllr Donna Jones JP	Portsmouth City Council
	Cllr Tim Warren	Bath & North East Somerset Council
	Sir Richard Leese CBE	Manchester City Council
	Cllr Martin Gannon	Gateshead Council
	Mayor Marvin Rees	Bristol City Council

Mayor Joe Anderson OBE
Cllr Warren Morgan
Cllr Abigail Bell

Liverpool City Council
Brighton & Hove City Council
Hull City Council

In Attendance

LGA Officers