

## Note of last City Regions Board meeting

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**Title:** City Regions Board  
**Date:** Friday 25 January 2019  
**Venue:** Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

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### Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#) to this note

Item	Decisions and actions
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### 1      Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

Apologies of members were noted.

No declarations of interest were made.

### 2      Urban Leadership Campaign

The Chair welcomed Rebecca Cox, Principal Policy Adviser, to the Board.

Rebecca updated the Board on the proposals for the Urban Leadership Campaign. The paper sets out a draft campaign structure, outlines a set of statistical indicators to be used in constructing a campaign evidence base and provides the broad parameters of a commissioned piece of research to advance the case for fiscal devolution.

After a steer from members at the last Board meeting in November, officers concentrated on:

1. the pressures on local authorities and what opportunities can be opened up with other partners to identify new ways of working and where greater fiscal autonomy might lie;
2. how we can take this message forward and;
3. how the wider urban leadership campaign can set out the spending review.

It was explained that paragraph 11-18 set out how to land the campaign with consideration to three audiences: the public, local authorities and the Government.

The Chair updated the Board on what was discussed at the LGA Executive regarding the Fair Funding Review. The Board was informed that there was a strong unanimous view that deprivation should be part of

the foundation formula and also that there should be an evidence base to drive this. The Chair referred to paragraph 16 which explains developing a campaign evidence base, and outlined that there is a list of authorities that provides a ‘pen picture’ of urban authorities, informs future policy direction and the work already developed.

The following points were raised in a discussion with members:

Members welcomed the work being undertaken with other organisations, but emphasised the need for greater representation of urban local authorities as it is fundamental to the formula that it be built around population because areas with the greatest deprivation are not being accurately represented.

Concerns of relevant representative organisations were noted on issues relevant to urban authorities highlighted by the Government’s Fair Funding Review, with specific reference to the additional costs arising as a result of greater population density in urban areas who are also affected by travel speeds, which shows that density is an indicator that also affects costs, and this needs to feed into the work of the LGA.

Regarding the indicators outlined in paragraph 16 towards developing a campaign evidence base, those that do not fit the criteria means that not all urban areas will be correctly identified.

### **Decisions and Actions**

- Officers to incorporate members’ comments on the draft campaign structure and evidence base set out at paragraphs 11-18
- Officers to incorporate members’ comments on the principles outlined in paragraphs 19.

## **3 Spending Review (Verbal Update)**

Hannah Berry, Head of Campaigns and Digital Communications, updated the Board on proposed activity to lobby for greater devolution as part of the LGA’s Spending Review campaign.

Hannah outlined that with the Spending Review as the LGA’s main priority, there needs to be some wider strands to the campaign to echo the main strategies and objectives. One of these strands is devolution, which has been signed off by group leaders.

Hannah informed the Board of the four proposed objectives ahead of member’s feedback:

1. Raise devolution up the national agenda and ensuring that this aim is not lost
2. Ensure that all areas in the country that wish to pursue meaningful devolution can do so

3. Demonstrate that devolving powers to local government is beneficial for central government and local communities
4. Highlight that councils can provide services that people can rely on and trust to deliver.

Hannah outlined the strategies proposed to achieve these aims:

1. To make the case for devolution that it can be successful in a post-Brexit climate to the two key audiences: the public and national politicians.
2. Consistent messaging is essential. The LGA will therefore focus on outlining what powers should be devolved and re-highlighting what benefits devolving these powers would bring.
3. As with the main campaign, the LGA plans to focus on using statistics and real examples in a national and international context.
4. Focus on how councils can be trusted by putting a face to local government through the use of officers and councillors across the country.

The main question posed to the Board was whether as well as highlighting the benefits of devolution, the LGA should also be seeking to highlight the risks of not devolving these powers.

The following discussion took place with members:

There was a keenness to include greater clarity on what is meant by devolution and ensuring we have a consistent definition with government.

There was concern with the structure of devolution not being widely understood by what it could deliver to residents. Therefore, it is important to get the messaging and terminology right in order to achieve this and ensure that local authorities are talking in a language that the public understand.

#### **Decision:**

Members of the Board support the objectives of the Spending Review Campaign.

#### **4 Brexit Update**

The Chair welcomed Ian Hughes, Head of Policy, to update the Board on the progress of the Brexit Taskforce. Ian provided a brief update that covered:

- the LGA's engagement with government departments on Brexit
- the additional government funding announced for councils relating to Brexit
- the efforts being made by the LGA to ensure that councils were being provided with greater certainty by government departments

and that departments wherever possible are acting in a coordinated way.

Comments from members included concerns over levels of engagement with DEFRA on decisions regarding importing of fresh food and livestock.

**Decision:**

Members noted the update.

## **5 Trade and Inward Investment**

The Chair welcomed Daniel Gardiner to the Board. Daniel outlined a draft set of aims to frame the LGA's policy engagement on trade and investment over the coming year, informed by the LGA's engagement in this area to date. Daniel then outlined the proposed next steps for the LGA to take these aims forward with government and key national stakeholders.

The Mayor of Bristol also fed back on a meeting with Secretary of State for International Trade, in which the opportunities to work through cities was highlighted and a commitment was made by the Secretary of State to meet with Core Cities four times per year.

Members made the following comments on the draft aims and next steps:

Emphasis was placed on the need to ensure that government money is not used to promote inter-area competition as this is counter-productive.

In relation to the aim focused on reviewing and strengthening sub-national trade and investment infrastructure (paragraph 12), this should feed into the LGA's next steps for engagement with the LEP Network (paragraph 22.6).

Accountability of LEPs remains a key issue.

**Decision:**

Members approved the proposed aims and next steps for the LGA's trade and inward investment work.

## **6 Industrial Strategy (Verbal Update)**

Daniel Gardiner provided the Board with a verbal update on recent developments with local industrial strategies (LIS), the Government's review of local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

In relation to LIS, Daniel outlined that the LGA has now commissioned a local support offer focused on LIS and have secured additional funding from BEIS which has allowed the LGA to appoint two providers – Metro Dynamics and Shared Intelligence – to deliver this offer.

Shared Intelligence will be focusing specifically on understanding and strengthening the role of councils in the development of a LIS and their offer will include the delivery of action learning sets for council officers seeking to instigate or further their authority's engagement with their LIS.

Metro Dynamics will be focusing more broadly on the 'key ingredients' of Local Industrial Strategies and their offer will include the delivery of a series of masterclasses on areas including driving inclusive growth through a LIS and developing a LIS evidence base.

In relation to the LEP Review, Daniel informed the Board that there had been no public announcement on geography thus far though some areas have begun to progress plans for changes and we understand that outstanding geography issues are limited to only a couple of areas.

Daniel also pointed out that the National Local Growth Assurance Framework had been published and that the LGA would continue to explore options relating to strengthening the democratic accountability of LEPs.

In relation to the UKSPF, Daniel noted that the consultation had not been published in December 2018 as planned. Daniel noted that once clarity is provided on the timing of the consultation, officers will consider the most appropriate option for capturing the views of the Board.

Members queried whether any resources were currently available on embedding inclusive growth at the outset of LIS development. Aside from the LGA's support offer, officers noted that the Joseph Rowntree Foundation were developing a report on the ways in which inclusive growth could be embedded into a LIS. Officers noted that this has not yet been published but committed to circulating to the Board once available.

### **Decision and Actions**

- Members noted the information in the verbal update.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation report will be circulated to members once published.

## **7 Devolution Framework (Verbal Update)**

The Chair welcomed Ami Beeton to the Board. Ami provided the board with a verbal update on the devolution framework and the LGA's work to support combined authorities.

Ami noted that the Chairman of the People and Places Board had recently written to the MHCLG Secretary of State regarding the devolution framework and that the LGA had received a holding reply from the Department's Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Jake Berry MP. Ami noted that there remains uncertainty around the scope and content of the devolution framework and when it will be published.

Ami also brought to members attention work commissioned by MHCLG looking at the internal institutional process of combined authorities. The

LGA are expecting the findings of this work to be published in May and will be working with MHCLG to consider how this might inform the LGA's offer to combined authorities.

Ami concluded by noting that the LGA would be discussing concerns regarding reporting demands on combined authorities with the Combined Authority Chief Executive Network in February.

The Chair thanked Ami for her update, and congratulated her on securing her secondment placement at Surrey Council.

The Chair also highlighted the robust evidence review being undertaken in Greater Manchester through the GM Independent Prosperity Review.

### **Decision**

Members noted the update.

## **8 Employment and Skills Update**

The Chair introduced Jasbir Jhas to the Board.

Jas updated the Board on the LGA's skills and employment activity. This included progress on the Skills Taskforce jointly developed by this Board and the People and Places Board which aims to engage stakeholders on our 'Work Local' proposals.

A brief summary of the first roundtable (December 2018) was given, which included discussions on apprenticeships, low skills, career progression and the National Retraining Scheme.

Once the three roundtables are conclude (March 2019), officers will bring a paper to the Board on next steps.

The reformed Social Mobility Commission, chaired by Dame Martina Milburn, is due to release its 'State of The Nation' report in March 2019. The last report stated that councils should be doing more around social mobility. LGA officers have suggested that due to the cross cutting nature of social mobility, the SMC chair should be invited to the a future LGA Executive as this would provide a good opportunity to discuss the development of the report.

Bushra Jamil, informed members that a paper was presented to this Board in February 2017 which highlighted the sectors ambitions in terms of an all age careers service. Since the LGA's position paper there has been the launch of the Careers Strategy and more recently the establishment of Careers Hubs,. Therefore, it is now an opportune time for the LGA to refresh its careers policy, as part of our Work Local campaign. Officers intend to produce a more detailed paper to the Board at a future meeting for discussion.

Cllr Peter John gave a brief update on London Councils 'Better Ways to Work' report on the labour markets in London. Cllr John outlined that it calls for Government to work closer with local government in fashioning

how this agenda is taken forward. The report is available online and will be circulated to members.

The Chair introduced Lesley Giles, Director at the Work Foundation. Lesley leads a work programme seeking to champion 'good work' and to improve policy and business practices.

Given the range of issues covered by this Board, Lesley was asked to give her reflections on the following:

- our ability to address inclusive growth and the productivity challenge including through the current employment and skills system;
- the future of work including insecure work, the outlook post-Brexit and the continued advancement of new technology; and
- potential for the Industrial Strategy and local industrial strategies to address these challenges and opportunities nationally, locally and by sector.

Key points from presentation and discussion:

- According to ONS 96 per cent of our economy is small businesses. This is challenging management capability and leading to business polarisation of high and low skilled jobs.
- New technology and automation of jobs is resulting in skills gap, which need to be addressed with the changing nature of future work.
- According to OECD data, UK has young people leaving the education system with lower skills than the older generation, which indicates that we have not utilised technology effectively and upskilling the workforce is increasingly important.
- The Local Industrial Strategy offers a vital framework to drive the economy, strengthen partnerships and provide a whole government perspective. This offers an opportunity to look at how to align a national strategy with local areas needs and unlock potential devolution.
- Recent employment growth has been in low wage, part-time contracts and job uncertainty, which questions the role of legislation relating 'good work'. It is critical for employers to ensure 'good work' as this affects the wellbeing of workers.
- Work Foundation have dedicated projects with businesses to think about specific health conditions and tailored health management systems.

The Chair thanked Lesley Giles for presenting to the Board.

#### **Decisions and Actions:**

- London Councils 'Better Ways to Work' report is available online

and will be circulated to members.

- Once the three roundtables are conclude (March 2019), officers will bring a paper to the Board on next steps.

## 9 Note of the Previous Meeting

Members **agreed** the minutes from the last meeting.

### Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Sir Richard Leese CBE	Manchester City Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Abi Brown	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Clarence Barrett	Havering London Borough Council
Members	Cllr Robert Alden Cllr Sean Anstee CBE Cllr John Beesley Cllr Martin Gannon Mayor Marvin Rees Cllr Jon Collins Cllr Peter John OBE Cllr Sue Jeffrey Cllr Roger Lawrence Cllr Paul Crossley	Birmingham City Council Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council Bournemouth Borough Council Gateshead Council Bristol City Council Nottingham City Council Southwark Council Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council City of Wolverhampton Council Bath & North East Somerset Council
Apologies	Cllr Tim Warren Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe Mayor Joe Anderson OBE Cllr Timothy Swift MBE Cllr Debbie Wilcox Cllr Julie Dore Cllr Linda Thomas Cllr Abigail Bell	Bath & North East Somerset Council Bradford Metropolitan District Council Liverpool City Council Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council Newport City Council Sheffield City Council Bolton Council Hull City Council