

Note of last People & Places Board meeting

Title: People & Places Board
Date: Tuesday 11 January 2022
Venue: Online via Microsoft Teams

Attendance

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

Item Decisions and actions

1 Chair's Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes and Declarations of Interest

The Chair wished Members, officers and guests a Happy New Year and welcomed them to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Eddie Reeves, Jordan Meade, Peter Butlin and Doina Cornell. Cllrs Peter Heydon, Colin Kemp and Erica Lewis attended the meeting as substitutes.

Cllr Erica Lewis raised a declaration of interest as a Programme Leader for the Undergraduate Business and Management programmes at the University of Cumbria.

2 Business in the Community update

The Chair welcomed Lord Steve Bassam, Chair of the Business in the Community (BITC) Place Taskforce, and invited Esther Barrott, Adviser, to introduce the report.

Esther introduced the report which provided Board Members with a brief overview of the BITC Place Taskforce and the Board's involvement to date to support a discussion with Lord Steve Bassam.

Lord Bassam presented a series of slides to the Board which set out the following points:

- Background information which related to the Taskforce.
- The Taskforce's primary focus: place, levelling up and the contributions that business could make.
- Recent and upcoming visits, tours and roundtable discussions.
- The role of businesses and projects to engage local people.
- Proposed report contents which covered:
 - How cross-sector collaborative working could be facilitated.
 - The key drivers and barriers for business engagement in place-based working.
 - The lessons that could be learnt from the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - How business could have a truly transformative impact within

communities.

Board Members made the following comments:

- As the Board's Taskforce representative, Cllr Simon Henig spoke, referring to a number of evidence sessions which he had attended to ask questions which had reflected his experiences and those of others. The main priorities that he had focused on in the evidence sessions were place leadership and the role of local government, partnership working and diversity.
- A question was asked which related to best-practice and community engagement and its delivery.
- A question was asked which related to next steps and the way in which the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were monitored.
- Additional focus was required in relation to nature restoration and regenerative farming.
- The Taskforce report should focus on equality as a broader perspective with wider businesses in mind.
- A question was asked which related to engagement with developers.
- A question was asked which related to the LGA responses to the community call for evidence referred to within the report's appendix.
- The importance of local leadership, retaining heritage and culture of areas and buildings and the skills and local jobs agenda was emphasised.
- A concern was raised in relation to planning rights.
- The Chair referred to staffing and recruitment gaps within sectors such as health care and hospitality and asked a question which related to small businesses' ability to meet demand. He also asked a question which related to the Taskforce's next steps.

Lord Bassam responded to Board Members' comments:

- All of the points raised by Board Members would shape the place making agenda.
- In relation to metrics, a better understanding of the way in which successful place making would be measured was needed.
- The Taskforce report would focus on how best to achieve the aspiration that communities had in being more fair and equitable places, levelling-up, and the role that business would play in achieving aims.
- In relation to funding models and resources, the balance between central funding and local funding needed to be better in balance.
- An encouraging place making aspect in looking at town deals had been the ability of local authorities to bring forward projects that make use of heritage projects in regeneration.
- The case needed to be made more strongly by local government to secure greater leverage over developers and ensure that the potential for a site was unlocked sooner.
- BITC was interested in sponsoring and supporting projects that helped to upskill and alter the mix of skills in areas, part of that would address environmental issues and Build Back Better.
- Local government needed to continue to lobby central government

for funding to address recruitment and training gaps in sectors such as health, skills and development and environment.

- In relation to next steps for the Taskforce report, it would continue to be an interactive and live document. It was anticipated that the report and its recommendations would impact government policy and policy in practice at a local level.

Decision:

- Board Members noted the report.

3 Green Skills and Employment

The Chair invited Jacob Coburn, Adviser, to introduce the report.

Jacob referred to recent discussions which related to the need to link together LGA activity on climate change and consider the employment and skills elements, and said that the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport, City Regions and People and Places Boards were presented with a Green Skills and Employment report in November 2021 and had all agreed the next steps within it. Jacob introduced the report which built upon recent work, focusing on next steps and sought Board Member's views and agreement on direction outlined within the report.

Board Members made the following comments:

- The Chair asked a question which related to the level of engagement with universities and the development of new technologies.
- The need to continue to work in partnership with organisations that were providing support to councils in relation to green skills and employment was emphasised.
- The importance of local government continuing to lobby central government for support was emphasised.
- It was suggested that more emphasis be put on rural economy jobs within the report when referring to green jobs, as well as business regulations.
- The Chair reminded Board Members of the work that the Climate Change Network (CCN) undertook and encouraged them to contact CCN colleagues.
- The importance of supporting employers during periods of transition to prevent job loss was emphasised.
- A number of concerns were raised which related to funding, the increase in the cost of raw materials, skills shortages, increases in fuel prices and inflation.
- A question was asked which related to paragraph 14 within the report and the whereabouts of the 24 retrofit officers.
- A question was asked which related to paragraph 2.3 within the report and the definition of 'green skills and jobs'.
- The importance of higher-skill, energy efficient jobs was emphasised.
- A concern was raised which related to the lack of further education funding.

- It was suggested that the definition of green skills and jobs include the creation and recognition of more sustainable workforces and sectors of the economy and emphasise the value of the care sector.
- The importance of retaining sustainability was emphasised.

Jacob responded to Board Members' comments and confirmed that work would continue to be undertaken with universities in relation to green skills and jobs.

Decision:

- Board Members noted the report.

Action:

- Officers to circulate additional information to Board Members in relation to the whereabouts of the 24 retrofit officers referred to within paragraph 14 of the report.

4 Refreshing Work Local - update

The Chair invited Jasbir to introduce the item. Jas referred to the last Board cycle and said that Board Members had requested a further discussion in January 2022 on progress to develop Work Local 2022. Jas also introduced Tony Wilson, Director of the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) and Stephen Evans, Chief Executive of the Learning and Work Institute, who presented the labour market and skills analysis, and Cost Benefit Analysis.

Board Members commented on Tony and Stephen's presentation slides.

A Board Member suggested that devolution be referred to as 'locally-led skills and training'.

Tony and Jasbir responded to Board Members' comments.

Decision:

- Board Members noted the report.

5 Levelling Up update

It was agreed that the item be adjourned to the next meeting in March 2022 to ensure that a full discussion could be had.

6 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

A Board Member suggested that an item which related to housing be

added to the Board's work programme. Rebecca Cox, Principal Policy Adviser, would liaise with the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board's lead officers in relation to housing.

Appendix A - Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
	Cllr Emily Smith	Vale of White Horse District Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Simon Henig CBE	Durham County Council
	Cllr Emily O'Brien	Lewes District Council
Members	Cllr Rachel Bailey	Cheshire East Council
	Cllr Marc Bayliss	Worcester City Council
	Cllr Hilary Carrick	Cumbria County Council
	Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen	Breckland Council
	Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire Council
	Cllr Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council
	Cllr Damien Greenhalgh	High Peak Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council
	Cllr Caroline Leaver	Devon County Council
	Cllr Stan Collins	Cumbria County Council
	Cllr Kevin Etheridge	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Cllr Sue Roberts	South Oxfordshire District Council	
Apologies	Cllr Peter Butlin	Warwickshire County Council
	Cllr Jordan Meade	Gravesham Borough Council
	Cllr Eddie Reeves	Oxfordshire County Council
	Cllr Doina Cornell	Stroud District Council
In Attendance	Cllr Peter Heydon	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
	Cllr Colin Kemp	Woking Borough Council
	Cllr Rosanne Kirk	Lincoln City Council
	Cllr Erica Lewis	Lancaster City Council
	Cllr Michael Mullaney	Leicestershire County Council