

## Note of last City Regions Board meeting

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<b>Title:</b>	City Regions Board
<b>Date:</b>	Monday 18 June 2018
<b>Venue:</b>	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	Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</b>  The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting.  The Chair noted apologies received, and substitutes in attendance.  No declarations of interest were made.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Industrial Strategy</b>  The Chair invited Alex Thomson, Principal Policy Adviser, to introduce the item.  Alex stated that the paper provides an overview of the Local Government Association's work relating to the Government's Industrial Strategy following the publication of the Industrial Strategy White Paper and proposes initial next steps for this work, which included a briefing for possible discussion points detailed in <b>Appendix A</b> .  Alex then invited Stephen Jones, Director of the Cities and Local Growth Unit, to present his update. This update focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The design and implementation of key place-based policies announced in the White Paper.</li><li>• The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) review, which is due to be published before the summer recess, which brings recommendations together to re-establish expectations of LEP's and their relationships with local authorities and strengthen local economies.</li><li>• The geography of LEP's.</li><li>• The importance of joint-up working across Whitehall.</li><li>• Local Industrial Strategies development, which will be a rolling programme with areas working on different stages of development in parallel, including evidence-gathering, policy proposals and strategy development.</li><li>• The approach to the roll-out will seek to ensure that a mixture of different areas are engaged, not just Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCA).</li></ul>	

- The Spending Review and the future UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).
- Stephen also stated that his team are seeking for everywhere to have a government-endorsed LIS before UKSPF is rolled-out (January 2021).

The Chair thanked Stephen for his update and invited members to comment:

- Members agreed that the current approach to endorsement and roll-out of LIS' is a very centralised approach. However, Members did comment that it may be a positive step for MHCLG to have some oversight of LIS, providing that they:
  - Share good practice with other local areas; and
  - They act as a partner, not a judge.
- Members discussed frustration regarding the wait in confirmation for a LIS for areas, and discussed the potential for innovative LIS. This included discussions over the benefits of foreign trade and investment.
- Members welcomed and discussed the benefits of joint-up working across Whitehall.
- Members stated that in order for LIS to be successful, local areas need full funding and flexibility. Members discussed the limiting aspects to having a tight-structured, stern process, which could lose enthusiasm for LIS.
- Members discussed the capacity issues that both local and central government face.
- Members questioned the selection process of LIS, ensuring that it isn't just areas that have a MCA.

In response, Stephen welcomed local areas to be constantly pushing and challenging his team to ensure the best outcome for LIS. Stephen stated that different conversations need to happen to ensure the best outcome for local areas and to share best practices. Stephen concluded that enthusiasm for LIS is hailing from across the country, and that there needs to be flexibility from both sides to ensure LIS can be made into a success.

The Chair concluded the discussion, and thanked Stephen for his time.

**Actions:**

- **Members noted the update.**
- **Members stated that the LGA should be pressing for a timeline for nationwide completion of Local Industrial Strategies and clarity on sequencing, approach and resourcing.**
  - a) Briefing for discussion with Stephen Jones, Director of the Cities and Local Growth Unit, MHCLG (to be sent as a supplemental agenda item)
  - b) Final joint letter from the LGA and the LEP Network to SoS BEIS
  - c) Letter to the LGA from SoS BEIS

### 3 Higher Education

The Chair invited Daniel Gardiner, Advisor, to introduce the item.

Daniel stated that the update was in two parts, the first of which asks Members to consider engagement with national higher education stakeholders to explore the contribution higher education institutions can make to place based growth, collaborative civic leadership and public service reform, through the industrial strategy and more generally.

Following the first update, the Chair invited Members to comment:

- Regarding engagement, Members expressed keenness begin demonstrating influence on HE bodies and starting to shape their outcomes and focus.

The Chair then invited Alex Thomson, Principal Policy Adviser, to give the second update to Members.

Alex asked Members to consider joint work with the LGA's Resources Board and the People and Places Board to address the financial impact of student populations on councils, developing a position that might inform both the Fairer Funding Review and, potentially, more specific lobbying activity on these issues. Alex drew Members attention to:

- **Appendix C:** the paper Addressing the Financial Impact of Student Populations on Councils, due to go to the forthcoming Resources Board whereby four options have been outlined regarding the taxation of student populations.
- Alex also updated Members that in the recent People and Places Board, there was a strong, cross-party consensus not to take forward this work. Members of the People and Places Board were of the opinion that students raise more funds for rural areas.

Following this update, the Chair invited Members to comment:

- Members discussed the implications of the taxation of students.
- Members also discussed the benefits of the taxation of students, if they are using local resources and public services. Members went on state that local authorities should have the right to decide who to charge council tax.
- Members discussed the use of student accommodation use out of term time, and how some HE institutes can make a significant profit as they are a charitable status and are exempt from paying tax. Members gave examples of HE institutes undercutting local businesses such as hotels to make a profit.
- Members also discussed the need of clarity around the need to differentiate student accommodation and family housing.

The Chair thanked Members for their comments, and summarised key points from discussion on the financial contributions section as:

- No dissent from the view that the Fair Funding Review should seek to capture growth in student populations.

- Agreement with general principle that where councils choose to implement local taxes/change local exemptions they should be able to retain the proceeds.
- The nuances to consider further are: distinction between family housing and purpose-built student accommodation, licensing and planning regulation relating to student accommodation/HMOs and ensuring that where student accommodation is used for other purposes, this should be captured by business rates.

**Action:**

- **Officers to feedback headline points from the discussion to the Resources Board.**
- a) Evaluation of Leading Places Phase Two Programme
  - b) Raising the Anchor - Leading Places Phase Two: Findings and Reflections
  - c) Addressing the Financial Impact of Student Populations on Councils

#### **4 Employment and Skills Update**

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

Jasbir stated updated Members on:

- The recent meeting between the Chair, the Skills Minister Anne Milton MP, and the Chairman of the People and Places Board, Cllr Mark Hawthorne. The Chair agreed that this meeting was positive, and felt the Minister showed good engagement, with different opinions expressed but with a sense that these were workable.
- An update on the formation of the Skills Taskforce.

The Chair thanked Jasbir for the update and asked members to comment:

- Members also discussed the need for Skills Advisory Panels to hold more powers.
- Members emphasised the need to push for influence on 16-18 funding, and for local areas to have more delegated powers.

The Chair thanked Members for their comments.

**Action**

- **Members noted the updated.**

#### **5 City Centre Management and Community Cohesion**

The Chair invited Daniel Shamplin-Hall, Adviser, to introduce the item.

Daniel update Members that as part of its 2017/18 work programme the Board expressed an interest in exploring the role of councils in managing town and city centres and facilitating improved community cohesion. Daniel stated that this paper outlines the activities officers have identified as being undertaken by the LGA and partner organisations within the city centre management and community cohesion space, and details the opportunities provided to City Regions Board Members to feed its particular urban viewpoint into their development. In light of this, Daniel stated the report asks Members whether they wish to undertake new work in this area over the next political cycle.

The Chair thanked Daniel for his update, and asked Members for agreement for this work to be deferred to both the Safer and Stronger Communities Board, and the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board.

Members agreed for this work to be deferred, and made the following comments:

- Members discussed the benefit of ensuring Key Cities being included and referenced, in-line with core Cities.

The Chair thanked members for their comments, and stated that future updates regarding this work will be given to the Board when available.

#### **Actions**

- **Members noted the update.**
- **Future updates regarding City Centre Management and Community Cohesion to be made to the Board when available.**

## **6 Fiscal Devolution - Verbal Update**

The Chair invited Alex Thomson, Principle Policy Adviser, to introduce the item.

Alex gave members a verbal update on the current progress of the work, which included:

- A fiscal Devolution Seminar, due to take place in mid-July. Lead Members of the City Regions, People and Places and Resources Board will be in attendance.
- A update report will be submitted to the first Board in the 2018/19 political cycle for members to consider.
- The external consultants of this work will be invited to the first Board in the 2018/19 political cycle to deliver a presentation for members.
- Following the three Boards first meeting of the 2018/19 political cycle, the three Chairs will then meet to discuss further steps.

#### **Action**

- **Members noted the update.**

## **7 End of Year Board Report**

The Chair invited Benn Cain, Member Services Officer to introduce the item.

Benn stated that the paper was in two parts, and was for Members to note:

- The achievements against the board's priorities in 2017/2018; and
- The board's proposed priority areas for 2018/19.

### **Action**

- **Members noted the report.**

## **8 Note of last City Regions Board**

Members agreed the notes of the City Regions Board on 15 March 2018.

## **9 Devolution Improvement Support Offer**

The Chair invited Ami Beeton, Senior Adviser, to introduce the item.

Ami stated that the paper provides members with an overview of the LGA devolution support offer, including to established and aspiring combined authorities (CA), in the light of the current devolution policy landscape and asks members to consider the devolution support needs of metropolitan authorities in the coming year.

The Chair thanked Ami for her update and welcomed Members to comment:

- Members expressed interest in exploring comparisons between CA cost bases and interrogation of this.
- Members welcomed the proposed focus on scrutiny and governance.
- Members suggested expediting this work with a view to establishing some common principles.

The Chair thanked members for their comments.

### **Action**

- **Members noted the update.**

## **10 Trade and Investment Update**

The Chair invited Philip Clifford, Senior Adviser, to introduce the item.

Philip stated that following discussions with members at the last Board meeting, this paper sets out the headline elements of a survey of council trade and investment activities and asks members to agree next steps regarding timing and outputs. Philip concluded that the survey will be carried out over the summer.

- The Chair noted the establishment of a LEP/CA officer structure for the North of England to coordinate trade and investment and stated that he will liaise with officers regarding a contact.

#### **Action**

- **Members noted the report.**

#### **Appendix A -Attendance**

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

In Attendance

LGA Officers