

## Note of last City Regions Board meeting

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**Title:** City Regions Board  
**Date:** Monday 19 November 2018  
**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

#### 1 Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. The clash of the 14 March Board 2019 with the MIPIM conference was noted by members, and all agreed that a reorganised date will be arranged.

Apologies of members were noted.

No declarations of interest were made.

#### 2 Fiscal Devolution

Philip Clifford, Senior Adviser, introduced item two.

Philip stated that the report summarised this Board's previous discussions. In light of discussions at this board, work commissioned by this Board in the last political cycle and further discussions between the Chairs of City Regions, People and Places, and Resources Boards, three main areas of a work plan had been agreed: devolution messaging report; progressing work on a tourism levy; and exploring an e-commerce levy.

The three areas were taken in turn to the board:

- devolution messaging report: all members agreed that the LGA should take short term messaging around the spending review issues in the new year.
- progressing work on a tourism levy: all members agreed with the steer taken by the three chairs to commission this work to the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board in order to investigate the practicalities in the wider tourism context and a place based approach to engage in this sector.
- e-commerce levy: This belongs in the remit of the Resources Board with oversight by the EEHT Board, as it explores the impact on highstreets wellbeing. It was agreed that the Resources Board would feed back to this Board on the developments made and also on issues surrounding Business Rates Avoidance.

**Decision:**

The following decisions were made:

- The Devolution messaging report will be dealt with in relation to the spending review in the new year.
- Members agreed that the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board will be commissioned to investigate the practicalities of the tourism levy.
- Members agreed that the Resources Board lead on e-commerce levy and feedback updates to this board.

**3 Urban Leadership**

Philip Clifford, Senior Adviser, introduced item three.

Philip outlined the key points addressed in the draft scoping paper: that growth has slowed and that a unified urban voice needed to be re-established. This process would be a two-part approach and at a high level. It was explained that LGA officers had met with representatives from Core Cities and London Councils to discuss the details regarding fiscal devolution, skills and employability, and the ability for local leaders to hold national leaders to account. It was noted that it was well received by officials.

A discussion followed and members made the following comments:

- With regards to holding national leaders to account, one member noted that it needed to be ensured that this does not lead to fragmentation.
- One member raised the concern that in terms of the three priorities, they are not of equal importance and that fiscal devolution takes precedent.
- Many members raised the point that members need to unify their mutual concerns such as lack of funding for population growth.
- It was established that the Board needs to agree on three mutual topics, so that officers can put together a draft script to review at the next Board.
- The work programme is positioned towards a spending review predicted to take place late 2019.

**Decisions**

The following decisions were made:

- Members agreed on the approach to this work and will identify areas of mutual agreement.
- Officers to circulate a draft policy script to members.

**4 Industrial Strategy**

Daniel Gardiner, Adviser, introduce item four.

Daniel stated that the paper provided an update on recent developments

with the Government's Industrial Strategy and outlined proposed next steps relating to the key elements of the Industrial Strategy. The paper was introduced in three parts: Local Enterprise Partnerships, the Local Industrial Strategy and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

#### *Local Enterprise Partnerships*

Daniel updated the Board on the key issues surrounding LEP geographies and the removal of overlaps. There is limited scope on the LEP review. It was discussed that the Board's engagement with the review with LEPs has a dual focus of accountability and understanding the design for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

With regards to paragraph four, which stated the letter wrote to BEIS Secretary of State seeking urgent clarity on LEPs, a response had still not been received by the time of this Board.

All board members agreed that they are happy with the proposals offered in the report.

#### *Local Industrial Strategy*

Daniel explained that the key place-based announcement contained in the White Paper was the introduction of Local Industrial Strategies. The White Paper outlined that places in England with a Mayoral Combined Authority will have a Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) led by the mayor and supported by LEPs. However, as outlined in paragraph 12 of the report, there is a lack of clarity on key issues for councils that need to be answered.

Previous meetings with BEIS suggested that there is no dilution of members' capacity for supporting LIS, and it is hoped that an update is before the end of the year. With this in mind, the LGA's focus is on policy and public affairs work. The LGA proposed to focus works on the areas of ambiguity for councils outlined in 12.1-12.4 to ensure a consistent approach to the roll out of LEPs.

The LGA's Memorandum of Understanding with MHCLG includes requirements that the LGA supports areas to develop their LIS.

Daniel introduced Phil Swann, from Shared Intelligence, to the Board to give further details on the role of councils and the areas that need to be addressed. The Chair welcomed Phil to the Board.

Phil Swann explained that it is clear that the task is to produce support for authorities in relation to the LIS and mayoral combined authorities and to help councils work effectively with their LEPs and LIS. This means supporting the roles of councils working with LEPs gaining greater clarity of what these roles entail.

Shared Intelligence are clear that the roles of councils will differ dependent on their context. For example, there are potential differences between councils in combined authorities with others and also with London Boroughs compared to others. Shared Intelligence is working with the LGA in order to complement each other's work.

Phil Swann explained that they envisage a three phase process of work. Phil explained that they want to talk to authorities who have experienced the trail blazers to get feedback to identify with them what is working. He also stated that Shared Intelligence plan to organise learning sectors with local authorities outside the trailblaze and that findings will be published throughout the process.

The following comments were made:

- The Chair raised the point that in some of the areas where combined authorities have dealt with LIS, the feedback has been that it is difficult to engage when there has not been any examples of best practice.
- The Chair also raised the question of what powers do LEPs need to help deliver growth, as it is these principles that need to be addressed first before the structure of the process. It was also mentioned that other important partners such as universities and businesses need to be included and engaged.
- Daniel Gardiner expanded on this point, and explained that in the LEP review there is a commitment to these responsibilities and what recommendations they are engaged with.

In consideration to the next steps outlined in paragraph 21, all members agreed with the proposed next steps.

#### *UK Shared Prosperity Fund*

Paul Green, advisor, introduced this section of the report.

Paul explained to the Board the LGA's position in pressing the Government on the design and delivery principles to underpin the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). To further develop the LGA's lines on UKSPF, the proposals contain issues that surround accountability, transparency, and a wider growth landscape. Internally, the LGA will be refreshing the fragmented funding so that a position is established on the replacement of EU funding and on the future pathways on funding streams. The LGA will be engaging with councils on the publication of the consultation and welcomed steer from members.

The Chair stated that the aim is to continue to push a long standing LGA line: to release funding to local control.

#### **Decisions**

The following decisions were made:

- All board members agreed that they are happy with the proposals offered for Local Enterprise Partnerships.
- In consideration to the next steps outlined in paragraph 21 for the Local Industrial Strategy, all members agreed with the proposed next steps.

## **5 Devolution Update**

Ami Beeton, Senior Advisor, updated members on the LGA's devolution improvement support offer to established and aspiring Combined Authorities (CAs) and provided the latest on the Government's Devolution Framework, due to be published before the end of the year.

Ami explained the improvement support offer and the nature of the support provided outlined in paragraph 2.1 to 2.3 of the report and also of the new networks that have been established set out in paragraph 24. Ami also outlined that the LGA have ongoing support to combined authorities, and that the LGA are still in the process of developing a sector led improvement tool. This is similar to a corporate peer challenge and is hoping to be completed by late 2019.

Members were asked to consider the current scope of the LGA's Devolution Improvement and Support Offer and suggest further areas of development.

With regards to the second half of the paper on Devolution Framework, the LGA has supported the Government's agenda on devolution but there is a want to go further. Recent signals from Government has been that there is a limited appetite for further deals of this type and the LGA are unclear on direction of travel, but as stated in the report there is a commitment to publish the devolution framework by the end of the year. The report also stated that the People and Places Board decided that they will write to the Secretary of State regarding devolution and include key asks that are based on what is already in the CA deal.

Due to the changes of Secretary of State, direction of the devolution framework structure has changed and the Board are in agreement to lobby government and influence this framework before publication.

### **Decision:**

The following decision was made:

- The City Regions Board agreed to play a supporting role in the LGA's work relating to the Devolution Framework and for the People and Places Board to lead in this area.

## **6 Trade, Inward Investment and International Engagement**

Daniel Shamplin-Hall introduced the item, provided members with an update on the LGAs recent work on trade, inward investment and international engagement and proposed the next steps. Daniel Shamplin-Hall divided the item into three sections.

Daniel recapped and explained that the first area of work conducted by this board was a survey of all councils to gain a better understanding of trade and investment activity going on in the sector. Research commissioned by this Board last year explored the current trade and investment support in local areas on business to encourage investment, the research found a complex landscape regarding support for businesses

and investors. As a result, the research recommended that there should be a greater role for councils in producing more bespoke support at a local level, as although there is some activity, it is not sector wide.

The recommendations going forward is that future merging of sectorial strategies had clear elements of investment and trade work streams, role of local areas to support businesses and that much of the work undertaken is EU funded. This gives this Board a steer when it comes to the role of UKSPF in the absence of EU funding.

The paper set out recommendations to the Board that the LGA conduct a full analysis of the survey completed to help develop a set of policy proposals for this Board to consider in January 2019. With the local and combined authority contacts established through this survey, the LGA will establish a sounding board in order to develop this work in a sector-led environment.

It was also recommended to the Board to invite an official from DIT to a future Board meeting to discuss policy developments and establish an opportunity for bilateral cooperation with localities which includes a potential summit between French and UK leaders in early 2019.

The third section of the report outlined raising the profile of councils in national government and internationally. Daniel updated members on the progress to date, which included work related to DIT and the work established between the UK LGA and the French LGA.

The Chair stated that in some parts of the UK, particularly regions within the remit of the Northern Powerhouse, trade and inward investment links have already been established and have developed good relationships with DIT. In light of the recommendations, there is already work on the ground taking place.

Daniel Shamplin-Hall also stated that the LGA are working with DIT to commission improvement work that focusses on good sectoral practice and investment portfolios that are attractive to international investors. Members were asked to consider any cases member's areas which demonstrated best practice for attracting local investments or examples where areas may need support.

## **Decision**

The following decision was made:

- Members agreed with the recommendations set out in paragraph 23.1- 23.4 of the report.

## **7 Note of the Previous Meeting**

The previous minutes were agreed.

The registration of members who attended the October Board was rectified and updated.

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