

## Note of last City Regions Board meeting

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<b>Title:</b>	City Regions Board
<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday 24 March 2021
<b>Venue:</b>	Online via Microsoft Teams

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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>Chair's Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes and Declarations of Interest</b>  The Chair welcomed Members, officers, and guests to the meeting.  Apologies had been received from Cllrs Daniel Fitzhenry and Graeme Miller.  During item 6, Cllr Elise Wilson declared an interest as Vice-Chair of the Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Membership Changes</b>  Cllr James Swindlehurst has moved from a substitute to a full Board Member to fill the Labour group's vacancy.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of the last meeting</b>  The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2021 were agreed as an accurate record, subject to the following changes being made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cllr Toby Savage to be marked as present in the attendance list.</li><li>• Cllr Robert Alden requested that reference to 'temporary accommodation' be changed to 'exempt accommodation' in item 7 (Mid-Year Review) to accurately reflect the discussion that took place.</li></ul>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Education to Employment: supporting youth participation</b>  The Chair welcomed Philip Wilson, Finance Partner – York Consulting, and Kate Crosswaite, Senior Consultant – York Consulting, to the meeting and invited Bushra Jamil, Adviser, to introduce the report.  Bushra introduced the report which set out information related to youth	

participation and the research project which builds upon youth policy work to date and the LGA's publication last autumn around supporting young people. York Consulting had been commissioned to undertake the action learning piece of work on behalf of the council and had been working with a number of councils and combined authorities to develop a better understanding of the barriers/challenges that exist for councils in fulfilling their statutory duties for young people.

Philip presented a series of slides to Board Members which set out aims and approaches, emerging issues, conclusions, and recommendations in relation to supporting youth participations in education to employment.

Members made the following comments:

- With the COVID-19 pandemic impacting our most vulnerable residents, and the impact of young people not engaging easily with our services, how widespread is the format/informed approach across the cohort of councils of dealing with this issue?
- Young people who could've remained in education but have not are increasingly vulnerable and more likely to have mental health issues.
- It is important to ensure that young people do not fall through the gaps and unfortunately, I feel that many children do so when they come out of school and vulnerability increases. I wondered whether your conversations with the councils had any conclusion in relation to NEET/not known status' amongst young people?
- Has work been undertaken in relation to the cost of the services that offer young people additional emotional support to manage their academic catch up with our schools?
- Has work been undertaken in relation to statutory partners/informal partners and any benefits?

Philip and Kate responded to comments made by Members:

- In terms of the cost of additional emotional support and mental health issues, I'm not aware of any work that has been undertaken to explore the additional cost for these services. However, what councils have shared with us is a recognition that advisors and support workers are encountering an increase in mental health diagnosis' amongst young people in general due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic position that the country is in.
- With regards to young people who are NEET/not known, a lot of local authorities have undertaken a significant amount of work to try and reduce this and have made quite a lot of progress. It remains a challenge and the figures have still not been reduced to zero. The very existence of a group of 'not known' are young people who are not being identified and supported based on their needs.
- In terms of informal partners, the topic did not come up explicitly,

but it was not something that was particularly explored through this particular piece of work. This was the same with trauma-informed approaches, no definitive picture can be provided, it was raised at some councils, but not all. There are a couple of examples of councils working with mental health organisations to upskill their own teams so that they can signpost young people and have a basic understanding of the issues that young people are facing with this particular rise in mental health issues amongst young people. Another example is the support that was being offered to care leavers and the potential to work with charitable organisations to help with the emotional wellbeing support and housing needs of those groups.

Bushra added that through the project's work, a partnership approach has been very effective and also that the resources needed to be available to tackle the NEET and 'not known' figures.

**Decision:**

Members noted the report.

## **5 Higher Education Institutions (HEI) Funding and 'Levelling Up'**

The Chair invited Nathan Brewster, Adviser (NGDP) to introduce the report.

Nathan introduced the report which looked at the potential role of higher education funding in the context of levelling up and how the work might be taken forward.

Members made the following comments:

- It doesn't seem as though the link between participation and universities has been considered in this paper. Any strategy must be geared towards increasing participation.
- Individuals that have university degrees tend to have higher levels of reward later in life.
- Universities have a strong thread around being civic universities, but I am unsure where they fit in with my agenda in our council. How do we enhance that connectivity for them?
- Are there any figures which relate to students that travel to a university outside of their local area and potential accessibility barriers?
- LEPs work with us to develop the strategies that we have. Given the government's current view on LEPs, could good practice potentially be lost?

The Chair referred to a previous joint-working group which explored ways in which a more place-based approach could be built from universities and the civic university relationships. He suggested that officers align the joint-

working group findings with the work being undertaken now and analyse the vast differences in practice in different places.

**Decision:**

- Members noted the report.

**Action:**

- Officers to reflect upon and analyse the work of the joint-working group work re the relationship between universities and civic universities.

## **6 Budget Update**

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

Philip introduced the report which set out information relating to the Budget which contained a suite of announcements pertinent to the government's levelling up agenda. Four areas believed to be of particular interest to Board Members were funding for growth, local enterprise partnerships, the government's plan for growth, and jobs and skills.

Members made the following comments:

- Whilst it's positive to have some indication as to the methodology regarding the allocation of these particular funds, this doesn't appear to show all of the working out that's taken place in central government. The government could be more transparent about the process that's been used.
- Government seems to have cooled quite dramatically on the idea of the LEPs. Whilst LEPs are important, they're not the whole story and we shouldn't assume that they are the only mechanism we have to strengthen local partnerships with business.
- With regards to levelling-up, the involvement of MPs is puzzling, and the competitive element is also a concern, will some parts of counties be disadvantaged? How have government arrived at the results that they have?
- Addressing inequalities and pockets of deprivation across the country is important and should be considered, as should accessing economic opportunities. We need financial certainty and the ability to plan long term.
- Councils need to be understood and respected in terms of their role and knowledge. Also, councils competing with each other needs to be raised as a real risk. Bids shouldn't just be put in for shiny new buildings, we need real intervention and investment in people's lives and the ability to upskill.
- The frustration for us is that many of these funds is an attempt from government to micromanage the way we spend our money

locally.

- Small pots of money won't be enough to try and tackle some of the significantly large issues that we've got to deal with. MPs should focus on tackling some of the larger issues that we're facing as a country rather than local issues.
- With regards to LEPs, there is always room for improvement as not all LEPs are the same. Genuine consultation and engagement is needed with LEPs to seek to improve.

**Decision:**

- Members noted the report.

**Action/s:**

- Officers to liaise with Board Members outside of the meeting in relation to how best to take the raised issues forward with the relevant government departments.

**7 Equalities Update**

The report was noted without discussion.

**Decision:**

Members noted the report.

**8 City Regions Board Update report**

The report was noted without discussion.

**Decision:**

Members noted the report.

**9 UK State Aid Regime**

The Chair invited Dominic Rowles, Deputy Head of Brussels Office, to introduce the report.

Dominic introduced the report which set out information related to the government's newly launched consultation on a new subsidy control regime for the UK, ahead of issuing primary legislation.

**Decision:**

Members noted the report.

**10 Update on A Vision for Urban Growth and Recovery**

The Chair welcomed Glenn Athey, Principal Consultant – Cambridge Economics, to the meeting and invited Eleanor Law, Policy Advisor, to introduce the report.

Eleanor introduced the report which provided an update on the ‘A Vision for Urban Growth and Recovery’ project. The report summarised the work to date, key findings, and recommendations of the draft report. It sought the views of Board Members before the work was finalised.

Glenn presented a series of slides to Board Members which set out the project’s progress to date.

**Decision:**

Members noted the report.

## **11 Discussion document on the Further Education White Paper**

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

Jas introduced the report which outlined the Skills for Jobs Further Education White Paper which had been launched by government on 21 January. The White Paper set out planned reforms to the further education and technical training system.

**Decision:**

Members noted the report.

### **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
	Cllr Anita Lower	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Gillian Ford	Havering London Borough Council
Members	Cllr Robert Alden	Birmingham City Council
	Cllr Donna Jones JP	Portsmouth City Council
	Cllr Joanne Laban	Enfield Council
	Cllr Toby Savage	West of England Combined Authority
	Cllr John Merry CBE	Salford City Council
	Cllr Shaun Davies	Telford and Wrekin Council
	Cllr Martin Gannon	Gateshead Council
	Mayor Marvin Rees	Bristol City Council
	Cllr Danny Thorpe	Royal Borough of Greenwich
	Cllr David Mellen	Nottingham City Council
	Cllr Sean Fielding	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Shama Tatler	Brent Council
	Cllr Anthony Hunt	Torfaen County Borough Council
	Cllr Elise Wilson	Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Cllr James Swindlehurst  
Cllr Gareth Roberts

Slough Borough Council  
Richmond upon Thames London Borough  
Council

In Attendance

Cllr Samantha Dixon

Cheshire West and Chester Council