

## Note of last City Regions Board meeting

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| <b>Title:</b> | City Regions Board   |
| <b>Date:</b>  | Thursday 25 November 2021  |
| <b>Venue:</b> | Hybrid meeting (via Microsoft Teams & Beecham Room, 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 Chair's Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed Members, officers, and guests to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Danny Thorpe and Arooj Shah.

Cllr Adam Marsh attended the meeting as a substitute.

Sir Richard Leese declared an interest as Chair Designate of an Integrated Care Board (ICB).

Members of the Board paid tribute to Sir Richard Leese, former City Regions Board Chair for his hard work and dedication to supporting the work of the Board and for his leadership. Sir Richard thanked Board Members for their kind words and LGA officers for their support over the years.

#### 2 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

The Chair suggested that names of government Ministers and officials be included within minutes to ensure that relevant connections can be made where appropriate.

#### 3 Community Renewal Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Update and Next Steps

The Chair invited Paul Green, Policy Adviser, to introduce the report.

Paul introduced the report which provided an update following the announcement of the successful Community Renewal Fund (CRF) pilots.

Board Members made the following comments:

- A Board Member emphasised the significant need for alignment between the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and wider inclusive growth funding.
- Concerns had been raised in relation to the CRF's competitive bidding process, the potential elimination of collaborative working between local authorities, the impact on less affluent areas, and potential endangerment of long-term urban regeneration.
- The importance of ensuring best value for money and long-term evidence-based solutions was emphasised.
- A Board Member requested more information in relation to the successful bids.
- A Board Member raised a concern in relation to the added level of bureaucracy.
- The importance of co-design and working in partnership was emphasised.
- Concerns had been raised which related to the time and money wasted on the cost of the competition process.

Paul responded to Board Members' comments:

- The concerns related to the competitive bidding process continued to be raised by the LGA and had been since first lobbying for the replacement of European (EU) funding. It was understood that government had started to better understand the impact of fragmentation of funding and multiple bidding processes.
- In relation to the UKSPF taskforce, officers representing local government were very clear about the benefits of EU funding in terms of the multi-annual funding stream. The clear message would continue to be delivered through LGA work to better understand the impact that the bidding process had had on successful programmes and to capture learning.
- A list of the successful bids had been published online and was publicly available, Paul confirmed that he would circulate the information to Board Members outside of the meeting. With regards to the unsuccessful bidders, this would be a part of the LGA's improvement offer to better understand the engagement that councils had had and the reasons for not being successful in the bidding process.
- The bureaucratic element would also be captured within the improvement process and officers would speak to local authorities to capture the steps taken and reflect those steps within the outputs from the improvement process.
- In relation to quantum, European structural and investment funds (ESIF) would continue to be spent until 2023 and phase out, whilst UKSPF phased in, and it would accumulate up to year 3 once ESIF had ceased. The budget for years 4-7 could not yet be set, it was important to ensure that the quantum was fully matched so that local areas did not miss out.
- The strategic element was significantly important and had been raised by officer representation on the UKSPF taskforce, therefore senior civil servants had been made aware.
- Attempted engagement with the new government Ministerial would continue, in the hopes of future engagement at a Member/officer

level with government Ministers.

**Decision:**

- Board Members noted the report.

**Action:**

- Officers would continue to attempt to engage with government Ministers and civil servants for a political meeting to highlight anguish with regards to the CRF, alongside the LGA's People & Places Board.
- Officers to circulate a list of the successful bids to all Board Members, which had been published online.

#### **4 Green skills**

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

Jacob introduced the report which aimed to facilitate initial discussions and next steps in relation to the LGA's activity on climate change. The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT) Board requested that a skills and employment dimension paper be submitted, led by the City Regions and People and Places Boards, Cllr Emily O'Brien would present the report at the upcoming EEHT Board meeting.

Board Members made the following comments:

- In relation to point 17 within the report, a Board Member requested more information with regards to the scale and pace of the pilot taking place. The need to put pressure on government for a more flexible application of the apprenticeship levy was also emphasised.
- The importance of training opportunities was emphasised, the need to lobby for funding from government for a peer offer for Cabinet Members and training for officers within councils. A question was asked which related to the LGA Conference and the way in which training opportunities would feature.
- Board Members raised concern in relation to the lack of clarity of the meaning of 'green skills' and all that it entailed.
- A Board Member suggested that a paragraph be added to the report which related to the way in which local authorities worked with regional Mayors to deliver green jobs.
- In relation to skills, a Board Member suggested that the role of local government in working closely with schools be included within the report and the work that schools undertook to make children and young people aware of the changing economy, future employment and skills.

Jacob responded to Board Members' comments:

- In relation to point 17 within the report, a further update would be provided to Board Members as progress was made.

- A toolkit would soon be created to allow for a better understanding of green jobs and the green element of jobs for a skills pathway. It was anticipated that the toolkit could then be shared with different sectors, not just within local government.
- In relation to the comment made which related to the LGA Conference and the inclusion of training opportunities, officers would provide a further update to Board Members as progress was made.
- With regards to rural and urban areas, officers continued to undertake work in relation to the greater levy flexibility which would be part of the wider work local refresh.
- Officers would attempt to engage with regional Mayors and work to include a paragraph within the report.

**Decision:**

- Board Members noted the report.

**5 Business plan 2019-22: 2021 review and update**

The Chair invited Rebecca Cox, Principal Policy Adviser, to introduce the report.

Rebecca introduced the report and the business plan review and update for 2019-2022.

Board Members made the following comments:

- In relation to children, education and schools, clearer emphasis could be made on children and young people's mental health in 2022 and the need to promote mental health support advisers within education settings. It was suggested that this be undertaken in partnership with the LGA's Children and Young People Board.
- A Board Member stated that the 'One Public Estate' link within the report was broken.
- A Board Member raised a point which related to catering services and the climate impact in relation to the menus offered.
- The work undertaken to upgrade 18 Smith Square was much welcomed by Board Members.

The comments that Board Members had made had been noted by officers present and the broken link within the business plan would be fixed.

**Decision:**

- Board Members noted the report.

**Action:**

- Officers to ensure that the 'One Public Estate' link within the business plan be fixed.

**6 Updated Terms of Reference**

The Chair invited Rebecca Cox, Principal Policy Adviser, to introduce the report.

Rebecca introduced the report which set out Board Members' amendments to the terms of reference and confirmed that Lead Members had approved it as a final version.

**Decision:**

- Board Members noted the report.

**7 Refreshing Work Local**

The Chair invited Jasbir to introduce the item. Jas updated the Board on progress since the last meeting to refresh our Work Local proposals for employment and skills devolution. 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 a series of slides to Board Members.

Board Members comments on the presentation slides and asked a number of questions.

**Decision:**

- Board Members noted the report.

**8 Update on health devolution**

The Chair invited Ellie Law, Policy Advisor to introduce the report.

Ellie introduced the report.

Board Members commented on the report and asked questions.

**Decision:**

- Board Members noted the report.

**Action:**

- Officers to invite Cllr Fothergill, Chair of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, to the next meeting of the City Regions Board.

**9 Proposal for Urban Summit**

The Chair invited Ellie Law, Policy Advisor to introduce the report.

Ellie introduced the report.

Board Members made comments and asked a number of questions.

**Decision:**

- Board Members noted the report.

**Appendix A -Attendance**

| Position/Role   | Councillor             | Authority                                   |
|-----------------|------------------------|---|
| Chairman        | Mayor Marvin Rees      | Bristol City Council                        |
| Vice-Chairman   | Cllr Abi Brown         | Stoke-on-Trent City Council                 |
|                 | Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe | Bradford Metropolitan District Council      |
| Deputy-chairman | Cllr Gareth Roberts    | Richmond upon Thames London Borough Council |
|                 | Cllr Gillian Ford      | Havering London Borough Council             |
| Members         | Cllr Robert Alden      | Birmingham City Council                     |
|                 | Cllr Barry Anderson    | Leeds City Council                          |
|                 | Cllr Joanne Laban      | Enfield Council                             |
|                 | Cllr Samantha Dixon    | Cheshire West and Chester Council           |
|                 | Cllr Graeme Miller     | Sunderland City Council                     |
|                 | Cllr Elise Wilson      | Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council      |
|                 | Cllr Jason Brock       | Reading Borough Council                     |
|                 | Cllr John Merry CBE    | Salford City Council                        |
|                 | Cllr Anthony Hunt      | Torfaen County Borough Council              |
|                 | Cllr Shama Tatler      | Brent Council                               |
|                 | Cllr David Mellen      | Nottingham City Council                     |
|                 | Cllr Carl Cashman      | Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council       |
|                 | Cllr Martin Fodor      | Bristol City Council                        |
| Apologies       | Cllr Danny Thorpe      | Royal Borough of Greenwich                  |
|                 | Cllr Arooj Shah        | Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council         |
| In Attendance   |                        |   |
| LGA Officers    |                        |   |