

Minutes of last City Regions Board meeting

City Regions Board

Friday, 30 September 2022

Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#)

Item	Decisions and actions
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1	Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest
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The Chair welcomed Members and officers to the meeting.

Apologies for the absence were received from Cllr John Merry CBE, Cllr Chris Penberthy, and Cllr Martin Fodor.

The Chair introduced the board's history, membership, current activities, interdependencies with other boards and how it operates to the new members.

No declaration of interest was received.

2	Minutes of the last meeting
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The minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

3	Terms of reference
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The Chair invited Rebecca Cox, Principal Policy Adviser, to introduce the terms of reference.

Rebecca Cox noted that Lead Members have not suggested any substantive changes this year to the terms of reference and some stronger wording around climate and ecological emergencies was added last year.

Members made the following comments:

- Confidential labels should be applied clearly.

Decision:

That the Board's terms of reference be agreed.

4 Work Programme

The Chair invited Rebecca Cox to introduce the overview of the work programme. Rebecca Cox invited comments from members on whether the LGA maintained the overall balance right, any concerns around timing, any gaps, and other issues that should be considered.

Members made the following comments:

- Councils need to have stronger enforcement powers around the unchecked growth of exempt accommodation.
- A central focus should be given to levelling up.
- Urban areas should be considered in their entirety (including both urban centres and the outer communities) to account for impacts across city regions.
- Councils should focus on innovation zones and ensure that innovation zones and levelling up run in parallel.

The Chair encouraged members to look at the themes in terms of not just what they do but in terms of how they maximize the influence of what they do.

Decision:

- That the proposed work programme be agreed.

Action:

- Officers to update the work programme with those who could help the board carry its messages and perspectives locally, nationally, and internationally.

5 Theme 1: Future of Cities

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

Team members of *The means* were invited to present their project which includes the delivery of 6 compelling interview-based films where citizens will share their perspectives and experiences of living in their respective city and their hopes and aspirations for their cities in the future. Team members showed a list of possible target cities and welcomed comments from members regarding subjects and themes that are important to the board.

Members made the following points:

- A city with leadership from Independent politicians be included to ensue political parity.
- Cost of living should be part of a future urban summit and the questioning within film interviews.
- The health and well-being implications of cities should be reflected in the report.

- Since only 6 cities are involved in the interviews, consideration should be given to those who are marginalized.
- Areas should be chosen carefully to ensure proper political spread across the project.
- Some cities that do not demonstrate diversity adequately should be re-visited. For instance, Plymouth is preferred over Exeter since it has more diverse voices and experiences.

The Chair noted that some aspects of urban life would be the same regardless of geographical locations and thus when selecting urban cities, a proper matrix that accounts for income levels, background, gender, sexuality, and disabilities should be applied. The Chair noted that this would help councillors have a proper evidence-based understanding of how cities are and what cities need to be. The Chair considered the project as an opportunity for board members to shape the future of urban Britain.

Decision:

- That the report be noted.

Action:

- Officers to incorporate members' comments and ensure the balance of cities.
- Officers to send out a survey link where members can share their thoughts and perspectives.

6 Theme 2: Levelling Up Update

The Chair invited Esther Barrott, Adviser, to introduce the report.

Members made the following comments:

- A level playing field is not provided in terms of quality, ability, and expertise at a local level to submit bids.
- For levelling up, the focus should be on need rather than geography.
- Jobs brought within levelling up should be good quality jobs with a good pay.
- It is important to have a conversation with Dehenna Davison as quickly as possible to learn about her perspectives on levelling up to ensure that this is not something that is going nowhere.
- Adjusting our language to the new government and talking about levelling up for growth was recommended.

The Chair noted that he always made sure that national leaders were connecting with the board. He suggested the use of growth without anything attached to it in terms of qualification. The Chair suggested a public-facing event where there are right ministers targeted and journalists as an opportunity to publicize the findings of the inquiry.

Decision:

- That the report be noted.

Action:

- Officers to incorporate members' comments into the paper.
- Members to find out any particular people that should be targeted through the findings of the inquiry and send their names.

7 Theme 2: Supporting 'Economic Inclusion'

The Chair invited Bushra Jamil, Adviser, to give the summary of the report. Bushra Jamil introduced the report and requested comments regarding local and regional issues councillors are dealing with or anything to explore further.

Members made the following comments:

- Cost of living impact on young people and second jobs they are having should be considered in the paper.
- It was good to see the unemployment rate by race and ethnicity and how young Black people have higher unemployment rate than the average white young person despite their qualifications.
- Using public sector procurement as a way to develop more wealth and employment locally and address economic inclusion was suggested.
- Looking at barriers to economic inclusion and how councils can overcome barriers from a positive standpoint.

The Chair asked if the board can be specific about how they maximize their voice on devolution and delivering inclusion at the local level.

Bushra Jamil would be happy to receive case studies on effective practices that enabled private sector employers to advance economic inclusion.

Decision:

- That the report be noted.

Actions:

- Members to share relevant case studies.
- Officers to send out a link where members can share their case studies.

8 Theme 3: Urban Resilience

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

Members made the following comments:

- SDG 13, climate change, should be considered.
- Focusing on one issue strategically rather than on many. Members should decide which one of the items they should focus on and discuss with ministers.
- Including energy generation in the report. Local governments should push for energy generation projects, such as the hydrogen project in Teesside.
- Linking environmental issues with economic disruption to ensure interconnectedness.

Decision:

- That the report be noted.

Action:

- The Chair to share the Bristol heat map with LGA officers for future reference.

9 Theme 4: Retrofit Skills

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

Members made the following comments:

- Being wary of duplications with the Environment, Economy, Housing, and Transport (EEHT) Board on retrofit skills.
- There should be a long-term outlook on matching skilled people with market demands.
- A clear definition of retrofitting is needed.
- Retrofit skills programs should be targeted at neighbourhoods with the highest unemployment rate.
- Training people not just in skills for installation but also in skills for repair is important.
- Ensuring that jobs created in the green economy focus on people who are not highly skilled (working class people) or those who do not have O-level qualification.

Decision:

That the report be noted.

10 Theme 5: Growth Funding

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

Members made the following comments:

- How councils can work together with the government on growth issues and deal with bureaucracies should be explored.
- Ensuring that people are not left behind when it comes to growth and that resources are provided to those in the greatest need.

Decision:

- That the report be noted.

Actions:

- The LGA officers to let members know anyone listed in the key political targets to help members have focus.

**Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 23 November 2022, 10.30 am,
Hybrid Meeting – 18 Smith Square and Online**

Appendix A - Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chair	Mayor Marvin Rees	Bristol City Council
Vice-Chair	Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Deputy-Chair	Cllr Gareth Roberts	Richmond upon Thames London Borough Council
	Cllr Gillian Ford	Havering London Borough Council
Members	Cllr Barry Anderson	Leeds City Council
	Cllr Joanne Laban	Enfield Council
	Cllr Toby Savage	West of England Combined Authority
	Cllr Graeme Miller	Sunderland City Council
	Cllr Jason Brock	Reading Borough Council
	Cllr Anthony Hunt	Torfaen County Borough Council
	Cllr David Mellen	Nottingham City Council
	Cllr Carl Cashman	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Bev Craig	Manchester City Council
	Cllr Bob Cook	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
	Cllr Robert Alden	Birmingham City Council
	Cllr Ian Ward	Birmingham City Council
	Cllr Satvir Kaur	Southampton City Council
	Cllr Nazia Rehman	Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr James Moyies	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
	Cllr Brenda Dacres	Lewisham London Borough
	Cllr Kerrie Carmichael	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Denise Scott-McDonald	Royal Borough of Greenwich	
Apologies	Cllr John Merry CBE	Salford City Council
	Cllr Chris Penberthy	Plymouth City Council
	Cllr Martin Fodor	Bristol City Council
Substitutes	Cllr James Giles	Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames