

Minutes of last City Regions Board meeting

City Regions Board

Wednesday, 22 November 2023

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

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

Apologies were received by Cllr Robinson. Cllr Hale attended the meeting as a substitute. Cllr Richard-Jones attended the meeting as an observer.

No declarations of interest were received.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 02 October 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

3 City Regions Summary Work Plan

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

Rebecca touched upon the discussions which had recently taken place between the Board and Lead Members and confirmed that officers had refined the Board's work plan to reflect members' priorities under the Board's over-arching themes. Within each theme, the Board would advocate for the needs and opportunities of city regions and urban areas. Where the workstream was 'ongoing', a variety of channels would be used to promote messages. She added that information would be circulated to Board Members outside of the meeting related to matters arising from the Autumn Statement that would impact proposed activity.

Members made the following contributions:

- *'The importance of transport for skills and employment'* to be discussed in January rather than June.
- *'Sector-specific skills policy: future of energy; nature recovery'* to include infrastructure more generally, for discussion in January.

- *'Promoting the role of urban areas and city regions in strategic housing'* – external speakers to share real examples of strong, new communities which had been built.
- To see a detailed case study for the national living wage uplift, focusing on individuals who earn an average salary.
- To focus on the unique challenges and opportunities of Coastal cities, particularly in relation to housing and transport.
- The importance of ensuring that items marked as 'ongoing' were monitored regularly was emphasised.
- *'Promoting the role of urban areas and city regions in strategic housing'* to focus on the challenges associated with social housing.
- It was suggested that land values in cities and subsidy levels applied to private housing developments and council housing developments be explored.
- The importance of focusing on improving transport links outside of urban area to the surrounding countryside was emphasised.
- The need to significantly strengthen the working relationship with Homes England was expressed.

Decision:

- Board Members noted the report.

Action:

- Officers to circulate information to Board Members outside of the meeting related to matters arising from the Autumn Statement that would impact proposed activity.

4 City Regions Board Terms of Reference

The Chair introduced the report and confirmed that:

- The Board meeting in January would focus on strategic transport.
- The Board meeting in June would focus on strategic housing.
- The Board meetings in January and June would be face-to-face meetings (preferred).
- The Board meeting in January would take place off-site (potentially in Manchester) and more information would be circulated to Board Members as soon as possible.

Members made the following contributions:

- A question was asked which related to travel costs and claiming expenses.
- It was suggested that a future off-site Board meeting be held in a smaller-sized city to see how unique challenges were tackled.
- Cllr Merry offered to host a future off-site Board meeting in Salford.

Decision:

- Board Members noted the report.

5 Health Devolution

The Chair invited **Philip Clifford, Senior Adviser**, to introduce the report, and welcomed **Michael Wood, Head of Health Economic Partnerships – NHS Confederation**, to the meeting. Michael presented a series of slides to the Board and discussed emerging recommendations from the health and devolution working group.

Members made the following contributions:

- Concerns were raised which related to the lack of engagement and equality between local government and the NHS.
- Concerns were raised which related to decreased accountability in relation to local CCGs and how local authorities could be represented in ICBs.
- The importance of investment in early intervention and prevention was emphasised.
- The need for equity of judgement in performance was expressed.
- It was suggested that the recommendations within the report be strengthened.
- The importance of prioritising people was emphasised.
- A concern was raised which related to the diminishing role of councillors throughout the process.

Decision:

- Board Members noted the report.

6 Councils' Future Role in Driving Growth and Prosperity

The Chair welcomed **Steve Hughes, Associate Economist at WPI Economics**, and invited **Efa Gough, Adviser**, to introduce the report which summarised updates to a research report undertaken by WPI Economics, exploring growth and prosperity and how this could be unlocked through enhancing the roles and responsibilities of local government.

Members made the following contributions:

- A date-related typo within Annex A was highlighted.
- The importance of being precise in what was meant by devolution was emphasised.
- It was suggested that economic factors be included within the report.
- The need to attract international investment was expressed.
- A case study which focused on building houses and how local

authorities could use statutory tools and work closely with partners was requested.

- The difficulty in reconciling the differences between economic growth and prosperity and using wellbeing as one of the concepts within the report was expressed.
- The importance of prioritising people was emphasised.
- A concern was raised regarding the readability of the report.
- A concern was raised regarding the lack of information contained within the report regarding combined authorities for local growth and prosperity and in addition, risk management.
- The importance of case studies and sharing best practice was emphasised.

Decision:

- Board Members noted the report.

7 Urban Summit

The Chair invited **Efa Gough, Adviser**, to introduce the report which detailed proposals for a third urban summit, to be held in June 2024, with a focus on setting out the priorities of urban areas to national stakeholders ahead of the summer recess and with a view to influencing a forthcoming general election.

At the summit, Members requested that there be:

- Independent party representation.
- an update on the proposals related to Influencing Youth Employment UK's Youth Commission.
- an update on LEPs.

Decision:

Board Members noted the report.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Satvir Kaur	Southampton City Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Robert Alden	Birmingham City Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Gareth Roberts	Richmond upon Thames London Borough Council
	Cllr Martin Fodor	Bristol City Council
Members	Cllr Bella Sankey	Brighton and Hove City Council
	Cllr Nazia Rehman	Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Nadine Peatfield	Derby City Council
	Cllr Fran Belbin	Sheffield City Council

Cllr Jason Brock
Cllr John Merry CBE
Cllr Anthony Hunt
Cllr John Cotton
Cllr David Mellen
Cllr Ross Garrod
Cllr Martin Gannon
Cllr Barry Anderson
Cllr Julia Lepoidevin
Cllr Antony Mullen
Cllr Michael Ross

Reading Borough Council
Salford City Council
Torfaen County Borough Council
Birmingham City Council
Nottingham City Council
Merton London Borough
Gateshead Council
Leeds City Council
Coventry City Council
Sunderland City
Hull City Council

Apologies

Cllr Liam Robinson

Liverpool City Council

In Attendance

Cllr Daren Hale
Cllr Aled Richard-Jones
Cllr Matt Edwards
Cllr Geraldine Coggins

Hull City Council
Wandsworth London Borough
Bradford City Council
Trafford Council