

Minutes of last City Regions Board meeting

City Regions Board

Wednesday, 31 January 2024

Hybrid meeting - Manchester (see agenda for venue info) & Online via Microsoft Teams

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 Cllrs Lepoidevin, Robinson and Miller. Cllr Turrell attended the meeting as a substitute.

No declarations of interest were received.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

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Apologies were received by Cllrs Lepoidevin, Robinson and Miller. Cllr Turrell attended the meeting as a substitute.

No declarations of interest were received.

3 City Regions Board visit to Manchester - agenda

The information contained within this agenda item was noted without discussion.

4 Universal Support

The Chair invited **Jasbir Jhas, Senior Adviser**, to introduce the report. Positive early discussions had taken place between the LGA, councils and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on plans to route Universal Support, a major new employment support programme, through local government. The report updated Members on progress to date and next steps. A Work Local update was also provided. A similar discussion took place at the People and Places Board on Tuesday 23 January.

Members made a number of contributions, which related to the following points:

- The importance of supporting care leavers into employment
- Incentivising employers through marketing
- Capacity building
- Good opportunities for local government
- Transitions from old technologies to new
- Green skills agenda and training opportunities
- Flexibility to meet various needs
- Building upon current good practice
- Clustering and lobbying government
- Voluntary schemes
- Comparative examples for best practice sharing and lobbying purposes
- Barriers to employment – a lack of transport connections
- Capacity and next steps

Jas responded to Members comments and thanked them for their contributions.

Decision:

- Members noted the report.

5 Presentations from partners

a) Jason Prince, Director, Urban Transport Group

The Chair welcomed **Jason Prince, Director of Urban Transport Group**, to the meeting and invited him to present a series of slides to the Board. The slides set out:

- Urban Transport Group background information
- Case studies and productive policy
- Thought leadership and strong relationships
- Advocates for public transport
- Professional network
- Key challenges facing Urban Transport
- Active Travel and Future Mobility

Members made the following contributions:

- The importance of maximising the benefits of transport modes was emphasised.
- A question was asked which related to bus funding and associated research to assist with making a case to government.
- The need to focus on geographical impacts in relation to additional costs associated with travel, the economy and links into cities, was expressed.

- It was suggested that councillors be more involved in Urban Transport Group meetings to provide greater insight into the transport-related challenges that residents face.

Jason responded to Members' comments and questions and thanked them for their contributions. He emphasised the importance of investment into transport to create better places and outcomes and to have a clear identity of the country's direction economically, socially and in achieving decarbonisation targets.

Decision:

Members noted the verbal update.

- b) Henri Murison, Chief Executive, Northern Powerhouse Partnership

The Chair welcomed **Henri Murison, Chief Executive, Northern Powerhouse Partnership**, to the meeting and invited him to address the Board. He provided background information related to the work of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, in addition to:

- The need to bring together a wider coalition of voices to make a strong case to government for vital transformation transport investments.
- The lack of funding for local government and its reliance on government deploying money fairly and sensibly.
- The demographic change which enabled people to work in their nearest large city and commute from outer lying areas.
- The role of transport and its importance to a sustainable economy.
- Current transport barriers.
- Government decision making and its challenges.

Members made the following contributions:

- Capacity issues related to the HS2 railway line were highlighted. The importance of tackling the management structure of the railway system was emphasised.
- A question was asked which related to the specific changes required to allow the structural roll out to progress at a faster rate.
- A concern was raised regarding uncertainty.
- A question was asked which related to the Board's main focuses over the next year.

Henri responded to Members' comments and questions and thanked them for their contributions.

Decision:

- Members noted the verbal update.

c) Cllr Bev Craig, Leader, Manchester City Council

The Chair welcomed **Cllr Bev Craig, Leader, Manchester City Council**, to the meeting and invited her to address the Board. She provided information which related to the following:

- The close working relationship with the Northern Powerhouse Partnership.
- The importance of transport in attracting businesses and economic growth.
- Work being undertaken which related to the economic strategy and analysis to tackle urban inequality.
- The lack of government support in tackling transport-related issues.
- Views from businesses about the lack of reliable transport links and the value that they would bring.
- The ability to connect buses with trams and, in time, regional rails.
- Next steps for Manchester's transport policy.

Members raised concerns which related to the structural and systemic barriers regarding transport, the gap in social and economic aspirations and the lack of connectivity and its impact on economies and house prices.

Cllr Craig responded to Members' comments and questions and thanked them for their contributions.

Decision:

- Members noted the verbal update.

6 Support for care leavers

The Chair invited **Megan Edwards, Adviser**, to present the report. The Chair of the LGA, Cllr Shaun Davies, had announced that one of his priorities for 2023-24 is corporate parenting, in particular support for care leavers. Recognising that all Councillors are corporate parents to children in care and care leavers, all policy Boards were asked to share their own ideas for this priority area, to shape the LGA's work in relation to supporting care leavers. The report outlined current ideas for the programme and next steps.

Members made the following contributions:

- Many examples of good practice within local government were shared.
- The importance of care experience being treated as a protected characteristic, including by other public bodies, was emphasised.

- The importance of wrap-around and transitional support for care leavers was recognised.
- The need to work closely with partners, local charities and voluntary groups in relation to young people in care/care leavers to share best practice, was expressed.
- The importance of ensuring that all young people had access to basic life skills programmes to ensure self-sufficiency after leaving care, was emphasised.
- The need for appropriate funding to support care leavers who were formerly unaccompanied asylum-seeking children was raised.
- The need for additional support within the workplace for care leavers was expressed.

Decision:

- Members noted the report.

7 Work Programme updates

The information contained within this agenda item was noted without discussion.

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 John Merry CBE	Salford City Council
	Cllr Anthony Hunt	Torfaen County Borough Council
	Cllr David Mellen	Nottingham City Council
	Cllr Ross Garrod	Merton London Borough
	Cllr Martin Gannon	Gateshead Council
	Cllr Barry Anderson	Leeds City Council
	Cllr Antony Mullen	Sunderland City
	Cllr Michael Ross	Hull City Council
Cllr Geraldine Coggins	Trafford Council	
Apologies	Cllr Liam Robinson	Liverpool City Council
	Cllr Julia Lepoidevin	Coventry City Council
In Attendance	Cllr Ellis Turrell	Wolverhampton City Council

Cllr Matt Edwards

Bradford City Council