

## Note of last City Regions Board meeting

<b>Title:</b>	City Regions Board
<b>Date:</b>	Monday 13 June 2016
<b>Venue:</b>	Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

### Attendance

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

### Item Decisions and actions

#### 1 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

The chair noted apologies and asked for any declarations of interest.

#### 2 Leading Places Project Update

Philip Clifford, Senior Adviser, introduced the paper. He outlined the Leading Places Project and advised members that it was being run jointly between the LGA, Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and Universities UK (UUK). The project would take place in six pilot areas across the country and would run over the summer, concluding in February 2017. Each pilot area was currently in the process of selecting a priority challenge theme to develop, bringing together leaders from across the public, business and academic sectors in local institutions. The project would draw on successful international examples to drive growth, support public service reform and strengthen partnerships vital to the devolution agenda.

Ian Hughes, Head of Programmes, advised that HEFCE was funding the first pilot of the project and that this had influenced the criteria used to select areas for this phase. In particular, it was decided that the initial pilot would seek to work with areas where a successful working relationship between local institutions was already well established. If the pilot is deemed to be a success, members were advised of the potential to extend the project to include other areas across the country.

In the discussion which followed, members made the following points:

- It was positive that education bodies were engaging with local government, but members were concerned that few councillors were currently involved with the project in each pilot area.
- Members requested to know what work had been done on survey

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responses for priority working between universities and local authorities.

- Members asked how work on skills and employment would feed into the project.
- Members felt that councils needed to work with business leaders in their areas on issues such as land banks and the physical regeneration of communities.
- Members felt that councils and universities could work on the impact of the student population together, and discussed the impact of council tax rebates for student housing.

**Decision:**

1. Members **noted** the report.

**Action:**

1. Officers agreed to come back with updates for members as the project progressed.

### **3 Skills and Employment Update - Next Steps**

Jasbir Jhas, Senior Adviser, introduced the paper. She advised board members that the paper captured the outcomes of the discussion on Skills and Employment which had taken place between City Regions and People and Places Lead Members on 10<sup>th</sup> May. At this meeting, lead members had agreed that the work would be a key priority as discussions evolved.

The relationship and work carried out between local government and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) was discussed, as was the changing role of Job Centre Plus. Members were advised that the LGA was working on the Work and Health Programme (WHP) with DWP, which would be devolved in 10 devolution deal areas. National consultation events had been arranged by the LGA and DWP in May on this and a working group was looking at recommendations in this area.

In 2018, the Job Centre Plus Estates Contract would end and there would be an opportunity for local government to put forward a vision on the employment service. Members were advised that the LGA would look to develop a green paper on this in the autumn.

Members were also advised that work with Shared Intelligence on growth related areas had been recommissioned. They would produce an independent report on this.

In the discussion which followed, members raised the following points:

- In reference to paragraph 10 and the adult education budget, members discussed learner loans and asked how they could be used as a catalyst to benefit those who had benefited little from the system. Members also emphasised that developing a partnership approach with the careers service was important.
- As well as developing local government's relationship with DWP, members highlighted that it was important for local government to develop a working relationship with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), so that skills and employment work at government level could be joined up.
- In reference to paragraph 8 and the availability of jobs, members felt there needed to be a way of ensuring good, qualitative jobs were available.
- The results of the further education system should be considered so that it was clear how adult education could be improved.
- Members highlighted that the paper did not mention youth employment and how this could be measured. They asked if additional funding streams would be available for this area.
- A culture change within was needed DWP and some early positive changes had been seen. Members asked how the agenda with DWP could be broadened in the future.
- Members asked what the difference would be in the 10 devolution deal areas where the WHP was being developed compared with the national solution offered elsewhere. This was something the board would look to influence as it was developed. Members asked if there would be an opportunity for flexibility within the DWP national framework.
- Members noted that the role of Job Centre Plus was changing and that it was important for the organisation to be encouraged to work with other local partners.

**Decisions:**

1. Members **noted** the update.

**Actions:**

1. Officers agreed to take forward work as directed by members above.

**4      Inclusive Growth Commission**

Claire Hogan, Senior Adviser, introduced the report. Members were

updated on the Commission, which had been formally launched on the 12<sup>th</sup> April. It would be informing its programme through a series of meetings, evidence hearings and a formal call for evidence. Members were encouraged to attend and input to the evidence sessions.

- Members asked how the state would be reconfigured to support growth in city areas. It was felt that government could look inwards to support this work.
- There was potential for this work to be tied in with the work on business rates retention.
- The work could address the divisions between rural areas, the commuter belt and urban areas. The position of the LGA was also discussed in relation to this.
- There were concerns about the focus on insufficiency of jobs in the report. Members highlighted that the methodology demonstrated a correlation between commuting and inclusion, and that high numbers of commuters in an area often brought wealth and economic growth. Places prospering economically often had a high mobility amongst the workforce. This should be seen positively and should be addressed in the LGA's evidence.
- Members felt that the report did not refer to the spatial nature of exclusion – particularly in highlighting that neighbourhoods which were poor ten years ago were still disadvantaged.
- Improvement of transportation in an area increased opportunities to commute and put pressure on the housing market. It was highlighted that it was often harder to work with people who worked at a distance and that commutability could marginalise more individuals in an area.
- Members requested that asset- or strength-based approaches on delivery were considered.

### **Decision**

1. Members **noted** the report.

### **Action:**

1. Officers agreed to continue with work as directed by members.

## **5 End of Year Report**

Eleanor Reader-Moore, Member Services Officer, introduced the report and advised members that the report gave a synopsis of the board's work over the past year and looked forward to key issues the board would consider during next year's cycle. She asked members for feedback and

suggestions on additions/improvements before it was submitted to the LGA Executive in July.

In the discussion which followed, members made the following points:

- That budgets on key areas of the board's work should be included.

**Decisions:**

1. Members **noted** the achievements against the board's priorities in 2015/2016.
2. Members **noted** the board's priority areas for 2016/17.

**Action:**

1. Officers to include information on budgets in the report.

## **6 Note of the Previous Meeting**

**Decision:**

1. Members **noted** the minutes of the previous meeting and **agreed** that they were an accurate summary of the discussion.

## **7 Devolution Green Paper**

Rebecca Cox, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced the report, advising members of progress on the Devolution Green Paper since the last board meeting. She asked members for feedback on the most recent draft.

In the discussion which followed, members made the following points:

- There were issues not covered in the paper which could be included, such as the need to have a greater variety of options for devolution governance arrangements available.
- The paper could discuss the arrangements which would be needed for the election of representatives in devolution areas.
- The geography of devolution areas needed clarifying and it was suggested they ought to align with functional economic areas.
- Members requested that there was an opportunity in the paper for them to reply (in for example, a consultation pack).
- Members highlighted that current governance systems in local areas were complex, off putting for the public and led to confusion on where responsibility lay. The paper needed to map out a

straight forward system.

- More investment was needed to ensure the public were aware of different types of governance. The paper should set out a way forward on engaging with government and on ensuring residents understood devolution proposals (and councillors in some cases).
- As additional layers of government were introduced with deals, it was felt that there would be further confusion and devolution would become discredited. The devolution settlement for local government needed to be clarified and clear objectives and rules laid out. The debate needed shaping rather than responding to.
- Government could helpfully produce a menu of options on devolution to clarify which were available. Members requested that 'asks' in established devolution deals which had not been forthcoming were captured.
- Members highlighted the importance of community identity – especially in the context of fundraising and unlocking the benefits of growth in communities.
- Members requested that the green paper discuss fiscal freedom for local government. It would be helpful for there to be options for authorities to collect different taxes in different ways.
- Consensus in devolution could be difficult to achieve between authorities at different levels. Members requested that the LGA play a part in pushing government to recognise this problem.
- The Greater Manchester Devolution model was based on a French model, and therefore international learning was still important.
- MPs needed to be further encouraged to support devolution.
- It was clear there would be several metropolitan mayors by mid-2017 and it was suggested that from then on it would be difficult to introduce variety in governance arrangements.
- It was suggested that there should be arrangements for new mayors to be included under the LGA umbrella. Members asked what work was planned to engage with them through the LGA Leadership Board.

**Decision:**

1. Members **noted** the updated.

**Action:**

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1. Officers agreed to take forward work on the paper as directed by members.

### **Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Sir Richard Leese CBE	Manchester City Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Robert Light	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Vice-Chair	Cllr Paul Watson	Sunderland City Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Abigail Bell	Hull City Council
Members	Cllr Sean Anstee Cllr Robert Alden Cllr John Beesley Cllr Donna Jones JP Mayor Jules Pipe Cllr Helen Holland Cllr Tudor Evans OBE Cllr Jon Collins Cllr Roger Lawrence Cllr Sir Albert Bore Cllr Ann Lucas OBE Cllr Simon Letts Cllr Judith Blake Cllr Warren Morgan Cllr Iain Roberts	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council Birmingham City Council Bournemouth Borough Council Portsmouth City Council Hackney London Borough Council Bristol City Council Plymouth City Council Nottingham City Council Wolverhampton City Council Birmingham City Council Coventry City Council Southampton City Council Leeds City Council Brighton & Hove City Council Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Apologies	Mayor Joe Anderson OBE Cllr Peter Rankin	Liverpool City Council Preston City Council