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## Note of last City Regions Board meeting

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**Title:** City Regions Board  
**Date:** Monday 19 June 2017  
**Venue:** Rooms A&B, Ground Floor, Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London, EC1M 5LG

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### 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 welcomed members to the meeting. There were no declarations of interest.

Support was echoed for the work going on in cities following the recent terrorist attacks in London and Manchester, and the role of the Chair following the Manchester attack was acknowledged.

#### 2 LGA Fire Safety Work

The Chair informed members that there would be an additional agenda item on LGA fire safety work following the Grenfell Tower Fire.

Charles Loft, Senior Adviser, informed members that the LGA was currently advising councils to look into cladding in tower blocks and to liaise with their local fire and rescue service.

He asked members to feedback what councils were doing in response to the incident.

In the discussion which followed, these points were made:

- The installation of smart meters was discussed. It was suggested that the LGA could look into this.
- Concerns were raised over the reputation of local government following the fire. It was suggested that the LGA could review council contingency planning.

#### Decision:

1. Members **noted** the update.

### **3 Skills and Employment - LWI's Final Report**

Jasbir Jhas, Senior Adviser, introduced the item, advising members that the final report on a locally accountable employment and skills service was in draft form in Appendix A and would be launched at the LGA Annual Conference. She invited members to make comments by email before Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June.

Tony Wilson, Director of Policy and Research at the Learning and Work Institute, set out background to the report, highlighting the failures of the current system to address the needs of the unemployed and the underemployed. As a result, around £90 billion was lost to the UK economy. The report put forward proposals for local areas to deliver an integrated service which would be aligned around groups of councils, building on examples from other countries. The system would also look at realigning LEP boundaries with Combined Authorities or groups of councils.

Six keys features were proposed for the new system:

1. A 'one stop' service rooted in place
2. Clear and responsive local leadership
3. Driven by local opportunities and needs
4. A common national framework for devolution
5. An integrated offer for individuals and employers
6. Local Labour Market Agreements (LLMA)

In the discussion which followed, these points were made:

- Members raised concerns that the online apprenticeship application system was technically difficult and discouraged young people from applying.
- Members discussed 'quick wins' in the proposal and whether these could be achieved without legislation.
- There was a discussion on how the apprenticeship levy could be made more effective.
- There was a point made on the number of low skilled workers and the lack of low skilled jobs. Members asked how the workforce could be upskilled in some areas.
- LEP and combined authority boundaries did not necessarily need to be aligned for both to work together. However, some LEP boundaries did not currently make sense as they needed to represent functional economic areas.
- There was a brief discussion on making proposals for a single exam board and for careers guidance to be an Ofsted requirement.
- It was emphasised that cross party support for the report would

need to be built in Parliament.

**Decision:**

1. The board **noted** the report.

**Action:**

1. Officers to incorporate members' comments into ongoing work.

**4 Strengthening Sub-National Trade and Investment Policy**

Daniel Shamplin-Hall, Adviser, introduced the item.

Adam Swash (Value Adage) introduced the draft 'Strengthening Sub-National Trade and Investment' report (in Appendix A). He informed members it aimed to assess the different models local government has adopted to support international trade and investment, identify the factors that constrain or enable the development of a coherent local approach, and develop recommendations concerning how to strengthen sub-national trade and investment policy.

The research had been conducted through a mixture of desk-based work and direct consultation. It revealed complexity in the current system with around eighty different national schemes in place to support trade and investment, many with overlapping objectives. The report concluded that the current trade and investment policy framework is not supporting areas as well as it could do, and that councils should play more of a role in commissioning trade and investment support for their area.

In the discussion which followed, these points were made:

- Members made clear that in designing a reformed policy framework Government should resist adding further bureaucratic layers to an already overcrowded system. They were advised that future work could look to understand the eighty schemes more and investigate where overlaps and waste exist.
- There was a discussion on 'pan-regional' arrangements and questions on where these already existed.

**Decision**

1. Members **noted** the report.

**Action**

1. Officers to incorporate members' comments into ongoing work.

## **6 Leading Places Update**

Daniel Gardiner, Adviser, introduced the item. He updated members on the progress of the second phase of the Leading Places Project, advising them that fifteen areas were currently participating (of thirty which had applied). He asked board members for a steer on work going forward.

### **Decision:**

1. Members **noted** the update.

### **Action:**

1. Members endorsed the support offer outlined and commented on its particular relevance for those areas that had been unsuccessful in securing a place in the second phase of the project.

## **7 Devolution Update**

Philip Clifford, Senior Adviser, introduced the item. He provided an overview of the LGA's work with Combined Authorities and the newly elected Mayors. He also discussed the uncertainty surrounding the scope and scale of the government's commitment to devolution following the recent general election.

In the discussion which followed, these points were made:

- It was emphasised that while it was only right for the LGA to engage with the newly formed Mayoral Combined Authorities future support for must continue to be made available to all council areas.
- Members requested that employment and skills relationships with further education providers (including schools) be included on the devolution work programme for the coming year.
- There was a brief discussion on fiscal devolution, the uncertainty regarding the government's plans for business rates localisation and wider implications for financing local public services. Members advised that while the subject had been explored previously, there was now an opportune moment to consider the matter more thoroughly .

### **Decision:**

1. Members **noted** the report.

### **Action:**

1. Officers to incorporate members' comments into ongoing work.

**8 IPPR Research: Devolution, Local Government and Gender Representation**

Rebecca Cox, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced the item, advising member that the IPPR were conducting research into gender representation in local government and combined authorities as the devolution agenda progressed. She referred members to Appendix A which outlined the detail of the emerging findings and recommendations, and advised them that a roundtable discussion would be held on the 18 July ahead of the launch of the final report.

In the discussion which followed, these points were made:

- Members raised concerns that the responsibility for encouraging diversity amongst councillors lay with political parties. It was emphasised that the report needed to add something of further value to previous reports on similar subjects.
- There was a request for officers to clarify party membership statistics.

**Decision:**

1. Members **noted** the update.

**Action:**

1. Officers to feedback comments to the IPPR and clarify party membership statistics.

**9 End of Year Report**

**Decision:**

1. Members **noted** and **agreed** the End of Year Report.

**10 Note of the Previous Meeting**

**Decision:**

1. Members **agreed** the notes of the previous meeting as an accurate summary of the discussion.

**Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Sir Richard Leese CBE	Manchester City Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Robert Light	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Deputy-Chair	Cllr Liz Hazell	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Deputy-Chair	Cllr Abigail Bell	Hull City Council
Members	Cllr Robert Alden	Birmingham City Council
	Cllr Sean Anstee	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr John Beesley	Bournemouth Borough Council
	Cllr Samantha Dixon	Cheshire West and Chester Council
	Cllr Martin Gannon	Gateshead Council
	Cllr Jon Collins	Nottingham City Council
	Cllr Peter John OBE	Southwark Council
	Cllr Simon Letts	Southampton City Council
	Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Sue Jeffrey	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Apologies	Cllr Donna Jones JP	Portsmouth City Council
	Cllr Julie Dore	Sheffield City Council
	Cllr Helen Holland	Bristol City Council
	Cllr Jean Stretton	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
	Mayor Joe Anderson OBE	Liverpool City Council
	Cllr Timothy Swift	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Warren Morgan	Brighton & Hove City Council
	Cllr Iain Roberts	Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council