

Theme 1: The Future of Cities

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

This paper provides an update on the commissioning of a series of videos of city residents as part of the future of cities work, with the successful supplier, *The means*, attending the Board meeting to hear from Board members and set out their plans for the project. It also sets out options for a future urban summit.

Is this report confidential? Yes No

Recommendation/s

1. Members are asked to note that *The means* has been appointed to carry out the *Future of Cities: City Citizens* work, and hear at the Board meeting about their plans for the work.
2. Members are asked to comment on the proposal to host another urban summit early in 2023.

Action/s

1. Officers will work with *The means* to carry out the *Future of Cities: City Citizens* project, continue to liaise with the RSA and Core Cities on their work on the future of cities, and proceed as directed by Members on the hosting of a second urban summit in 2023.

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Theme 1: The Future of Cities

Purpose and outcome

1. The purpose of the future of cities project is to reach an agreed set of asks and offers around the future of cities, which can be used to feed into the LGA's lobbying to Government and political manifestos ahead of the next general election. This will be achieved through bringing together the voices of city leaders, experts, and now urban residents, to draw on their understanding of how cities need to change to meet the needs of the future. It will be informed by, and compliment, work of other organisations in the same space, including the RSA, Core Cities, Key Cities, London Councils and 3Ci.
2. Key civil servants for this work are: Jeremy Pocklington, DLUHC permanent secretary; Will Garton, Director General for Levelling Up; Catherine Frances, Director General, Local Government, Resilience and Communities.

Background

3. The [Future of Cities collection](#) was launched at LGA Annual Conference in June 2022. This collection brought together city leaders, academics, think tanks, urban artists and writers to provide a response to the question "What do we want our cities to be, and how do we get there?". This question aimed to develop further the discussions held at the Board's first Urban Summit in March, which posed three questions: "What are cities?", "What do we need our cities to be?" and "What is the difference and how do we get them there?".
4. Although all submissions are answering the same broad question, the contents cover a broad range of topics. From city governance structures to the opportunities presented by increased density, and from rewilding to devolving more powers to cities, the responses show the breadth of ideas around how cities can and should change.

Issues

5. Following the launch at LGA Annual Conference, officers have continued to add to the collection, with new essays and a new section of videos from the Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network. Officers are still reaching out to potential contributors so that the collection will continue to grow.
6. Following previous conversations at the Board, officers commissioned work to capture and explore in more detail the views of city residents. Following a competitive selection process, *The means* have been awarded the contract, and will be attending the Board meeting to hear from members about what they would like to get out of the project, and set out their plans.

7. This project aims to supplement the existing contributions, highlight a broad range of perspectives and include voices not often heard in the debate around what cities of the future should be like. It will capture these views in a series of videos, where a diverse collection of urban residents talk about the challenges they face today, how cities could change to address these challenges, and what an ideal city which allowed them to fulfil their potential and meet their aspirations would look like.
8. Officers have also had initial conversations with RSA regarding a commission they have received from Core Cities. This project also looks at the future of cities, and officers are working with the RSA and Core Cities to identify how the Board can contribute to this work most effectively. We also continue to speak to Key Cities and London Councils about the role that they can play in the next stages of the work.
9. The Board has previously discussed hosting a second urban summit, to take place in early 2023. Members may wish to provide a steer on whether they would like another urban summit to take place, and if so, what they would like the contents of the summit to include.
10. It has been suggested that the next urban summit could bring together the RSA and 3Ci as a halfway point to reflect on the urban futures project that they have been working on with Core Cities. We would also consider it essential to have representation from Key Cities and London Councils as part of the summit. We could also use this as an opportunity to launch the collection of videos from city citizens, and hear in person from the residents interviewed as part of the videos.

Implications for Wales

11. This work is being carried out within the context of the Levelling Up White Paper, which presents a vision for the UK. While many of the investment and policy levers are likely different within the Welsh context there will be value in drawing on the experience of Welsh cities.
12. In our discussion with *The means* we have stated that we would like at least one of the city residents to be drawn from a Welsh city to ensure that a Welsh perspective is included in the next stage of the work.

Equalities Implications

13. The specification for the *Future of Cities: City Citizens* project explicitly stated that we expect the supplier to recruit a diverse group of people, and this was reiterated in the first meeting with *The means*. The specification also stated that the bidder must demonstrate an understanding of the equality and diversity issues relevant to the project. All bidders were required to provide a detailed explanation of how these equalities issues will be addressed in the design, implementation and evaluation of the project.

Financial Implications

14. The cost of commissioning the series of videos capturing the views of urban residents, the cost of arranging an urban summit as well as any additional policy activity arising from this paper will be met from the Board's policy and research budget.

Next steps

15. Members are asked to note that suppliers *The means* have been appointed through a competitive procurement process to carry out the *Future of Cities: City Citizens* work, and comment on the proposal to host another urban summit early in 2023.
16. Officers will work with *The means* to carry out the *Future of Cities: City Citizens* project, and continue to liaise with the RSA, 3Ci and Core Cities on their work on urban futures, along with Key Cities and London Councils on the role they can play in contributing to the future of cities work.
17. Officers will proceed as directed by members on an urban summit, including setting a date and bringing a draft agenda to the next board meeting if members agree to proceed.