

**Meeting:** City Regions Board

**Date:** 23 November 2022



## Theme 2: Future of Cities Update

### Purpose of report

For information

### Summary

This report outlines work since the last board meeting on the Future of Cities: City Citizen videos and plans to hold a second urban summit, in conjunction with Core Cities and the RSA in March 2023. It proposes that the aim of the summit would be to bring together the complementary strands of works from the RSA, Core Cities and the City Regions Board, as well as other work being carried out by London Councils and Key Cities and agree a series of propositions which would then be used for joint lobbying to Government and to influence political manifestos ahead of the next general election.

**Is this report confidential?** No

### Recommendation/s

Members are asked to note progress on the *Future of Cities: City Citizens* videos and provide feedback on the first cuts of two of the videos.

Officers will continue to work with *The means* to complete the *Future of Cities: City Citizens* project, continue to liaise with the RSA, Core Cities and other key stakeholders to arrange an urban summit for late March 2023 which will bring together several strands of work and produce a series of propositions for agreement at the summit to feed into future lobbying work.

### Contact details

Contact officer: Ellie Law

Position: Policy Adviser

Phone no: 07584 273764

Email: [Eleanor.Law@local.gov.uk](mailto:Eleanor.Law@local.gov.uk)

## Theme 2: Future of Cities Update



### Outcome and Purpose

1. The purpose of this 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.
2. Key stakeholders to engage for this work include the RSA, Core Cities, Key Cities, London Councils and 3Ci. Officers will continue to work with these organisations, particularly where similar projects can be brought together.
3. The desired outcome of this work is that leaders of our city regions will be empowered to play a key role to play in the shaping of cities in the future, ensuring that they are inclusive, flourishing regions able to manage global challenges.

### Background

4. At the last meeting of the City Regions Board, members heard from *The Means* and their partners who had been commissioned to carry out work on the *Future of Cities: City Citizens* project.
5. This project aims to supplement the essays and videos already included in the [Future of Cities online collection](#). It will highlight a broad range of perspectives and include voices not often heard in the debate around what cities of the future should be like through a series of six videos, each filmed in a different city, with urban residents talking about their experiences of city life and how cities could change to help them meet their aspirations in the future.
6. At the September Board meeting, members fed back on the cities presented as options for filming. Following comments from members during the meeting and an email to members following the meeting, the following locations were chosen:
  - 6.1 Wrexham
  - 6.2 London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
  - 6.3 Birmingham
  - 6.4 Norwich
  - 6.5 Plymouth
  - 6.6 Newcastle

7. Members also fed back that they would like to see the impact of the cost of living and the health and wellbeing implications of cities to be incorporated into the interviews that shape the filming. Members also noted that as far as possible within the constraints of six videos, they would like a proper matrix that accounts for income levels, background, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and disabilities should be applied.
8. Members also fed back on the proposal to hold a second urban summit, and asked officers to work with Core Cities and the RSA to ensure that the Board's work aligns with the UK Urban Future Commission.

## **Proposal**

9. Following the meeting, officers have continued to work with *The means*. At the time of writing, three of the six videos have been filmed – in Richmond, Wrexham and Birmingham, and work is underway to recruit and select participants to be filmed in Norwich, Plymouth and Newcastle. A first cut of two of these videos (Richmond and Birmingham) will be ready to be shown at the Board meeting.
10. Officers have also progressed plans to hold a second urban summit. Officers met with Core Cities and have agreed to bring together the Board's Future of Cities work and the UK Urban Futures Commission, which has been commissioned by Core Cities and is being carried out by the RSA.
11. The UK Urban Futures Commission has looked at very similar themes to the Future of Cities work, including looking at the three questions posited at the urban summit held in March: "What are cities?", "What do we need our cities to be?" and "What is the difference and how do we get them there?". By March, the RSA aims to have produced work looking at the first two of these questions, and the summit could be an opportunity to present the findings from these workstreams and receive input from city leaders and urban experts on these findings.
12. The summit will also provide an opportunity to launch the *City Citizen* videos, which are due to be completed in December. These videos will be used to inform the discussions that take place at the summit and ensure that less often heard voices are included as part of these debates.
13. The urban summit is planned to take place in late March, and a date will be agreed and circulated before the end of the year. Officers will bring a full agenda for agreement to the next meeting of the Board in January. The ultimate aim of the summit is to bring together the complementary strands of works from the RSA, Core Cities and the City Regions Board, as well as other work being carried out by London Councils and Key Cities and agree a series of propositions which would then be used for joint lobbying to Government and political manifestos ahead of the next general election.
14. These propositions will be drawn from the existing Future of Cities collection, the discussions at the previous urban summit, and the *City Citizen* videos, but members may wish to suggest themes or ideas that they would like to be included. For example, it may be useful to consider the Board's work related to urban resilience or the economic composition of cities within a broader policy context.

## **Implications for Wales**

15. 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, and one of the six videos has been filmed in the Welsh city of Wrexham. This ensures that a Welsh perspective has been included as part of the diverse range of urban experiences that the *Future of Cities: City Citizens* project aims to highlight.

## **Financial Implications**

16. 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.

## **Equalities implications**

17. 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 both the previous Board meeting and in subsequent meetings 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.

18. Similarly, officers will ensure that the urban summit has a diverse range of speakers which reflects the diversity of cities in the UK.

## **Next steps**

19. Officers will continue to work with *The means* to produce six videos encapsulating the views of a diverse group of city citizens.

20. Officers will also work with Core Cities and the RSA to agree a date and agenda for the urban summit and bring this to the January meeting of the Board.