

**Meeting:** City Regions Board

**Date:** 25 January 2023



## **Theme 1: Future of Cities**

### **Update on Urban Summit**

#### **Purpose of report**

For direction

#### **Summary**

This report outlines a draft agenda and potential speakers for the Board's second urban summit, proposed to take place on 22 March 2023, in lieu of the City Regions Board meeting scheduled for that day.

It suggests that the urban summit becomes an annual event, with a different theme each year, and proposes that one of the key outputs of 2023's urban summit would be to agree a joint open letter to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The paper also suggests a further event at LGA annual conference in July 2023.

**Is this report confidential?** No

#### **Recommendation/s**

Members may wish to provide a steer on the timings, draft agenda and suggested speakers proposed for the urban summit, and whether they would like to see an event at LGA annual conference.

Officers will invite speakers and attendees to the urban summit in line with the agenda outlined above if members are content to proceed on this basis.

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# Update on Urban Summit



## 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 inform the LGA's lobbying to Government and political manifestos ahead of the next general election, as well as being used by cities and urban areas themselves. 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 and the strong offer cities can make to some of the important challenges facing the nation.
2. Key stakeholders to engage for this work include the RSA, Core Cities, Key Cities, London Councils, SIGOMA 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 and access a diverse range of funding.

## Background

4. In March 2022, the City Regions Board held its first urban summit, and followed this up with an urban fringe at LGA Conference in June 2022. These events brought together key stakeholders and urban leaders.
5. Following these events, the Board agreed that a second urban summit should take place in March 2023, and indicated that they would like this to become an annual occurrence, with different themes each year but the same broad aim: to bring together those involved in setting the agenda for cities to agree common interests and shared lobbying positions.
6. Members also asked officers to ensure that the Board's urban summit is joined up with the work of the UK Urban Futures Commission, which has been commissioned by Core Cities and is being carried out by the RSA.

## Proposal

7. Following feedback from members, the next urban summit is proposed to take place on 22 March, and it will take place at the LGA's offices at 18 Smith Square. A save the date has been sent to all members of the Board, along with key stakeholders who have already taken part in previous sessions of the RSA's UK Urban Future Commission.
8. Officers have worked with Core Cities and the RSA to draft an agenda for the day, however the summit is intended to be inclusive of all urban Special Interest Groups.

9. This agenda continues to reflect the three questions that have shaped the Board’s future of cities work to date, with the focus of the morning session being the first question – “What are cities?”. This will involve hearing from the RSA about their work to date which has focussed on this first question. The afternoon session will turn instead to the second and third questions “What do we need our cities to be?” and “What is the difference and how do we get them there?”.

10. The full draft agenda is as follows:

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Potential speaker(s)</b>
10am-10.15am	Welcome and launch of joint open letter	Mayor Marvin Rees
10.15am-10.45am	Presentation of RSA findings to date	<a href="#">Andy Haldane</a> , Chief Executive Officer of the RSA, and Mayor Marvin Rees
10.45am-11.30am	Response to RSA research – panel discussion	Panel will be comprised of a mixture of civil servants, urban local government leaders, and academics.
11.30am-12pm	Feedback from attendees on presentations and discussions so far	
12-12.45pm	Lunch	City Citizen videos playing
12.45pm -1.15pm	Keynote speaker - Government/shadow cabinet lead on their priorities for cities	Michael Gove MP and/or Lisa Nandy MP
1.15pm-1.45pm	Response to keynote speech – panel discussion	Panel will be comprised of urban local government leaders and representatives from Special Interest Groups.
1.45pm-2.45pm	Breakout sessions – examining the 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?)	

	<p>Within these sessions, themes to explore could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health devolution</li> <li>• Urban resilience</li> <li>• Skills</li> <li>• Climate</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Michael Wood</a>, Head of Health Economic Partnerships at the NHS Confederation</p> <p>Representative(s) from Space Syntax and/or representatives from Resilient Cities</p> <p><a href="#">Dame Sharon White</a>, Chair of John Lewis Partnership</p> <p><a href="#">Professor Greg Clark</a>, Chair of 3Ci</p>
2.45pm-3pm	Break	
3pm-3.45pm	International response to levelling up	<p><a href="#">Bruce Katz</a>, urban policy expert and co-author of <i>The New Localism</i></p> <p>Representative from Commonwealth Local Government Forum</p> <p><a href="#">Alice Charles</a>, Lead on Urban Transformation for World Economic Forum</p> <p>U7 Mayors</p> <p>Representative from Eurocities</p>
3.45-4pmpm	Roundup of the day	
4pm	Reception	

- Following feedback from Lead Members, it is proposed that the summit have a strong interactive element to it, with opportunities for attendees to feed in ideas and contributions on the three main questions throughout the day, such as via Slido. The event will be facilitated by an external host, likely a journalist, to ensure the smooth running of the day.
- A summary of the findings of the RSA research will be distributed to attendees in advance of the event, alongside a reminder of the three questions framing the event.

All speakers will also be briefed on the contents of the research so far, as well as the Board's work to date on these issues.

13. It is proposed that the summit will also provide an opportunity to publish a joint open letter to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The contents of the letter would be drawn from 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. This letter would outline the key asks and offers from the urban sector to central Government, and could be used going forward as a set of cross-sector agreed lobbying positions, seeking to both influence the Government and political manifestos ahead of the next general election.
14. If members are content with these proposals, officers will work with the LGA's communications and media team to formulate a media plan for this open letter, including a press release and promotion through the social media and the LGA's channels. To maximise impact, urban special interest groups would be asked to support the promotion of this letter.
15. The summit could be followed up by a further event at LGA conference, due to take place from 4-6 July 2023, in order to maintain momentum and provide a further opportunity to bring together key stakeholders.
16. Officers are continuing to work to expand the Future of Cities hub. New essays and data analysis are underway for the collection, and members are asked to provide a steer on any further people they would like officers to invite to write an essay or record a video. Similarly, the City Citizen videos commissioned by the Board are progressing, with filming having completed in Newcastle, Richmond, Birmingham and Wrexham. Filming has been scheduled for Plymouth and suppliers are continuing to look for candidates to film in Norwich. Officers have fed back comments from members on the first cut of the Birmingham video at the last Board meeting, and the suppliers have adjusted the questions and framing they are using for interviews with participants accordingly. If members are content, these videos will be launched at the urban summit in March.

## **Implications for Wales**

17. 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 the aspirations of Welsh city leaders as part of this work.

## **Financial Implications**

18. 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**

19. Officers will ensure that the urban summit has a diverse range of speakers which reflects the diversity of cities in the UK, and that equalities implications of policies affecting cities are examined as part of the sessions taking place in the urban summit.

## **Next steps**

20. Officers will invite speakers and attendees to the urban summit in line with the agenda outlined above if members are content to proceed on this basis.