

City Regions Board – Report from Mayor Marvin Rees (Chair)

Future of Cities

1. Planning is underway for a second urban summit, due to take place on 22 March 2023. This first part of the summit will showcase the progress of the RSA UK [Urban Futures Commission](#) with an address from RSA Chief Executive Andy Haldane. The second part of the summit will provide opportunities for attendees to get involved in discussions about three key questions: *what are cities, what do we need cities to be, and what is the difference and how do we get there?*
2. The summit will provide the opportunity to bring together key urban special interest groups and stakeholders including Core Cities, Key Cities and London Councils.
3. The summit will also launch a collection of videos, capturing the views of city citizens from six different cities in England and Wales to augment our existing [collection of essays and videos](#) drawn from city leaders, urban planners, think tanks, academics and urban artists and writers.

Urban Resilience

4. At the last meeting of the City Regions Board, members heard from Bristol City Council on Bristol's work on urban heat resilience, including the context for urban heat risks and Bristol's Heat Vulnerability Index. Members also commented on the Government's recently published national resilience framework, for the purpose of feeding back to Government on the plans to take forward the proposals in conjunction with the Safer and Stronger Communities Board.

Levelling Up

5. The [Levelling Up Locally Inquiry](#) has completed five roundtables. The inquiry has looked to explore how the government's levelling up agenda might better strengthen local areas and the emerging themes of the roundtables have been used in conjunction with research into how the pandemic may have affected demographic trends and what the implications are for levelling up of any demographic shifts. The final report will be launched at a hybrid event on Tuesday 14th March. Confirmed speakers include Sarah Longlands, Professor Francesca Gains and Professor Michael Kenny.
6. The City Regions Board has approved the creation and co-sponsorship of a health devolution working group with the NHS Confederation. This working group will provide an opportunity to ensure that learning can be shared between local government, the NHS and Integrated Care Systems (ICSs).

The three boards with an interest in health devolution (the City Regions Board, the People and Places Board, and the Community Wellbeing Board) will all have a nominated representative on the working group, with the nomination from the City Regions Board being Cllr Gillian Ford. Sarah Pickup, Deputy Chief Executive of the LGA will also be a member of the working group.

7. Following the announcement of the second round of the Levelling Up Fund, the Board, with the People and Places Boards raised concerns about the process. The Board resolved to write to the Secretary of State about these concerns, and to ask the Minister to review the process of allocating the Levelling Up Fund ahead of any future rounds.
8. The Board together with the People and Places Board hosted a series of roundtables to hear directly from councils around the country to explore how councils are working to improve equality and diversity in employment and skills outcomes to encourage economic inclusion for their communities. Officers are drawing together the evidence from the discussions to develop policy recommendations to advance this agenda.

Growth funding

9. The City Regions Board, together with the People and Places Board has commissioned WPI Economics to carry out research into what works in driving economic growth and prosperity at the local level. It will also look at the steps English councils working in partnership might take to achieve this. This work is due to conclude in April.
10. The Board is also feeding into two pieces of commissioned work undertaken by Shared Intelligence supporting local economies as part of the LGA's Government-funded support offer. The first relates to the changing skills needs of economic development teams. The project aims to better understand economic development services and how they are delivered across England, the breadth of the work undertaken and how they add value locally, and skills and capacity challenges they face including skills needs and capacity issues delivering local and national priorities.
11. The second project supports councils and combined authorities with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) integration process. To date, two workshops have been held with tranche 2 areas, with a further two workshops scheduled to take place including one for tranche 1 areas who have already integrated. DLUHC officials are confirmed to attend the sessions to provide an update from Government. A final report will be published to share good practice and highlight the opportunities and challenges of LEP integration.

12. The LGA has commissioned Shared Intelligence to run action learning sets to support local authorities delivering the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This will include developing resources to support the wider sector with the introduction of the fund.

Green Jobs

13. The Government's Green Jobs Delivery Group have agreed for the formation of a time limited Local Capacity and Capability sub-group that will run between March and May. The group will make recommendations to the Government on how best to address the local capacity and capability challenges local government face in delivering the jobs and skills needed to achieve net zero.
14. Local Government will be represented by Solace, ADEPT, Mayoral Combined Authorities as well as the LGA, which Cllr Kye Dudd will be representing Bristol City Council. There will also be representation from business, energy companies, and education and training providers. The LGA are engaging with the partners to support the sub-committee as well as inform our wider policy development work.

Contact details

Contact officer: Rebecca Cox

Position: Principal Policy Adviser

Phone no: 0207 187 7384

Email: rebecca.cox@local.gov.uk