

Minutes of last City Regions Board meeting

City Regions Board

Wednesday, 7 June 2023

Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#)

Item	Decisions and actions
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1 Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed Members, officers and guests to the meeting.

Apologies were received by Cllr Hinchcliffe, Cllr Miller and Cllr Kaur. Cllr Bennett, Cllr Cook, Cllr Penberthy and Cllr Dacres attended substitutes.

No declarations of interest were made.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

3 Theme 1: Future of Cities

Philip Clifford, Senior Adviser, introduced the paper and provided an update on the recent urban summit and an overview of follow-up work.

Members made the following comments:

- A Member suggested that future urban summits be held at a more convenient time for councillors and felt that the recent urban summit was in very close proximity to the local elections, meaning not as many councillors were able to attend. The Chair suggested that future urban summits be held mid to end of February each year.
- The importance of focusing on urban areas more broadly, as opposed to just city-centres, was emphasised.
- A Member highlighted several economic issues regarding smaller urban areas.
- The importance of expanding the list of key stakeholders, their engagement and ensuring that their voices were heard was emphasised.

Decision:

That Members **note** the report.

4 Theme 2: Levelling Up

a) Supporting Economic Inclusion

Bushra Jamil, Adviser, introduced the paper which set out an overview of the six guiding principles to realise economic inclusion in employment and skills, and the key tasks and roles that local government would undertake.

Members made the following comments:

- It was noted that four of the six Economic Inclusion Principles set out within the report stated, 'Local Government may want to...' as opposed to 'Local Government will/shall...'. The need to make the wording stronger and clearer was emphasised.
- A Member highlighted the potential negative impact that data collection could have on local authorities and their represented areas.
- In reference to Principle 2, the importance of access to good quality broadband across the country was emphasised.
- In reference to Principle 3, it was suggested that economic growth be included.
- The need for more research and action into the current lack of transport and connectivity across all areas of the country was highlighted.
- A Member felt that there should be more emphasis within the paper on economic opportunity and opportunities through the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).
- The importance of investing in infrastructure and retrofitting for future generations was emphasised.

Decision:

That Members **note** the report.

Action/s:

- Officers to check legal history to see if the title wording of four of the six Principles could be strengthened and to update the Board.
- Officers to progress collaborative work with the transport policy team to explore a) how transport challenges could be addressed, and b) how the cost of lack of transport connectivity could be quantified.
- Officers to consider bringing a paper to a future meeting of the Board focused on collaboration and partnership

working.

- b) Update on the health and devolution working group with NHS Confederation

Philip Clifford, Senior Adviser, introduced the paper and provided an update on the newly formed health and devolution working group established by NHS Confederation and co-sponsored by the LGA following its first meeting in April 2023.

Members made the following comments:

- Cllr Ford, as the Board's representative, had attended a recent meeting whereby transport and the impact that a lack of access to transport had on health and wellbeing had been discussed. The working group had also looked at devolved authorities, the issues related to the meaning of devolution in different localities and the impact on health and wellbeing consequently. She confirmed that she would be attended future meeting of the group and would continue to feedback to the Board at future Board meetings.
- A Member asked a question which related to data-sharing. Cllr Ford responded and confirmed that data-sharing would be a key topic of discussion at a newly formed Joint Commissioning unit with health partners.

Decision:

That Members **note** the report.

Action/s:

Officers to feedback Members' comments to the NHS confederation.

5 Theme 3: Urban Resilience

- a) Local Resilience Act

The Chair welcomed **Joe Fyans**, Head of Research at Localis, to the meeting and invited him to introduce the report. Joe presented a series of slides which set out information related to the independent think tank, Localis, which explored the potential of a 'local resilience act' to help strengthen local authorities' ability to respond to current and future risks arising from a changing climate.

Members made the following comments:

- A Member highlighted challenges related to current

energy demands across the country, and the significant need for more affordable housing.

- The need to combine adaption with mitigation, and share best practice was expressed.

With regards to the support that the Board could provide to Localis, Joe confirmed that more in-person events and stakeholder engagement would be beneficial.

Decision:

That Members **note** the report.

6 Theme 5: Growth Funding

a) Supporting Economic Growth and Prosperity

Philip Clifford, Senior Adviser, introduced the paper and provided an update on the work of the Board in supporting local economies.

Members made the following comments:

- A Member made a comment which related to the impact of freeports and the way in which they could help the economy.
- The importance of the role of urban areas in driving growth and prosperity was emphasised.
- The need for clarity in relation to the future of LEPs, associated powers and assets was expressed.

Decision:

That Members **note** the report.

b) Growth Funding Update

Philip Clifford, Senior Adviser, introduced the paper and provided an update on recent work to improve the provision of growth funding from national to local government highlighting correspondence with the Secretary of State relating to the Levelling Up Fund.

Members made the following comments:

- The need for clarity in relation to the bidding process and comprehensive solutions to issues was expressed.

Decision:

That Members **note** the report.

Action:

Officers to liaise with central government colleagues in relation to the streamlining of Growth Funding.

7 Work Programme

Rebecca Cox, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced the Work Programme and talked briefly about upcoming work.

The Chair encouraged Members to attend the Annual Conference.

Decision:

That Members **note** the update.

Action:

Officers to circulate a list of relevant Annual Conference sessions, including the Urban Fringe meeting to Members outside of the meeting.

8 City Regions Annual Report

Rebecca Cox, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced the annual report which summarised the Board's activity over the past year. It set out key achievements in relation to the priorities for the Board in 2022/23 and looked forward to next year's priorities.

Decision:

That Members **note** the report.

9 Theme 4: Green Jobs and Skills

Paul Green, Adviser, introduced the paper which provided a summary of progress from the Local Capacity and Capability sub-group and proposed a policy narrative for a green jobs framework.

Members commented on the report. Their comments included information related to retrofitting, adaptation, sustainability, the importance of investing in skills and private-sector investment.

Paul responded to Members' comments.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

Action:

Officers to explore information related to joining up with the resilience setting further outside of the meeting and report back to the Board.

10 Theme 5: Growth Funding

a) Councils' Future Role in Driving Growth and Prosperity

Items 10a and 10b were taken together. See item 10b for the minute taken.

b) Presentation from WPI economics

The Chair welcomed **Steve Hughes**, Associate Economist at WPI Economics, to the meeting and invited him to present a series of slides on the interim findings of WPI Economics' research into councils' role in driving growth and prosperity.

Members commented on the presentation slides. Their comments included information related to the British Chambers of Commerce, culture in local authorities, responsiveness, opportunities, working with partner organisations, the importance of local authorities and the work that they undertake, growth and consolidation.

Steve responded to Members' comments.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

18 Any other business

The Chair thanked Members for their kind words and equally expressed his thanks to all Members who stood down/ had not been re-elected.

The Chair encouraged Members to attend the first meeting of the next cycle in person.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Mayor Marvin Rees	Bristol City Council
Vice-Chairman		
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Gareth Roberts	Richmond upon Thames London Borough Council
	Cllr Gillian Ford	Havering London Borough Council

Members	Cllr Robert Alden Cllr Barry Anderson Cllr Joanne Laban Cllr James Moyies Cllr Bev Craig Cllr Nazia Rehman Cllr Kerrie Carmichael Cllr Jason Brock Cllr John Merry CBE Cllr Anthony Hunt Cllr David Mellen Cllr Denise Scott-McDonald Cllr Martin Fodor	Birmingham City Council Leeds City Council Enfield Council Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Manchester City Council Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council Reading Borough Council Salford City Council Torfaen County Borough Council Nottingham City Council Royal Borough of Greenwich Bristol City Council
Apologies	Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe Cllr Graeme Miller Cllr Satvir Kaur	Bradford Metropolitan District Council Sunderland City Council Southampton City Council
In Attendance	Cllr Simon Bennett Cllr Bob Cook	Wolverhampton City Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council