

Minutes of last City Regions Board meeting

City Regions Board

Monday, 2 October 2023

Online via Microsoft Teams

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.

The Chair thanked the previous Chair, Mayor Marvin Rees, and the Board Members for their work over the past year.

Apologies were received by Cllr Lepoidevin, Cllr Cotton and Cllr Peatfield. Cllr Penberthy attended as a substitute.

No declarations of interest were received.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

3 City Regions Board Terms of Reference

The Chair stated that item 3 and item 4 would be taken together.

The Chair alluded to the change of focus regarding the newly formed Local Infrastructure Net Zero (LINZ) Board and the Economy & Resources (E&R) Board. She stated that greater clarification was needed regarding the changes to prevent future duplication or gaps. Members agreed that greater clarity would be welcomed.

In addition to the Chair's comment, Members made the following contributions:

- A comment was made which related to the importance of strategic housing and transport in shaping place and inclusive growth.
- A question was asked which related to planning and whether the Board would take on planning-related matters within its remit.
- It was suggested that additional work be undertaken to look at housing-related challenges faced by local authorities.
- The importance of urban resilience, particularly in relation to

employment and skills, was emphasised.

The Chair suggested that each of the Board's meetings for the 2023/24 cycle followed a thematic approach.

Rebecca suggested that item 4 be deferred to the next Board meeting to ensure that there was greater clarity in relation to the changes brought by the newly formed LINZ Board and E&R Board. Board Members supported this.

Decision:

- That the Board's overview and priorities be deferred to the next Board meeting.

Action:

- Officers to work with the Board's Lead Members and the LINZ and E&R Board officers to seek greater clarity in relation to the changes brought by the newly formed Boards, to shape the Board's terms of reference and work programme.

4 City Regions Overview and Priorities 2023-24

Item 3 and Item 4 were taken together, please refer to minute 3 for further details.

5 Health Devolution

Esther Barrott, Policy Adviser, introduced the report which provided background information related to the LGA's health and devolution work, including an update on the working group established by NHS Confederation, and cosponsored by the LGA. The report suggested actions related to potential engagement from the Board regarding health devolution over the 2023/24 cycle.

Members made the following contributions:

- Reference was made to the impact that health devolution had had in Manchester, and the importance of monitoring the Manchester Devolution Deal was emphasised.
- Concerns were raised which related to the lack of accountability within the NHS. It was suggested that such issues be closely monitored.
- A question was asked which related to the practice and partnership, related impacts to primary healthcare, and what could be done by local authorities to help matters.
- The importance of ensuring that local authorities had the necessary powers to ensure that their residents could access essential health services was emphasised.
- It was suggested that the devolution of public health powers be further discussed at the next Board meeting.
- The importance of monitoring health challenges within urban areas, as well as addiction and treatment services, was

emphasised.

Decision:

- Board Members noted the report.

Action:

- Officers to ensure that the report be brought back to the next Board meeting for a wider discussion.

6 Urban Summit

Efa Gough, Policy Adviser, introduced the report which set out options for a third Urban Summit to take place in 2024. The aim of the summit was to bring together urban leaders from the City Regions Board, Core Cities as well as London Councils and Key Cities, and set out their key priorities to national stakeholders, politicians, and stakeholders.

Members made the following contributions:

- It was noted the desire for the third Urban Summit to take place in June, after the elections had taken place.
- In relation to section 9 of the report, it was suggested that examples of the Board's success in delivering economic growth be added.
- It was suggested that the role of cities and how crucial they were in training the next generation of young people be emphasised within the report.
- The importance of presenting a positive image of cities for both business and leisure purposes was emphasised.
- A question was asked which related to partnership working between combined authorities and the Board.
- The importance of coastal communities was emphasised.
- The importance of focusing on climate-related issues, housing, economic growth and skills, and the need to tackle community disadvantages was emphasised.
- The need to use the summit as a platform to showcase good work taking place in cities and urban areas was expressed.
- The importance of creativity in joining up economic activity, skills, sustainability, community development and inclusion was emphasised.

Decision:

- Board Members noted the report.

7 Councils' Future Role in Driving Growth and Prosperity

Efa Gough, Adviser, and **Steve Hughes, Associate Economist at WPI Economics**, introduced the report which summarised commissioned research conducted by WPI Economics, which explores growth and prosperity and how this could be unlocked through enhancing the roles

and responsibilities of local government.

Members made the following contributions:

- Questions were asked and concerns were raised regarding the report's recommendations.
- The need to make the case to government for community-led regeneration was expressed.
- The importance of green spaces to improve health and wellbeing was emphasised.
- A question was asked which related to the demise of Local Enterprise Partnerships.
- The importance of locally led solutions was emphasised.

Efa and Steve noted all comments from Members.

Decision:

- Board Members noted the report.

Action:

- Officers to incorporate Board Members' comments into the report where possible and share the amended report with Board Members at a future meeting of the Board before being published as a final version.

8 Employment and Skills

Jasbir Jhas, Senior Adviser, introduced the report which was jointly led by the City Regions Board and the People & Places Board. It set out the aim of the LGA's work, which was to ensure that the current national employment and skills system was more integrated and localised, and for the sector to benefit from greater freedoms and flexibilities through devolution. The report summarised key priority work areas over the past year and suggested next steps for the coming months. A similar discussion had taken place at the People & Places Board on 12th September.

Members emphasised the importance of:

- engaging with national politicians
- importance of green skills, sustainable business development, retrofitting, energy security and understanding the lack of grid capacity, and need for LGA to link into the work of 3ci
- the need for multi-year employment and skills agreements to provide certainty and security for colleges and training providers
- understanding future employment growth
- supporting people back into work and education settings
- sustainable housing and transport
- long-term planning in relation to upskilling
- interconnectivity between coastal and rural communities

Decision:

- Board Members noted the report.