



Note of the Scottish Cities Alliance Leadership Group meeting

Wednesday 18th March 2015

Perth

Attendance

Cllr Jennifer Laing	Leader, Aberdeen City Council
Angela Scott	Chief Executive, Aberdeen City Council
Cllr Ken Guild	Leader, Dundee City Council
David Martin	Chief Executive, Dundee City Council
Cllr Andrew Burns	Leader, City of Edinburgh Council
Greg Ward,	Head of Economic Development, City of Edinburgh Council
Cllr Gordon Matheson	Leader, Glasgow City Council
Annemarie O'Donnell	Chief Executive, Glasgow City Council
Cllr Drew Hendry	Leader, Highland Council
Steve Barron	Chief Executive, Highland Council
Cllr Ian Miller	Leader, Perth and Kinross Council
Bernadette Malone	Chief Executive, Perth and Kinross Council
Cllr Corrie McChord	Stirling Council
Stewart Carruth	Chief Executive, Stirling Council/SCA Strategic Director
Keith Brown MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities
Oonagh Gil	Head of Enterprise and Cities Division, Scottish Government
Ross Martin	Chief Executive SCDI, Chair (item 1 & 2 only)

Also in attendance

Kevin Rush	Glasgow City Council
Sharon Miller	Cities Team, Scottish Government
Simon Forrest	Private Secretary to the Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities, Scottish Government
Iain McCrae	Policy Executive, Scottish Cities Alliance
Isabel McDermid	Administrator / PA, Scottish Cities Alliance

Apologies

Sue Bruce	Chief Executive, City of Edinburgh Council
Cllr Johanna Boyd	Leader, Stirling Council

Note of meeting

1. Appointment of Chair

Ross Martin, current Chair of the Leadership Group, welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced that he would be retiring as Chair. He asked the Leadership Group members for nominations for Chair. Cllr Burns was nominated and appointed with effect from 18 March 2015.

Ross Martin handed over Chair of the meeting to Councillor Burns and highlighted that SCDI would continue to support the Alliance in the future.

2. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

The Chair welcomed Annemarie O'Donnell and Aileen Edwards to their first meeting, and thanked Ross Martin for his support for the Alliance and chairing of recent Leadership Group meetings. Apologies were tabled as noted above.

The Chair thanked the group for their support, and advised that he hoped that the meetings would move forward in an open, supportive and productive manner. The Chair indicated that he viewed items 4 and 5, to be discussed later in the agenda, as part of an evolution and maturing process for the Alliance, with the cities taking a greater lead in the Alliance whilst maintaining a strong partnership with Scottish Government.

3. Note of Previous meeting

The note of the previous meeting on 15th December 2014 was agreed and will now be published on the Alliance website.

4. Scotland's Seven Cities : A Shared Vision for Scotland's Success

The Chair advised that the city Leaders met twice recently in a private session to agree a collective approach and update their Shared Vision paper, which was originally signed in April 2011 by the then six cities.

Stewart Carruth, in his role as SCA Strategic Director, outlined the key changes in relation to setting out the long term vision. He advised that the refreshed Vision builds on the original document signed in 2011 and sets out the city leaders' long term vision to drive economic growth. It has been updated to include Perth which joined the Alliance in 2012 and some new areas of focus around Smart Cities, the need to tackle inequality and play a lead role in taking forward the decentralising democracy agenda. The refreshed Vision continues to recognise the mutual benefits realised by all seven cities working together and in partnership with both the Scottish Government and UK Government.

The Chair thanked Stirling for hosting the city Leaders' meetings and the SCA Strategic Director for facilitating the discussions.

Cllr Hendry welcomed the Vision paper and asked that Inverness be recognised not just as a city but as a city region and suggested that it was important to reflect the decentralising democracy agenda in its widest possible terms and build on the Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy in Scotland.

The group agreed with this approach and it was noted that both Edinburgh and Stirling were in the process of taking a regional focus to activity.

The Cabinet Secretary welcomed the proactive approach of the cities. He confirmed that the Scottish Government will continue to work in partnership with the cities through the Scottish Cities Alliance. He also made a number of suggestions that he considered would strengthen the Alliance including greater involvement of Economy Conveners of the Councils in the Alliance and increased European engagement on cities policy. He suggested that

there was potential for the Alliance to be involved in the Scottish Government's proposed Cities Convention. The Cabinet Secretary also encouraged the Alliance to be more proactive in communicating its successes.

It was noted that whilst Scottish Government shares many of the ambitions contained within the city Leaders' Vision some elements do not align with current policy. The Scottish Government welcomed further discussion of these elements with the cities. Consequently, it was noted that the Vision has been developed by city Leaders and belongs to them and not the Scottish Government.

Cllr. Hendry agreed that there was a need to highlight the Alliance's achievements and advised the group that Inverness have been referencing the Alliance throughout the development of their City Deal and is supportive of greater European engagement, and encouraged other cities to promote the Alliance more proactively through their own communication channels. He also welcomed discussion around a City Convention.

Following discussion, the group agreed that the Vision should be amended to recognise that, as well as working collaboratively, there is also healthy competition between cities. It was also agreed that the updated Vision should include a focus on sustainable economic development and more clearly articulate the cities commitment to social justice and the need to address inequalities.

Cllr McChord welcomed the Scottish Government proposal to increase EU engagement and suggested that the waste and the circular economy agenda, which is a key policy theme for the European Commission, could offer cities an opportunity for future collaboration.

The Chair suggested that the city Vision be updated to reflect these suggestions and welcomed the proposal by David Martin that the Chief Executives and take this forward, with a view to further consideration at the next City Leaders meeting.

5. Review of Governance Arrangements

The Chair advised in light of the refreshed Vision that it would be appropriate for the Alliance's governance arrangements to be reviewed.

The Alliance Leadership Group will continue to meet three times per year. In addition, City Leaders will meet separately three times a year. City Leaders have agreed to take a portfolio responsibility for one of the six key areas detailed in the city leaders' Vision, with Chief Executives taking on an additional project sponsorship role to support operational delivery in line with the Vision. Further work is required to define these new arrangements and agree leadership of each portfolio. A meeting of the cities' Chief Executives will be arranged to take this forward.

In addition, the Programme Director will facilitate discussions with all the Alliance Partners to revise the current Alliance protocols and these will be tabled at the next meeting of the Leadership Group for approval.

6. Director's Update

The Programme Director spoke to the Director's Report which updated the Leadership Group on key progress and achievements made on delivering the Operational Plan since the previous Leadership Group meeting.

A proactive communications strategy has been developed which fully embraces the use of social media to increase the reach of the Alliance messaging. There has been positive press in the Herald's Business magazine to raise the profile of the Alliance and further media releases are planned over the next 6 months. A key area of focus will be the SCA's Smart Cities activity to build on the developing ERDF bid.

The Programme Director thanked Edinburgh for leading the Alliance's investment promotion activity over the past 3 years and confirmed that this has given the SCA a strong base to build future activity. It was noted that Stirling will be taking forward the lead for investment promotion from 1st April 2015.

The Smart Cities ERDF application is progressing well and all cities and Scottish Government are working closely together (see item 7).

The budget up to 31st December 2014 was noted, and it was agreed to publish the high level budget on the Alliance website.

Scottish Cities Knowledge Centre is currently undertaking a review of the new draft Scotland Bill 2015 and its potential implications for cities. It was agreed that their final report would be presented at the next Leadership Group meeting for discussion.

7. Smart Cities

Glasgow, as lead partner for the Smart Cities ERDF bid, outlined the background to the “Scotland’s 8th City – The Smart City” ERDF Application and confirmed that this has now been submitted to the Managing Authority for review. It was noted that the Delivery Group has approved funding for the Project Management Office to support the bid and Glasgow will now commence recruitment in anticipation of a successful application.

A Project Approval Application for £500k towards the match funding requirement for the ERDF application from Cities Investment Fund was tabled for approval. The City Leaders noted the potential risks detailed in the paper due to slippage in the timescales within the Managing Authority timetable for assessing the application as this may have an impact on the cities’ ability to confirm match funding and progress projects. The Scottish Government confirmed that any delay would not impact on the success of the Alliance’s application, and ability for cities to progress or access ERDF funds.

The application for funding was approved by the group pending a successful ERDF application.

8. Industry Engagement Forum (IEF)

The Programme Director presented a paper on the establishment and potential membership of an Industry Engagement Forum (IEF). Following a discussion, it was agreed that further consideration needs to be taken with regard to the purpose, role and remit of the IEF to ensure that it adds value to both the Alliance and those business representatives involved. The current proposal needs increased focus and care needs to be taken not to duplicate arrangements already in place.

It was agreed that a paper be brought back to the next Leadership Group meeting with more detailed proposals for the creation of an IEF and how it would complement existing activity in city and city regions.

9. AOB

The Chair proposed that dates be set for the next two years, and that the venue be rotated around cities. It was agreed that consideration be given to the use of video conferencing, particularly around the winter months. The Programme Director will work with the Chair to set out a programme of meetings up to March 2017.

The suggestion that the Conveners of Economy Committees could attend Leadership Group was agreed in principle and should be further explored as part of the revised governance arrangements.

It was noted that the Programme Director, working with the Strategic Director, will meet with Chief Executives to progress amendments to the City Leaders’ Vision and Alliance partners to take forward agenda items 5 and 8.

The Cabinet Secretary invited Leaders to consider a strategic discussion to explore the opportunities from accelerating the delivery of High Speed Rail on Scotland. He offered to ask an SG official to attend a city leaders meeting if this would be helpful.

It was agreed that a press release be released confirming the appointment of Cllr Burns as Chair and reaffirming the city Leaders' commitment to a long term vision for cities and their regions.

Cllr McChord asked that the Leadership Group mark their appreciation for Stewart Carruth's involvement with the Alliance as its Strategic Director, and the Chair on behalf of the group thanked Stewart for his contribution and support in facilitating the recent City Leaders meetings.

The meeting closed at 11.20 am.