



**Note of the Scottish Cities Alliance Leadership Group meeting
Thursday 25th February 2016**

Attendance :

Cllr Andrew Burns	Leader, City of Edinburgh Council (Chair)
Cllr Archie Graham	Depute Leader, Glasgow City Council
Pamela Rennie	Policy and Governance Officer, Glasgow City Council
Cllr Ian Miller	Leader, Perth and Kinross Council
Bernadette Malone	Chief Executive, Perth and Kinross Council
Cllr Johanna Boyd	Leader, Stirling Council
Stewart Carruth	Chief Executive, Stirling Council
Keith Brown MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities
Oonagh Gil	Head of Enterprise, Cities and Tourism, Scottish Government
Aileen Edwards	Programme Director, Scottish Cities Alliance

Also in attendance :

Dr. Morag Watt	Cities Team Leader, Scottish Government
Sharon Miller	Cities Team, Scottish Government
Julie Hoey	Cities Team, Scottish Government
Iain McCreaddie	Policy Manager, Scottish Cities Alliance
Caroline Trainer	Communications Officer, Scottish Cities Alliance
Isabel McDermid	Administrator, Scottish Cities Alliance
Leo Platt	Leopold Marketing (item 3)
Ingrid Green	Scotland Europa (item 5.1)
Jim Hayton	Housing Officer, Scottish Cities Alliance (item 5.2)

Apologies :

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
Andrew Kerr	Chief Executive, City of Edinburgh Council
Cllr Frank McAveety	Leader, Glasgow City Council
Annemarie O'Donnell	Chief Executive, Glasgow City Council
Cllr Margaret Davidson	Leader, Highland Council
Steve Barron	Chief Executive, Highland Council

Note of meeting

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

Introductions were made and apologies were tabled as noted above.

It was noted that Aberdeen, Dundee and Inverness were offered the opportunity to provide feedback on the papers as they are unable to attend due to full Council meetings taking place to set budgets. Any feedback will be communicated under the respective items.

2. Note of Previous Meeting

The note of the previous meeting on 28th October 2015 was approved and will now be published on the Alliance website.

Item 3 - Empowering Scotland's Cities to Grow – It was noted that the cities have commissioned Ernst & Young to clarify the “asks” outlined in the discussion document by mid-March 2016, and this piece of work will be shared as soon as it is finalised.

Item 6 – Cities Convention – The Cabinet Secretary advised that feedback has been very positive, the speakers were very interesting and he suggested that the Scottish Government would look to hold similar events in the future. The Chair agreed with the Cabinet Secretary's sentiments and thanked everyone involved in arranging the event.

3. Investment Promotion Strategy

Stewart Carruth (Stirling), as the lead city for Investment Promotion, advised that the draft strategy demonstrates the background of strong investment and potential to bring investment into Scotland. The report also identifies key territories where the Alliance should target investment promotion activity in a more co-ordinated manner. It was noted that the value the Alliance offers is the ability to create larger scale propositions which are of interest to investors, which may not be possible at an individual city basis.

Leo Platt, Leopold Marketing, outlined the research he has undertaken on behalf of the Alliance. It was noted that the strength and value of collaborative working on this agenda through the Alliance is well respected within the cities themselves. The report makes recommendations on how the Alliance can capitalise on this to ensure the cities can continue to compete globally for capital investment.

A discussion took place and concerns about the current EU Referendum were expressed in terms of impacting negatively on the ability for cities to attract investment. It was agreed that the Alliance should consider a joint position on this agenda and that the Scottish Government should be invited to the next City Leaders meeting on 8th June 2016 to discuss this.

The Chair gave thanks to Leopold Marketing for the presentation and Stirling for leading on this work. The following recommendations were agreed/acknowledged:

- The proposed approach of the Alliance's refreshed Investment Promotion Strategy and Action Plan in principle.
- That additional resources would be required to deliver the strategy and this will be progressed through the Delivery Group and Investment Promotion Working Group.
- That an update on progress should be provided to the Leadership Group meeting on 20th June 2016.

4. Refresh of the Agenda for Cities

The Scottish Government spoke to the draft of the refresh of the Scottish Government's Agenda for Cities, noting that it is intended to be complimentary to the original Agenda, and celebrates the successes delivered since the launch of the Agenda in 2011. The refresh looks forward positively to what lies ahead, focusing on what we do collaboratively and what the Scottish Government and cities do individually. It acknowledges the developing landscape in relation to city region deals and the need to embed inclusive growth in the cities agenda. The Scottish Government thanked the cities for their support in refreshing the strategy and welcomed further comment in advance of the final deadline of noon on Monday 29th February 2016.

The Chair thanked SG for the significant effort put into this document and the group confirmed that they were happy with the broad structure of the document. The Chair asked if section 8 of the draft tabled referring to the "primary role of the Alliance" could be softened to read "one of the primary roles".

A discussion took place around the launch of the document and it was agreed that the Core Team will liaise with Scottish Government Cities Team to provide a supportive response.

It was agreed that the Alliance should have an agreed collaborative response in terms of progressing the Agenda following the launch and implications for the future focus of the Alliance. The Chair asked that officers from Scottish Government and cities develop an agreed line on the future of the Alliance. This should be brought back to the Leadership Group on 20th June 2016 for discussion and approval.

5. Europe

5.1 EU Action Plan: Ingrid Green (Scotland Europa) provided an update on the EU Action Plan being developed by them for the Alliance. It was noted that the Action Plan had been mapped against the Alliance work streams and that the priorities had been presented to the Delivery Group in January. A request was made by the Delivery Group for further information and capacity building sessions, which have been scheduled as follows:

Workshop 1 - Strategic EU Engagement on 1st March 2016 : focusing on loan, equity and guarantee schemes. The workshop will build a clearer idea of what the Alliance could do through a loan scheme or grant funding and look at ways to create a fund.

Workshop 2 - Innovation Opportunities on 25th April 2016 : financing, low carbon, urban innovative actions - where collaboration between cities makes sense.

The Group confirmed that they were happy with how this work is progressing and emphasised the importance of the EU dimension for what the Alliance is trying to achieve. The agendas for the workshops were noted and the following actions were agreed:

- In principle, the allocation of resource from the City Investment Fund to progress identified opportunities for European Funding such as a Cities Fund;
- In principle, that the Delivery Group should seek to approve funding to support the extension of the Alliance's membership of Scotland Europa through to 31st March 2017 to progress delivery of the EU Action Plan and in particular future funding opportunities for Alliance activity; and
- That an update on progress should be provided to the next meeting of the Leadership Group on 20th June 2016.

5.2 EU Urban Partnership on Housing

Jim Hayton updated the group on the Alliance's engagement with the European Housing Partnership and the anticipated outcomes and opportunities for the Alliance.

The Chair advised that Edinburgh have just doubled their affordable housing output for the next ten years, so this is very welcome. The group welcomed that issues around state aid issues had been raised as a priority for the Alliance to progress through participation in the partnership. The discussion also highlighted that further consideration could be given by the Scottish Government around how land held by the Scottish Government and other agencies could be transferred more easily to local authorities to help accelerate the delivery of increased levels of affordable housing.

The Group felt that there was greater opportunity to use pension funds to aid the provision of affordable housing. The Chair indicated that it would be useful to learn about the pension fund models from other Member states on the housing partnership, with the Cabinet Secretary noting in particular the Dutch experience in this area. UK experience of using pension fund models including Falkirk, Clackmannanshire and Fife and Manchester should also be drawn upon.

The Chair thanked Jim for his presentation and it was agreed that the Alliance should:

- Establish a strategic role for the Alliance in terms of accessing European funding for housing development as part of the infrastructure work stream of the Alliance's operational activity.
- Arrange a workshop to consider EU Funding opportunities and explore how Scotland's access to funds can be improved.
- Engage with Housing Europe (& SFHA).
- Take a lead role in writing the Action Plan for the EHP.
- Prepare a detailed policy statement on the importance of a housing investment strategy to the economic growth and productivity of Scotland's cities.

6. Director's Report

The Programme Director spoke to the Director's report, updating the Leadership Group on key progress and achievements made since the previous Leadership Group meeting.

It was agreed to amend page 5 to read "Aberdeen is leading on the development of a procurement framework which any local authority or named operator in UK can utilise for the deployment of hydrogen fuel cell buses", rather than "The Alliance".

The budget report detailing approved spend and drawdowns to 31st December 2015 was noted. The group was informed that there are currently a number of applications for funding being progressed by the cities that will ensure ongoing investment from the Cities Investment Fund.

With regards to the current underspend within the Operational Budget 2015-16, it was noted that this will be carried forward into the operational year 2016-17 where it is fully committed to spend.

The Chair noted progress and the Leadership Group approved the summarised version of the Budget to be published on the Alliance website.

7. A.O.B.

7.1 Reflections on "Improving Transport Connectivity for Vibrant Economies" – 17th February 2016

The Cabinet Secretary and Chair who attended the event highlighted that feedback had been very positive. The conference provided a useful opportunity for the Alliance to establish relationships with the northern cities. It was noted that Cllr Milne from Aberdeen spoke on behalf of the cities on the crucial role efficient transport connectivity plays in supporting economic growth, referencing the cities position statement **"Connecting Scotland's seven cities together and to the world"**. The Cabinet Secretary informed the group that a

Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Transport Scotland and Transport for the North to promote further collaborative working on transport connectivity which was welcomed by the group.

7.2. European Week of Regions and Cities – 10th-13th October 2016, Brussels

Following a discussion, it was agreed that the Alliance should explore the opportunity to be involved in this event as it is in line with the Alliance's aspiration to raise its profile and influence in the European agenda. This will be progressed with the Delivery Group and an update will be given to the Leadership Group in due course.

8. Date of next meeting:

Monday 20th June 2016, 11.00 am – 1.00 pm in Inverness.

The meeting closed at 2.10 pm.