



**Note of the Scottish Cities Alliance Leadership Group meeting
Thursday 3rd June 2021 – 11.00 am – 1.00 pm (MS Teams virtual meeting)**

Attendance:

Cllr Jennifer Laing	Leader, Aberdeen City Council (Chair)
Angela Scott	Chief Executive, Aberdeen City Council
Cllr John Alexander	Leader, Dundee City Council
Gregory Colgan	Chief Executive, Dundee City Council
Cllr Adam McVey	Leader, City of Edinburgh Council
Andrew Kerr	Chief Executive, City of Edinburgh Council
Cllr Margaret Davidson	Leader, Highland Council
Donna Manson	Chief Executive, Highland Council
Cllr Murray Lyle	Leader, Perth and Kinross Council
Barbara Renton	Interim Chief Executive, Perth and Kinross Council
Carol Beattie	Chief Executive, Stirling Council
Iain McCreaddie	Programme Director, Scottish Cities Alliance

Also in attendance :

Jillian Hardie	Director, Arup (item 3)
Pete Gladwell	Head of Public Sector Partnerships, Legal & General (item 3)
Iain Stewart MP	Permanent Secretary of State for Scotland (item 4)
Jenny Bann	Scottish Government
Kate Bryson	Scottish Government
Gavin Slater	Glasgow
Mike McNally	Glasgow
Manisha Gulati	Economist
Amy Groden	Scottish Cities Alliance
Veni Kojouharova	Scottish Cities Alliance
Isabel Brennan	Scottish Cities Alliance

Apologies received from :

Annemarie O'Donnell	Chief Executive, Glasgow City Council
Cllr Susan Aitken	Leader, Glasgow City Council
Cllr Scott Farmer	Leader, Stirling Council

1. Welcome, Introduction & Apologies

The Chair welcomed the group and noted apologies as detailed above.

2. Note of Previous Meeting – 11th March 2021

The note of the previous meeting was approved and an update was given as follows:-

Item 3 - Following Kadans' attendance at the last meeting, individual introductory meetings have taken place with four of the cities. Cities who welcome an individual introduction should contact the Alliance.

3. Jillian Hardie, Director, Arup and Pete Gladwell, Head of Public Sector Partnerships, Legal and General

The Chair introduced Jillian Hardie, Director, Arup and Pete Gladwell, Head of Public Sector Partnerships, Legal and General who provided a video presentation touching upon the following key topics:

- The accelerated shift in market expectations of carbon performance of property and the need to decarbonise buildings as carbon intensive assets lose value;
- Post-pandemic places and their experience of working with the think tank Demos to see what people want from their cities post-pandemic; the accelerated need to reinvigorate retail dominated high streets and the need to repurpose existing buildings to unlock their potential;
- Working with local authorities and universities in partnership: e.g. in Oxford, resource was committed to help the economic growth of the university and whole city whilst providing affordable housing.

The Chair welcomed the overview, highlighting the cities' desire to work collaboratively particularly around challenges city centres are facing and to encourage partnerships with universities on the work on transition to net zero.

In the discussion, specific ideas raised include:

- The importance of identifying what the local need for investment is when investing such as in the example of Legal & General's partnerships with the academic sector in Oxford and Newcastle and opportunities to explore how the joint investment partnerships evidenced in these case studies enable cities to overcome procurement challenges and focus on addressing local issues such as health and inequality;
- Fuel poverty, the need for residential retrofitting and the opportunities for a collaborative joined-up approach between the public and private sector which could influence collaboration with customers and foster confidence;
- The trend for developers to move from traditional office space towards start-up labs and opportunities for cities to work on pilots with Arup looking at repurposing existing office block buildings for science lab use;
- The desire for local authorities to encourage adaptable and sustainable homes which are built with the ability to add in future net zero technologies as they are developed;

The Chair thanked Arup and Legal & General for their attendance and advised the partners that the Alliance will be in touch to set up one-to-one introductions.

4. Iain Stewart MP, Permanent Secretary of State for Scotland

The chair welcomed Iain Stewart MP, Permanent Secretary of the State for Scotland who spoke to the group about the UK Government's developing policy and funding programme in Scotland as part of the levelling up agenda.

In his opening remarks, Mr Stewart praised the partnership approach of working between local and national government and the academic and private sector as part of the City and Region Growth Deal Programme and noted that the new UK government strategies and funds are a continuation of the encouragement of these partnerships and will allow local authorities to determine the schemes and projects that are of value in their local areas. Mr Stewart provided an overview the Community Renewal Fund, the 1-year transition programme from the existing EU schemes leading towards the anticipated publication of a detailed prospectus for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund; the longer term, capital infrastructure-based Levelling Up Fund; and the Community Ownership Fund, which will have a transformative effect on specific local areas, noting that the assessment criteria between the different funds will vary.

Finally, the Minister advised that these funds provide an opportunity to complement other investments from both the public and the private sector and flagged the importance of thinking on an economic region basis, as investments in one area may benefit the wider region and that joint bids and a partnership approach would be welcome. In terms of future planning, he spoke about the need to address broader challenges of a post-COVID world and how this may affect cities and towns.

Key points raised in the discussion with the Leaders included:

- Specifics around putting in bids jointly with neighbouring local authorities such as the criteria, the rationale behind securing support from local MPs for bids and the importance of bids showcasing their potential to bring in wider investment to the area both now and into the future;
- The prioritisation of certain cities as part of the Community Renewal Fund and opportunities to influence this in the longer term based on existing and emerging policy guidance regarding inequalities and long term unemployment;
- Concerns raised by cities regarding the tight timescales of the Levelling Up fund and the potential to explore flexibility around this to ensure the quality of the bids submitted;
- An offer to have a follow up conversation with cities following this initial round of bids to take stock and shape the future process.

The group welcomed the discussion with Mr Stewart and noted the intention to have a follow up conversation once the deadline for the current schemes has passed in order to reflect and provide feedback.

5. Scottish Cities Outlook – Update, Angela Scott, CEO Aberdeen City Council

Angela Scott, CEO, Aberdeen, as the overall strategic lead for the work on the transition to net zero challenge, spoke to the papers issued and gave an update to the Leadership Group on the co-designed action plan for Transition to Net Zero Carbon and the Transition to Net Zero Funding and Investment Strategy.

Angela thanked all officers within the cities, government, and agencies on their continued collaborative work on the Transition to Net Zero Carbon Action Plan and the Funding and Investment Strategy, highlighting the intention to keep the Strategy as a live document which is refreshed regularly.

The Leadership Group noted the progress in taking forward the Transition to Net Zero Carbon Action Plan following its approval by Leadership Group on 18th November 2020 and approved the Funding and Investment Strategy for Transition to Net Zero, noting its usefulness in progressing the net zero agenda.

6. Annual Report

Iain McCreaddie, Programme Director spoke to the Annual Report for 2020-2021 tabled noting key highlights from the last year. The group commended the Alliance for the work achieved over the last year in challenging circumstances and approved the publication of the report on the Alliance's website.

- Budget

The group noted the projected carry forward in the CIF as of 31st March 2022 as £109,706, and that a budget update will be tabled at the next Leadership Group meeting for approval and publication on the Alliance website.

7. Reinvestment in SCA – 2022-2026

The Programme Director spoke to the reinvestment paper which sets out the CEO Group's recommendations for reinvesting in the Alliance Operational Budget and Investment Promotion Programme from 1st April 2022- 31st March 2026.

The Leadership Group approved the CEO Group's funding recommendations for reinvesting in the Alliance Operational Budget and Investment Promotion Programme 2022-2026 noting that:

- further consideration is being given to increasing capacity within the Core Team to provide the partners with additional economic analysis support to inform future programme activity; and
- That work is underway by the CEO Group to discuss future programme considerations as part of an Operational Plan for Alliance activity from 2022-2026 which will be tabled for Leadership Group approval before the end of 2021.

8. AOB

- **City Centre Recovery Taskforce Update, Scottish Government**

The Chair invited Jenny Bann, Scottish Government to provide an update on the Taskforce's progress advising that workshops have now taken place with Scottish Government and city officers in attendance focusing on the agreed themes: Vibrant & Living City Centres, Green & Connected City Centres, Safe City Centres and Working City Centres. Work will continue over the summer to work with the cities to consider the issues raised in the workshops with the aim of producing a draft report setting out initial short and medium term recovery recommendations for consideration by City Leaders and the Taskforce's new chair Kate Forbes MSP towards the end of August.

City Leaders agreed to provide a short contribution to the final report outlining their aspiration for the future of their city.

- **Investment Prospectus update**

The Programme Director provided an update on plans to update the Investment Prospectus over summer and encouraged cities to come forward with new investment propositions and case studies for inclusion.

9. Dates of Future Meetings

- 15th September 2021 – MS Teams
- November – as part of Glasgow COP-26 Programme