



**Note of the Scottish Cities Alliance Leadership Group meeting
Friday 7th June 2024 – 12.00 noon – 1.30pm**

Attendees :

Cllr Ian Yuill	Co-Leader, Aberdeen City Council
Jim Johnstone	Service Manager – City Development, Aberdeen City Council
Cllr John Alexander	Leader, Dundee City Council (Chair)
Gregor Hamilton	Head of Planning & Economic Development, Dundee City Council (online)
Paul Lawrence	Executive Director of Place, The City of Edinburgh Council (online)
Cllr Gordon Pryde	Fife Council - Dunfermline
Ken Gourlay	Chief Executive, Fife Council – Dunfermline (from 1pm - online)
Cllr Susan Aitken	Leader, Glasgow City Council (online)
Cllr Ken Gowans	Highland Council - Inverness
Cllr Grant Laing	Leader, Perth & Kinross Council
Thomas Glen	Chief Executive, Perth & Kinross Council (online)
Tom Arthur MSP	Minister for Employment and Investment, Scottish Government (online)
Anne-Marie Martin	Deputy Director, Economic Development, Scottish Government (online)
Nadia Abu-Hussain	Regional Economic Development, Scottish Government (online)
Cllr John Merry	Deputy Mayor Salford Council, Chair Key Cities Network (Item 3 – online)
Anna Wiley	Policy Officer, Key Cities Network (Item 3 – online)
Iain Jenkinson	Executive Director, CBRE (item 3)
Iain McCreaddie	Programme Director, Scottish Cities Alliance
Lauren Pascu	Investment Lead, Scottish Cities Alliance
Gillian McCallum	Policy & Stakeholder Engagement Lead, Scottish Cities Alliance

Apologies:

Cllr Cammy Day	Leader, The City of Edinburgh Council
Cllr Raymond Bremner	Leader, Highland Council (represented by Cllr Ken Gowans)
Cllr Chris Kane	Leader, Stirling Council
Angela Scott	Chief Executive, Aberdeen City Council (represented by Jim Johnston)
Greg Colgan	Chief Executive, Dundee City Council (represented by Gregor Hamilton)
Cllr David Ross	Leader, Fife Council – Dunfermline (represented by Cllr Gordon Pryde)
Susanne Millar	Chief Executive, Glasgow City Council
Derek Brown	Chief Executive, Highland Council – Inverness
Brian Robertson	Interim Chief Executive, Stirling Council

1. Welcome, Introduction & Apologies

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

A special welcome was given to Tom Arthur MSP who attended the meeting in his new capacity as Minister for Employment and Investment with a portfolio responsibility for cities investment and strategy and the City Centre Recovery Taskforce.

On behalf of the Alliance partners, the Chair extended a special thank you to Aberdeen for hosting the meeting and for the support provided to the Alliance Team to allow them to host the Joining the Dots Programme which took place in the city over the last 2 days in partnership with the Connected Places Catapult and the British-Irish Embassy. The Chair noted that the event had provided an excellent opportunity for Aberdeen to showcase work underway to drive their city centre economy and enable cities elsewhere in the UK and Ireland to exchange best practice in supporting the city centres of the future.

2. Note of Previous Meeting (21st February 2024)

The note of the previous meeting was approved and an update on items not covered elsewhere on the agenda was given as follows:-

- **Item 3 – City Region Innovation**

It was noted that following the discussion at the last meeting the Alliance has facilitated discussions with Innovate UK, Scottish Enterprise and The Data Lab to identify how other Scottish city regions might access capacity to analyse the data required to inform the development of further Scottish city region innovation action plans to enable all eight cities to speak about their sectoral strengths and how they interrelate with each other at Alliance investor events.

- **Item 4c – 3Ci Membership**

Following discussion at the last meeting the Alliance's membership of 3Ci has been renewed for 2023/24. To address points raised in discussion the Alliance is supporting 3Ci and the Scottish Government to develop a proposal around how 3Ci may advance the Stage 4 projects from the Scottish Net Zero Investment Pipeline report published during Scottish Cities Week, London in January. To broaden the understanding across the Alliance partners of 3Ci, the Leaders of Inverness and Perth will also attend 1 of the next 2 3Ci advisory board meetings this year in addition to Cllr Aitken who will remain the Alliance's representative on the group. The Alliance Team is also exploring opportunities with 3Ci to support an event in Scotland within the current financial year.

3. City Centre Living

The Chair welcomed Iain Jenkinson, Executive Director of CBRE and Cllr John Merry, Deputy City Mayor of Salford Council and Chair of the Key Cities Network to the meeting to speak to the group about their shared experience of the use of Public/Private Partnership approaches in England to fund the economic regeneration of cities, including the supply of a range of different housing types. Iain gave a broad overview of why and how such partnerships are set up and function, including the English Cities Fund, UK Affordable Housing Fund and the Housing Growth Partnership, with reference to good examples such as Crescent Salford and Brent Cross Town in North London, and reflected on how similar models might operate in Scotland including how they might address the current viability issues around how public sector "risk capital" is deployed into supporting the leveraging of private capital into the delivery of projects. A key message was the need to stimulate conversations around how unspent state issued subsidy might be redirected into housing and regeneration. Utilising information that is now publicly available as a result of the Subsidy Act 2022, CBRE is currently facilitating discussions between Homes England and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority around how the £250bn of state issued subsidy since 2021 which is currently uncommitted might be redirected into housing and regeneration projects.

Cllr Merry spoke about Salford's experience of utilising Public/Private Partnerships to deliver economic regeneration and housing in the city including via Crescent Salford. Key lessons shared with the group include:-

- The importance of being responsive to enquiries, and in a timely fashion, ensuring you tell the private sector what they can have and what you see the advantages of the partnership being. Private sector partners appreciate honesty and directness, understand that the city's priorities might be different to theirs and that the city expects to deliver something of added value to the local community.
- Understand that prestige developments have a role to play in contributing to social housing and can help unlock opportunities for wider developments. High quality public realm also contributes to improvements to wellbeing.
- Salford set up its own housing company in the council which serves two functions. One part of it is focused on attracting grants from Homes England and the other part has commuted sums paid into it by developers. The Homes England monies are subject to restrictions such as the right for social owners to acquire the homes after a certain time whilst the other monies allow the council to retain the homes in perpetuity. This two part strategy has proven successful for Salford with the Housing Company now operating with a £900,000 surplus.
- From a Key Cities perspective they have identified a number of key asks they are keen to discuss with UK Government which would empower them as local authorities to deliver good quality affordable homes in their cities including the suspension of the right to buy.

In discussion the following points were raised:-

- The Minister noted that as part of his new portfolio, he is keen to meet with each of the City Leaders over the summer to understand their shared and unique challenges related to housing provision and thereafter work closely with relevant Ministers including the Deputy First Minister, Minister for Housing and the Minister for Finance to remove barriers and impediments and mobilise private investment to meet the housing needs across the cities.
- Cllr Gowans noted that it was positive to see action by the Scottish Government to help streamline the process for new developments which will support cities to be more responsive to unlocking investment in housing.
- Paul Lawrence noted the great opportunity to design co-investment models that we have not had before based on PPP which minimises risk. There is a role for the Alliance to lead the way on the design of these models which may vary across place in order that there is a palette of models cities can utilise based on the learning from England.
- Cllr Aitken advised that what they are finding in Glasgow is that there is no shortage of development coming forward but the challenge is that it is not supporting the range of residential accommodation they would like to see. There is an opportunity for the cities and government to collectively communicate with investors and developers to provide confidence around what we would like to see across a range of tenure types in terms of protections for tenants, allowing for nuances across different tenure types. The Alliance's collective voice could also help give a clear steer around what it would like to see around the transformation of brownfield sites for housing and in terms of utilising house to regenerate our city centres and build in resilience from future economic shocks.

4. Investment Promotion

- **UKREiiF 2024 and Next Steps UKREiiF 2025**

The Chair thanked the Alliance team for their support to the partners in raising the profile of Scotland at UKREiiF 2024 and invited the group to provide wider feedback to the team outwith the scope of the meeting to help inform future activity as he had already done.

The Chair noted the paper tabled setting out the agenda for a workshop planned with officers across the cities, Scottish Government, SE, SDI and the DBT on 18th June with the aim of agreeing a collective approach to raising the profile of Team Scotland at UKREiiF 2025 which makes the most of resource and funding that exists within the Alliance team to deliver subject to agreement around how this is supplemented by wider capacity across the cities, government and agencies. Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow all noted their support for a Team Scotland approach to UKREiiF 2025 and the importance of having a usable physical base to host activity and meetings throughout the programme.

- **Scottish Cities Week 2025**

The Chair noted that since the last meeting the Alliance team has discussed the group's feedback on Cities Week 2024 with the Investment Promotion Working Group and agreed the structure for the 2025 programme as per the paper tabled. The group approved the outline structure for the programme tabled subject to consideration being given to the practicalities of starting the programme on a Monday afternoon taking into account travel time from Scotland.

5. Annual Report 2024-2025 and Budget Update

The group approved the Annual Report for 2023-2024 for publication on the Alliance's website noting thanks to the Alliance team for the breadth of activity they had supported the partners to deliver this year which has helped unlock wider opportunities across the cities as well as local and national government.

Finally the group approved the budget report 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024 for publication on the website.

6. A.O.B

Graduate Route Scheme – The group noted that following the joint comms with Universities Scotland, the UK Government confirmed that the Graduate Route Scheme would remain unchanged for all Universities and agreed that the Alliance should continue to identify similar opportunities to this where the Alliance partners can use their united voice to influence policy.

7. Dates of Future Meetings

- **Wednesday 9th October 2024**

The Chair advised that the intention is to hold this meeting in person in Dundee aligned to an investment dinner the Alliance is looking to host that same day focused on retrofit and supported by Arup and Chris Hayward, Policy Convenor at City of London Corporation. Further information will be provided in due course.

The meeting finished at 13.30 pm.