

**CENTRE FOR CITIES – COMMON FUTURES NETWORK  
ROUNDTABLE 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2017**

**Governance of the London Capital Region**

**Venue: Centre for Cities Office, 9 Holyrood Street, London SE1 2EL**

Contact details <http://www.centreforcities.org/about/contact/>

PROGRAMME

- 09.00           Arrival
- 09.30           Introduction by Chair (Andrew Carter : CEO Centre for Cities)
- 09.40           Session 1:: What needs Governance?  
                  Chair Andrew Carter: Discussant: Duncan Bowie  
                  The session will seek to establish the range fo issues  
                  that require decisions to be taken at the City Region-  
                  level (refer the attached discussion note).
- 11.00           Break
- 11.15           Session 2 : What form of Governance?  
                  Chair Andrew carter: Discussant: Corinne Swain  
                  The session will seek to establish the range and  
                  implications of available models of models of  
                  governance (refer the attached discussion note).
- 12.15           Implications for next steps?  
                  The outcomes of the roundtable will be drawn  
                  together with ideas for taking them forward.
- 12.45           Close

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Attendees

|         |         |         |           |
|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| Andrew  | Carter  | Janice  | Morphet   |
| Alison  | Bailey  | John    | Lett      |
| Andrew  | Jones   | Lucinda | Turner    |
| Another | CfC     | Martin  | Simmons   |
| Cinar   | Altun   | Michael | Edwards   |
| Corinne | Swain   | Phil    | Swann     |
| David   | Edwards | Tom     | Venables  |
| Duncan  | Bowie   | Vincent | Goodstadt |
| James   | Cutting |         |           |

## Discussion Note on the Governance Issues of the London City Region Questions for the Roundtable

The governance of the London City Region (LCR)<sup>1</sup> has been debated for over half a century, and has from time to time been used as a political football. A key proposition in the *Prospectus* of the Common Futures Network is that the current arrangements are not fit for purpose in terms of:

- (i) The internal challenges that the Region faces;
- (ii) The need to rebalance the nation's economy, social well-being and environmental pressures;
- (iii) The external challenges that London faces to its global competitive role.

Informed commentators have set out a range of potential approaches to remedying the problems posed by the dysfunctional nature of the current governance arrangements. In all these there are two over-riding questions which should determine the most appropriate governance arrangements:

- The issues upon which decisions need to be taken at the city region level
- The status of the body that takes these decisions

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of the Roundtable the LCR is defined as by the London and the East and the South-East Regions is being used as the basis for cooperation in the Wider South East Region.

## Session 1: What Needs Governance?

### LCR-wide Issues - The need for a strategic decisions on spatial options

The question of governance is critically dependent upon those matters on which decisions need to be taken. A governance structure is required which to take key decisions about the strategic pattern of future growth. There are a wide range of spatial options to achieve increased economic and residential growth - all of which have benefits and disbenefits<sup>2</sup>. These options are not in themselves mutually exclusive, but a set of consistent assessment criteria is required - social, economic, and environmental, for the assessment of options, which can then be applied to plans and to individual development proposals. These will include not just the number of new homes produced, but their type and affordability as well as both their quality and sustainability for prospective occupants as well as neighbourhood impacts.

Any LCR-wide strategy/framework must have regard to the normal range of issues “economic prosperity as well as housing, planning and environmental quality and must address transport and other strategic infrastructure in the wider sense.”<sup>3</sup> This is not the same as being comprehensive. Nor is it the same as issues which are common across the LCR.

The challenge is that this can only be dealt with at the whole LCR level, given that the LCR is made up of a series of urban networks which can be variously grouped as around 50 functional urban regions<sup>4</sup> and some key Development Corridors<sup>5</sup>. Currently the only LCR-wide strategic policy that exist is the Green Belt, little changed over the decades. The debate needs to move beyond whether or not development should take place in the Green Belt.

The following matters have been identified by commentators as requiring a LCR-wide perspective:

- The Overall Scale and Balance of Demand in terms of people, housing and jobs for the region and sub-regional areas , important external relationships that need to be taken into account, especially: Links to south Midlands & MK / Northampton area and M4 Corridor to Bristol;
- The LCR Spatial Priorities which drive and secure the economic and social future of LCR. Including transport hubs, strategic areas for community growth (through urban extensions or intensification or new communities) and metropolitan commercial and cultural centres
- The LCR Networks upon which all are, including, inter alia: Rail (passenger and freight, Road, Canals/river systems, Power grids, Telecommunications, The Water Catchment, Green infrastructure , e.g. networked urban national park)

### **Questions1 for the Roundtable: What are the key matters upon which an LCR Strategy should focus and what spatial level (e.g. which sub-regions)?**

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<sup>2</sup> Refer Common Futures Website – Document Folder

<sup>3</sup> WSE Forum conclusion

<sup>4</sup> Refer Peter Hall Polynet study

<sup>5</sup> Refer M Simmons paper CFN website

## **The Status of an LCR Strategy**

Governance is not just about the territorial responsibilities of different public bodies but about the distribution of powers between them. This is not limited to which organisation has plan making and/or planning decision powers, but which organisation owns the land and has the power to acquire land, which has the funding, and which has powers of regulatory intervention - the power to direct development as well as the power to stop development.

The status of the LCR Strategy will determine the appropriate form of the decision-making body. There is a consensus that if any LCR strategy is to be effective it must be more than advisory, and at the whim of political cycles and discretionary. It therefore requires to have teeth. There is no agreement about what form that this should take; The options range from:

- A material consideration through secondary instrument – e.g. endorsed as government policy in some form (letter, circular, or part of the NPPF)
- Incorporated as part of the development plan system.
- Some form of hybrid whereby the whole document is a material consideration in the system but those components that are recognised national priorities are built onto the NIC process.

The mechanisms should be

- Light touch and flexible and strategic.
- Permanent (i.e. not convene on an ad hoc basis)
- Independently advised (i.e. with its own permanent technical support)

However, there is no consensus on the form of organisation. The options include:

- Annual Forum
- Voluntary Board Public-Private Board (RPA Model)
- Ad hoc standing committee of local government
- Statutory body advisory powers e.g. (Royal) Commission
- Statutory regional body with planning powers

### **Questions for Roundtable:**

**Which approach to plan-making is seen as most effective, and what form should it take?**