

Roundtable on Levelling Up and Combined Authorities with Adam Hawksbee, Deputy Director of Onward

Monday 27th November 2023

Introduction

The APPG held a roundtable examining Levelling Up and the role of combined authorities with Adam Hawksbee from Onward. Critical discussions unfolded on the intricate facets of urban regeneration, local Levelling Up, and the evolving landscape of devolution in the UK. This summary captures the essence of the key points raised during the meeting, offering a comprehensive overview of the insights shared by thought leaders in housing, government, and development. From the nuances of safety and security in regeneration to the imperative of flexible devolution strategies, and challenges and opportunities shaping the future of housing and urban development in the United Kingdom.



Key takeaways

- The importance of local Levelling Up and the mayoral model, combined authorities, and devolution as key themes in regeneration discussions was highlighted. Specifically drawing attention to Onward's research in areas like Clacton and South Tyneside, which resulted in five recommended interventions for local leaders. These interventions included addressing safety and security concerns, revitalising high streets, investing in sports and cultural assets, promoting local private sector growth, and providing community-based support to disadvantaged individuals through third-sector organisations.
- The discussion explored the potential opportunities that devolution deals could offer to various organisations, leveraging resources such as the education budget and apprenticeship levy transfer. There was an emphasis on the need for clear structures, funding mechanisms, and flexibility within devolution deals to maximise their effectiveness.
- Funding options for ambitious projects were explored in-depth, including the use of Brownfield funding and incentivising developers with affordable housing funds to encourage investment in specific areas. The necessity of robust infrastructure plans to support spatial development plans, especially in the context of regionally-led projects, was highlighted as a critical aspect of successful urban development.

- Acknowledging the significant challenge of effectively delivering regeneration and Levelling Up, the discussion underscored the need for flexibility in devolution processes. The importance of skills in driving successful regeneration and delivery was emphasised, recognising the diverse set of skills required for effective implementation of urban development initiatives. The conversation concluded with a call for adaptable approaches to devolution and regeneration strategies to address evolving challenges.

Issues raised

- Recognition of the crucial role of robust infrastructure plans in supporting spatial development plans, especially in the context of regionally-led projects.
- Call for flexibility in devolution processes and the recognition of the essential role of skills in driving successful regeneration and delivery.
- The importance of clear structures, funding mechanisms, and flexibility within devolution deals for optimal outcomes.

We would like to thank the members of our Advisory Board for their contributions and continuing support.



Richard Bacon MP is the Chair of the APPG for Regeneration & Levelling Up

To get involved, please contact
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