

Note of last Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board meeting

Title: Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board
Date: Wednesday 19 July 2017
Venue: Room D&E, Ground Floor, Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London, EC1M 5LG

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
12	Declarations of Interest	
	<p>There were no declarations of interest.</p> <p>The Board agreed that item 4, on Grenfell Tower, was moved to follow after item 2, the End of Year report, on the agenda.</p> <p>The Chairman gave thanks to Cllr Keith House for his long standing role as a Deputy Chair of the Board and for his valuable expertise.</p>	
13	Post EU Exit - Waste and Recycling Policy	
	<p>Sonika Sidhu, Adviser, introduced this report with the aim of Members giving consideration to the challenges facing councils around providing effective waste and recycling services. To assist Members to have a complete picture about the future of waste and recycling three external speakers presented their views and experience to the board.</p> <p>Jacob Hayler, Environmental Services Association, explained to the Board that his organisations view was that current waste and recycling targets being discussed by Europe will not get transposed onto the UK. Regarding recycling he expressed a view that it would require far greater investment or structural change going forwards. He informed the Board that in future the UK should move away from weight based targets. He emphasised that the targets currently being discussed are municipal waste as opposed to domestic waste. He also emphasised the opportunity to reform regulation around producer responsibility and that after the British exit of the EU the Environment Agency will have to completely review their policies.</p> <p>The second speaker, Alison Ellison of the British Retail Consortium, gave particular emphasis to the importance of a circular economy and need for a long term vision. She supported Jacob in his view that weight based recycling should not continue. She also expressed a view that a consistent policy direction would continue to increase the quality and quantity of recycling and that retailers will continue to simplify packaging. Alison raised her concern around the risk of not having long term vision for the future and businesses having to deal with different policies for each country of the UK.</p>	

Andrew Pau, the Strategic Manager of Waste at Oxfordshire County Council, spoke to the Board as the final external speaker. He expressed his support for the concept of a circular economy and a view that Councils could see as a great opportunity to create jobs. He also raised concerns as to the recent stagnation of recycling and that the current target of 65% would be unattainable. He informed the Board that Councils need to change their focus from recycling and focus on waste minimisation and managing landfill. Lastly he expressed a view that local decision making powers within a national framework would be the best way forwards.

In the discussion that followed Members raised the following points;

- Views were expressed in support of ascertaining a new way in which we measure recycling.
- Members also showed support for favouring waste minimisation going forwards.
- A view was expressed that Councils would need clear and consistent recycling targets.
- A view was expressed that recycling and waste minimisation need to be included in the Government's energy strategy.
- Members were of the view that the LGA should continue to lobby for greater producer and manufacturer responsibility.
- A concern was raised that Local Government would need to be careful if focusing more on waste minimisation to not be viewed as reducing their ambition regarding recycling.

Decision

The Chairman summarised the Board's views on the questions that were raised by the report and explored in the Board discussion as follows.

Regarding whether recycling had naturally plateaued the Board agreed that discussion around recycling needed to move beyond the national targets and consider the broader concept of waste minimisation and how this could be delivered. Members saw the recycling market as being unpredictable and wanted to further understand the potential for the reuse and recovery of energy. There was clear agreement that the LGA continues to lobby for greater producer responsibility and the overall reduction of packaging.

Regarding models of more efficient waste and recycling services for the future, the Board agreed there wasn't any single best model. Council's value having local flexibility so that they can deliver the right kind of service. In many cases this means working with neighbouring authorities. Post Britain leaving the EU councils want local control over how they collect and dispose of waste. A prescriptive national model was not seen as the answer. A discussion about pay as you throw should be considered for a future meeting.

In regards to the medium to long term risks for waste and recycling services the Board were of the view that these were unclear as the Government is yet to articulate its 25 year Environment Plan and still needs to develop a Resource Management strategy. It was agreed that it would be unhelpful if the 4 nations started developing their own strategies as it would be important for there to be synergy across any long term policies. It was recognised that some form of targets would be useful to drive continuous improvement, but that these shouldn't be so directive that they stifle the performance of councils. The EU target needed to be replaced with something that fits local needs. It was also suggested that the food waste bill needs further consideration.

Regarding the post EU Exit aspiration for this service area and what the balance between a national policy and local flexibility should be the Chairman stated that until the current rules are repatriated this would remain an open question. Some Members highlighted that our exiting of the EU offers up the opportunity to redefine the target framework for waste and recycling services. Members asked officers to look at alternative methods for measuring recycling and looking at what waste minimisation would mean in practise.

Action

Officers will incorporate the Boards views into our EU exit lobby position.

14 Grenfell Tower

The Chairman introduced the paper informing on the work that central and local government have been doing following the Grenfell Tower Fire. In particular the report asked the Board to consider actions that have been taken nationally and locally to identify and address fire safety issues in buildings over 18 metres following the Grenfell Tower Fire, the role of the Board in lobbying for an urgent review of the Building Regulations' guidance and how best to use a meeting and potential working group drawn from the Fire Services Management Committee, Safer Stronger Communities Board, EEHT and the National Fire Chiefs Council.

In the following discussion Members raised the following points;

- Views were expressed that local government would need to know the full results of cladding tests before progressing.
- Views were expressed that the LGA need to develop a stronger narrative in approaching is, in particular in future discussion with central government.
- Members raised concerns that councils needed clarity from central government as to the actions they needed to take, and how this will be funded.
- Members asked that a note be circulated to LGA Boards detailing their specific remit on the work that central and local government have been doing following the Grenfell Tower Fire.
- Cllr Blake also raised concerns from Leeds City Council where they have 116 tower blocks, of which it would cost 240 thousand for each to be retrofitted with sprinklers and that Leeds currently lacked the capacity to retrofit these tower blocks in the near future.
- Members expressed views that building regulations needed an urgent review, in particular where permitted developments are concerned.

Eamon Lally, Principal Policy Adviser, explained regarding communications to Board Members that the Chief Executive and Chairman's Bulletins where the media that had been used to keep LGA members informed.

It was suggested that the Board send a letter to the LGA's Executive expressing the Boards concerns, and asking they push for urgency from central government in providing clarity to local government as to how they should progress in ensuring fire safety in tower blocks. Also, that this letter brings to the LGA Executive's attention the Board's request for clarity regarding the issue of permitted development rights and an urgent review of current building regulations.

Decisions

The Members of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board;

1. Discussed and provided feedback on the actions that have been taken nationally and locally to identify and address fire safety issues in buildings over 18 metres following the Grenfell Tower Fire.
2. Discussed the role of the EEHT board in lobbying for an urgent review of the Building Regulations' guidance.
3. Agreed that a letter be sent to the LGA Executive expressing their concerns regarding fire safety issues in buildings over 18 metres following the Grenfell Tower Fire as well as their support for an urgent review of the Building Regulations' guidance be brought to the attention of the LGA Executive.
4. Discussed how best to use a meeting and potential working group drawn from the Fire Services Management Committee, Safer Stronger Communities Board, EEHT and the National Fire Chiefs Council.

Actions

Officers to draft a letter for the LGA Executive expressing the views of the Board and this letter to be sent to the following LGA Executive meeting with Lead Members agreement, to ensure a cross party consensus as to the contents of the letter.

Officers to circulate an update to all LGA Boards whose remit is affected by the Grenfell Tower Fire and work following this, as well as what exactly falls within each Board's remit.

15 End of Year Report

The Chairman brought Members attention to the end of year report which provides the Board with an overview of the issues and work the Board has overseen during last year, as well as setting out key achievements in relation to the priorities for the EEHT Board in 2016/2017, and looks forward to next year's priorities.

Members expressed views that the Boards priorities should expand on inclusive growth and circular economy. A view was also expressed that energy efficiency in housing should be a priority.

Decision

Members agreed the End of Year report.

Action

Officers to incorporate Members views into future priorities of the Board, to be agreed at the first meeting of the Board in the 2017/18 political cycle.

16 Transport and Growth Update

Kamal Panchal, Senior Adviser, gave an update to Board members regarding three recent policy and LGA developments; The Government's Transport Investment Strategy and the Major Roads Network, Town Centre Regeneration and Economic Growth landscape.

In the discussion which followed members raised the following points;

- A view was expressed that there would be a need for greater accountability in Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) should the government go through with their manifesto commitment to give LEPs greater weight in law.
- A concern was raised that devolution should perhaps not be addressed as if it confirmed that the government is going through with devolving powers.
- A Member also asked that going forwards we consider how local authorities will deliver the Industrial Strategy, in particular once laws and powers are repatriated.

Decision

Members noted the update.

Action

Officers to incorporate Members views into future policy work in transport and growth.

17 Minutes of the previous meeting

Members agreed the minutes.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Judith Blake CBE	Leeds City Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Julian German	Cornwall Council
Members	Cllr Jason Ablewhite	Huntingdonshire District Council
	Cllr Simon Cooke	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Steve Count	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Cllr Mark Mills-Bishop	Broxbourne Borough Council
	Cllr Stephen Parker	Hart District Council
	Cllr Tony Newman	Croydon Council
	Cllr Ed Turner	Oxford City Council
	Cllr Alyson Barnes	Rossendale Borough Council
	Cllr Gillian Campbell	Blackpool Council
	Cllr Rachel Eburne	Mid Suffolk District Council
Apologies	Cllr Stephen Parnaby OBE	East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Cllr Catherine Rankin
Cllr David Westley
Cllr Simon Greaves
Mayor Marvin Rees
Cllr Hugh Evans OBE
Cllr Keith House

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
West Lancashire Borough Council
Bassetlaw District Council
Bristol City Council
Denbighshire County Council
Eastleigh Borough Council

In Attendance

LGA Officers