

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

Title: Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board
Date: Friday 6 October 2017
Venue: 5th Floor Board Room, 5th Floor (North side), 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

1 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Cllr Peter Thornton, Cllr Blake Pain and Cllr Tony Newman.

Cllr Phillip Broadhead, Cllr Jon Clempner and Cllr Stuart Golton attended as substitutes.

2 DCLG Consultation on 'Planning for the right homes in the right places'

The Chairman welcomed Sarah Fox, Head of Planning Policy from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) who had attended to discuss proposals to take forward a number of measures set out in the government's housing white paper to boost housing supply in England. These proposals were set out in the DCLG consultation 'Planning for the right homes in the right places' published on 14 September 2017.

Nick Porter, Senior Adviser, introduced the report and provided a summary of the consultation proposals and set out potential issues for members to consider and discuss. He particularly emphasised the difficulties of a single national formula to understand local housing markets.

In the discussion which followed, these points were made;

- In response to a concern raised that the proposed methodology focused on a top down approach, Sarah emphasised that it was DCLG's intention that Local Authorities be able to use a different methodology, should they have a clear reason to do so.
- Concerns were raised as to the current proposals not taking into account the disparity between the housing markets in different local authorities.
- Concerns were raised as to the great deal of uncertainty for local authorities following this announcement.
- Members requested a map to give clarity as to how this is impacting different local authority areas across England.

The Chairman summarised the views and concerns of the Board as follows;

- That it would be crucial for central government to take into account local areas infrastructure in greater depth going forwards.
- That regarding viability, Councils need greater powers to ensure homes are built in appropriate time after permission is given.
- That regarding the proposed methodology DCLG would need to place a greater emphasis on local factors.
- That further engagement from Ministers would be of great value to local government.
- That local authorities will need further information on the National Planning Policy Framework.

Decision

The Board considered and discussed the key proposals within the consultation and provided a steer on the LGA's response.

Action

1. Officers would pursue further information regarding the NPPF from DCLG.
2. Officers to circulate a map from DCLG showing the impact on authorities in England to Board members.
3. Officers to incorporate Members steer into the LGA's response on the DCLG Consultation.

3 Grenfell Tower and fire safety in high rise buildings

Eamon Lally, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced the report which provided an update on the LGA's work following the Grenfell Tower tragedy in June and actions taken by central and local government in response to the fire. He explained that DCLG and the LGA was working to ensure we understood the numbers of tower blocks that might have similar cladding to that on Grenfell Tower and that could be at risk, and the LGA is particularly working to ensure the resources are in place for local authorities to respond to the situation. He also explained that DCLG are now turning their attention to private sector blocks and how to ensure that they have sufficient fire safety, and the Department has confirmed Councils will have a role in this. Eamon emphasised that it is still unclear as to what would be happen should a landlord be uncooperative.

Eamon also outlined the ongoing work to identify Large Panel System built buildings that might require strengthening work. This follows concerns raised in respect of four tower blocks in Southwark , that were meant to have been strengthened following the Ronan Point Collapse in 1968, but were subsequently found to require additional strengthening.

Eamon explained the current key LGA priorities were:

- Ensuring buildings are safe;
- Clarity as to Government providing local authorities with resources for any required changes; and
- An immediate review of building regulations and fire safety guidance.

In the discussion which followed, the following points were raised;

- Eamon explained that the LGA's Leadership Board takes on overall responsibility for the LGA's Grenfell work.
- Following a query from the Chairman, Eamon explained there had already been some cases of private sector resistance to required remedial work on high rise flats.
- A view was expressed that local authorities should have a role in scrutiny of housing association properties, and their fire safety measures.
- Following a concern raised as to what powers local authorities could have in enforcing that fire safety measures are taken on private sector properties Eamon explained that Government has provided guidance on legal powers but has also advised local authorities seek their own legal advice.
- A concern was raised that the lack of clarity on regulation from Government was of real concern.
- A view was expressed that it would be helpful for Board Members to receive a statement regarding what Council duties and powers were regarding the private sector issue.
- A view was expressed that local authorities would need clarity as to their responsibilities on University accommodation.
- The Chairman emphasised that local authorities would need further clarity on the powers Councils have when ensuring fire safety is in place in private properties.

Decision

Members of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board:

1. Noted the LGA's work to support local authorities arising from the Grenfell Tower Fire.
2. Provided comments on the actions that have been taken nationally and locally to identify and address fire safety issues in buildings over 18 metres.
3. Provided comments on the initial draft of the LGA's submission to the call for evidence from Dame Judith Hackitt's review of building regulations and fire safety.

Actions

1. Officers to incorporate Members views into the draft submission to the call for evidence from Dame Judith Hackitt's review of building regulations and fire safety.
2. Officers to circulate a statement regarding what Council duties and powers were regarding the private sector issue.

4 Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board 2017/18: Terms of Reference, Membership and Appointments to Outside Bodies

The Chairman introduced the report setting out how the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board operates and how the LGA works to support the objectives and work of its member authorities.

Decision

The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board:

1. Agreed its Terms of Reference;
2. Formally noted the membership for 2017/18;
3. Noted the Board meeting dates for 2017/18; and
4. Agreed the Board's nominations to outside bodies.

5 Environment, Economic, Housing and Transport Board Priorities 2017-18

Eamon Lally, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced the report setting out a draft list of priorities for the Board together with a draft work programme for the period to July 2018.

In the discussion that followed, the following points were raised;

- Nick Porter indicated that there are a number of announcements the LGA are anticipating which will need to be priorities for the Board, such as the Housing Green Paper.
- The Chairman asked that an update on the Housing Green Paper come to the Board later in the year.
- A view was expressed that further discussion on homelessness and rough sleeping was welcome on the Board's priorities for the year.
- In response to a query, Nick informed the Board that a paper on the private rented sector would come to the Board later in the year.

Decisions

Members are asked to consider and agree a final version of the Board's priorities and work programme.

Actions

Officers to incorporate Members views and comments into the work programme.

6 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

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 Adele Morris	Southwark Council
	Cllr Rachel Eburne	Mid Suffolk District Council
Members	Cllr Alistair Auty	Wokingham Borough Council
	Cllr Simon Cooke	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Lynne Duffy	Wychavon District Council
	Cllr David Renard	Swindon Borough Council
	Cllr Mark Mills-Bishop	Broxbourne Borough Council
	Cllr Colin Davie	Lincolnshire County Council
	Cllr Helen Holland	Bristol City Council
	Cllr Ed Turner	Oxford City Council
	Cllr Rachel Blake	Tower Hamlets Council
	Cllr Gillian Campbell	Blackpool Council
	Cllr Michael Mordey	Sunderland City Council
	Cllr Peter Thornton	Cumbria County Council
	Cllr Linda Gillham	Runnymede Borough Council
Apologies	Cllr Blake Pain	Harborough District Council
	Cllr Tony Newman	Croydon Council
In Attendance	Cllr Philip Broadhead	Bournemouth Borough Council
	Cllr Jon Clempner	Harlow District Council
	Cllr Stephen Parker	Hart District Council