

Note of last People & Places Board meeting

Title: People & Places Board
Date: Tuesday 30 January 2018
Venue: Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
22	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming Members to the Board. Apologies were noted by the Chairman. There were no declarations of interest.	
23	Digital Connectivity Working Group Daniel Shamplin-Hall, Adviser, introduced the Item, whilst giving an overview of the paper to Members, which set out for approval the Digital Connectivity Working Group's proposed Terms of Reference, membership and initial focus. Daniel also updated Members on how the Working Group will be resourced – which included an overview in the process of appointing officers to resources the group by the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT). The Chairman then invited Members to comment, where the following was raised: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members requested that the group be renamed to incorporate the word 'rural', giving more clarity for the groups focus and direction. Members broadly agreed with the re-naming of the group, although expressed that coastal areas that were considered rural were not forgotten in the groups focus of work.• Members discussed the focus areas of the group, where the following issues were raised:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Planning regulations and new building schemes. Members agreed that broadband in new homes and builds were as vital as other utilities such as gas, electric and water. Members agreed that LGA calls and the groups focus need to be strong with a clear direction, especially around	

certainties relating to next-generation planning.

- Calls for 5G mobile phone coverage, and aiming for 100 per cent coverage across the UK. Members agreed that this was a significant challenge, but one that needed to be addressed.
- Members discussed mobile phone coverage outside of London. This led to further discussions by Members on how some rural parts of Suffolk did not have access to broadband up until 2016.
- Members discussed ways to engage British Telecoms (BT) with this work, as well as BT's lack of capacity in the rollout of upgrades across the country.
- Members agreed for strong lobbying work to be planned at both local and national levels, engaging a wide range of mobile phone and broadband companies.
- Members expressed the need for the Group to quantify in clear terms the financial losses of lack of digital connectivity.
- Members also discussed how lack of digital connectivity can cause social isolation.
- Members stated that while the paper focuses on residents, there could be more of a focus on services and work, and how this issue impacts these areas.
- Members agreed that the timeline of the Group should be discussed and agreed by the Group at the inaugural meeting.
- Members discussed digital connectivity in wider Europe, and the positives of this.
- Members held discussions over issues pertaining to poor-quality copper wiring and the issues this can cause whilst using broadband.
- Members addressed Ofcom's available data regarding UK mobile coverage, and how this didn't seem possible. This included some Members raising the issue that up to 40 per cent of rural England had no 4G coverage.
- Members also spoke about the ways lack of digital connectivity can have a negative impact on education, to both school and university students, as well as young people's access to work.

Actions

- Members agreed the Terms of Reference for the Group.
- Officers incorporate the word 'rural;' in the title of the Group.

- Officers collated the ideas gathered from the Board for the Groups areas of focus.
- Members noted the Group's membership, and future resourcing and delivery of the Group's work programme.

24 Appendix A - Draft Terms of Reference

25 Non-Metropolitan Messaging presentation

Alex Thomson, Principle Policy Adviser introduced the item. Alex updated Members that this item ties directly to the Post-Brexit England Commission (item 4) and relates more generally to the sense of stalled progress that has come to be felt regarding the Government's appetite for ambitious devolution to non-metropolitan areas.

Alex explained that Public First were only appointed to this project the following week, and were very much in the early stages of their planning. Alex then introduced Rachel Wolf and James Frayne, who proceeded to give a presentation, which gave Members:

- Details of both their, and Public Firsts' background and experience.
- Details on what they will be doing; running a number of focus groups to test residents' opinions on what does and doesn't appeal around the concept of non-metropolitan devolution; and
- What the output will be – a detailed analysis and advice on the sort of messages that will maximise the appeal of non-metropolitan devolution to residents, including how to shift residents' negative perceptions of fiscal devolution.

The Chairman concluded Rachel and James' presentation, and invited Members to comment, where the following was discussed:

- Members discussed residents' mistrust of local authorities handling of public funds and finances.
- Members expressed interest in future focus groups responses regarding local government finance handling. This included the differences in residents responses from unitary authorities and two-tier councils, as well as different opinions spread across different regions.
- Members also discussed the failures of their local Police and Crime Commissioners in relation to fiscal devolution matters.
- Members discussed that this is a wider issue, and the possible lack of understanding residents have over local authorities function in England. Members agreed that residents' mainly associate local authorities with local services.

- Members agreed that this work could help improve the relationship between district and county councils. Members went on to discuss that there was a distinct blame culture, and a so-called ‘battle’ for service delivery between district and county councils.
- Members broadly agreed the need to discuss Brexit and EU funding to local areas through these focus groups.
- Members also widely agreed across the Board that devolution does work.
- Discussions were held between Members and colleagues from public First over methodology in focus groups.
- Discussions were turned to Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCA’s), fiscal devolution, and central government’s lack of clarity surrounding areas that do not fall under MCA’s.
 - Alex Thomson stated that the Government is interested to undertake devolution deals with areas that were not lead by Mayors.
 - The Chairman supported this claim by stating that the Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government (DHCLG) are currently creating a framework to support these deals.

James and Rachel welcomed Members comments.

Actions:

- Ideas on the next steps of Public First’s messaging work, including details of the locations of focus groups, to be provided at the next Lead Members.

26 Post-Brexit England Commission

Daniel Shamplin-Hall, Adviser, introduced the item, updating Members on the work plan for the Post-Brexit England Commission following the previous Board meeting. Daniel requested steers’ from Members, detailed in the paper. This included details pertaining to the interim report, scoping paper (helping to inform the Commissions launch event), and details surrounding the first two regional roadshows.

Daniel also discussed finance, including investments made in non-

metropolitan areas, potential powers to non-metropolitan areas, as well as the Board working alongside both the LGA's Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, and the Brexit Task and Finish Group.

The Chairman invited Members to comment:

- Members requested the commission explore both short and long-term effects of Brexit on non-metropolitan England.
- Members requested officers separate semi-rural (including market-towns) and very rural areas, as the effects of Brexit will differ on both these types of area in England.
- Members expressed that grant-funding will be a future consideration and extra pressure for local authorities, following the UK's departure to leave the European Union.
- Members also stated the need for officers to link both funding and powers, as well as making calls for extra powers when rural areas are further funded. The Chairman agreed with this point – that there was a need to compliment power and funding, and make this a priority for LGA calls.
- Members broadly agreed that it was all about pitching opportunities, identifying gaps and future challenges to central government, as well as re-connecting government with communities that voted in favour of Brexit.
- Members agreed that the scope of the work should remain positive, and focus on goals and achievements, rather than drawbacks, including offering solutions to central government's problems and improving services and infrastructure (such as better flood management).
- The Chairman discussed the needs of future demographical information, possibly liaising with CCN and DCN colleagues. The Chairman went on to state that, as an example, what would Gloucestershire look like in 2030 and 2050.
- Members discussed that it had been well over a year since Brexit, and nearly a year since the UK formally notified the EU of the intention to withdraw from the Union, and the UK was still not clear what Brexit means or looks like. Members agreed the lack of clarity central government has given to their Brexit vision.
- Members agreed that the Commission also needs to address the idea of a 'no deal'.
- Members pressed the importance of this work, and how it cannot be forgotten, including further discussions on the ways it can be pitched to improve the governments Brexit work.
- Members discussed the impacts Brexit will have on the NHS and adult social care, and what this will look like post-Brexit.

Actions:

27 Employment and Skills

This item was introduced by Jasbir Jhas, Senior Adviser. Jasbir stated that the LGA's employment and skills work is delivered jointly by this Board and the City Regions Board. This item was to update Members on the progress of the Work Local campaign, and options for future activity in this area, including a steer from members on the formation of the skills taskforce. The campaign aimed to deliver skills for everyone, with a person-centred approach. The campaign also aims to include setting the agenda with both MP's and business stakeholders, ensuring locally delivered results.

Jasbir stated that the next step was to try and engage the Department of Education (DfE), with the upcoming meeting between Anne Milton MP (Minister of State for Skills and Apprenticeships), the Chairman of the People and Places Board, and Sir Richard Leese CBE, Chair of the City Regions Board. The aim of this meeting is to develop an strategic and operational relationship with the DfE. Jasbir concluded that the Work Local Campaign will work alongside the Industrial Strategy, as it offers a framework to deliver the new and existing initiatives the Strategy cites.

The Chairman asked Members for their comments:

- Members discussed the importance of this work, and the need to be absolutely clear to government what we are calling for.
- Members agreed that currently, the skills system is fragmented and doesn't benefit those who need it.
- Members agreed that the need for this work to be delivered locally, and for the operational rollouts to be different depending on the different needs of areas.
- Members discussed the future of work, jobs and employment in the UK in twenty years' time, and what the job market will look like. However, Members also stated that this issue was a current issue that urgently needed to be addressed.
- Members stated that the campaign needs to further highlight the LGA's vision of potential – especially post-Brexit.
- Members discussed that the skills taskforce should broaden the base to work alongside stakeholders, identifying both positive and negative in the skills system.
- Members further discussed that currently, the government was not listening to the shortages of skills in the UK which will only be further impacted by Brexit. Members agreed that the taskforce needed to make clear calls to government by 'banging the drum' to get their attention.

- Members agreed that skills programmes need to be devolved, alongside funding, to improve local economies. Members agreed that local are in the best position to determine what their local skills shortages are, and how best to address this.
- Members agreed the need to engage the LEP network and the Industrial Strategies Skills Advisory Panel with this campaign, ensuring they are strong stakeholders.

The Chairman brought Members attention to the LGA's Migration Advisory Panel's work. The Chairman concluded that he will be attending an LGA joint summit with the LEP Network on the 15 March, where skills will be discussed. The summit is being attended by Lead Members Cllr Western, Board, along with Lead Members of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport and City Regions Boards.

Action

28 Appendix A - Work Local Campaign Plan

29 Industrial Strategy Update - Local Enterprise Partnerships

Daniel Gardiner, Advisor, introduced the item. Daniel updated Members on the focus on the LGA's recent and proposed work in relation to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), in light of the pre-eminent role for LEPs proposed by the Industrial Strategy White Paper and in advance of further guidance regarding the development and implementation of Local Industrial Strategies.

Daniel invited Lead Member Cllr Western to feedback to the Board on the LEP Review, which she is currently a panel Member of. Cllr Western raised the following points:

- The first review meeting was positive. The Terms of Reference were discussed, and geographical issues in relation to LEP's were raised.
- The second meeting at recently taken place:
 - A new Minister was now undertaking the review, following on from the governments reshuffle.
 - The second meeting had poor attendance.
 - Cllr Western did not think the review was very well structured.
 - The discussions were focused on public and private sector membership of LEP's, which was disagreed by the panel.
 - The lack of administrative capacity for LEP's.
 - Cllr Western believed the government was pushing back on

local government contribution, and that they were extremely pro-business.

- The review is being extended to four or five meetings.

The Chairman then invited Members to comment:

- Members stated that LEP's was not at all a locally driven scheme.
- Members agreed that there was a lack of scrutiny or accountability.
- Members discussed the lack of oversight on how unelected LEP network membership spend public funds, compared to that of elected members, and the need for scrutiny.
- Members discussed the role of LEP's in the future, both:
 - post-Brexit; and
 - in combined authorities.

The Chairman concluded by highlighting the importance of the upcoming joint summit (previously mentioned in these notes under item 5), in order to work with LEP's for mutually beneficial outcomes.

Action:

- Officers to update Members at the next Board following on from the LGA joint summit with the LEP network.

30 Appendix A - Local Enterprise Partnership survey - summary of findings

- a) Appendix B - LEP Advisory Panel Briefing

31 Appendix C - LGA and LEP network joint-working commitment

32 Brexit - verbal update

The Chair invited Ian Hughes, Head of Policy, to introduce the Item. Ian gave Members of the Board updates which included:

- The recent agreement made in the December talks that the EU will continue to fund local areas until the end of 2020 if a deal is reached.
- Updated Members on further LGA work on the skills crisis, and referenced how the UK gains seven per cent of adult social care staffing from the EU. Ian stated that the LGA will be using the Work Local campaign (item five) as a tool to counteract a further

skills shortages, post-Brexit.

- Ian briefly updated Members on the EU Withdrawal Bill in relation to transferring EU law to UK Law, and how decisions were not reached as of yet regarding what laws will be transferred to local government.
- Ian updated Members that weekly LGA Briefings regarding all Brexit matter are being published on the LGA website, which Members have full access to.

Action:

- Members noted the update.

33 Notes of last People and Places Board meeting

Members agreed notes of the previous Board.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Gillian Brown	Arun District Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Anne Western CBE	Derbyshire County Council
	Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
	Cllr Bob Jennings	Epping Forest District Council
Members	Cllr Derek Bastiman	Scarborough Borough Council
	Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick	North Norfolk District Council
	Cllr Charlotte Haitham Taylor	Wokingham Borough Council
	Cllr Ian Hudspeth	Oxfordshire County Council
	Cllr Daniel Humphreys	Worthing Borough Council
	Cllr Peter Jackson	Northumberland Council
	Cllr Rob Waltham MBE	North Lincolnshire Council
	Cllr Steve Count	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Cllr Vince Maple	Medway Council
	Cllr Leigh Redman	Somerset County Council
Apologies	Cllr Sarah Osborne	Lewes District Council
	Cllr Helen Grant	North Yorkshire County Council
	Cllr Ralph Bagge	South Bucks District Council
	Cllr Deborah Croney	North Dorset District Council
	Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
In Attendance	Cllr Harvey Siggs	Mendip District Council
	Cllr Azhar Ali	Lancashire County Council
LGA Officers		