

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

Title: Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board
Date: Tuesday 12 February 2019
Venue: Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

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

Item Decisions and actions

1 Chairman's Welcome, Declarations of Interest and Apologies

Cllr Simon Dudley declared an interest in item three, as they are a non-executive director of Homes England.

2 Local government's relationship with the rail industry

Andrew Jones introduced the report that outlines the LGA's initial engagement with the Williams Review of the rail industry and asked the Board to consider what issues they would wish the review to focus on as well as propose any further areas of reform that could help improve local government's relationship with the rail industry.

Rachel Kelley (Industry Structures Team Lead, Williams Rail Review) gave an introduction to the Williams review and the work of the Industry Structures Team Lead.

Rachel Kelley highlighted that there has been a series of work around the relationships between national government and commercial interests and this has included important points like rail fares and how the public fits into these relationships.

Cllr Martin Tett made the following points

- The review is helpfully broad in its approach to modernising the railway.
- The relationship between network rail and local government is fractured and the paper brings the context of this together very well.

Rachel Kelley invited members to give feedback into how the railway works for local government and what they would like to see from the review.

Members made the following comments

- Working with network rail can be very bureaucratic and working with them can be very slow in delivering projects together
- With the current government position on the rail industry and lack of accountability in companies like Southern, this review must ensure its independence
- On large projects, network rail can be very slow and often hold themselves up with funding and process issues, the review should take that into scope.
- The joining up of improvements in the northern network could have been handled better, instead of doing work at the same time, projects are separated and cause

longer delays. The review should speak to Northern council leaders on this.

- When network rail has sold off property, the new commercial operations do better with community engagement than network rail ever have. Can this be something the review looks at, getting network rail to truly engage with the public?
- There must be a massive cultural change. There has been an extreme impact on the lives of the public on those who rely on the rail and as standards have dropped, so has trust in rail.
- Building housing developments near train stations seems helpful, but some rail stations are not well sited and work would be required to stimulate demand.
- The rail industry will often turn up to meetings and seem to be engaging but following up on actions can be so much harder
- The cost of season tickets for commuters should to be included in the review as costs for similar distance journeys can vary enormously

Rachel Kelley responded

- It has been interesting to look into how a large body like network rail, works locally with different councils
- While network rail has public engagement channels, how we build on further engagement will be interesting
- This review feels like a different moment for rail, a wide spread view that the sector needs to change. Stakeholders who are part of the review all agree on that. Accountability for the public is a thread that runs through the review.
- While fares are a complicated issue, finding out who runs the service will make accountability easier for the review to understand
- Optimising and operating a network rail people want is a certain set of skills

Decision

The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board noted the report

4 Homes England

Tom Walker introduced how Homes England was recently established and outlined the the current objectives of Homes England

1. Unlocked public and private land
2. Ensure a range of investment produced are available
3. Improve construction productivity
4. Create a more resilient and competitive market
5. Offer expert support for priority locations
6. Deliver home Ownership products

Tom Walker detailed that Homes England can engage with councils to provide stability to councils building houses, in cases of rising costs and effects of Brexit.

Members made the following comments.

- While it is refreshing to hear of the work is being done on housing problems in the South East of England, there are a number of housing crisis across the country that need addressing.
- Homes England have a good reputation for helping councils. But what can be done with developing other larger sites, like the NHS or Highways England?
- Secondments and partnership work between Homes England and local authorities could help with skilling up the sector

- More support for house stock renewal is needed, particularly in areas with low incomes
- What can Homes England do, regionally and locally to help councils deliver local plans? The system feels like it is working against councils.

Tom Walker responded

- Current work is being done on the top 50% of the most unaffordable housing areas, which falls mainly within the South East of England. But Homes England recognises that there is a national housing crisis, but Homes England is guided by national government on where to work.
- The combination of housing and working with large organisations is where Home England can have some influence.
- A better open relationship between local authorities and Homes England could only help the sector in terms of staffing. Collectively growing staff in the sector is worth a wider discussion
- There is a commitment to work with local and neighbourhood plans and councils should feed into Home England projects to ensure they are heard.
- Homes England does have expertise to help councils and offer grants to projects.

Decision

The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board noted the report and the presentation from Tom Walker.

Action

Cllr Martin Tett invited Tom Walker to a future board meeting

5 Tackling fly tipping

Lizzie Noel introduced the board to the current work that is being done about the involvement of organised and serious criminal activity in fly tipping, and what councils and other stakeholders could do to deter criminal activity. The two main points that Lizzie Noel highlighted were

1. Households have no idea about their responsibilities
2. What local government would do if they had more resources to deal with fly tipping.

Lizzie Noel concluded with asking the board how we can move this debate on fly tipping forward.

Members made the following comments

- Organised crime around fly tipping seems like a new crime, but can cost councils thousands of pounds.
- The court actions to stop fly tipping does not suit what the public feels should happen. There should be more dialogue with councils on fly tipping. While councils can take every opportunity to bring fly tipping to court, the courts often do not take this seriously.
- Leaseholder blocks can lead to a slow build-up of fly tipping. Leaseholders can end up paying twice, via tax and paying waste to be picked up.
- Bin collections can be a great way to get messaging to households on fly tipping as collection vehicles are already visiting houses.
- There should be a register of who deals with waste within the local authority for the public to access.

Lizzie Noel responded

- While data on fly tipping is new, fly tipping is both casual and organised. Criminal activity has developed because there have been few barriers to getting organised.
- The prosecution stage of fly tipping is councils can take a lot of measures to stop fly tipping, before they get to the prosecution stage

Decision

The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board noted the report and the presentation from Lizzie Noel.

Action

Send feedback on discussion via Lead Members on fly tipping Lizzie Noel

Look at what punitive measures Councils can take on Fly tipping.

7 Resources and Waste Strategy Update

Sonika Sidhu presented the Resources and Waste Strategy Update

Members made the following comments

- No clear steer from national government on plastics. What does the government expect local government to do with plastic waste, when incinerators seem to gone out of favour.
- Councils will all be in difficult positions as their reforms are implemented, but there must all benefit from any additional investments in the sector.
- Nappies are being recycled in small scale pilots.
- Any new scheme needs to be fully funded by central government rather than worked out by local authorities

Sonika Sidhu responded

- The government is talking more about consistency in collections and letting councils decide local decisions on waste

Decision

The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board noted the report

Action

Report back on the Proctor and Gamble and European Commission on nappy waste. Members noted the recommendations of the report

8 Housing Update

Eamon Lally presented the housing Update

Decision

The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board noted the report

9 Growth and transport Update

Kamal Panchal presented the Growth and transport Update.

Decision

The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board noted the report

9 Minutes of the previous meeting

Members noted the minutes from the previous meeting.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council
Vice-Chair	Cllr Judith Blake CBE	Leeds City Council
Deputy-chair	Cllr Adele Morris	Southwark Council
Members	Cllr Ainsley Arnold	Cheshire East Council
	Cllr Simon Dudley	Windsor & Maidenhead Royal Borough
	Cllr Patrick Nicholson	Plymouth City Council
	Cllr Catherine Rankin	Kent County Council
	Cllr David Renard	Swindon Borough Council
	Cllr Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council
	Cllr Tony Newman	Croydon Council
	Cllr Ed Turner	Oxford City Council
	Cllr Rachel Blake	Tower Hamlets Council
	Cllr Gillian Campbell	Blackpool Council
	Cllr Michael Mordey	Sunderland City Council
	Mayor Philip Glanville	Hackney London Borough Council
	Cllr Peter Thornton	Cumbria County Council
	Cllr Linda Gillham	Runnymede Borough Council
Apologies	Cllr Louise Goldsmith	West Sussex County Council
	Cllr Rachel Eburne	Mid Suffolk District Council