

Note of last People & Places Board meeting

Title: People & Places Board
Date: Tuesday 29 January 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	Action
1	Welcome, introductions and declarations of interest	
	<p>The Chairman welcomed members and guests to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies listed at Appendix A were noted.</p>	
2	Rural Land Management	
	<p>The Chairman welcomed Daniel Shamplin-Hall, who outlined the work commissioned by the Board on the future role of councils in the management of rural land.</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed Mark Little, Director, and Alice Rawdon-Mogg, Associate Director Rural from Savills Rural Research.</p> <p>The presentation covered the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">the UK has been bound by the Common Agricultural Policy but following the result of the EU referendum and the UK's impending withdrawal from the CAP, the policy framework which determines the way farmers, land owners and land managers are incentivised to maintain rural land is set to change.Fundamentally, there is a view from UK Government to transition away from a centrally managed national system and create locally targeted plans to improve the environment based on local priorities.The opportunities within the draft Agriculture Bill. <p>One of the Core elements Savills wanted to explore is how the future delivery of agricultural and environmental land management policy will be delivered at both national and local levels.</p> <p>A discussion took place with the board and the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">guidance on the best approach on increasing growth in these areas and ensuring business and conservation areasthat the potential large range of future levers that could be used to	

drive local economic growth in rural areas could create significant fragmentation

- concern around the expansion of the national parks and the impact this can have on local communities in terms of stricter planning laws restricting development and the diversification of economies within these AONB communities.

The Chairman thanked Savills for updating the Board on their findings to date.

Decision:

Savills and officers to use members' comments to inform future discussions and the shape of the final report.

3 Trade and Inward Investment

The Chair welcomed Daniel Gardiner, Adviser, to the Board. Daniel outlined a draft set of aims to frame the LGA's policy engagement on trade and investment over the coming year, informed by the LGA's engagement in this area to date. Daniel then outlined the proposed next steps for the LGA to take these aims forward with government and key national stakeholders.

Members made the following comments:

Regarding the draft aims in paragraphs 5-17, there was concern expressed by Board members that the language in this draft runs the risk of being perceived by the Department as confrontational, and the tone needs to reflect that local authorities want to deliver on ambitions shared by central government to work in partnership.

There needs to be a more place-based approach to engagement and delivery from the Department for International Trade, in order to provide a good opportunity for local authorities to engage with SMEs.

There is an opportunity to better understand and evidence the experience of SMEs under the current system, potentially through engagement with the FSB.

The principles present a good opportunity to draw on existing good practice through examples from both this Board and the City Regions Board as well as highlighting the differences between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas.

Regarding the proposed next steps, members agreed it would be valuable to invite a senior official from DIT to attend the next Board and this could be used in part as an opportunity to showcase what local government can offer in this space. Members were also particularly positive about the proposal to progress work in this area with the LEP Network.

Decisions:

Members agreed the amended draft aims that will be used to frame the

LGA's engagement on trade and investment over the coming year, subject to comments on the tone with which these are presented (paras 5-17).

Members approved the proposed next steps for the LGA's trade and investment work (paras 22-23).

Actions:

1. For officers to amend draft principles in line with the feedback from members.
2. For officers to consider evidencing experience of SMEs and local case studies to back up these principles.
3. For officers to take forward the proposed next steps.

4 Digital Connectivity

The Chairman welcomed Daniel Shamplin-Hall, Advisor, to the Board. Dan provided members with an update on the current national digital connectivity policy context and the work of the Board's Rural Digital Connectivity Working Group.

The following comments were made by members:

Members responded positively to the Government's move to ensure all new build homes are connected to full fibre broadband. They believe the Board and Working Group should continue to push for universal coverage of 4G coverage and encourage Ofcom to undertake more advanced coverage mapping of rural and non-met areas.

In response to a query regarding how well the UK's broadband compare with other Western countries does, the Board were informed that the UK does well with superfast broadband, with coverage at 96 percent, but does not compare well to other countries when it comes to full fibre broadband with only 5 percent coverage. This compared to 40 percent in Spain and over 90 percent in South Korea.

Members welcomed the digital handbook.

Decision:

1. Members noted the activity of the Group to date.
2. Members welcomed the content of the proposed 'councillors digital connectivity handbook'
3. Members feedback and agreed on areas the Group plans to focus on over the coming political cycle

5 Local Industrial Strategy (Verbal Update)

Daniel Gardiner provided the Board with a verbal update on recent developments with local industrial strategies (LIS), the Government's review of local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

In relation to LIS, Daniel outlined that the LGA has now commissioned a

local support offer focused on LIS and have secured additional funding from BEIS which has allowed the LGA to appoint two providers – Metro Dynamics and Shared Intelligence – to deliver this offer.

Shared Intelligence will be focusing specifically on understanding and strengthening the role of councils in the development of a LIS and their offer will include the delivery of action learning sets for council officers seeking to instigate or further their authority's engagement with their LIS. Metro Dynamics will be focusing more broadly on the 'key ingredients' of Local Industrial Strategies and their offer will include the delivery of a series of masterclasses on areas including driving inclusive growth through a LIS and developing a LIS evidence base.

In relation to the LEP Review, Daniel informed the Board that there had been no public announcement on geography thus far though some areas have begun to progress plans for changes and we understand that outstanding geography issues are limited to only a couple of areas. Daniel also pointed out that the National Local Growth Assurance Framework had been published and that the LGA would continue to explore options relating to strengthening the democratic accountability of LEPs.

In relation to the UKSPF, Daniel noted that the consultation had not been published in December 2018 as planned. Daniel noted that once clarity is provided on the timing of the consultation, officers will consider the most appropriate option for capturing the views of the Board.

Decision

Members noted the verbal update.

Action:

Members to feedback on any developments in their locality regarding LEP geography proposals

6 Spending Review (Verbal Update)

Hannah Berry, Head of Campaigns and Digital Communication, updated the Board on proposed activity to lobby for greater devolution as part of the LGAs Spending Review Campaign.

With the Spending Review as the LGA's main priority, there needs to be some wider strands to the campaign to echo the main strategies and objectives. One of these strands is devolution, which has been signed off by group leaders. The LGA proposes to undertake a range of campaign activity to re-energise the devolution debate.

The main question posed to the Board was alongside outlining the benefits to devolution, whether or not to include the risks of not devolving these powers.

The following discussion took place with members:

In response to a query raised about how to message funding, HB explained that one of the key messages from the Spending Review will be about how to fund these devolved powers, and therefore will go hand in hand.

Ian Hughes, Head of Policy, explained that the LGA intend to look at the funding gap and transfer of powers that have gone to Combined Authorities as a starting point.

In response to the question posed to the Board, one member responded saying that the preferred approach was to focus on the benefits of devolution rather than focus on the risks of not devolving powers. However, we still need to balance this with the reality of the difficult decisions councils are having to make around the provision of existing services.

Decision:

Members of the Board support the objectives of the Spending Review Campaign at present

Action

Officers will draft a full Spending Review Campaign and discuss further detail at the next Lead Member's meeting. Feedback from this meeting will be fed back to members digitally.

7 Devoluton Framework (Verbal Update)

The Chair welcomed Ami Beeton to the Board. Ami provided the board with a verbal update on Devolution Framework and work to support combined authorities.

The update included following the last Board, the Chairman wrote to the Secretary of State to reemphasise the devolution manifesto commitments. The LGA received a holding reply from the Department Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Jake Berry MP. Currently, there is still uncertainty around the devolution framework's content and when it will be published.

Ami also brought to members' attention the work commissioned by MHCLG from Warwick Economics, to evaluate the policy decisions behind devolution to Combined Authorities. The LGA are expecting the final report to be published in May.

Meetings of the combined authority officer networks are ongoing.

The Chair thanked Ami for her update and congratulated her on securing her secondment placement at Surrey County Council.

There was a brief discussion around the language terminology of 'devolution' and whether or not to move away from this term.

Decision

Members noted the update.

8 Minutes of the last meeting

Members agreed the Board's last minutes.

The Attendance list will be updated to include Simon Henig and Rosanne Kirk.

It was noted that there are some technical issues with the IT system which did not accurately record all members' details. Members were informed that the LGA are looking into resolving this.

9 Employment and Skills Update

The Chairman introduced Jasbir Jhas to the Board.

Jasbir updated the Board on the LGA's Skills and Employment activity.

A confidential discussion followed.

10 Post-Brexit England Commission

The Chairman welcomed Rebecca Cox, Principal Policy Adviser, to the Board.

RC updated the Board on the Commission's work to date.

A confidential discussion with members followed.

11 Confidential Minutes of the last Board Meeting

Members agreed and noted the confidential minutes from the last meeting.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Gillian Brown OBE	Arun District Council
	Cllr Simon Henig CBE	Durham County Council
Deputy-chairman	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 Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
	Cllr Tim Hall	Surrey County Council
	Cllr Adrian Hardman	Worcestershire County Council
	Cllr Glen Horn	Mid Suffolk District Council
	Cllr Rory Love OBE	Shepway District Council
	Cllr Linda Robinson	Wychavon District Council
	Cllr David Thomas	Torbay Council
	Cllr Peter Jackson	Northumberland Council
	Cllr Rob Waltham MBE	North Lincolnshire Council

Cllr Azhar Ali
Cllr Leigh Redman
Cllr Sue Woodward
Cllr Sarah Osborne
Cllr Helen Grant

Lancashire County Council
Somerset County Council
Staffordshire County Council
Lewes District Council
Richmondshire District Council

Apologies

Cllr Harvey Siggs

Mendip District Council

In Attendance

LGA Officers