

Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board – report from Cllr Martin Tett (Chairman)

Homelessness Reduction Bill

1. Following a short consultation exercise with councils and key partners, the Economy, Environment, Housing and Transport Board published a policy briefing on the Homelessness Reduction Bill, which is available [here](#). There is growing awareness in the sector about the potential impact of the Bill. Although it is a private members Bill, it is looking increasingly likely that it will gain government support and therefore pass at the second reading in the House of Commons, which is scheduled for 28 October. Our briefing has been circulated to councils and other key partners, and will form the basis ongoing discussions with government and the Bill's sponsor, the Rt. Hon. Bob Blackman MP.
2. On Tuesday 4 October, I meet with the Mr Blackman to discuss the LGA's concerns. Our conversation included the following reservations about the draft Bill:
 - 2.1 56 day accommodation duty for those with nowhere safe to stay regardless of whether or not they have priority need - There is an insufficient supply of suitable accommodation to discharge this duty, and attempts to do so rely on sourcing expensive temporary accommodation which risks detracting from prevention work.
 - 2.2 The requirement to recognise an expired section 21 notice as proof of homelessness. This requirement will limit the time available to local authorities to engage in preventative work to avoid evictions.
 - 2.3 The duty to help to secure accommodation in 12 month tenancies for people who are homeless regardless of whether or not they have priority need - There are insufficient 12 month tenancies available to successfully discharge this duty for all applicants.

Joint session with the British Property Federation and senior managers of Milton Keynes Council

3. On Monday 19 September, the LGA held a joint session on the issue of infrastructure and growth. Civil servants and leaders from the development industry took part in discussions, offering their valuable thoughts, reflections and expert knowledge into what will help Milton Keynes achieve its growth ambitions and attract investment. This event follows on from an earlier occasion held in Southampton. Key messages will be shared widely with local government, the development industry and Government.

Commercial Waste Service

4. During the week commencing the 19 September, the Board, in conjunction with the legal team at the LGA, supported the Treasury and HMT to successfully defend a judicial review of the VAT exemption for council commercial waste services.

Conferences, Meetings and External Events

5. On Tuesday 11 October and accompanied by Kamal Panchal (Senior Adviser, International Affairs and Economic Growth) I met with the Rt. Hon. Andrew Jones MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport). This conversation covered a broad range of topics, but included the LGA's priorities of vibrant and cost-effective bus services, tackling congestion and infrastructure investment.
6. On Tuesday 4 October I also spoke at the Centre for Progressive Capitalism event on driving housing growth through Land Value Capture.
7. On Wednesday 13 July Cllr Keith House (Deputy Chair) spoke on connection between homeless and house building at the Housing Quality Network Annual Conference. On Thursday 29 September Cllr House also spoke at the Planning for Housing Conference, where his talk revolved around the implications for housing of Britain leaving the European Union. Cllr House also spoke at an Inside Government event on rogue landlords on Tuesday 27 September.
8. On Tuesday 14 June, Cllr Julian German (Deputy Chair) attended a workshop on food waste with the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser and Rory Stewart MP.

Responses to select committees and other consultations

9. The Board has engaged with a range of select committees and other consultations, including:
 - 9.1 Responding in August to a Department for Energy and Climate Change consultation on the future of the Energy Company Obligation funding energy efficiency;
 - 9.2 Responding in August to an Ofgem consultation on opening up funding from voluntary redress payments by energy companies to a wider group of stakeholders including councils;
 - 9.3 Submitting written evidence in September to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee Inquiry into the economic, social and environmental impact of food waste in England.
10. The Board has briefed on a number of issues, including the Neighbourhood Planning Bill, the recent Parliamentary debate on quality and affordability of housing as well as submitting evidence to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Housing and Planning about the private rented sector.
11. I have personally written to both Clive Betts (Chair of Communities and Local Government Committee) and the Rt. Hon. Marcus Jones MP (Minister for Communities and Local Government) with evidence on the Homelessness Reduction Bill. I have also written to the Public Accounts Committee on the review into the sale of public land.

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