

Note of last People & Places Board meeting

Title: People & Places Board
Date: Tuesday 1 November 2016
Venue: Council Chamber, St John's Gate, 26 St John's Lane, London, EC1M 4DA

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions
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1 Welcome, Introductions and Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and listed apologies.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of the Last Meeting

Regarding the minutes from the last meeting, the following points were made:

- Members requested that a briefing was produced on the work of other policy boards, and that this was considered as an item at the next board meeting.
- Officers advised that the Chief Executive of Ofcom would be attending the January board meeting.
- Officers advised that the Business Rates Retention Task and Finish Group had considered suggestions made regarding an independent commission for the fair funding review at the last board meeting but instead expressed a preference for some form of independent scrutiny of the results of the Government's work rather than a full commission. The Leadership Board were now looking at the issue in more depth and officers would report back at the January board meeting.
- It was agreed that the paper commissioned on the Fair Funding Review by the task and finish group would be circulated to the board in December.
- Points made on the support offer currently received by Looked After Children at the last board meeting were raised. Officers advised these would be addressed in the Skills and Employment item.

Decision:

1. Members **agreed** the minutes as an accurate summary of the discussion.

Actions:

1. Officers to produce a paper on the work priorities of all policy boards for the next meeting.
2. The paper on Fair Funding Review commissioned by the Business Rates Task and Finish Group to be circulated to the board in December and officers to feedback at the January meeting.

3 Devolution Update

Philip Clifford, Senior Adviser, introduced the item. He advised members that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government had been invited to a board meeting to discuss devolution deals (particularly in non-metropolitan areas). He gave an overview of press and public affairs work to highlight the case for devolution to non-metropolitan areas in advance of the Autumn Statement, and recent support activity including work to increase community engagement in the process of devolution.

The following points were made:

- Members requested that emphasis was placed on 'missed opportunities' in LGA work. A discussion followed on the different perspectives of central government and local areas to the mayoral model.
- A discussion took place on business rates retention. Members agreed it would be useful to have a further debate on this and asked for an update at the next board meeting.
- The role of England in issues such as Brexit and devolution (in comparison to Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland) was discussed. It was agreed that lead members would relate to this point to their political group offices.

Decision:

1. The board **agreed** to a press and public affairs campaign in advance of the Autumn Statement highlighting the case for devolution to non-metropolitan areas and missed opportunities.

Actions:

1. The letter to SoS to be followed up
2. Lead members to relate concerns about the lack of representation for England in the devolution debate (in comparison to Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland) to their political group offices.

4 Broadband, Mobile and the Digital Divide

Philip Clifford, Senior Adviser, introduced the item. He updated members on the LGA's recent activity on digital connectivity and advised that Sharon White, Chief Executive of Ofcom, would attend the board in January.

Melanie Haslam, Public Affairs and Campaigns Adviser, updated members on the progress of the Digital Economy Bill. Published in July, the bill had had its 2nd reading in September. Two proposed amendments had been narrowly voted down. Officers advised that these would be re-introduced in the Lords. The LGA were now using the bill to inform its response to the Autumn Statement and would be meeting with MPs to raise the profile of the work.

The following points were made:

- There were concerns that many rural and remote rural areas had not yet benefited from the roll-out of the Superfast Broadband programme.
- It was suggested that compensation should be provided to those without the service.
- There was a discussion around the digital skills training provided by councils and the plans for digital inclusion to be covered by the Adult Education Budget. Officers suggested that it was unclear at present whether the AEB funding envelope was sufficient to fund anything additional, and were therefore proceeding with caution.

Decision:

1. Members **noted** the update.

Actions:

1. Officers to explore any progress on the funding of digital inclusion from the AEB and produce a short note for the next board meeting if there are any new developments.

5 Skills and Employment Update

Jasbir Jhas, Senior Adviser, introduced the item, updating members on the progress of joint lobbying work between the People and Places Board and City Regions Board on employment and skills. Members made the following points:

Public Employment and Skills Service (PESS) project

- Members' views were sought on the project specification -

appendix C - P&P and CR lead members would have oversight of the project. Members were also asked for a steer on how Ministers could be engaged in the process.

- The project should identify the problem with the current system before setting out local government's alternative. Critical to the solution would be gearing the skills system – including colleges and schools - to local need and involvement of LEPs.
- The vision should develop an integrated skills, employment and careers guidance service which supported the unemployed / low skilled but also those looking for a career change. This could include different types of service, being publicly / privately funded.
- LGA should engage with CCN on developing a survey to councils on the impact of employment and skills provision in their area to feed into the wider project.
- The Danish model for skills was highlighted as a successful system for creating a skilled workforce, and should be included in the international evidence.
- With reference to correspondence between the Chairman and the Employment Minister on the Work and Health Programme (Appendix A), Members raised the challenge that large CPA areas would not achieve local targeting with additional access issues for rural areas.
- LGA to develop work on skills which links to impact of Brexit, industrial strategy, and technological innovation.
- It was suggested that the board consider working with the City Regions and Children and Young People Board in this area, possibly through a seminar.

Decision:

1. Members **noted** the recommendations.

Actions:

1. Officers to engage with CCN on their recent skills survey.
2. Officers to include the Danish model for skills in international evidence.
3. Officers to explore ways to bring together the board with the CYP and CRs board as part of the Public Employment and Skills Service project.
4. Officers to continue with work on the project, in line with the steer above.

6 Local Government's Position Following the EU Exit

Philip Clifford, Senior Adviser, introduced the item, advising members that the paper set out the details of a commission from the Leadership Board to consider English local government's position following Brexit. He asked the board to comment upon and agree the set of draft principles (set out at appendix B) in order to feed into this wider piece of work.

The following points were made:

- The loss of the European Social Fund and the impact this would have on communities was discussed. Funding going to the EU from the UK and its possible repatriation to local government was touched upon.
- It was suggested that the draft principles be expanded to take into account a local government post-Brexit perspective. The skills agenda could be fed into these.
- Members discussed secondary legislation based on directives which affected local government, and the need to be aware of amendments the government could make to these.

Decision:

1. Members **agreed** that officers would take forward further work in this area.

Action:

2. The draft principles to be adapted to reflect a local government (post-Brexit) perspective.

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 Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
Deputy-Chair	Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
Members	Cllr Philip Atkins OBE	Staffordshire County Council
	Cllr Derek Bastiman	Scarborough Borough Council
	Cllr Roger Blaney	Newark & Sherwood District Council
	Cllr Paul Carter CBE	Kent County Council
	Cllr Daniel Humphreys	Worthing Borough Council
	Cllr Kenneth Meeson	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr John Osman	Somerset County Council
	Cllr Blake Pain	Harborough District Council
	Cllr Ken Turner	Pendle Borough Council
	Cllr Vince Maple	Medway Council
	Cllr Jennifer Mein	Lancashire County Council
	Cllr Caitlin Bisknell	Derbyshire County Council
	Cllr Chris Townsend	Surrey County Council
	Cllr Amanda Martin	Council of the Isles of Scilly
	Cllr Stan Collins	South Lakeland District Council
	Cllr Sarah Osborne	Lewes District Council
	Cllr Leigh Redman	Somerset County Council
	Cllr Chris Saint	Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Apologies	Cllr Chris Hayward	Hertfordshire County Council
	Cllr John Pollard	Cornwall Council