

End of Year Board Report

Purpose of report

For information and discussion.

Summary

This report provides an overview of the issues and work the Board has overseen during last year. It sets out key achievements in relation to the priorities for the EEHT Board in 2016/2017, and looks forward to next year's priorities.

Recommendations

That the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board are invited to:

- (a) Consider and comment on the Board's activity in 2016/2017
- (b) Consider the process for developing the 2017/18 programme of work

Action

Officers to action as appropriate.

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Background

1. The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board provides strategic oversight of the LGA's policy, regulatory and improvement activity in relation to the economy and environment, including transport, economic development and business support, housing, planning, waste and climate change, in line with the LGA priorities and any specific regulatory and LGA European lobbying priorities as they relate to this activity.
2. The Board set out the following priorities for 2016/17:
 - 2.1. Housing
 - 2.2. Responding to the outcome of the EU referendum (Brexit)
 - 2.3. Waste and recycling policy
 - 2.4. Transport including (infrastructure investment)
 - 2.5. Economic development (including the industrial strategy and infrastructure investment)
 - 2.6. Flooding (Including Infrastructure Investment)
3. The Board wanted to achieve tangible outcomes and these are set out under the key priority themes.

Achievements

Ministerial meetings

4. On Tuesday 4 October, Cllr Tett met with the Bob Blackman Mp to discuss the LGA's concerns over the Homelessness Reduction Act. Their conversation included the following reservations about the draft Bill:
 - 4.1 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.
 - 4.2 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.
 - 4.3 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.
 - 4.4 Follow this the proposals were dropped from the final Act. The LGA was instrumental in ensuring the final version of the Homelessness Reduction Act was

practical; working with Bob Blackman MP who introduced the Private Members Bill, the Government who supported the Bill, and with councils.

5. On Tuesday 25 October Cllr Tett met with Lord Gardiner to discuss common priorities between the LGA and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Cllr Tett and the Minister discussed concerns around connectivity, especially regarding the last 5% of people who don't have access to broadband. Cllr Tett raised the possibility of looking at planning law so that broadband services are automatically included in any new build planning applications, as well as using both cellular and fixed line services to deliver an overall increase in coverage. Concerning litter, Cllr Tett stressed the budgetary pressures around litter and both sides agreed to try and work more closely on this issue. This meeting also included animal welfare, where both parties were keen to ensure that reforms to the animal licensing system reflects council priorities.
6. On Wednesday 2 November Cllr Tett met with the Minister for Housing and Planning to discuss matters of mutual concern to both the Department for Communities and Local Government and the LGA. These included the importance of resourcing planning departments, supporting local authorities to build homes outside their Housing Revenue Accounts, diversifying the types of developers engaged in construction, kick-starting development of those sites which have already received planning permission, the provision of public land for housebuilding, as well as the importance of delivering housing for a range of different needs locally. Both Cllr Tett and the Minister agreed to continue working on priority areas.
7. On Tuesday 21 February Cllr Tett met with the Rt Hon Therese Coffey MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment and Rural Life Opportunities following our previous meeting in November. The meeting was focussed on discussion of urban recycling rates and how they can be improved. Many thanks to all the Board members who provided feedback in preparation for the meeting.

Housing

8. The LGA was successful in influencing elements of the Housing and Planning Act that have most concerns for local government through policy and lobbying work with the Departments, with Parliament and the media. Major successes include the Government's decision to abandon implementing the High Income Social Tenants policy (known as 'Pay to Stay'), to, at the very least, delay any plans to implement the forced sale of higher value assets, and to significantly reduce requirements for starter homes on new developments. We are continuing to push for clarity of direction on the forced sale and starter home policies.
9. The LGA's housing commission has helped place the sector at the forefront of the debate in resolving the countries housing crisis. It engaged over 100 different partners across the housing, planning and health sectors, held a number of successful events, and launched a preliminary and final report that was well received by partners and gained significant press attention. The final report was developed alongside sustained engagement with the

Government and in advance of the Government's own Housing White Paper (see below), which had adopted ideas put forward by the LGA.

10. The Government's Housing White Paper acknowledged that the housing market is broken and adopted a number of arguments pushed by the LGA.(see Housing Commission) It also pledged to further explore issues raised by the LGA, such as providing more older people's housing, and exploring options for land value capture to fund infrastructure. However there are some risks for councils in the white paper and it could have been more ambitious, and the LGA will continue to work with the Government on next steps.
11. The LGA has completed a project and launched a report looking at the different ways that councils can enable housing growth. This includes practice in establishing a housing company, supporting community land trusts, and entering into a joint venture with housing associations and private developers. The LGA is close to completing a project capturing council innovation in providing temporary accommodation (TA) innovations in reducing the demand for TA, in sourcing new TA, or in finding alternatives to TA. The LGA is also close to completing a project looking at how councils can meet the housing need of an ageing population, in ways that integrate housing with health and care.

Environment

12. The Board has worked on responses to the Government's consultations on it's clean air plan and the proposals to introduce Clean Air Zones. We have convened a series of seminars with officers from affected areas as well as engaging directly with DEFRA making the case that local government can only help the Government deliver on its clean air responsibilities if we are adequately resourced and are given the necessary powers to tackle the problem.
13. We have focused on working with councils to understand what our future approach should be to waste and recycling as we prepare to exit from Europe.
14. A successful involvement in the commercial waste judicial review has meant the LGA has protected the sector from potential loss of income of around £77 million per year.
15. An additional £700 million of funding was made available for flooding in the 2016 budget. The LGA has been working closely with the government to ensure that this is focussed on localised flooding projects.

Transport & Growth

16. The Bus Services Act 2017 received Royal Assent on 27 April 2017. The LGA has called for more flexibility for local authorities to intervene in local bus markets to deliver better results for passengers. We therefore supported the Bill in its passage through Parliament and are glad that the Government has provided a framework for making it a reality As part of our work on the act we hosted a buses conference for officers and members in

February. The conference explored ways in which councils could help increase bus patronage as well as discussing new powers available through the Act.

17. At the Government's Autumn Statement the Chancellor announced £1.3 billion for improvements to Britain's roads and to tackle congestion. The LGA welcomed the Government's acknowledgement of our repeated calls for more investment in local road networks.
18. The Government announced, as part of their litter strategy, that they will bring forward proposals to allow local authorities to fine the registered keeper of a vehicle when someone in the vehicle commits a littering offence. This is a change that the LGA has called for for some time and we welcome the Government's position.
19. The LGA were successful in getting the Government to review and withdraw its proposals for improving roadworks, in particular tackling unattended roadworks at weekends. The Board has renewed our calls for the full roll out of lane rental powers which have proved effective in London and Kent.
20. The board continues to support changes to how freight movements are managed. We have re-iterated our call for full implementation of the Traffic Management Act 2004 Part 6 to allow councils to enforce weight limits and HGV bans in areas where they are not appropriate. We have also called for the Government to make it compulsory for HGVs to use commercial sat navs.
21. Following joint study visits to Southampton and Milton Keynes councils, the LGA and British Property Federation launched a report on [local development, growth and regeneration through successful public/private collaboration](#) at an event attended by leaders from local government, the development and investment industries and central government.
22. The EEHT Board led on developing the [LGA's response](#) to the Government's green paper on the Industrial Strategy. The response highlighted the importance of local leaders across the country being able to access appropriate levers of growth, such as on skills and employment, infrastructure and housing in order to raise productivity, achieve inclusive growth and match the economic performance of their global competitors.

Unlocking Growth in Partnership

23. Melanie Leech, Chief Executive of the British Property Federation, and Cllr Martin Tett jointly launched a good practice guide on unlocking commercial growth through long-term public/private collaboration. The report highlights best practice of councils and developers and identifies key asks of central government to help attract investment into local areas and achieve better growth.

Programme of work and priorities 2017/18

24. A draft work programme for 2017/18 will be presented at the Board's October meeting. In proposing the programme a number of factors will need to be taken into account including:

24.1. Make the case for councils to have the powers and funding to deliver more homes that meet needs and are affordable to communities, to build prosperous places well supported by services and infrastructure, and to reduce homelessness.

24.2. Growth and future national and local policy on transport and infrastructure, including emerging legislation in relation to Connected and Autonomous Vehicles and the Government's response to the Air Quality Plan consultation.

24.3. To fully understand the impact of exiting the EU on environmental policy, including waste and recycling, and to help shape the new policy framework.

24.4. To work with our members and government to ensure that policy infrastructure funding on flood defences meet the needs of communities.

Next steps

25. Members are asked to consider:

25.1. The Board's activity in 2016/2017; and

25.2. The process for developing the 2017/2018 programme of work.

26. Officers will work with Lead members over the summer in bringing forward a programme of work for 2017/18.

Financial Implications

27. All work programmes are met from existing budgets and resources.