

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

Title: Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board
Date: Friday 17 March 2017
Venue: Room A&B, Ground Floor, Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London, EC1M 5LG

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#) to this note.

Item Decisions and actions

1 Declarations of Interest

The Vice-Chair of the Board, Cllr Judith Blake, took the Chair and received apologies.

There were no declarations of interest made.

2 Housing White Paper

Nick Porter, Senior Adviser on Housing and Planning, introduced the report on the Housing White Paper 'Fixing our broken housing market' and the LGA's Briefing on the publication. He asked the Board for their views on the Housing White Paper to steer further lobbying on announcements in the White Paper and next steps that should be taken. Further to this he explained that the Housing White Paper included some encouraging proposals that reflect recommendations in the LGA Housing Commission report. He also informed the Board there were gaps in the Housing White Paper the LGA would like to see addressed in greater depth; such as in planning policy, enabling housing growth, building more affordable housing, homelessness and welfare reform.

In the discussion that followed Members raised the following;

- The White Paper puts more accountability on councils but few powers, further empowering local authorities to secure the delivery should be a priority.
- Members welcomed proposals to ensure certainty and to simplify the planning system by introducing a standardised formula for assessing need, but were concerned that these reflect local need.
- That there needs to be a clearer definition on what is genuinely Affordable Housing, and a greater emphasis on allowing councils to meet it.
- Going forward a much greater focus on the private rented sector would be required.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the quality of private rented sector in some city centres where some privately rented properties are now cheaper than social housing.

- That local authorities being empowered further to bring together a strategy that enables the building to meet local housing demand should be included in the Housing White Paper.
- Members expressed a view that broadband should be referenced as a requirement for adequate housing going forwards.
- That there should be a greater mention as to the long term stability of housing.
- Members expressed a view that central government should have more direct communication with local authorities regarding the future of the housing market in their areas.
- Members raised the concern of the impact of unaffordable housing and welfare reforms on homelessness, and councils having tools to respond to this.
- It is important to find ways of influencing land values to help fund infrastructure and affordable housing.
- Members want to seek clarification from Government that it supports Local Housing Companies.

Decision

The members **discussed** the response to the Housing White Paper and next steps to be taken.

Action

Officers to;

- 1) The views of the EEHT Board to be included in the response to the Government on the Housing White Paper 'Fixing our broken housing market'.
- 2) Circulate a draft response to the consultation on the Housing White Paper to lead members for comments.

3 Update on Other Board Business

Eamon Lally, Principle Policy Adviser, introduced the report which included updates on a number of areas related to the Board's work.

Cllr Blake informed the Board that she had written to the Northern Energy Task force regarding their research project.

Sonika Sidhu, Senior Adviser, informed the Board that Cllr Tett's meeting with the Rt Hon Dr Thérèse Coffey MP had been very productive. She explained that the Minister was very open to listening to the views of local government and that further dialogue with Cllr Tett had been suggested.

In the following update regarding the Buses Bill members were given assurance that the views of the EEHT Board would be discussed further as the Bill progresses.

Decision

The board **noted** the update.

Action

Officers to include an update on the Buses Bill in future Board updates.

4 Confidential - Industrial Strategy Report

Kamal Panchal, Senior Adviser, introduced the report on the recently published Green Paper 'Britain's industrial strategy'. He explained that the Government is inviting responses to the Green Paper, and that a draft response was set out as an appendix to the report. He informed the Board that the LGA had to respond by 17 April. Further to this he brought members attention to the '10 pillars' of the Industrial Strategy which summarise the constituent parts of the strategy.

Kamal asked for members views on the draft response and whether there any areas members had identified where our response could be strengthened.

In the discussion that followed members raised the following points:

- Members expressed a view that little of the Industrial Strategy was new.
- Concerns were raised that investment towards research and development was disproportionately focused towards London, Cambridge and Oxford and the role of Central Government was a missing pillar
- That the Industrial Strategy should include some clear propositions on how the scientific sector will be supported going forward post-Brexit.
- Regarding devolution members expressed the view the Green Paper could be more ambitious.
- Members expressed a view that Trade Unions should be at the heart of an Industrial Strategy.
- That the Industrial Strategy needs to be more ambitious in terms of giving local areas tax and regulatory freedoms, going beyond devolution of Business Rates
- .
- That a National Investment Strategy should have been included as a part of the Green Paper.
- Members expressed a view that productivity, and its relationship to skills and health, should be explored in greater depth in the Industrial Strategy.
- That reference needs to be made to the importance of inclusive growth.

Decision

The Members of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board;

1. **Discussed** the LGA's draft response to the Industrial Strategy; and
2. **Identified** areas the draft response could be strengthened.

Action

The views of the EEHT Board to be reflected in the response to the Government on 'Britain's industrial strategy' Green Paper.

5 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Board **agreed** the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 January 2017.

Appendix A -Attendance

| Position/Role | Councillor | Authority |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Vice-Chairman in the Chair | Cllr Judith Blake | Leeds City Council |
| Deputy-chairman | Cllr Julian German | Cornwall Council |
| Members | Cllr Jason Ablewhite Cllr Simon Cooke Cllr Steve Count Cllr Catherine Rankin Cllr David Westley Cllr Tony Newman Cllr Ed Turner Cllr Gillian Campbell Cllr Simon Greaves Mayor Marvin Rees Cllr Adele Morris | Huntingdonshire District Council Bradford Metropolitan District Council Cambridgeshire County Council Tunbridge Wells Borough Council West Lancashire Borough Council Croydon Council Oxford City Council Blackpool Council Bassetlaw District Council Bristol City Council Southwark Council |
| Apologies | Cllr Martin Tett Cllr Stephen Parnaby OBE Cllr Alyson Barnes Cllr Hugh Evans OBE Cllr Keith House | Buckinghamshire County Council East Riding of Yorkshire Council Rossendale Borough Council Denbighshire County Council Eastleigh Borough Council |
| In Attendance | Claire Hawkes | Buckinghamshire County Council |