

General Board Update

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

Updates to the Board on activity in relation to transport and planning since the last Board meeting.

Recommendation

That the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board note the updates detailed in the report.

Action

Officers to action as directed

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General Board Update

Interim National Infrastructure Assessment consultation

1. In October 2017 the National Infrastructure Commission launched its interim National Infrastructure Assessment, titled 'Congestion, Capacity, Carbon: Priorities for national infrastructure'. The report examines seven key areas, and sets out the vision and priorities for helping meet the country's needs up to 2050. Those seven areas are:
 - 1.1. Building a digital society
 - 1.2. Connected, liveable city-regions
 - 1.3. Infrastructure to support housing
 - 1.4. Eliminating carbon emissions from energy and waste
 - 1.5. A revolution in road transport
 - 1.6. Reducing the risk of drought and flooding
 - 1.7. Financing and funding infrastructure in efficient ways
2. [In response](#) to the wide-ranging list of consultation questions the LGA highlighted issues relating to the future of EU funding, fragmentation of national funding for local infrastructure, the role of Government, the planning regime, streetworks, capture of land-value uplift, energy, waste infrastructure, electric charging infrastructure, autonomous vehicles, water supply and demand and flood risk management.

Clean air fund submission

3. The LGA [responded](#) to the Government's consultation on the Clean Air Fund. Our response welcomed the creation of the Clean Air Fund and the changes to tax treatment for new diesel vehicles as a step in the right direction. However, we feel that the Government could go further using its fiscal levers to hasten the transition to low emission vehicles as well as giving councils more funding certainty and powers to manage traffic. We continue to be concerned about the reliance of government funding on competitive bidding. This adds costs, time and uncertainty onto any project that it funds and we hope that the process for allocating the air quality fund will be as simple as possible.

Meeting with Jesse Norman MP

4. The Chair of the EEHT Board, Cllr Martin Tett, met with Jesse Norman MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, on 23 January. There was constructive discussion on a range of issues including funding, tackling congestion and electric charging infrastructure. In a follow up letter an offer was made to the Minister to work together with councils and the LGA to co-design national schemes of support and investment for local areas as the LGA felt that such an approach would help the Government to be better able to deliver its priorities as well as serving local people more effectively. The letter identified three areas where such an approach should be made:

- 4.1. Streamlining the nature of future central government funding for local roads and transport
- 4.2. Tackling growing levels of congestion, in particular a way forward to implement London style powers for enforcement of moving traffic offences
- 4.3. Support to incentivise local investment and efforts on electric vehicle charging infrastructure

Strategic Roads Network (SRN) consultation response

5. The LGA responded to the Department for Transport's consultation on the proposals for the Strategic Road Network (SRN) and its current and future needs. In order to set investment in the SRN, which is operated by Highways England, the government publishes a multi-year 'Road investment strategy' (RIS). The second RIS (RIS2) will cover the financial years 2020/21 to 2024/25. Our response acknowledged the benefits of long term funding certainty and sustained investment for the strategic network. However, the LGA also noted with concern the large disparity in funding by central Government between the local and strategic networks. We also stated that there is a need for this investment and long term approach to be replicated with long term funding certainty for local networks to ensure investments on both networks can complement each other and the schemes planned in RIS period 2 achieve the best possible value. Much of the language of the Strategic Route Network proposal shows Highways England has listened to the local government sector on areas of its work that could be improved. This included firm commitments to local partnerships, working on integration between different networks, recognising the different groups impacted by the MRN and the greater cost benefits of smaller schemes. Whilst we welcomed these high level strategic commitments it is important that these are translated to delivery on the ground.

Future transport

6. Following on from the 14 December Future Transport seminar to the EEHT Board, a [feature](#) was published in First magazine from the Chair of the EEHT Board that highlighted the potential risks and benefits to the public services that councils provide, and for the residents they serve from driverless, electric and connected vehicles. A more detailed publication, incorporating the views of those organisations who presented at the seminar is being drafted by officers for launch in late March. A workshop at the LGA Annual Conference (3- 6 July) on the future transport agenda has also been secured.

LGA Town Centre conference – 14 May

7. Building on the LGA's town centre improvement work a conference is being organised for the 14 May 2018 at 18 Smith Square. The conference programme will include a Minister along with case studies and regeneration and town centre experts. For further details and to book a place please go [here](#). Further information will also be announced

on the LGA's work on a town centre on-line toolkit and good practice guidance for councils and elected members.

Lane Rentals announcement

8. The EEHT Board has successfully led repeated calls by the LGA for the Government to roll out Lane Rental schemes to all areas of the country. The Government announced, on 16 February, that Lane Rental schemes, where utility companies are charged by the day for digging up the busiest roads at peak times, could now be adopted by councils nationwide after successful pilots in the Kent and London. The scheme incentivises firms to minimise the period of time occupying roads and instead focus their works outside of rush hour, or to collaborate with other companies to prevent roads being dug up multiple times. The announcement follows a DfT consultation which the LGA [responded](#) to. DfT have said they will produce guidance in the autumn to help councils develop lane rental schemes for Secretary of State approval and that the first schemes could start by the end of 2019. LGA officers will continue to liaise with DfT to ensure that the guidance is as helpful and flexible as possible to help councils manage traffic and the process for seeking DfT approval is kept to a minimum.