

## **Economy and Transport Programme Board – report from Cllr Peter Box CBE (Chair)**

### **Economic growth**

1. I am pleased that this month we will be launching the Economy and Transport Programme Board's local growth campaign. Our website ([http://www.local.gov.uk/web/10161/economy-and-transport-/journal\\_content/56/10161/2899620/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE](http://www.local.gov.uk/web/10161/economy-and-transport-/journal_content/56/10161/2899620/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE)) gives more information. We hope to achieve a robust national debate about how councils can promote strong and sustainable local economies. Arrangements for our "town hall" meetings are now well underway and our discussions with think tanks, community groups and business contacts shows there is a great amount of enthusiasm about our campaign. Have a look at the website. It holds a wealth of useful information regarding economic development; including a set of maps showing how local growth varies by region, and views and publications from many organisations on economic growth. The campaign will be launched at the Smith Square debate on the 23 November where I will be speaking alongside the LGA Chairman and business colleagues and launching a series of essays by leading thinkers on new boundaries for local economic development.

### **Transport**

2. On the transport front, the Board has continued to be active. A number of Board members met with officials from the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) to discuss rail devolution and the role that councils could play in managing local franchises. The ORR does not oversee franchising, but is responsible for ensuring Network Rail delivers savings which will be necessary if councils are to be successfully involved in the franchising process. The meeting was useful in helping the two organisations understand each other and we will be meeting again in the New Year. The Board is very keen to ensure that if councils want to get involved in the management of local rail franchising, the risks are managed well by the national regulators.
3. To help prepare for winter weather, our "Winter Weather" Community of Practice (<http://www.communities.idea.gov.uk/c/12325837/home.do>) has been launched to allow the exchange of information between those involved in keeping the roads open during periods of snow fall and freezing temperatures. Content includes a recent presentation by Cllr Shona Johnstone, Economy and Transport Programme Board Vice-Chair, to the Cold Comfort Conference.

4. Cllr Mike Haines, Board Deputy Chair and Independent Group lead member, will set out the Board's view of the impact of the Localism Bill on transport policy at the TRICS conference in early November. This is an issue that we will be discussing with DfT officials at our next Board meeting. Our concern is that whilst there is a clear drive for devolution at DfT, there needs to be a more comprehensive localist policy on transport to join all DfT's devolution initiatives together.

### **Working with other Boards on Youth Unemployment**

5. The Board has been working actively with colleagues on the Children and Young Peoples Programme Board to discuss the next stages of the LGA's youth unemployment work. We are developing a campaign to establish how councils can help ensure that public services deliver more for young people's employment prospects.
6. The starting point of our discussion was the wide range of advice services that young people encounter at various points in their life. Currently the services are not joined up and do not concentrate on the individual. We have asked officers to research into current trends by talking to young people, to councils, to other service providers, and to employers. Members will look at what needs to change to encourage services which are better fitted to the individual and to local employment opportunities. We intend to offer our own new ideas here, rather than waiting to respond to Whitehall.

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