

Regeneration and Transport Board
19 November 2008

Item 6

Notes of Decisions Taken and Action

Regeneration and Transport Board

03 September 2008

Local Government House

Present

Chair: Cllr David Sparks
Vice Chair: Cllr Jim Harker
Deputy Chairs: Cllr Richard Knowles

Cllr Shona Johnstone (Con, Cambridgeshire CC); Cllr Ricky Bower (Con, Arun DC); Cllr Heather Kidd (South Shropshire DC), Cllr Stephen Parnaby (Con, East Riding of Yorkshire); Cllr Mark Dowd (Lab, Merseyside PTA), Cllr Andrew Carter (Con, Leeds City Council); Cllr Roy Davis (Lab, Luton)

Apologies; Cllr Prof John Whitelegg (Ind, Lancaster City), Cllr Tony Page (Lab, Reading); Cllr Peter Jackson (Con, Northumberland CC); Cllr Sylvia Dunkley (LD, Sheffield City);

LGA officers: Paul Raynes, Caroline Green, Ian Keating, Jenny Day

The Chairman began by welcoming new and returning members to the meeting.

Item 1 Membership and Terms of Reference

Members noted the Board's membership and terms of reference for 2008/09. Members raised the issue that the May Board date is in the middle of local and European election period. European elections are due to take place in June.

Decisions

- Members agreed to raise the issue of the May Board date (20 May) with their relevant political group Leader.
- Secretariat to consider altering the May board meeting dates.

Actions

- Circulate dates of relevant seminars, workshops and conferences to members on a regular basis.

Jenny Day

Item 2- Outside Bodies

Decisions:

- **Members noted the report.**
- **Members agreed that the decisions on nominations to outside bodies could be delegated to office holders.**

Actions

- **Office holders to agree and finalise nominations to outside bodies for 2008/09.**
Office holders/Steven Skelton

Item 3- Presentation from Commission for Rural Communities (CRC)

Roger Turner, head of Rural Economies, and Crispin Moor, Director of CRC, gave a presentation to members about releasing the economic potential of England's rural areas. Crispin Moor explained that CRC is not a delivery body, but rather an advocate for rural communities, funded by Defra. The rural economy is a major contributor to the national economy, with a GVA equal to that of urban areas (excluding London). In spite of this substantial contribution, rural areas are underperforming, leaving unrealised potential for an even greater contribution from the rural economy. CRC presented their reasons why this potential is not being released, and made suggestions as to how these barriers could be tackled. Members then held a discussion raising several issues including:

- **how this strategy is feeding in to the many other strategies designed to improve rural areas**
- **why there is no mention of housing or the impact of migrant workers**
- **concern about the lack of involvement of any elected members, or local authority Chief Executives in CRC's work on rural economies**
- **concern that this work is not pitched around the possible outcomes of the SNR.**

CRC responded that part of their role is to bring the different strategies together in order to give rural issues a louder voice at a national level, and to encourage best practise sharing, for example, where relationships between cities and regions are working well.

Housing does not fall directly in the 'economic pot', and there is other work going on with housing and planning which CRC did not wish to duplicate. Some research work is being done on the impact of migrant workers by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). CRC acknowledged the missing element of elected members in their work and welcomed the opportunity to present their findings to the Board.

Decisions

- **Members noted the presentation.**
- **Members responded positively to the suggestions made in the presentation as to how the LGA and local authorities can work with CRC.**

Item 4 - Board Work Programme

The Chair introduced this item, stressing the importance of the LGA and the Board having regular liaison with certain organisations and groups, particularly with regard to the Sub National Review outcomes. Members discussed additional areas they felt should be included in the table of work including rail capacity, heavy rail, implications of 2012, widening the congestion charging work to include low carbon vehicles, and making more explicit references to the work of other Boards where it overlaps with issues of interest to the Regeneration and Transport Board, eg Environment Board/Rural Commission/ CTS Board.

Decision

- Members noted the report

Actions

- Officers to redraft the table of themed work in light of members' comments.
- Letter to be drafted to Secretary of State the recognition that extra rail capacity is needed, but highlighting that 1,300 extra carriages announced in 2007 rail white paper, will be largely targeted at London and South East and will do little to address growing capacity constraints in other regions.

Item 5.1 – Implementation of the Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR)

Ian Keating introduced this item which updated members on recent developments in relation to the implementation of SNR, and informing members about the two enquiries into RDAs by NAO, and the Business and Enterprise Select Committee.

Decision

- Members noted the update.

Actions

- Forward the government response to the SNR consultation to members when it is published in September.
- Consult office holders on the LGA evidence to the BERR Select Committee Inquiry.

Ian Keating

Item 5.2 - Transport Intervention

Caroline Green updated members on the Local Transport Bill, and other transport work. DfT has been publishing various pieces of guidance for consultation on competition law and community transport which LGA will be responding to, and these responses will be sent to Office holders of the board for approval. Members raised the issue of fuel tax increases.

Decision

- Members noted the update report

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Actions

- **Send guidance consultation responses to office holders**
- **Letter to all councils setting out LGA's key points on the Local Transport Bill asking them to raise the issues with their MPs.**

Caroline Green

Item 5.3 - Concessionary Fares

Caroline Green updated members on concessionary fares. Members asked for a date for the next bus partnership forum meeting. Members also discussed the change of administration of concessionary fares schemes being moved to county councils from district councils, and raised the issue of differing fares across different authority boarders, particularly between Wales and Shropshire.

Decision

- **Members note the report.**

Actions

- **Arrange the next meeting of the bus partnership forum.**
- **A further report setting out more detail on implications of the DfT review of Concessionary fares to be presented at the next meeting of the board.**

Caroline Green

Item 6 - Note of previous meeting

The note of the previous meeting was agreed.