

25 March 2010

Note of Last Meeting – 21 January 2010

Present:

Chairman	Cllr David Sparks (Dudley MDC)
Vice-Chair	
Deputy Chairs	Cllr Richard Knowles (Greater Manchester ITA / Oldham MBC), Prof John Whitelegg (Lancaster City)
Conservative	Cllr Shona Johnstone (Cambridgeshire CC), Cllr Ricky Bower (Arun DC), Cllr Kevin Lynes (Kent CC)
Labour	Cllr Mahroof Hussain (Rotherham MBC), Cllr Mark Dowd (Merseyside Travel / Sefton Council), Cllr Roy Davis (Luton BC)
Liberal Democrat	Cllr Heather Kidd (Shropshire Council),
Apologies	Cllr Jim Harker, Vice-Chair (Northamptonshire CC); Cllr Zulfiqar Ali (Rochdale MBC); Cllr Andrew Carter (Leeds City), Cllr Peter Jackson (Northumberland Council),
Substitutes	Cllr Tony Page (Labour, Reading Council); Cllr Lesley Clarke (Conservative, Wycombe DC); Cllr Jon Ball (Lib Dem, Ealing)
In attendance	LGA Officers: Paul Raynes; Philip Mind; Caroline Green; Steve Skelton; Fatima de Abreu
	Guest Speakers: Rt Hon Sadiq Khan MP, Minister of State for Transport, DfT; Cllr Dave Goddard, Leader, Stockport Council and Mr Graham Wilson, National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA)

1. Discussion with the Minister of State for Transport

The Chairman welcomed The Rt Hon Sadiq Khan MP, Minister for Transport, to the meeting. The Minister thanked members for the invitation, and referred to recent close working between DfT and LGA to manage the impact of adverse weather conditions.

In discussion, members raised the following points:

- The need for investment in rail capacity, especially delivering on pledges to commission new suburban rolling stock outside London;
- The need to update the investment appraisal system to reflect the value of modes other than road;
- The need to clarify the liability position of homeowners and businesses with regard to the recent snowfall and clearing paths;
- The need to take air quality objectives more seriously in planning and appraisal;
- The need to better join-up investment in transport and housing infrastructure;

23 4

- To address concerns about shortfalls in funding for concessionary bus travel, including discrepancies in cross concessionary travel entitlements in cross-border areas.

The Chairman thanked the Minister for his responses, and extended an open invitation to attend the Board at any time. The Minister undertook to respond in writing on several of the issues raised by Members.

Action

- Officers to progress unresolved issues with the DfT

2 Traditional Markets and the Local Economy

Cllr Sparks welcomed Cllr Dave Goddard (Leader, Stockport Council) and Mr Graham Wilson, National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) to the board.

Cllr Goddard highlighted ways in which markets benefit the local economy, and Mr Wilson described the work of NABMA, a Special Interest Group of the LGA, and directed members to resources available on their website, www.nabma.com

Members supported the role of NABMA and the work of the Markets Champion, and discussed issues from their own experience of working with markets, including problems they had experienced with planning and markets management.

The Chair referred to recent LGA Executive discussions on reporting arrangements for LGA Special Interest Groups (SIG). He agreed that there could be benefits to SIGs having a stronger relationship with those boards that led LGA policy in relevant areas. The Chairman thanked the speakers for their presentation.

Decision

- The Board noted the report.

Action

- Officers to finalise NABMA / LGA input into the CLG Markets Working Group.

Steve Skelton

3. Connecting Local Economies

Philip Mind (LGA) summarised the key points in the RTPI's Connecting Local Economies report which the LGA had given support to, and informed members about the Government consultation on the National Policy Statement (NPS) for ports. Broadly, officers felt that the draft NPS failed to integrate national policy for ports with development of inland transport infrastructure and regional and local policy on the development of sub-regional economies.

Members were asked to consider the LGA's proposed response and the following points were made:

23 4

- Members agreed strongly that the NPS approach was not joined-up with other policies and the LGA response should make these points more firmly;
- The submission should use evidenced case studies;
- A reference to pressures on Trust ports to change to leisure ports should be made in the response;
- The potential of Inland waterways to act as freight infrastructure should be addressed.

Decision

- The Board noted the report, and asked for their comments to be reflected in the LGA submission

Action

- Officers to reflect member's comments in the draft response, and to circulate this prior to submission.

Caroline Green / Philip Mind

4. Severe Winter Weather

The Board discussed councils' work during the recent severe winter weather. Officers felt that, in particular, this was reflected in a more positive media story than during the similar conditions in 2009. A "lessons learned" exercise would be undertaken once the threat of further severe weather had passed.

Members said that the impact of the weather on highway maintenance and related budgets was considerable, particularly the increase in pot-holes. The board also discussed the impact of the weather on wider community services, such as adult social care services, and suggested these issues might be addressed in any review. The practice of not gritting pavements and cycle lanes also seemed to be at odds with efforts to get more people to shift to cycling and walking.

Caroline Green said that the Department for Transport had said it would consider applications for funding for repairs to damage caused to roads by the severe weather, but that councils would have to prove that the damage was exceptional, and solely caused by the severe weather.

Decision

- The Board noted the report.

Action

- An updated report, including a proposed approach to undertaking a lessons learned exercise, to be submitted to the March Board.

Caroline Green

5. Lobbying on Investment in Rail Capacity

Members **noted** the report, and asked officers to progress a meeting with the Rail Minister as suggested.

Action

- officers to pursue a meeting with the Rail Minister

Officers

6. Transport Update

Members **noted** the report, and requested further feedback on DfT discussions regarding cross border concessionary travel.

Action

- Officers to progress feedback on DfT discussions regarding cross border concessionary bus travel.

Officers

7. Meeting between Dame Margaret Eaton and Government Ministers – oral feedback

A meeting between Cllr Dame Margaret Eaton, Chairs of regional leaders' boards, Kevin Brennan MP (Minister for Skills) and Rosie Winterton MP (Minister for Regional Economic Development) took place on 1 December to clarify the government's intentions for the roles of local authorities in the new skills funding arrangements. Cllr Kevin Lynes had attended and agreed that the meeting had been positive.

Decision

- The Board noted the report.

8. Sustainable Communities Act Progress Report

Members noted the report and requested copies of the SCA proposal shortlist, which can be found on the LGA website at: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/6820540>

Decision

- The Board noted the report.

9. Oral Feedback from Members

Members received feedback from Cllr Bower on his attendance at the Transport Futures meeting and the Motorists' Forum dinner.

Decision

- The Board noted the discussion.

10. Note of the last Meeting and Decisions Taken

Members agreed the note of the last meeting.

The next meeting will be held at **11am on Thursday 25 March** at Local Government House.

Written response from DfT on several questions raised at the 21 January Regeneration and Transport Board

Is DfT's response to the report determining high-speed links available yet?

Following full consideration of the report submitted by High Speed 2 Ltd in December 2009, the Secretary of State for Transport made a statement to the House of Lords announcing the Government's proposed high speed rail strategy on 11th March. High Speed 2 Ltd's report together with this strategy, can be found on the DfT website at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/highspeedrail/>

Is there any news as to when the expected announcement on Kickstart bids will be?

We are aware that the extended delay in being able to make an announcement is presenting problems for local authorities. However, the Department for Transport remains committed to the Kickstart scheme. We are optimistic that the ongoing discussions about Kickstart are now coming to a satisfactory resolution, and expect to be able to make an announcement about the outcome of the scheme shortly.

Is DfT's response to the consultation regarding shortfalls in funding for concessionary fares available yet?

The Department's response to the concessionary travel consultation on special grant funding was published on 28th January. Further information can be found on the DfT website at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/closed/specialgrantfunding/?view=Standard>

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/buses/concessionary/informationlocalauthorities/funding/>

Has there been any evidence of negligence claims to councils since the meeting took place?

Negligence claims are a matter for each individual authority; there is no central mechanism for monitoring them. Given the different in approach taken by local authorities in handling such claims, there is no clear rationale for gathering such information. Guidance is available on the handling of claims, produced jointly by the UK Roads Board and the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE). The guidance, entitled *Highway Risk and Liability Claims*, 2nd ed, July 2009, is available from the UK Roads Liaison Group website at: www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org.