

Regeneration and Transport Board

25 March 2010

Note of Meeting and Decisions Taken

Present:

Chairman

Cllr David Sparks (Dudley MDC)

Vice-Chair

Cllr Jim Harker, Vice-Chair (Northamptonshire CC)

Deputy Chairs

Cllr Richard Knowles (Greater Manchester ITA / Oldham MBC)

Conservative

Cllr Ricky Bower (Arun DC); Cllr Kevin Lynes (Kent CC); Cllr Peter Jackson (Northumberland Council)

Labour

Cllr Mahroof Hussain (Rotherham MBC); Cllr Mark Dowd (Merseyside Travel / Sefton Council); Cllr Roy Davis (Luton BC)

Liberal Democrat

Cllr Zulfiqar Ali (Rochdale MBC)

Apologies

Prof John Whitelegg, Deputy Chair (Lancaster City); Cllr Shona Johnstone (Cambridgeshire CC); Cllr Andrew Carter (Leeds City); Cllr Heather Kidd (Shropshire Council)

Substitutes

Cllr David Mackintosh (Conservative, Northamptonshire CC)

In attendance

LGA Officers: Paul Raynes; Philip Mind; Caroline Green; Steve Skelton; Fatima de Abreu; Ian Woolford (IDeA)

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting. The Board received copies of the LGA Group briefing on the Budget. Members welcomed the announcement of a £100m package of financial assistance to help repair roads damaged by the recent severe weather, which the LGA had requested in Cllr Sparks' letter to Lord Adonis of 22 January 2010.

1. LGA Group Business Plan

A paper detailing the draft LGA Group Economy & Transport Programme was tabled for members. Cllr Sparks reminded the board of the changes to LGA Group governance arrangements. Paul Raynes summarised the draft plan and invited members' views.

Members agreed that they did not envisage holding fewer meetings in light of the proposed, potentially more extensive, programme plan.

Members discussed the importance of engaging with other Boards on issues of shared interest, such as the combined spatial and economic plans of the new Regional Strategies. Members asked that instances of joint interest be explicitly demonstrated within the Business Plan.

Members discussed key themes within the Programme Plan and made the following points:

- The Economy & Transport Board's continuing interest in strategic planning issues and airports need to be referenced in the programme;

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- The LGA's work on training and employment should recognise the importance of the manufacturing sector to the skills base of many places;
- The LGA's work on the management of surface water and floods should recognise the impact floods can have on local economies and regeneration;
- lobbying on infrastructure funding should remain a priority, and might also incorporate broadband infrastructure, particularly in rural areas;
- lobbying for better support to small and medium enterprises should be included within skills work.

Decision

The Board **noted** the report and asked for their comments to be reflected.

Action

- Officers to reflect members' comments within the LGA Group Economy Programme Plan **LGA Officers**
- Report on future funding of highways maintenance to be on the agenda for the next meeting **Caroline Green**
- Explore joint working with other boards on issues of shared interest **Steven Skelton**

2 Transport Update

Caroline Green notified members that the Salt Cell had been disbanded on 16 March and that officers were now starting to undertake the LGA's lessons learned exercise. There would be a separate DfT review.

Members discussed the board's request for a meeting with Chris Mole MP, Minister for Rail; a date for this had not been forthcoming from DfT. It was noted that the ITA SIG had written to DfT asking the Department to revisit the cancelled orders for diesel rolling stock, and it was **agreed** to send a letter of support on this issue from the Chairman.

Members asked that a paper on Delivering A Sustainable Transport System (DASTS) be brought to the next meeting, and that the LGA lobby DfT to ensure growth areas were able to apply for funding under the Urban Challenge Fund. Members also discussed special grant funding for concessionary fares, and asked for an update on bus subsidy issues at the next meeting.

Decision

- The Board noted the report.

Action

- The Chairman to write to Sadiq Khan MP in support of ITA SIG's request to reinstate the order for diesel carriages. **Caroline Green**
- The Chairman to write to Sadiq Khan MP on the issue of growth areas and the Urban Challenge Fund. **Caroline Green**
- Report on DASTS to be on the agenda for the next meeting. **Caroline Green**
- Report on BSOG to be on the agenda for the next meeting. **Caroline Green**

3. EU Update

Nick Porter updated members on the LGA's work on EU funds for regeneration and said that the EU budget review was expected in July. The Board were notified about a planned joint LGA / Central Government Department seminar on these issues.

Members discussed the UK Government's approach to accessing EU funds in comparison with other member states, as well as regeneration and transport projects in those areas that had received EU funding.

Decision

- The Board noted the report.

4. Oral Feedback from Members

Cllr Sparks informed members of his recent visit to the Humber area, accompanied by Paul Raynes and Caroline Green. The visit had included a presentation by North Lincolnshire, North-East Lincolnshire, Hull City and East Riding Councils, and a tour of the Humber Gateway, focussing in part on the Humber Bridge. The sub-region had a strong energy sector covering both renewables and traditional energy industries.

The four councils of the sub-regions had wanted a story lobbying campaign on the issue of Humber Bridge tolls, which the LGA had encouraged as a good example of councils working together to drive the local economic development agenda. The Chairman had been grateful for this invitation extended by the four councils and especially the leader of North Lincolnshire.

Members referred to forthcoming meetings of outside bodies.

Decision

- The Board noted the report.

5. Draft Itinerary – Board meeting in Cambridge, Monday 24 May 2010

Members discussed the planned meeting and agreed a preference to move this to July.

Decision

- The Board agreed that a meeting in Cambridge would not be feasible on this date.

Action

- Notify Cllr Shona Johnstone of the Board's decision.
- Circulate the agreed alternative date to members.

Paul Raynes
Fatima de Abreu

6. Note of the Last Meeting and Decisions Taken

Members agreed the note of the last meeting, subject to the change of 'suburban' to 'diesel' (Item 1, bullet 1).