

LGA Regeneration & Transport Board

22 July 2010

Note and Decisions of Previous Meeting

Present:

Chairman

Cllr David Sparks OBE (Dudley MDC)

Vice-Chair

Deputy Chairs

Conservative

Cllr Richard Knowles (Greater Manchester ITA / Oldham MBC)
Cllr Shona Johnstone (Cambridgeshire CC); Cllr Andrew Carter (Leeds City); Cllr Peter Jackson (Northumberland Council); 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); Prof John Whitelegg, Deputy Chair (Lancaster City); Cllr Zulfiqar Ali (Rochdale MBC)

Substitutes

Isobel McCall (Liberal Democrat, Milton Keynes Council); Cllr Tony Page (Labour, Reading Council)

In attendance

LGA Officers: Paul Raynes; Philip Mind; Caroline Green; Steve Skelton; Fatima de Abreu; Jonathan Bry (Pteg)

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting.

1. Post Election Lobbying Priorities

LGA Officers summarised the recently announced £6.2billion of in-year savings, and the likely implications for issues that fall within the Board's remit. Members were then invited to comment on the LGA's proposals for lobbying priorities on economy and transport.

The Board discussed the key themes and endorsed the recommendations, asking that officers take forward the following points:

- Further clarification on the reform of Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), future role and funding of the Homes and Communities Agency and the creation of council-led Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) was needed and should include details of:
 - what would happen to the RDA's asset base;
 - who would nominate to their boards; and
 - confirmation of which RDAs would remain as well as clear indications of the LEPs remit;
- Local Authorities and local businesses need to work together to ensure agreements and ensure accountability;

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- Progress on reformation of the bus subsidy system should be accelerated, and the commissioning of bus services by Shire areas need to be addressed;
- Important infrastructure projects remain delayed, pending further government decisions; these decisions must be conveyed quickly, to ensure there are no further, avoidable, hold-ups.
- Detailed clarification on DfT savings will be required;
- Lobbying should continue on redressing disparities in transport infrastructure investment between regions.

Members went on to discuss employment and skills lobbying priorities.

They agreed that:

- Lobbying for a stronger council commissioning role on employment support programmes should continue, to manage the risks associated with the implementation of the new Work Programme, including provider “cherry-picking”;
- Councils should offer to play a commissioning role for Job-Centre Plus services in order to ensure that these match local requirements;
- The new arrangements should take into account the distinct employment support needs of rural communities, including access to jobs and training particularly for people aged 16 to 19 years old;
- They asked for clarification on the funding architecture for adult skills.

Members recognised that existing infrastructure would have to be used in a more efficient and effective way to tackle issues. They agreed that lobbying, rather than focusing on funding, should reinforce the willingness of councils to lead partnership working and share best practice, and asked that emphasis be given to creation of incentives to do this.

Decision

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

Action

- Officers to reflect members’ comments in taking forward lobbying priorities for the Board and provide updates as they arise. **LGA Officers**
- Request a meeting with Norman Baker MP (DfT) and Bus Partnership Forum to discuss reform of bus subsidy system **Caroline Green**

2 Transport Update

Members discussed investment and funding for transport infrastructure projects agreed:

- The importance of maintaining the road networks must be stressed in on-going lobbying

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- Any review of infrastructure investment should examine the remit and role of the Highway Agency, and must seek to ensure better joining up between strategic and local road networks.
- Increased flexibility to move capital budgets between years would deliver more effective investment locally
- A more consistent and simpler approach to transport appraisal would also produce better outcomes from a smaller pot of public money.

It was also noted that the Government will, in 2010, begin consulting on six rail franchises in total.

Decision

- The Board noted the report.

Action

- Officers to reflect members' comments in taking forward lobbying priorities on transport issues. **Caroline Green**

3. LGA Group Business Plan

Paul Raynes highlighted proposed lobbying priorities in the LGA Group Economy and Transport Programme plan. Members were asked to note the inclusion of IDeA led improvement projects, and to note the funding of these may be affected by the recent change of government. In this event, the Business Plan would be revised accordingly.

Decision

- The Board noted the report.

Action

- Updated LGA Group Business Plan on agenda at next meeting. **LGA Officers**

4. Oral Feedback from Members

Cllr Bower informed colleagues of his recent attendance at the Motorist Forum and notified them that the LGA Transport Futures Group meeting would be taking place on 3 June in Edinburgh.

Decision

- The Board noted the update.

5. Board Meeting in Cambridge, Thursday 22 July 2010

Members discussed plans for the next meeting in Cambridge and agreed that most of them would travel the night before. Cllr Johnstone confirmed that members would be returned to the station at the end of the tour.

Decision

- Members agreed the itinerary for the next meeting.

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Action

- Circulate names of local Hotels in Cambridge (as suggested by Cllr Johnstone). **Fatima de Abreu**
- Request a short briefing of the tour agenda for members over lunch / prior to the afternoon session. **Fatima de Abreu**

6. Note of the Last Meeting and Decisions Taken

Members noted and agreed the minute of the last meeting.

The next meeting will be held at **11am on Thursday 22 July** at the address below:

Meeting Room 128, Shire Hall
Cambridgeshire County Council
Castle Hill, Cambridge,
CB3 0AP