

LG Group Annual Conference – Economy and Transport Programme

Summary

This paper updates members on the presence of the Economy and Transport programme at the LG Group Annual Conference.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report.

Action

Officers to take forward any suggested actions.

LG Group Annual Conference – Economy and Transport Programme

Background

1. Over 1200 delegates attended the LG Group Annual Conference, which this year was held in Bournemouth from 6 to 8 July 2010. The Economy and Transport programme held several events during conference in order to help engage members councils in our work and to spread our lobbying messages amongst partners and throughout the sector. This paper provides details of the relevant sessions.

Hidden Talents

2. Cllr Dame Margaret Eaton chaired a plenary session which explored the work that the LGA Group has been doing with partners such as the Prince's Trust and Tomorrow's People on the issue of young people not in education, employment or training. The session began with a video message from His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.
3. There are almost one million young people who are not employed, in education or training. The recession has caused the numbers to rise, but this is not a new issue. The LG Group is calling for an integrated approach that brings together public support for young people at every stage of their journey in to learning and work. This session looked at where this is already happening, and how we can work together across local government to make sure we are getting the best out of Britain's young people.

Concessionary Fares

4. Cllr Jim Harker chaired a workshop session on the future of concessionary bus travel. The session looked at the urgent changes needed in the funding of concessionary bus travel in advance of changes to the administration of the scheme in two-tier areas from April 2011.
5. The session also explored the future reform of bus subsidy. The LG Association is calling for reform which could facilitate a greater degree of control over spending whilst providing greater leverage over the outcomes that subsidy buys in terms of services and control over fares.

Winter Weather

6. Cllr David Sparks chaired a workshop session that explored local resilience to severe weather. At the session delegates discussed councils' experience

of severe winter weather, and how they can seek to meet people's expectations for public service delivery during these periods.

7. The report, *Weathering the storm II - Improving UK resilience to severe winter weather*, was also launched at this session. The report is the result of the LG Association's review of how councils, salt suppliers and other local partners responded to the prolonged period of severe weather that the UK experienced in the winter of 2009/10. The review specifically looked at how all parts of the system can be better prepared, and work better together, in the future.

Supporting SMEs out of the recession

8. Cllr Paul Bettison, LG Regulation's Chairman, chaired a workshop session that explored how councils can help and support local small businesses. Speakers included Bob Neill MP, Parliamentary under Secretary of State for CLG, David Frost, Director General of British Chambers of Commerce and Cllr Mike O'Brien, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Enforcement at Medway Council.
9. The session looked at the importance of SMEs in the local economy, explored the Government's proposed Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to replace Regional Development Agencies, considered how good and effective council regulation can be helpful to businesses and heard how councils and their regulatory services can more effectively support SMEs in their locality.
10. At the workshop Councillor Bettison shared LG Regulation's soon to be launched publication "Lower carbon, lower costs – a resource directory for SMEs.

LGA Assembly motion on roads

11. Surrey County Council submitted a motion to the LG Group General Assembly on 6th July proposing that the LGA lobby to support investment in roads as a means of supporting jobs and economic growth. The motion was remitted to the Regeneration and Transport Board for further discussion. The Transport Update at Item 4 contains further details.

Financial Implications

12. None.

Implications for Wales

13. None.

Contact Officer: Steven Skelton
Phone No: 020 7664 3074
Email: steven.skelton@lga.gov.uk