

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: LGA Regeneration & Transport Board
Date and time: 11am, 22 July 2010
Venue: Shire Hall, Cambridgeshire County Council

Attendance

Chair: Cllr David Sparks (Dudley MBC)
Vice-Chair: Cllr Jim Harker (Northamptonshire CC)
Deputy Chairs: Cllr Richard Knowles (Greater Manchester ITA/Oldham MBC);
Prof John Whitelegg (Lancaster City Council)
Conservative: Cllr Shona Johnstone (Cambridgeshire CC); Cllr Peter Jackson
(Northumberland Council); Cllr Ricky Bower (Arun DC)
Labour: Cllr Mark Dowd (Merseyside Travel / Sefton Council);
Lib Democrat: Cllr Heather Kidd (Shropshire Council); Cllr Zulfiqar Ali (Rochdale
MBC)
Apologies: Cllr Andrew Carter (Leeds City Council); Cllr Kevin Lynes (Kent
CC); Cllr Mahroof Hussain (Rotherham MBC); Cllr Roy Davis
(Luton BC)
**LGA Group
Officers:** Paul Raynes; Philip Mind; Caroline Green; Steven Skelton;
Fatima de Abreu; Sara Williams

Welcome and Introductions

Cllr Sparks (Chairman) welcomed Members and thanked Cllr Johnstone and Cambridgeshire County Council for hosting the meeting.

1. Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)

Members were updated on the LG Group's recent work and wider developments concerning LEPs. Members were also informed about an online seminar arranged for 28 July to inform and develop ideas that would support councils to come forward with proposals for LEPs. In discussion, members made the following points:

- LEPs must be locally driven, flexible in response to local economic geography, and must have a broad remit;
- The LGA should encourage councils to challenge government on those RDA functions that might return to central government set out in paragraph 2 of the Secretary of States' letter and including business support and inward investment;
- Planning and funding for skills needed to be a key part of LEPs' remit;
- Council leadership was necessary to avoid a democratic deficit opening up. In particular, district councils take a strong role in the development of LEPs in two-tier areas;
- Without access to RDA resources and assets LEPs would struggle to make an impact on the ground;
- The LGA should be more explicit about working closely with business representative bodies;

- Where councils need to transfer staff from RDAs to exercise new functions this should be done under TUPE arrangements to minimise the cost to the public, rather than by making staff redundant and then rehiring them;
- the creation of local enterprise partnerships provides an opportunity to re-think economic development, and to consider the development of a low carbon economy.

Decision

- The Board **agreed** that their discussion should be shared with the LG Executive to relay back to Ministers.

Actions

- Reflect members' comments in taking forward lobbying priorities on the introduction of LEPs. **LGA Officers**
- Arrange a meeting to include Cllr Jim Harker as Board representative with Ministers at BIS and CLG – soon as possible after 6 September. **LGA Officers**
- Organise an event on LEPs for Autumn. **Philip Mind / Greg Taylor**
- Bring LEPs forward as a main item for discussion at the next Board meeting in September **Philip Mind**

2. The Work Programme

The Board was updated on the work of the LGA Group in lobbying for an active commissioning role in the new Work Programme. Members made the following comments:

- There was a contradiction between civil servants' stated interest in working in partnership with local government, the government's policy on developing local enterprise partnerships and the proposed centralised commissioning model for the Work Programme;
- A national solution to employment support that did not take account of variation between local labour markets would cost more and would be likely to achieve less;
- Access to employment opportunities also needed to be addressed, and councils were placed to do this;

Decision

The Board **noted** the report.

Actions

Reflect members' comments in taking forward lobbying priorities on the new Work Programme. **LGA Officers**

3. LG Group Revenue Support Grant Top-slice Bid

Following approval at the LG General Assembly, the LGA Regeneration and Transport Board would be reconstituted, from September, as the LG Group Economy and Transport Programme Board. New terms of reference would be agreed. Members felt that this process could have been better conveyed.

Officers also updated members on recent discussions with Government about changes to LG Group funding from Revenue Support Grant top-slice.

Decision

- Members noted the report.

Actions

- Officers to take forward Members' concerns with regard to web access and communication issues. **Steven Skelton**

4. Transport Update

Members discussed recent developments outlined in the accompanying paper, making the following points:

- Cuts to Local Transport Plan funding would have severe impacts to services in rural areas;
- The LG Group should continue to lobby for a national rollout of smartcards as a priority;
- Members who had contributed to *Weathering the Storm II* had not been able to attend the launch of the work as it was held at LG Group Annual Conference. Attendance at annual conference was a matter for Political Group Offices, although officers would, in future, try to accommodate as speakers those members who found themselves in this position.

The Board received a motion, from Surrey County Council on behalf of LG General Assembly, about investment in roads. Cllr Bower was concerned that DASTs had not been included in the update. Members **agreed** that both these issues would receive explicit discussion at the September Board meeting.

Decision

- Members **noted** the updates.

Actions

- LGA Officers to send a response to Surrey CC explaining that the motion will be addressed in greater detail at the meeting in September. **Caroline Green**
- A substantive item on roads to be on the September Board agenda **LGA Officers**

5. LG Group Annual Conference – Economy & Transport Programme

Decision:

- The Board **noted** the report.

6. Oral Feedback from Members

Cllr Bower updated members on his attendance at the Motorist Forum and Transport Futures groups.

7. Decisions and actions from previous meeting

- The Board **agreed** the note of the last meeting.

Cllr Harker (Vice-Chair), on behalf of members and officers, congratulated Cllr Sparks on his election as leader of the Labour Group and thanked him for his leadership and contribution to the work of the Board.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 15 September, Local Government House