

Item 1

Note of Previous Meeting

Title: Economy & Transport Programme Board

Date and time: 24 March 2011, 11am

Venue: Local Government House, Smith Square

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Political Group	Council
Chairman	Peter Box	Labour	Wakefield MDC
Vice Chair	Jim Harker	Conservative	Northamptonshire CC
Deputy Chair	Richard Knowles	Liberal Democrat	Greater Manchester ITA / Oldham MBC
Deputy Chair	Andrew Cooper	Independent	Kirklees MBC
Members	Shona Johnstone	Conservative	Cambridgeshire CC
	Andrew Carter	Conservative	Leeds City
	Kevin Lynes	Conservative	Kent CC
	Norman Hume	Conservative	Essex CC
	Antonia Bance	Labour	Oxford City
	Mark Dowd	Labour	Merseyside Travel / Sefton C
	Roy Davis	Labour	Luton BC
	Heather Kidd	Liberal Democrat	Shropshire Council
	Zulfiqar Ali	Liberal Democrat	Rochdale MBC
Substitutes	Tony Ball	Conservative	Basildon DC
	Tony Page	Labour	Reading Council
Apologies	Philip Atkins	Conservative	Staffordshire CC
In attendance:	Paul Raynes; Caroline Green; Philip Mind; Laura Caton, Kamal Panchal; Cheryl Turner; Fatima de Abreu (LG Group), Jonathan Bray (Pteg Support Unit)		

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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Cllr Box (Chairman) welcomed members to the meeting. Cllr Box said that he had to leave early and Cllr Harker (Vice Chair) agreed to chair any outstanding items.

A copy of the LGG's Briefing of the Budget was tabled for information. Members noted that the LGG's work was reflected in the announcement which confirmed an additional £100m for councils to deal with the damage to roads caused by the severe winter weather. This is on top of the £100m announced in February, meaning councils will have an extra £200m for potholes.

1 Note of previous meeting 20 January 2011

Officers noted Cllr Ball's attendance at the previous meeting and amended the note accordingly.

Officers updated Members that further research was undertaken on streetworks and said that the letter to Norman Baker MP would be sent imminently.

Decision

Members approved the note of the last meeting.

2 Rail Franchising

At the previous meeting, Members said they wanted to discuss a response to the Government's consultation on the new InterCity West Coast franchise.

Officers briefed the Board on the policy context and asked Members for a steer on key messages for the LGG's submission.

In particular Members emphasised that greater involvement of local authorities in decisions on rail investment will ensure they are integrated with plans for local economic growth, employment, land use planning and maximise investment opportunities at the local level. Comments included:

- The Secretary of State should be required to consult all relevant Local Transport Authorities before issuing an invitation to tender for franchise agreements which affect their area;
- Local Transport Authorities should be granted co-signatory status in franchise agreements affecting their area;
- Parts of the franchise that serve predominantly urban or suburban areas wholly within a local transport authority area should be devolved to the relevant local transport authorities;
- Local Transport Authorities and ITAs should have a stronger role in monitoring the performance and delivery of rail services. This commitment should be built into the franchise;

- Once LEPs are more established they could have a role to play in ensuring that rail franchises support wider local economic development, but we need to be pragmatic about the resources available to support this;
- Franchises should be let on the basis of their ability to meet future growth in demand for rail whilst providing value for money to the tax payer. There are a number of challenges in meeting this objective and Members agreed the recommendations set out in the paper.
- Members expressed concerns about the ability to capture the benefits from the McNulty review in the light of the short timescales.

Decision

Members noted the report and agreed the suggested key messages.

Action

- Officers to draft a response to the consultation and circulate to all Board Members for comment; Caroline Green
- Officers to draft a covering letter from the Chair of the Board to the Secretary of State emphasising the key issues. Caroline Green

3 Youth Unemployment

Officers updated Members on the latest situation regarding youth unemployment and noted related announcements in the previous day's Budget.

Members strongly supported the proposal to commission a joint work programme with the Children and Young People's Programme Board and in doing this asked officers to reflect the following points:

- The impact of rising unemployment on young people's life chances, including self-esteem, confidence and National Insurance contributions;
- The challenges young people face in finding and sustaining employment, particularly in rural areas where they can face additional barriers, such as the cost of transport;
- The difficulties with measuring youth unemployment;
- The important role responsible employers can play;
- How young people will be involved in shaping our work.

Members also emphasised the importance of updating our evidence base to reflect the new policy context and ensuring we capture and share the latest good practice examples.

Decision

Members noted the report and agreed the further lobbying actions proposed.

Action

- Officers to prepare a joint Economy and Transport / Children and Young People report setting out further detail on the work programme for consideration at the May Board meetings;
- Officers to arrange a joint meeting between the Economy and Transport and Children and Young People Programme Board Office Holders.

Philip Mind / LG
Group Officers

Laura Caton /
Paul Ogden

4 Regional Growth Fund

Officers said that the outcome of round 1 bids to the Regional Growth Funds would shortly be known. Members noted that the fund was heavily oversubscribed and said that more clarity on the criteria would help to prevent councils from submitting bids which did not qualify. Members also asked officers to analyse the reasons why some bids were unsuccessful and to reflect that learning in future support to councils and advice to government.

Decision

Members noted the update.

Action

- Officers to analyse the reasons why some bids were unsuccessful and to reflect that learning in future support to councils and advice to government.

Philip Mind

5 Adult Skills

Officers outlined the LG Group's current actions in relation to adult skills. This includes making the case for LEPs to have a strategic market making role to ensure that training fits the needs of local employers, working with the 157 Group of Colleges, the Association of Colleges and the British Chambers of Commerce to identify and promote practical approaches to local collaboration on skills and highlighting the importance of strong local links between councils, business and providers of 16 – 19 and post-19 learning provision.

Members highlighted the need to rural proof local skills strategies and noted the need for the LGG's improvement offer to councils on the economy to reflect building effective partnerships with local businesses to identify employers' training needs.

Decision

Members noted the report.

6 Oral Feedback from Members

Members noted the report.

A summary note of issues arising from the Chairman's briefing meeting of the ITA Special Interest Group was tabled for Members' information.

7 Economic outlook

Members noted the report and raised concerns about the impact of big global events, such as the recent earthquake in Japan, on the British economy.

8 Universal Credit and localised Council Tax reliefs

Members noted the report.

9 EU Funding

Officers said that a meeting between Cllr Box, available Office Holders and Baroness Hanham would take place on 6 April to discuss the European Regional Development Fund. *[Post meeting note: this meeting will now take place on 6 June.]*

10 Correspondence with Ministers

Members noted recent correspondence, which included a tabled response from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Bob Neill MP on Concessionary Travel.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 24 May 2011, Local Government House