

Economy and Transport Board

Agenda

Thursday 22 March 2012

Westminster Suite (8th Floor)
Local Government House
Smith Square
London
SW1P 3HZ

To: Members of the Economy and Transport Board
cc: Named officers for briefing purposes

www.local.gov.uk

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Economy and Transport Board
22 March 2012

Notification

The **Economy and Transport Board** meeting will be held on **Thursday 22 March 2012 11.00am** in **Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.**

Please note that there will be a Lead Members' Pre-meeting at 9.15am in Meeting Room 6.

Refreshments will be available upon arrival and lunch will be at 1.00pm.

Apologies

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting, so that a substitute can be arranged and catering numbers adjusted, if necessary.

Labour: Aicha Less: 020 7664 3263 email: aicha.less@local.gov.uk
Conservative: Luke Taylor: 020 7664 3264 email: luke.taylor@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat: Evelyn Mark: 020 7664 3235 email: libdem@local.gov.uk
Independent: Group Office: 020 7664 3224 email: independentgroup@local.gov.uk

Attendance Sheet

Please ensure that you sign the attendance register, which will be available in the meeting room. It is the only record of your presence at the meeting.

Location

A map showing the location of Local Government House is printed on the back cover.

Contact

Virginia Ponton (Tel: 020 7664 3068, email: virginia.ponton@local.gov.uk)

Carers' Allowance

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Economy & Transport Board

Date: 27.10.11

Economy & Transport Board - Membership 2011/2012

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (7)	
Shona Johnstone [Vice-Chair]	Cambridgeshire CC
Andrew Carter	Leeds City
Kevin Lynes	Kent CC
Philip Atkins	Staffordshire CC
Tony Ball	Basildon DC
Neil Clarke	Rushcliffe BC
Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire CC
Substitutes:	
Gillian Brown	Arun DC
Paul Yallop	Worthing BC
Kevin Bentley	Essex CC
Labour (5)	
Peter Box CBE [Chair]	Wakefield MDC
Mark Dowd OBE	Merseyside Travel / Sefton Council
Roy Davis	Luton BC
Claire Kober	Haringey LB
Anne Western	Derbyshire CC
Substitutes:	
Tony Page	Reading Council
Guy Nicholson	Hackney LB
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Roger Symonds [Deputy Chair]	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Richard Knowles	Oldham MBC
Substitutes	
Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
Independent (1)	
Mike Haines [Deputy Chair]	Teignbridge DC
Substitute	
Peter Popple	Scarborough BC

LGA Economy & Transport Board

Attendance 2011-2012

Councillors	08.09.11	17.11.11	19.01.12	22.03.12	24.05.12	19.07.12
Conservative Group						
Shona Johnstone	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Andrew Carter	No	Yes	No			
Kevin Lynes	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Philip Atkins	Yes	No	Yes			
Tony Ball	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Neil Clarke	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Martin Tett	N/a	Yes	Yes			
Labour Group						
Peter Box CBE	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Mark Dowd OBE	Yes	Yes	No			
Roy Davis	Yes	No	Yes			
Claire Kober	Yes	No	No			
Anne Western	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Lib Dem Group						
Roger Symonds	No	Yes	Yes			
Richard Knowles	No	No	Phone			
Independent						
Mike Haines	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Substitutes						
Colin Rosenstiel	Yes					
Tony Page		Yes	Yes			
Guy Nicholson		Yes	Yes			
Heather Kidd		Yes				
Kevin Bentley			Yes			

Agenda

Economy and Transport Board

22 March 2012

11.00am – 13.00pm

Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House

	Item	Page	Time
Part 1			
1.	Note of previous meeting	3	11.00am
2.	Transport Devolution LGA/DfT Pilot Work	7	11.05am
3.	LGA development offer for councils – driving local economic growth	15	11.35am
4.	Chair of ADEPT, Matthew Lugg to present	21	12.05pm
5.	Post Offices	23	12.20pm
Part 2 INFORMATION			12.50pm
6.	Hidden Talents: supporting the most disengaged young people	29	
7.	High Streets	35	
8.	Local Growth Campaign	61	
9.	Transport Update	81	

Note of Meeting 19 January 2012

Title: Economy & Transport Board
Date and time: 19 January 2012, 10.30am
Venue: Local Government House

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Political Group	Council
Chairman	Peter Box CBE	Labour	Wakefield MDC
Vice Chair	Shona Johnstone	Conservative	Cambridgeshire CC
Deputy Chair	Mike Haines	Independent	Teignbridge DC
Deputy Chair	Roger Symonds	Liberal Democrat	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Members	Kevin Lynes	Conservative	Kent CC
	Tony Ball	Conservative	Basildon DC
	Neil Clarke	Conservative	Rushcliffe BC
	Martin Tett	Conservative	Buckinghamshire CC
	Philip Atkins	Conservative	Staffordshire
	Anne Western	Labour	Derbyshire CC
	Roy Davis	Labour	Luton BC
Via telephone conference	Richard Knowles	Liberal Democrat	Oldham MBC
Substitutes	Kevin Bentley	Conservative	Essex CC
	Tony Page	Labour	Reading Council
	Guy Nicholson	Labour	Hackney LB
Apologies	Andrew Carter	Conservative	Leeds City
	Mark Dowd OBE	Labour	Merseyside Travel / Sefton C
	Roy Davis	Labour	Luton BC
	Claire Kober	Labour	Haringey LB
Substitutes	Heather Kidd	Liberal Democrat	Shropshire Council
	Gillian Brown	Conservative	Arun DC
	Paul Yallop	Conservative	Worthing BC
	Peter Popple	Independent	Scarborough BC

In attendance: Ian Hughes; Philip Mind; Eamon Lally; Charles Loft; Rachael Donaldson; Nick Porter; Virginia Ponton (LGA).

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
	<p>The Chair welcomed all, introduced Kevin Bentley as a substitute member and thanked all for agreeing to a different format for the Board meeting. The Chair and members wished Richard Knowles well, who attended via telephone conference.</p>	
1	Note of the previous meeting	
	<p>The note of the previous meeting was agreed as a correct record.</p>	
2	LGA Business Plan	
	<p>Members discussed the draft Business Plan agreeing the following feedback to send to the LGA Executive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members welcomed the opportunity to influence the business plan at an early stage, which is a clear advance on the past years, and the open approach to setting corporate priorities.• There is a need for more cross-cutting activities across the LGA and between Boards. The Economy and Transport Board has developed a joint programme with the Children and Young People Board on young people and work and with the European and International Board on EU regeneration funding. These projects have been at the Boards' own initiative but they exemplify how Board work needs to be joined up to concentrate on big issues. The development of clear corporate priorities is a welcome development and a discussion on how Board work can be joined up in these areas is welcomed in order to further these aims and ensure that work is accountable through the Board structures.• There was concern that there were too many work themes within the corporate priorities. In the "Growth Section", for example, there is a need for a clear measurement of sub-themes against final corporate priorities and the ability of the LGA to deliver. The Local Growth Campaign will clarify where councils want the LGA to target its work, which is likely to be in three areas: promoting councils' leadership of economic development; removing continued barriers to local growth (such as the centralisation of decision making on transport); and the devolution of new powers (such as skills).• The proposal for a "growth and prosperity" corporate theme is welcomed, but there would be more popular support if the employment issue could be addressed in the title. Thus it is suggested it is renamed "growth, jobs and prosperity".	

Action

- **Feedback to be sent to the LGA Executive**

Officers**3 Economy and Transport updates**

Under Appendix C Cllr Tony Page and Ian Hughes attended the 2012 Games Task and Finish Group. There is an expectation that the LGA, through the Economy and Transport Board, needs to engage more and disseminate more information on transport issues, such as during the Torch Relay.

Members noted the report.

Action

- **Officers to draft a paper for the Executive on transport issues during the 2012 Games.**

Officers**4 Climate Change Adaptation/Resilience**

Kamal introduced the item, highlighting that there would be a Government announcement on the risks of climate change and that this work aims to mainstream the risks of climate change into the usual risk management themes. Jessica David is the LGA Adviser for this work (jessica.david@local.gov.uk / 0207 664 3175)

Members discussed the need to:

- ensure local government is proactive on climate change. Kamal added that proactive work is being undertaken through the Environment and Housing Board and that some councils are particularly proactive on the Green Deal and in creating green jobs.
- understand where the Environment Agency has resources for the National Adaptation Programme. Kamal said that there is funding for advice, information and development days for members and officers and that Defra is ensuring all departments are joined up on this work.
- build an evidence base on the potential hindrance and cost to economic growth from the impacts of climate change.
- join up local plans and offsets.
- ensure serious conversations over the impacts of climate change are happening. There was concern that local government is limited in how it can respond to the effects.

The Chair highlighted that the LGA is working with the Environment Agency on the work programme as per paragraph 11 and that members' comments would be fed into the work programme.

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Item 2

Transport Devolution LGA/DfT Pilot Work

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This paper sets out the proposed approach for taking forward the LGA/DfT decentralisation programme.

Recommendation

To agree the approach to be taken in joint working with the DfT.

Action

Officers to take forward as directed by members.

Contact officer: Eamon Lally
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Transport Devolution LGA/DfT pilot work

Background

1. The Chairman of the LGA together with the Chair and Lead Members of the Economy and Transport Board met with Justine Greening MP, Secretary of State for Transport, and DfT officials on 1 February to discuss and agree a programme of work to reflect an enhanced partnership approach to transport.
2. The DfT is supportive of our position that transport is central to economic development and the department is keen to explore with councils how, through devolution and adjustments to its own practices, it can support growth in local economies.
3. Four areas emerged which can form the basis of a virtual real-time programme that will help frame the approach to and delivery of devolution:
 - 3.1. Place offer for investors. The Town Hall debates have been consistent in identifying transport issues as a key influencer of inward investment and increasing employment - good infrastructure is attractive to investors, but processes that delay decision-making can be a deterrent.
 - 3.2. Community budgets. Transport has been conspicuously absent from the discussions on community budgets, even though it is a central factor in determining outcomes for vulnerable groups.
 - 3.3. Highways Agency processes. The Town Hall events have flagged the challenges presented by Highways Agency processes, particularly when local authorities are trying to move quickly to secure investment.
 - 3.4. Capacity building. The LGA's peer and leadership work across a range of corporate and service areas have supported councils in significant improvement. Transport is an area that has not featured significantly in this work. The move to greater devolution means that there is a case for developing this capacity building offer.

Taking the work forward

4. In the meeting with the Secretary of State members explored options for taking forward the issues raised. Aspects of the approach discussed during the meeting included:

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- 4.1. working with a number of authorities, as virtual pilots, in order to understand how devolution of transport decision-making and delivery can be implemented practically to maximise its economic and social impact
- 4.2. galvanising sector support to ensure that local authorities can benefit for the knowledge and best practice in the sector
- 4.3. identifying and prosecuting some early successes.

Working with local authorities

- 5. Through working with councils we can look at innovative approaches for bringing funding streams together as well as the powers and flexibilities that might benefit economic social and environmental outcomes. For these virtual pilots to be effective, it is useful that we work with councils that are already in the process of seeking devolved powers or will be working with recent decisions to generate better economic outcomes in their areas. A number of authorities have been keen to explore the options for devolution through pilot work with the DfT:

Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire has expressed a definite interest in acting as a pilot area and the County Council is developing a proposal that would centre on the recently–approved new station at Chesterton. This will be called Cambridge Science Park and will connect rail links to London, Norwich, Birmingham and Kings Lynn with the guided busway to St Ives and Huntingdon, while car and cycle parking will also be provided. Part of the point of the pilot will be that schemes such as this, which are very beneficial locally and often nationally, take so long to bring forward. In this case, efforts have been made over 20 years to no avail. The "in-principle" approval has now been given for this project, but only because the County Council has agreed to borrow the funds up front and at risk (through prudential borrowing) and then recoup them from the train operating companies' additional revenues. The decision on whether this can happen still lies entirely with DfT. Even this current phase of the work has taken a year to get to this point and there are still further discussions to go. This sort of a proposal could have happened much more quickly if the Council had more power in franchising (as has been floated by Government as part of the potential "City Deal" packages) and so had the ability to take measured risks and judge these against the potential rewards. The other element of the pilot will be things that flow from the station – i.e. how TMA part 6 powers and other elements can help enhance the benefits of having a new station.

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Cornwall

Cornwall is keen to explore further through the pilot work a range of opportunities to increase its role in transport decision-making and delivery. These include:

Detrunking – Cornwall has been lobbying DfT to take on responsibility for the A30 and A38 trunk roads in the county. The Council has demonstrated that it can secure alternative funding sources that the Highways Agency (HA) does not have access to and thereby improve the trunk roads where HA cannot, e.g. £4 million investment at A30 Chiverton Cross to release development constraints. The Minister has already allowed the Council to fund the development of the design for the dualling of the A30 at Temple which had been suspended by DfT/HA. Detrunking would allow the Council to be more in control of the constraints on economic growth in Cornwall and allow the schemes to progress more quickly by removing the need to adopt HA procedures in addition to the councils' own. The ability to deliver schemes more quickly would allow the Council to respond more quickly to funding opportunities as they arise which could bring significant economic benefits to the Cornish Economy.

Rail Franchising – There have already been informal discussions around the possibility of Cornwall commissioning rail services on branch lines in the county. The forthcoming award of the Great Western franchise need not in our view impose an absolute deadline on resolving this issue as the franchise could allow for an early break in respect of these services. Cornwall Council has a record of successful support for improvements to rail services in the county, having invested £30 million in the Cornish railway infrastructure in the 10 years to 2009 and supported the Truro – Falmouth Improvement that has seen a 98% growth in patronage in the three years since completion.

Bus – a commitment on DfT's part to support examination by Cornwall of how bus subsidies and Quality Contracts or other innovations can be used to improve bus services and integrate bus and rail. Cornwall Council has submitted a bid through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund to deliver a quality bus network in Central Cornwall, and this could be used as an opportunity to consider how these improvements are implemented. Cornwall has started to investigate opportunities for improving the delivery of bus services for the needs of the customer.

Staffordshire

Staffordshire County Council has expressed an interest to be involved as a pilot area. The county and district councils have been successful in attracting substantial inward investment into the local area for example, Jaguar Land Rovers recent investment in the i54 site. Staffordshire County Council and Wolverhampton are investing nearly £40 million in local transport infrastructure improvements to secure this investment. The themes of the pilot work with the DfT provide an opportunity to explore options for improving the responsiveness to inward investors through greater local involvement in transport decision-making across road, bus and rail.

Improvements to road infrastructure have been an important aspect of recent successes in Staffordshire. However, through this pilot work we would also like to explore the potential for improving access to jobs through greater local bus franchising and also greater involvement in rail - particularly in relation to the capacity for new rail stations to transform local areas and improve access to development sites.

The Council is also keen to explore how it can work more effectively with the Highways Agency to prioritise economic development in Staffordshire.

6. In addition, **Leeds City Region, Greater Manchester** and **Durham** are also interested in exploring how they can support this development through their involvement as virtual pilots.

Capacity building

Leadership and strategic decision-making

7. Members discussed with the Secretary of State the potential need for capacity building in local authorities and DfT to accompany the devolution programme. There is scope for the LGA to support strategic leaders in dealing with devolution issues. Some areas of potential devolution, such as rail, will move councils into new areas. Support for leadership, decision-making and partnership working will be key.
8. At Item 3 on this agenda there is a report on the development support we can offer councils. Support with strategic leadership around transport can be incorporated through that route.

Support for authorities in rail franchising

9. In the area of rail we are already seeing that some authorities are sensing that they are not being fully engaged in the debate. Our work with councils is showing that there is a need for a support/improvement offer from LGA, designed to facilitate the exchange of best practice in navigating the rail franchising process. The existence of such an offer should help to raise ambition across the sector and empower councils to take advantage of a vital opportunity which if missed is unlikely to come round for a generation, if at all.
10. Our support here can be through intercession with the DfT and through the further development and sharing of best practice through an officer network.

Early successes

11. We are also keen to demonstrate that the closer working with the DfT can result in some quick wins. From the perspective of the LGA the first of these should be the Traffic Management Act Part 6.

Traffic Management Act Part 6

12. Giving councils outside of London the powers to enforce the measures in the Traffic Management Act Part 6 (banned turns, bus lanes, cycle lanes, box junctions etc) is in itself in line with localist principles but would also enhance other measures. We have made the point to DfT that giving councils the power to enforce cycle lanes seems likely to enhance the benefits of giving them the money to promote cycling under Local Sustainable Transport Fund projects and TMA bus lane powers would enhance any measure to give councils greater say in the provision of local bus services etc. As such these measures would help embed the concept of transport as a key place-shaping tool for councils.
13. We have consulted with the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and they have expertise in regulation-making which we can offer to DfT as a counter to the department's lack of resource to devote to this issue. TAG is confident that the regulations could be made in a way that would allow for piloting rather than a 'big-bang' introduction.
14. This is an area where we could move quickly to support the DfT and those authorities which want to progress with Part 6. We are providing currently working with the sector to provide DfT with additional evidence of the likely beneficial impacts of implementation.

Other potential areas

Concessionary fares

15. Concessionary fares has also been raised as an area where local authorities would like to work with government to improve the benefit of the scheme to local communities. The LGA's position is that concessionary fares should be devolved for local determination by councils. Councils are already beginning to explore options and councils are keen to innovate in this area, working with their communities to generate solutions. The Board may wish to comment on further work in this area.
16. Through our work with the DfT there are opportunities for options to devolve bus subsidies and there is the scope to include this within our pilot programme.

Conclusion and next steps

17. Following the agreement with the DfT for targeted pilot work with authorities, we have established a number of councils who would be keen to participate in virtual pilots. The pilot councils discussed above are already somewhat down the road in developing and/or having their plans agreed. Therefore these councils provide a great opportunity for the LGA to work with them to help identify and address barriers and also to look at implementation and the lessons that can be learnt and shared with others.
18. Through the work with authorities we will be able to address the key areas discussed with the Secretary of State, namely: the place offer; innovative use of budgets; capacity building; better working with the Highways Agency. We will also be able to take forward some quick wins and generate the debate on some particularly difficult issues such as bus subsidy and concessionary fares.
19. Members may wish to discuss the pilots and offer other innovative pilots from councils.
20. Once we have finalised our list of pilots and the areas we want to pursue we will formalise these with the DfT and firm up the milestones.

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Item 3

LGA development support for councils - driving local economic growth

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This paper highlights the current LGA activity on development support for councils on local economic growth and seeks members' views as to how well the proposed 2012/13 programme fits with local need. It also seeks support from members in terms of leading the programme.

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

1. Discuss the wide range of LGA support and identify gaps.
2. Agree in principle that each member of the Board identifies key successes in their areas that could be used as 'case studies' in support of the programme.

Action

Officers to action as directed by members.

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Item 3

LGA development support for councils - driving local economic growth

Background

1. One consistent message from the LGA's Growth Campaign and Town Hall debates is that councils are "just getting on with it". Through the decades and successive national governments councils have shown great interest and invested heavily in the economic welfare of the communities and businesses they serve. They have done this and continue to do this despite economic development not ever having been a statutory duty.
2. We have heard and read about several high profile examples of councils working together, with their neighbours, across tiers, with the private sector, central government departments and its agencies to support private sector growth projects. We have heard of successes in Staffordshire with JLR engine plant investment; the work in East Kent in response to Pfizer's withdrawal, Greater Manchester's investment framework; the innovation story in Cambridgeshire and the innovative partnership in Leeds City Region with the University of Huddersfield and manufacturing businesses.
3. Clearly many councils are already doing a great deal, and all have prioritised economic challenges. However, circumstances, such as the nature of the economic challenges faced as well as council capacity, and cultures affect the ability of councils to lead on creating conditions for growth.
4. Support on economic growth is a reputational issue for councils as well as the LGA. For councils, both the private sector and central government regard local government, through working in partnerships such as Local Enterprise Partnerships, as being key to creating the conditions for private sector economic growth and job creation. There is no one else at the local or sub-regional level to do this.
5. From a national perspective, it is vital that the local authority sector is able to demonstrate that it can lead on creating the necessary conditions. The risk to places that do not show the right leadership is that investment by-passes those places, or that the best outcomes for local people is not achieved. It is therefore important for the LGA that it provides councils with the relevant support on leadership skills, capacity and good practice information.

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6. In addition to strong leadership skills, councils that are successful in attracting investment have shown a whole council approach to driving growth and regeneration. There are a wide range of policy and service areas that can impact on the area's potential for economic growth and support the local business community – some of these, such as transport and connectivity, are covered in other Board papers.
7. Throughout the Town Hall debates, local politicians have very often described leadership as the ability to take calculated risks. Whether it's a risk to spend local resources on supporting a local growth programme or service, undertaking prudential borrowing to develop a critical road intersection, supporting investment in a neighbouring borough for the benefit of the whole sub-region, or taking leading a business delegation overseas to attract inward investment – there are difficult decisions to take which impact on councils' reputation.

LGA programme of development

8. This paper highlights the importance of development support for councils on driving local economic growth as well as current LGA activity. The paper also seeks to test members' views as to how well a proposed future programme of training and support in economic development by the LGA fits with local needs and to secure Board member support in leading the programme.

Current LGA activity

9. The LGA has already been supporting councils on helping them to lead on creating the conditions for private sector growth. In 2011/12, the LGA has:
 - 9.1. supported elected members and officers in developing a shared understanding of what local leadership on driving growth looks like through focused workshops and the Local Growth campaign events and website. There have also been dedicated Leadership Academies on strategic planning and councillor focused advice on development economics and viability.
 - 9.2. supported council officers through online communities of practice, alerting them to new opportunities, sharing challenges and learning and networking
 - 9.3. directly supported individual councils on getting their local plans in place, and on joint plan-making. Complementary support has included advice on using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL); New Homes Bonus, borrowing and public sector assets to make things happen.

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- 9.4. provided peer based challenge and support. As part of the LGA's Taking the Lead offer to the sector, all local authorities are entitled to a corporate peer challenge delivered at a time of their choosing. The scope is agreed with the council so that it is tailored to their local needs and requirements and looks at priority areas. Some authorities are choosing to focus their peer challenge on local growth and the economy peer, seeking peer-based reflection on the soundness of economic strategies and approaches.
- 9.5. As part of a joint initiative, joined with the British Property Federation (BPF) and Local Partnerships in conducting a programme of studies where three LGA member councils would work with senior BPF developers and local private sector partners, to carry out a detailed analysis of the local barriers to growth faced in its locality and identify appropriate solutions.
10. Demand across the range of sector-led support appears to be increasing and it is important that the LGA continues to develop its support to reflect council needs and that the 'offer' is coherent and maximises the outcomes from a limited budget. The 'offer' also needs to run alongside our Local Growth campaign. For 2012/13, the LGA is looking to build on the support it already provides. Key outputs earmarked to support the business plan are:
- 10.1. further roll out of member development workshops and support – focussing on their leadership role, and working with the private sector.
- 10.2. in parallel to member development activities, support to local authority officers, which will focus on using new techniques for promoting growth, financing and resourcing opportunities; supporting councils and lead members on their leadership role.
- 10.3. continuing to offer a flexible approach to peer challenges. For example, one county council recently invited an LGA peer-team to act as a 'peer sounding board' to inform the next stage of their economic growth work.
- 10.4. further development of the Capital & Asset Pathfinder Programme (CAP). The LGA, working closely with DCLG, have funded support to 26 councils under (CAP). The government and councils involved are now keen to shift the initial emphasis, which was initially to save money by rationalising the use of land and property used by the public sector for service delivery purposes, towards initiatives that deliver economic growth as well as drive deficit reduction.

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10.5. learn from and take forward the joint LGA/ BPF pilots.

Promoting the work of the LGA and of councils ‘just getting on with it’

11. The work of the LGA in supporting local economic growth priorities is likely to be broader than perhaps many councils are aware of. Thus, we need to refresh our communication in this area.
12. Case studies can provide a powerful and practical way to communicate what is possible given a particular scenario. They can also be very inspirational. Whilst we know of a good many stories of ‘councils getting on with it’ it is important that for a development programme that the LGA can promote a wide range of examples and stories so that there is greater resonance for participants of the development programme. Case studies work best in focused workshops – such as the member and officer development ones that the LGA currently runs. A good starting point to increasing the pool of local ‘stories’ are from the councils that are represented on the Economy and Transport Board.

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Item 4

ADEPT

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

A pothole review, aimed at developing best practice in dealing with pot holes, was announced by Norman Baker MP, the Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Transport, in April 2011. The government funded review has been undertaken through the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) on behalf of DfT.

Matthew Lugg, Director of Environment and Transport at Leicestershire County Council and Chair of ADEPT was seconded to the DfT to chair the review. The review is nearing completion and a final draft report has been produced. The final report is expected to be published later this month.

Mathew Lugg is attending the Board meeting to provide an outline of the review's findings and recommendations.

Recommendation

Members are invited to comment on the review.

Action

Officers to action as directed by members.

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Item 5

Post offices

Purpose of report

This report updates the Board on the strategic engagement between the post office and a group of 25 councils (listed at the end of the report).

Summary

Norman Lamb MP, Minister for Postal Affairs and Paula Vennells, Managing Director Post Office Limited met with representatives of 25 council leaders who are having a conversation about becoming a “strategic partner” with Post Office Limited (POL). The meeting was chaired by Cllr Peter Box and follows a meeting early in the New Year with the then Minister Ed Davey MP.

Recommendation

The Board are invited to comment on the update.

Action

Officers to take forward members’ views.

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Post offices

1. Representatives of 25 “pilot” councils met with officials from POL and the Business, Innovation and Skills Department (BIS) to discuss the strategic engagement taking place between them.
2. The meeting heard from Norman Lamb MP, the new Minister for Postal Affairs and Paula Vennells the Managing Director of Post Office Limited.
3. They delivered a number of key messages:
 - 3.1. firstly that there is a commitment to no further post office closures but to the modernisation of the network into “mains” and post office “locals”. The post office locals model will see the service move from a post office counter to the till point and extended opening hours
 - 3.2. secondly that the post office is keen to become a strategic partner of local government and to have a dialogue with local councils. This is a conversation about both network modernisation and a commercial relationship
 - 3.3. thirdly that the post office sees itself as having a key enabling role in helping local people access online channels for public services – “assisted digital” in the jargon.
4. The discussions between the post office and the 25 councils are at an early stage – in some cases councils have had a single preliminary meeting with representatives of the post office.
5. A number of themes are being explored including co-location with libraries and other community services, customer contact where councils are rationalising their own customer contact points and enabling local people to undertake transactions for council’s services across the post office counter.
6. The LGA will re-convene the forum before the summer break to explore the emerging themes in more detail and will bring together the learning in the autumn.

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The 25 “pilot” councils

**Barnsley
Birmingham
Devon
Doncaster
Durham
East Devon
Essex
Hammersmith & Fulham
Hertfordshire
Hounslow
Kent
Kingston Upon Thames
Lancashire
Lancaster
Leeds
Liverpool
Maidstone
Neath Port Talbot
Northumberland
Oxfordshire
Reading
Rotherham
Ryedale
Sheffield
Wakefield**

Item 6

Hidden Talents: supporting the most disengaged young people

Purpose of report

To update members on the progress of the youth unemployment campaign.

Summary

Members have discussed youth unemployment at recent Board meetings.

The LGA will publish an interim report in the week before the Board meeting which focuses on the young people who are most disengaged from work and learning. A Youth Summit was held on 14 February to hear young people's views on how the system could be improved and to test some key ideas.

This report asks members to comment on how the campaign should continue over the course of the Spring leading up to the LGA annual conference, where a final report with final recommendations for tackling youth disengagement will be presented.

Recommendation

That members discuss the issues explored in this paper, and consider next steps.

Action

To be taken forward by officers as directed by members.

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Hidden Talents: supporting the most disengaged young people

1. Lead Members of the Economy and Transport Board and Children and Young People Board met last year to set out the direction of LGA activity on youth unemployment.
2. This report outlines the LGA's work to date and introduces planned activity for the coming months. In particular, members are asked to comment on the proposals set out in paragraph 16.

Background

3. Over the last 18 months the policy and funding architecture for young people has shifted in response to Government strategy, against a background of rising youth unemployment. Although there is a debate about the statistics, over 1 million young people are not participating in any form of work and learning.
4. Whilst the headline unemployment numbers have been a focus for the media, the UK has had a poor track record in engaging young people in work and learning that pre-dates the recession – youth unemployment levels in the UK (20 per cent in July 2011) are much higher than other West European countries like Germany (8.1 per cent) and Netherlands (6.9 per cent).
5. Government has announced a range of measures on the education, training and employment of young people. Some reforms give local authorities opportunities to shape the public service offer to young people – the move to academies for example. Others reinforce the role of local authorities to provide attractive education and training choices, for example; councils will have a central role in raising the compulsory participation age from 16 to 18; and the Early Intervention Grant will enable councils to plan and deliver targeted services for the most vulnerable young people.
6. As a result there is debate as to whether councils have the tools they need to realise the aspirations of young people in their area. Despite substantial reform, the policy landscape still feels fragmented, with a host of centrally run initiatives administered in relative isolation to other services.
7. In particular, there is huge scope to improve the overall offer to the most disengaged young people that have not engaged in work or learning for long-periods. Services currently are not doing enough for this group of most marginalised young people – or those at risk of falling into it - which is growing at a faster rate than any other.

LGA Activity

8. Against this background, two pieces of research have been commissioned to include:
 - 8.1 assessment of the trends in youth unemployment to get underneath the one million headline figure, to explore the common characteristics, and to look at the future opportunities for young people in the economy – focusing on those young people most isolated from work and learning
 - 8.2 analysis of the various number of schemes designed to help young people reengage in work and learning, the budgets of these schemes, and the role and opportunities for influence of local authorities
9. To test emerging analysis and ideas, a Youth Summit was held jointly with the British Youth Council, where lead members tested emerging ideas with over 40 young people.
10. The work has consulted with local authorities throughout, including a specific call for evidence.

Update on findings

11. This research has informed the preparation of the interim report – copies will be circulated to the Board before the meeting. All information and research will be available on the Economy and Transport pages of the LGA website at:
www.local.gov.uk/economy-and-transport
12. The outline of the argument in the interim report is to give councils and local partners the leading role in helping re-engage the most disengaged young people in work and learning through a community budgeting approach. In more detail:
 - 12.1. Beneath the headline statistics are a group of increasingly disengaged young people, which has continued to increase through periods of boom and bust.
 - 12.2. This group are being impacted on particularly hard by recession, as opportunities are squeezed for all groups and all ages.
 - 12.3. They tend to have a more complex set of circumstances that can act as barriers to participating in work and learning.
 - 12.4. National schemes and funding schemes are not effectively reaching this group, instead being accessed by young people closer to the employment market.

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- 12.5. The education and skills system is not equipping young people with skills for local jobs, and the progression routes for young people not going to university are unclear and insufficient.
- 12.6. Local authorities - who are responsible for welfare of all children, and particularly the most vulnerable – do not have sufficient levers to bring funding together around the most disengaged.
- 12.7. Local authorities – who are responsible for helping create quality post-16 options as part of the raising of the compulsory participation age – are not enabled to bring together clear progression routes for young people in their area, and to link it with the needs of local economies.

LGA recommendations

13. This analysis has led to the development of a range of recommendations, including a call for:

- 13.1. a community budgeting approach bringing together a range of funding around the most disengaged young people
- 13.2. a role for local partners in commissioning school, further education, and apprenticeship provision to enable the use of more innovative ways to tackle the issues and deliver better results.

14. And an offer of:

- 14.1. local early identification of those at risk of becoming long-term disengaged
- 14.2. the involvement of young people in the design and delivery of all schemes in their area, including national ones like Job Centre Plus
- 14.3. the creation of clear progression routes for young people not going to university, with employers playing a central role
- 14.4. the development of new ways of commissioning, which build on the government's public sector reforms
- 14.5. integration with the early intervention approaches enabled by the Early Intervention Grant.

Next steps

15. An interim report on our findings to date (19 March) will be available online at <http://www.local.gov.uk/economy-and-transport>

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16. The following activity is planned to follow report launch:

- 16.1. a summit to bring together leading figures from government and other partners to discuss the LGA proposals and seek a way forward
- 16.2. a series of political and official engagement with government, through letters and followed by meetings
- 16.3. further research – the National Foundation of Educational Research (NFER) are undertaking some further work looking at the mismatch between skills provision and employment opportunities nationally, and in a handful of selected local areas
- 16.4. a series of press and campaign tools, including focuses on: the most disengaged young people, quangos, skills for jobs, graduate unemployment
- 16.5. leading up to LGA annual conference, and presentation of final recommendations.

17. Members are asked to comment on the proposed next steps.

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22 March 2012

Item 7

High Streets

Purpose

To update members on the progress with the High Streets activity, and to seek a steer on next steps.

Summary

The LGA has continued to engage within the debate on the future of our town centres leading up to, and in the aftermath, of the Portas review – including the presentation of the alternative high street.

A government response including detail on the proposals it wishes to take forward – which might be from within or outside the Portas review – is due sometime in the Spring.

Recommendation

That members discuss the issues explored in this paper, and consider next steps.

Action

To be taken forward by officers as directed by Members.

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22 March 2012

Item 7

High streets

Background

1. It is a tough time for the traditional town centre, which find themselves under pressure from a wide range of powerful economic, technological and social trends; such as online and out-of-town shopping.
2. This is affecting retail spend on high streets – as a share of total retail spend, high street sales are anticipated to decline further from 43 per cent in 2009 to 40 per cent by 2014.
3. In response to these trends David Cameron asked Mary Portas to undertake a review of the high street – this review has now reported, with the government response expected in the Spring.
4. The LGA continues to input at all stages, including a programme of activity related to high streets: response to Portas Review, presentation of the alternative high street, and the betting shops campaign.

Local Government Association input and activity

5. Alongside government's high street activity, the LGA has launched a number of initiatives that have been well covered in press, including:
 - 5.1. Alternative High Street and Local Growth campaign (attached).
Focusing on the need to look beyond retail, to develop town centres as places of community, culture and entertainment, alongside shopping, as well as making recommendations to government for removing the structural barriers to make it happen – including planning reform, devolution of transport and infrastructure funding, and roll out of local economic development tools.
 - 5.2. This was reinforced by the LGA/ComRes public opinion poll, which showed communities favoured a range of local amenities on their high street (74 per cent) and local shops selling local produce (79 per cent) rather than supermarkets (47 per cent).
 - 5.3. Planning reform, including betting shops campaign. Complimentary activity, led by the Environment and Housing Board, argues for greater planning powers for councils and communities to tackle the clustering of certain type of shops.

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- 5.4. This was also reinforced by the LGA/ComRes public opinion poll, which showed more the two-thirds (68 per cent) of people are against rules that allow for instance, banks to become betting shops, without planning permission.
6. Government is moving relatively quickly with its high street work, in summary:
- 6.1. The Mary Portas review reported to the Prime Minister in December 2011, since then Grant Shapps has become the responsible Minister within government.
- 6.2. DCLG is preparing a formal response, including details of measures it proposes to take forward – which may or may not have been included in the Portas Review – likely sometime before the end of March.
- 6.3. Government has launched a £1 million Portas Pilot scheme, inviting up to 12 towns to pilot innovative approaches to revitalising town centres.
7. The LGA has continued to engage with the government's high street work, which has included: response to the Mary Portas Review; contributing to 'national town team' to support those areas applying to become Portas Pilots; contributing to government response to Portas Review; and working closely with the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM) and the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA).
8. The LGA's contribution has been reflected in this activity, particularly around the need to focus on local partnerships as the solution and the need give councils greater tools to engage partners, such as landlords.
9. There are some risks to maintain a watching brief on, for instance Portas' recommendation on local parking strategies and to deregulate market traders on the high street.

Next steps

10. We seek member steer and comment on the next stages of the high street activity, which we propose to include:
- 10.1. Integration into Local Growth Campaign. Continue to push for the structural tools to enable local partnerships to adapt town centres to shifting consumer trends in their area - for instance including planning reform, infrastructure, transport and economic development tools.

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- 10.2. Watching brief on government policy. Continue work with government to ensure its response to the Portas Review is positive and takes forward sensible suggestions; also maintain support for those areas looking to become Portas Pilots.
- 10.3. Support for councils. Develop tools for councils to exchange knowledge and develop peer to peer learning in terms of town centre adaptation. Also support councils to further engage the private sector in town centre development, jointly with organisations like Business in the Community.
- 10.4. Engagement with partners. Working closely with ATCM and NABMA (an LGA Special Interest Group) to identify joint opportunities to promote high street, including National Markets Day on 23 June – 8 July 2012.

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Alternative high street

rethinking the town centre challenge





Cardiff Castle
Castell Caerdydd



National Museum
Amgueddfa G.Cymru



Civic Centre
Canolfan Dinesig



St David's Hall
Neuadd Dewi Sant



Shopping Centre
Canolfan - Siopa



Toilets
Toiledau

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Towards the alternative high street – introduction



Councillor Peter Box CBE,
Chair of LGA
Economy and
Transport Board

For better or for worse, our town centres are changing; responding to powerful socio-economic trends driving shifts in retail behaviour.

Locally, there is consensus among town centre partners that new approaches are needed to ensure high streets adapt successfully, the merits of which are drawn out by the contributions to this report.

Nationally, Mary Portas, like most other national commentators, has pointed to plummeting retail spend in town centres as the beginning of the end for high streets.

But it is crucial that we begin to think more positively about the challenge facing our town centres. Retail is not the future, and town centres are adapting. We have to go back to the start, moving beyond retail, and refocusing places as centres of social, community and cultural economies.

This is our vision for the alternative high street.

And public opinion is with us. Almost 8 in 10 of people see local producers as important to the future success of their high street. 74 per cent want to see local amenities, and almost 70 per cent restaurants and cafes. Retail is still important, but as part of a wider community offer.¹

For decades, however, there has been a national focus on assessing town centre performance in terms of sales which has led to national policy solutions focusing on retail, without sufficient acknowledgement of all the services that matter to communities.

Rather than empower communities to take ownership of their town centre, successive administrations have implemented small scale national schemes that address short term issues. For instance in the last few years government has announced a fund for high streets during the recession, a fund for high streets during the riots, and a fund for high streets following the Portas review.

This is not enough. Looking ahead we must consider how all partners and services can join-up to deliver a local vision for a town centre, nationally, government must focus on removing the structural barriers that prevent this happening, giving local partners genuine power to tackle local issues.

So we must adapt our high streets, building on each place's opportunities for growth and

¹ LGA/ComRes Public Opinion Poll, Clustering and the Future of the High Street, February 2012

reconnecting with individuals as communities and not just consumers. This will be crucial for developing a new town centre offer, and one that out-of-town centres and the Internet struggle to match.

As central and well connected public spaces, the innovative use of town centres can attract and engage people, supporting businesses to thrive, and create valuable retail demand in the process.

Councils are beginning to seize on these opportunities, thinking creatively about how everything fits together into a single offer to town centres – this can include anything, from shops, housing, restaurants, pubs, cinemas, and bowling alleys, to homes, hotels, museums, churches, green space, transport, safety.

Local partnership is crucial. Every high street involves a complex and vast range of interest parties, including retailers, residents, businesses, landlords, public services, the community and the voluntary sector. All partners must sign-up to the single local vision if it is to be achieved.

Councils need to play their part, showing local leadership and bringing together partners to understand and meet the demands of the community. It is not easy, as local government faces the toughest financial settlement in recent history, but councils are up for it.

In this pamphlet, we build on our submission to the Portas review with a collection of articles from contributors that are beginning to look at some what can be achieved to support high streets.

We want open a wider discussion with government, businesses and councils around a new vision for the high street, one that gives communities genuine power to remodel their place so that it responds and reflects their aspirations and needs.

As a start, we want to consider:

- Extending our understanding of the performance of high streets beyond retail figures to take into account community satisfaction
- Embedding measures to support high streets within the wider locally accountable economic ambition; and encouraging all government departments and their agencies to proactively participate in local strategies with the flexibility to pool resources around a strategy.
- Giving partners and the communities they serve the planning power to decide what their local high street should look like and what it should offer, for instance in tackling clustering
- Enabling communities to have greater control over the local transport offer, for instance giving local councils a commissioning role over bus services.
- Making high streets transparent and offer tools to better involve the full range of partners in local strategies, including absent landlords.

Rethinking the challenge

Councillor Clarence Barrett, Chair of LGA Urban Commission, considers the retail bias in how national commentators tend to measure high street performance, and argues for a complete rethink which focuses on the wishes and satisfaction of local communities.

All indications suggest 2012 is going to be a tough year for the traditional town centre. Mary Portas, like many other commentators, has predicted further gloom for high street retailers. A wide range of national figures reinforce this.

But national understandings of the real level of threat to the high street are limited because town centres are places of great complexity and variety; no two are the same, and because there is a heavy bias in favour of understanding value on retail performance alone.

Nevertheless, most high streets will have to adapt to declining retail spend

National assessments on the performance of high streets struggle to get beyond the bland analysis of retail performance indicators. And most of these indicators point to a decline in spending on town centres, for instance:

- As a share of total retail spend, high street sales are anticipated to decline further from 43 per cent in 2009 to 40 per cent in 2014
- The number of town centre stores fell by

almost 15,000 between 2000 and 2009, with further estimates of a further 10,000 losses up to 2011, a further decline in store numbers of 6.4 per cent expected between 2009 and 2011

- Estimates suggest retail floor space in town centres has fallen from 27 million square feet (or 9 per cent) between 2000-2009, out of town retail space has risen by 50 million square feet over the same period. A further loss of 8 per cent is expected from 2009 – 2014
- High street footfall, that is the number of people on the high street, has fallen by over 10 per cent during the past three years
- Whilst difficult to measure, assessments indicate increases in the number of empty shops. One assessment suggests a rise in vacancy rates as a proportion of floor space has been from 6.4 per cent in 2006, to 11 per cent in 2010, anticipated to rise to over 12 per cent by 2013
- This has all led to a surplus of in-town secondary retail floor space, much of which is no longer fit for purpose ²

But drivers for change play out differently across places

There are a wide range of factors that drive change on the high streets, some of them macro-economic, some of them national, and some of them local. But all play out in places in different ways. These factors include:

² Figures from 'Understanding High Street Performance', GENECON LLP (December 2011)

- Economic trends – people have less disposable income during the recession, consumer spending is expected to contract by 1.2 per cent in 2011 remaining flat in 2012
- Social and technological trends – people are choosing to spend more of their money online, the UK is Europe's leading e-retail economy, with sales expected to have reached £68.2 billion in 2011, an annual increase of 16 per cent ³
- Spatial factors – the format of a linear high street offering a variety of shops is becoming less popular, with people preferring a services to be clustered around central spaces; whether it be in-town, edge-of-town, or out-of-town

We have to value high streets differently

We have to move beyond sales figures to understand the alternative uses preferred by local communities. In reality, town centres are there to serve and reflect the interests of local communities, which are rarely limited to shopping.

High streets can often have a highly emotional resonance with people that cannot always be captured. This has been demonstrated by the riot clean up and by concerns over the homogenisation of high streets; communities care about their high streets.

Data and understanding on other aspects of high street vitality – such as assessments of the level of cultural, community, social and leisure activity, and the value of offices, public space and residential use – are impossible to assess nationally.

As locally accountable agencies, councils understand the value of the service mix in town centres, and where the opportunities for growth are. Local authorities continue to

try and ensure the service mix creates retail demand in key areas, but more important is to ensure the overall offer responds to community need.

There might be a few universal indicators that could help gauge this; such as analysis of footfall. But ultimately the complexity of services and partners requires a local understanding of the needs and challenges, a local understanding of the solutions, and so a local plan to deliver them.

Plymouth City Council with its Business Improvement District partners rebranded its Summer Festival through a website, a leafleting campaign, and bus, radio and print advertising. Research suggested an additional 300,000 day visits were made to the town centre.

Whitstable in Kent has become famous for its Oyster Festival and a growing food culture, this identity is being driven by the community, which is keen to ensure that any further development contributes to that local culture.

Camden Town Unlimited has stimulated a 35 per cent increase in visitor numbers preparing and delivering the reshaping of Camden's streetscape.

³ Interactive Media in Retail Group, statistics available at <http://www.imrg.org>

Planning our way to growth



Councillor David Parsons,
Chair of LGA
Environment
and Housing
Board, explores
the extent to which
councils are able

to plan and shape the offer on the high street, and how to give councils greater say over services in their town centre.

How far does the planning system provide elected representatives with the flexibility to respond to community concerns, to encourage investment into the area and stimulate local growth? The answer it would seem is – it depends.

High streets have been taken over by takeaways, off-licences, betting shops and late night bars. Oversaturation of whatever type is often a concern to local residents. We hear of example after example of councils that have been unable to respond to community concerns about clustering or change of use of buildings on their high streets.

Where change of use is permitted by national rules it does not require explicit planning permission by the local authority; furthermore the only tools available to councils to restrict this are blunt and expensive to use. This not only removes the opportunity for proper consideration to be given to the application which can often mean important design and

access statements to demonstrate how crime prevention measures have been considered in the design of a proposal but it means that elected councillors are powerless to respond to community concerns.

We do not want to see a situation where every change of use requires planning permission. We do however think it is reasonable that where there are community concerns that the local authority should have a route to consider the issue through the proper planning process.

We're therefore offering Government a suite of options, which include a simple opportunity to streamline and reform existing planning powers. Options include a more localist approach to the use classes order and improved planning tools. For example, current tools including article 4 directions are costly, time-consuming and difficult to implement. The aim is to allow councils to shape their high streets as their communities wish, and deliver vibrant high streets with a diverse range of different businesses that contribute to the local community as well as robust economic growth.

Local authorities can genuinely transform the lives of local people and are able to make changes happen instantly. Councils are seeking to take the lead and deliver diverse high streets that local people want, and now is the time to give them the means to do so.

West Lancashire County Council

is leading an ambitious regeneration plan looking to deliver a new central core for the town. Following detailed consultation with residents and businesses, the plan will focus on combining retail, leisure, residential, recreation, civic uses, education, community and office development into a comprehensive town centre offer.

South Shropshire District Council

would not grant planning permission to for a large out of town supermarket outside of Ludlow; instead only allowing the development within the town, and only if the building fit the town's character as a thriving market.

Cheshire West and Chester Council

transformed an unused city centre site into a quality green space, St Martin's park, offers a multi-purpose open air public area for visitors to relax, a multi-purpose space for events, and bus connections in and out of the area.



The stage is set



Councillor Flick Rea, Chair of LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport Board, describes the merits of revitalising some

town centres as spaces of cultural and community interaction and development.

The town centre can transform into almost anything; a gallery, a theatre, a gastronomic hotspot, a music venue, a market, a walking trail, a sports centre, a playground, a winter wonderland, even a fairground.

As central and well connected public spaces, the innovative use of town centres can attract and engage people, creating valuable retail demand in the process.

As far back as medieval times street and food markets, fairs and street entertainment, outdoor plays and music performances were an intrinsic part of a vibrant high street and community spirit. We need to go back to our roots.

Of course at the same time we need to embrace and adapt technological and social trends so we don't fossilise our high streets. Entrepreneurial local authorities such as York Council are leading the way by offering free wi-fi across the city.

The UK's rich history and culture is the main reason why tourism is the UK's fifth largest industry. Local government possess the

innovation and passion to create cultural hubs which reflect local historical and community need, to serve both as preserves of our national cultural heritage as well as catalysts to drive up tourism in our local areas.

We need to paint a new picture, where a diverse offer creates a new experience for visitors. How about putting a café in the old Woolworths shop. Across the road a museum revealing the local heritage and history. Next door is an open air theatre showcasing the local talent and a short stroll down the high street leads you to a local playground opposite to the local library hub with its study areas, community training courses and pop up cinema.

Already many local authorities are planning festivities, street parties and outdoor screenings to help local communities and visitors celebrate our culture and heritage this summer.

This is at the heart of what local authorities want to achieve for their town centres. With all local areas facing unprecedented funding pressures, local authorities are thinking of new and innovative ways to fund cultural and heritage services.

We can make our high streets enchanting places full to the brim with exciting things to see and do. With the world's eyes on us for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and Queen's Diamond Jubilee it is a once in a lifetime opportunity to do this, and increase tourist numbers and revenue for years to come.

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council's three seasons cultural programme sits at the heart of its ambitions for revitalising the High Street, the town centre became a stage for school performances, cultural sites became free exhibition centres, and street entertainment and specialist markets were ran and marketed on key trading days.

Chorley Borough Council's Midsummer Arts Festival attracts audiences of 4,000 people from the surrounding area to its high quality arts and cultural events in the town centre throughout July and August.

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council's new Cultural Quarter brings together a library, lifelong learning centre, and centre for cultural events into an attractive new building close to the city's main shopping streets.

Stroud District Council launched a regeneration initiative turning vacant premises into temporary art galleries, promoting local artists, improving the street scene, and helping landlords market their properties.



Using heritage

Steven Bee and Brian Human, Historic Towns Forum, suggest how local areas can use their heritage to reinvigorate high streets, and how that heritage itself illustrates the scale of adaption our town centres have already undergone.

A majority of our high streets lie within the historic districts of towns and cities and include a wealth of buildings and spaces that are an important part of our heritage.

Our heritage is one of the main reason visitors come to Britain; and the Taking Part Survey shows that here more than two thirds of adults and children visit heritage sites each year.

These interests can be capitalised on through the conservation of high street heritage as part of a diverse commercial and cultural centre. High streets have always been and must continue to be, more than just places for shopping and adapt to the needs of multiple uses and users.

The alignment, connections, uses and built form of each high street often reflects hundreds of years of sequential remodelling, as services adapt to serve the needs of the community.

Public and private buildings have shaped and been shaped by shifting high street activities – some early places remain, but few have escaped modification. This evidence allows us to interpret, through the changes: periods of prosperity and poverty; the dominant trades at different times; and fashions of architecture and consumption.

This evidence of the changing offer on our high streets can help us plan and design future changes. We cannot think of the current high street challenge as the end, but as part of a historical adaption.

And we must encourage and ensure the long-term success of the high street, while allowing users the opportunity to follow the story of its evolution.

Norwich City Council has helped the city become one of the top ten retail centres in the UK by developing a shopping experience mixing chains and independent stores in a variety of cultural and modern settings. The city's approach is encapsulated by the Castle Mall, which hosts a wide range of shops near the historic Norman Castle, the home to a popular museum.

Chorley Borough Council has launched a town Heritage Trail, offering visitors a step-by-step guide highlighting significant historic monuments around the town centre.

Sheffield City Council's tram network provides fast, reliable services connecting shops with the welcoming rail station, park and ride sites, and attractions such as the Cathedral, sports and entertainment venues.

Safer high streets and a vibrant night-time economy



Councillor Mehboob Kahn, Chair of LGA Safer and Stronger Communities Board, describes the importance of strong partnership

working in developing a safe and vibrant night-time offer, and some of the tools used to achieve this.

A thriving night-life can bring benefits and dangers. At its best it draws in people, fosters a sense of community, and stimulates the local economy. At its worst it can create a no-go area where the only open venues are betting shops, pubs and takeaways; with alcohol-fuelled violence and bottles, or worse, littering the streets.



I think many communities would recognise their high street falls somewhere in between. Many local authorities, including those awarded the coveted Purple Flag status, are taking positive steps to reap the benefits of a thriving night time economy; a fact recently recognised by Government when it delegated further powers to councils through the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act.

So what would the ideal high street look like, and how would it ensure safety for residents and visitors through a managed night-time economy?

Imagine a pedestrianised boulevard, strategically lit to emphasise the assorted cafes, restaurants and late-night shops. Community wardens patrol the area, greeting people as they go. There is no litter, graffiti or vandalised street furniture. A street entertainer performs in the street, attracting passers by. Although the place is bustling, there is no disorder and a tangible sense of community.

How has this idyll been created? It is clearly utopian in presentation, but all the key levers to creating it are available now to local authorities and the partnerships they support. It has all begun at the planning stage. Councils, businesses and the community collectively articulate their vision for the night-time economy and implement a strategy to achieve it.

Cambridge City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council

has worked with private and education partners to develop a set of specific guides that detail what the city has to offer for: City Centre, Day and Night, Markets, Shopping, and Transport.

London Borough of Lewisham set up the Love Clean Streets project offering a virtual means communities to report incidents of town centre enviro-crime, the number of reported incidents dropped significantly as a result, with complaints about graffiti dropping by 30 per cent.

The council has identified trouble spots and designed their planning and licensing policies around them, such as regulating the numbers of premises selling alcohol. Effective use of licensing conditions to manage queues and safety through the provision of door supervisors means that opportunities for conflict have been minimised. Opening hours have also been managed to stagger the closing times, allowing for crowds to disperse before they grow too large.

The locally-elected Police and Crime Commissioner has been elected on a mandate that included commitments to a safe night-time economy and has used the police element of the late night levy to fund taxi-marshals to provide safe journeys home; street pastors to build a sense of community; and police support officers to convey a feeling of security.

Retailers were rapidly convinced of the benefits of working with the council, police authority and community groups to benefit from a renewed focus on the night time economy. A few independent shops have been encouraged to open late, to create an evening experience that goes beyond provision of food and alcohol. Fast-food shops have been approached by their community safety partnership and encouraged to provide extra staff to cope with increased demand around 11pm.

A sense of shared values has been established through the partnership work, resulting in behaviour that respects the area and a sense of community pride. Alongside the street scene picture, this makes for better longer term sustainability than could be achieved by pure capital investment.

Local government, together with its partners have many of the ingredients to manage a thriving and safe night time economy. It takes leadership and commitment, but above all local partners need the freedom to get on and get things done.

London Borough of Wandsworth

is improving town centre street scene by limiting the times when trade waste may be left on public footways.

Brighton and Hove City Council

has installed a range of large communal containers in the city centre to prevent black sacks being put out, which had led to rubbish being strewn across the streets.

In the market

Krys Zasada, National Association of British Market Authorities, explores how markets can revitalise high streets as centres of flexible local retailing, while providing space for retail entrepreneurs of the future to innovate and develop.

Markets have existed for millennia and, historically, ensured the residents of towns and cities had access to affordable fresh food and other commodities. They have also acted as a key source of local retail innovation. Most commentators agree:

“...the public market hall paved the way for the modern chain store (or multiple shop as it was called in Britain), the department store, the ‘supermarket’, and, eventually, the shopping mall.”

Markets were the retail nursery that created many of today’s multi-national retailers e.g. TESCO (Hackney, East London), Marks & Spencer (Leeds), and Morrison’s (Bradford). This innovation is still being displayed today through, for example, Farmers’, Christmas and Night markets.

There are hundreds of markets occupying prominent High Street locations. Many of them make significant contributions to High Street viability. Leicester Market, winner of Britain’s Favourite Market award in 2009 and 2010, comprises over two hundred covered stalls boasting an eclectic range of goods. The Market has existed at the heart of the city centre since 1300 and is still a major shopping destination.

There is growing interest among Britain’s new entrepreneurs for trading opportunities on retail markets, and many markets are creating imaginative support packages to help the fledgling businesses develop. In addition to their commercial value, markets can play a critical role in moving towards a more flexible, locally responsive community, cultural and shopping experience. We need to move flexible, local retailing innovation to the centre of our renewed focus for the alternative high street.

Bolton Market introduced the first Electronic Market loyalty Card in November 2011, responding to the calls from the community. Locals like them as it rewards customer loyalty and is a form of saving for many. Retailers like the intelligence that can be gained from loyalty cards. A 6 month trial has been funded by the Council at nil cost to the traders. To date: 600 cards have been issued, with an 85 per cent registration rate; 25 per cent repeated weekly usage rate.

Manchester Markets have allocated funds for a promotional campaign to attract potential new traders. Targeting and supporting young people with innovative ideas for new market businesses. A wide range of support is offered, including promotional, advice and mentoring, and even an apprenticeship scheme.

Back to the start, the 21st century agora



Photo: Sophie Ballinger

Julian Dobson, Chief Executive, Urban Pollinators, considers the challenge faced by our high streets in the context of their

change over time, arguing that we have to learn from the past in creating town centres as spaces for social exchange

Towns and cities have always been centres of trade and exchange. But it's no coincidence that the great towns and cities of the world have always been about much more than that.

When Plato wrote his Republic, one of the earliest and most influential attempts to describe a just society, the Athenian town centre was far more than a marketplace. The agora, as it was known, was a centre of religious worship, civic and judicial activity, sport and leisure.

More than that, it was a place to meet, to debate and discuss the issues of the day, and to exercise democracy (limited as it was by our standards). It was a social space.

Last year I coordinated a submission to the Portas Review calling for a '21st century agora' approach to our town centres. As the Danish architect Jan Gehl puts it, we should go into town because we want to go

into town – not just because that is where the shops are. We need to rediscover the sociability, diversity and democracy of urban space.

That need is becoming acute because the model of the high street as shopping centre that has been dominant for the last century and a half is approaching its end in many of our town centres. Out-of-town shopping, the accessibility and convenience of supermarkets, and the inexorable rise of internet shopping have created a massive oversupply of town centre retail space. In Rochdale, even McDonald's is leaving the high street.

This trend will not be reversed by better customer service, cheaper parking, or retail makeovers. The story of the recession was a story of the failures of companies: Woolworths, Borders, Zavvi and more: 173 medium to large retailers with more than 18,500 stores were affected from 2007 to 2011, according to the Centre for Retail Research.

The story of the next few years will be the shrinking town centre presence of healthy and profitable companies, not just the failure of unprofitable ones. Property agents Jones Lang LaSalle predict that 25 per cent of all retail leases will expire by 2013 and 50 per cent by 2015. As chains 'rightsize' into prime locations, the gaps in our high streets will increase.

So the question for the town teams proposed by Mary Portas will not just be how to stop the rot. It will be how to rethink the purpose of place in an internet age, and an age in which demographic and economic trends are combining to reduce disposable income.

This is where going back to the idea of the agora offers us a way forward. A 21st century agora is not a case of turning the clock back, but of learning from the past to inform the future.

What would create that mix of activities now that would make town centres sociable, lively places to visit? How could they become places where business and civic life grow, where people engage in society and not just in consumption?

As our submission to the Portas Review showed, there is no shortage of ideas and experience. The challenge is to apply this thinking to town centres as a whole, and to do so in ways that involve the whole community.

Bristol City Council has launched a virtual High sTweet, which uses social media to promote the city's vast range of local independent shops, and advertise council grants and other business development opportunities.

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's Business Vitality Grants for new town centre business aim to drive a better mix of independent shops and an improved offer for shoppers.



What next for the high street?

This is a critical time for town centres; local partners need to be brave in setting out a vision, but need the tools to pursue this path.

Too much attention has been paid to the high street challenge, and not enough on the opportunities for growth.

Yes, nationally, retail spending in town centres is declining. But this plays out differently in each place, and within this decline are opportunities to develop a more coherent offer that serves not only consumers, but communities.

We need to completely rethink how all services engage in the high street as the centres of social and economic activity.

Individual initiatives will not address the challenge, instead local and central government must collectively consider and remove the structural barriers that prevent town centres from adapting to economic and social change.

Mary Portas began to explore how the alternative high street might be created.

But we want to go further, handing communities genuine power to reshape and revitalise services in their town centre.







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LGA Local Growth Campaign: supporting council's ambition for local economic growth

Purpose of report

For noting and discussion.

Summary

This report updates the Board on progress of the LGA's Local Growth Campaign.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to comment on the paper.

Action

Officers to build the Board's comments into the campaign plan.

Contact officer: Ian Hughes
Position: Head of Programmes
Phone no: 020 7664 3101
E-mail: ian.hughes@local.gov.uk

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LGA Local Growth Campaign: supporting council's ambition for local economic growth

Background

1. The Board began a Local Growth Campaign in November 2011 to develop an LGA lobbying approach to promote the role of councils driving economic growth. Since we began, we have held events in London, Leeds, Wakefield, Cambridge, Gateshead, with further debates in Devon and Lincolnshire scheduled in the next few weeks. The output from the campaign will be our own Green Paper on growth which sets out the local government offer on growth, identifies continuing barriers to local economic development, and highlights what additional powers local government requires to effectively support national recovery.
2. The Campaign has now passed the half-way point in the series of Town Hall debates taking place across the country. Last month, the Campaign published its interim findings, reporting the main themes that have emerged from the debates and the on-line essays which have been presented by council leaders, think tanks and business leaders, amongst others. This report is **attached** for members' comment.

Messages from the campaign meetings

3. We are "just doing it": One consistent message heard at the Town Hall debates from civic leaders is that councils are 'just doing it'. Numerous example of council innovation (contained in the interim report) have been presented on-line and in debates. Councils continue to drive economic development and have been doing so for over a century. Thus one emerging objective from the local growth campaign is to highlight councils' proud tradition, and ongoing work in economic development.
4. Skills: At both the Birmingham and Cambridge debates, the link between skills, education and innovation were discussed in depth. In Cambridge, we examined the role of higher education in driving business innovation at a local level. Given that our work in this area seems weaker than other developed nations, work needs to undertaken to develop HE/local economic development collaboration.
5. Transport: In Leeds the discussion focused on how transport can be used as an instrument of growth. Evidence was heard from colleagues in Scotland and the Netherlands about how transport programmes were devolved and assessed under economic and employment objectives, enabling transport systems to be a

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lever for growth. The transport paper at Item 2 on this Board's agenda provides more detail.

6. Spatial development: Our work with IPPR North (Institute for Public Policy Research), Centre for Cities and the Town Hall debate in Gateshead showed clearly that local economies are different and neighbouring towns such as York and Barnsley have very different needs. This challenges nationally driven programmes (for example, from the DWP) where a locally developed community budget for regeneration may be more effective.

Essays and think tank work

7. In addition to the Town Hall debates, the LGA has invited think pieces from business and civic leaders, and has also offered councils a space to showcase the many good practice examples of councils work in economic development. For access to these and find out more about the Local Growth Campaign please see: <http://www.local.gov.uk/localgrowth>.
8. Work from think tanks, including Locals, IPPR and SQW are expected in the next month.

A challenge from young people

9. One of the original objectives of the Local Growth Campaign, was that any proposals developed had to be tested by young people themselves. On 14 February Cllr Peter Box, Cllr Shona Johnstone and Cllr David Simmonds (Chair, Children and Young People Board) met 40 young people assembled from all over the country at a Youth Summit (organised by LGA and British Youth Council). Youth unemployment is an issue of critical concern to councils. After listening to the concerns and ideas of young people themselves, which included earlier provision of careers advice and greater involvement of employers in schools, members presented some of the LGA's emerging ideas for tackling youth participation in a 'Dragon's Den' format. Of the various ideas presented, the one for giving young people a greater say over all funding and services in their area got the most support.
10. Feedback from young people will be built into the heart of the LGA's work moving forward. A report will be published in the upcoming weeks. This is a joint initiative between the Economy and Transport Board and the Children and Young People Board.

From debate to proposals

11. We have three further Town Hall debates scheduled: London (13 March), Devon and Lincolnshire. Thus we need to start drafting our Green Paper on

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growth which will be delivered at the conference. This Board is the last “open debate” on issues as a draft report will be brought to the next meeting in May.

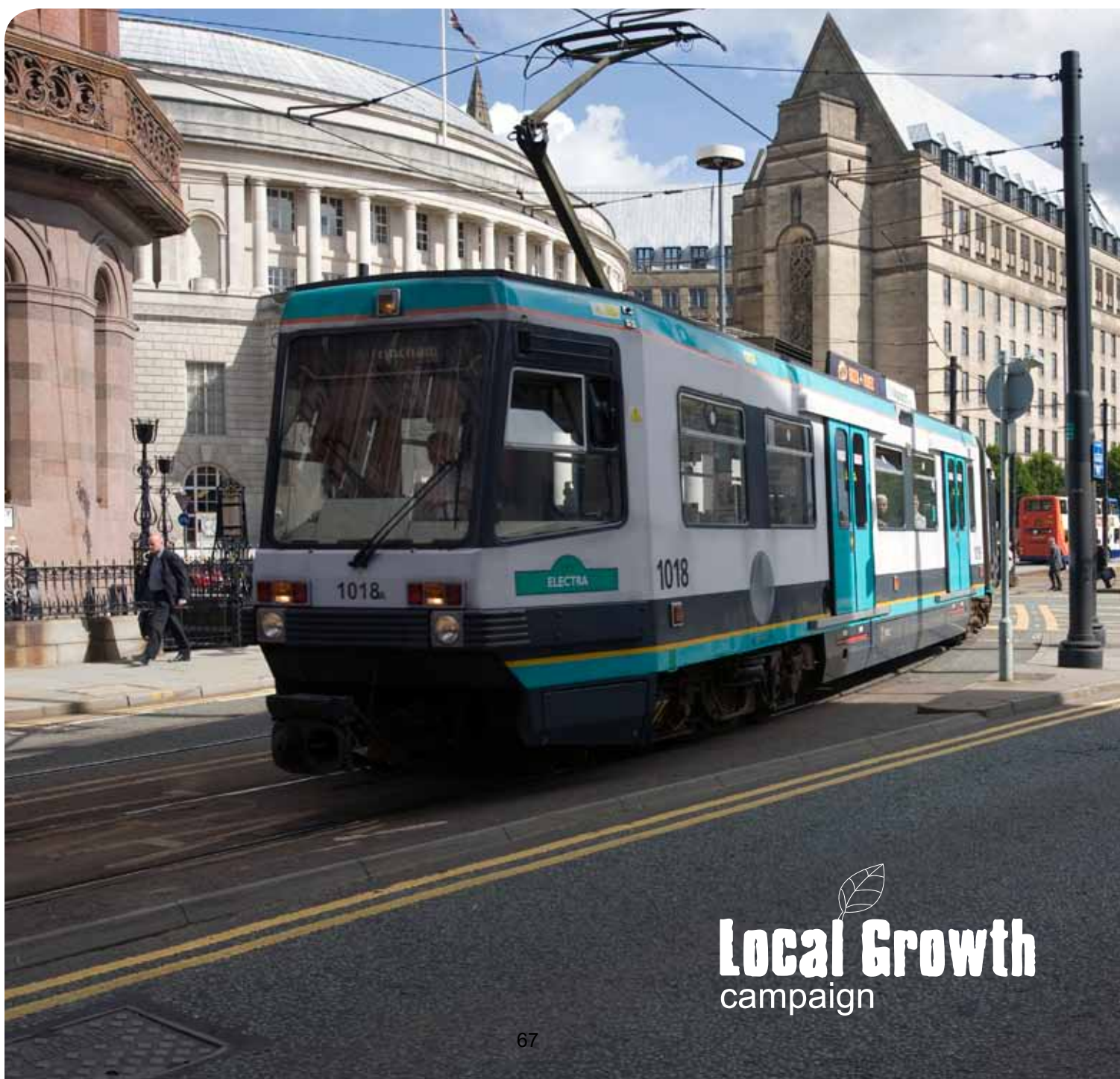
12. Thus members may wish to raise any issues of concern and additional topics which need to be addressed in the campaign. Members may also wish to raise issues from the appended interim report.

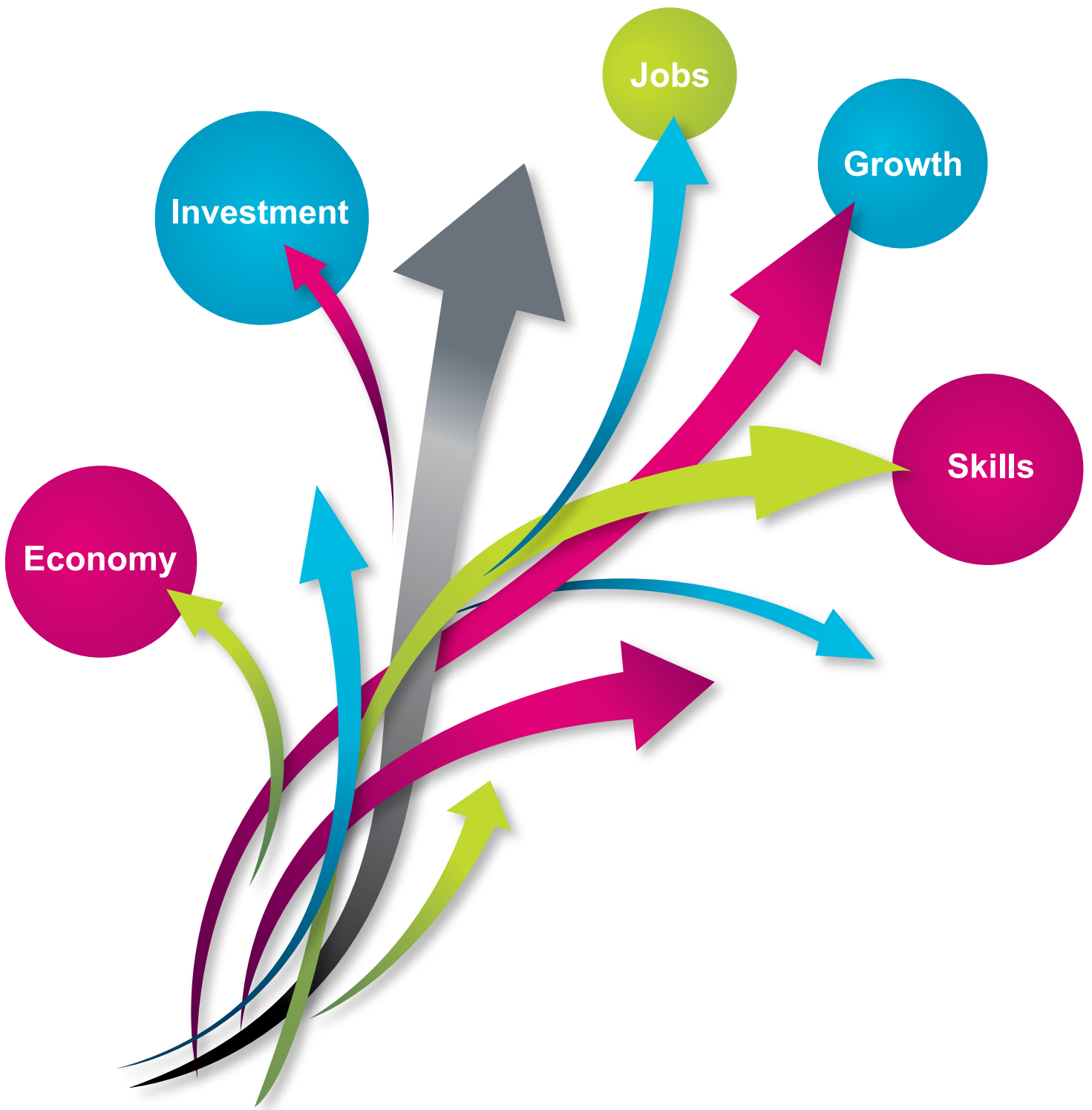
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LGA local growth campaign

Findings to date and an interim update

February 2012





Foreword



It is difficult to escape the daily news headlines on the state of our national economy. The predominant debate in politics and around our kitchen tables is about jobs, business and consumer confidence, the

continuing credit squeeze and Eurozone and global uncertainties. Whilst the headline news and figures are national, the impacts are local. And my own view is that it is at the local level that the solutions to a more prosperous national economy can be found.

While the institutional landscape has changed recently with the emergence of local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) and the abolition of regional development agencies (RDAs), councils remain one of the key drivers of growth. Councils' continued work on economic growth is therefore vital. However, there is a need for a wide debate in the local government sector which demonstrates our renewed ambition and sets some new boundaries in our thinking.

This is why the LGA is supporting a campaign on local growth. Whilst this government has taken some major steps in the direction of this argument we are gathering evidence on what more is needed to make local ambition for our local economies work. We are asking civic and

business leaders to share their perspectives on local growth. We are doing this through:

- a series of town hall debates; following a launch event at Local Government House in November, we have held town hall debates in Leeds, West Midlands and Wakefield. LGA members have also invited views in through other events and regional discussions. More town hall debates are planned for Cambridge, Newcastle and Devon.
- a series of essays from business and civic leaders, and highly regarded commentators and think tanks.
- a set of evidence gathering and analytical papers on key issues identified to date.

All of this will inform our green paper on growth that will be published in the summer. This will form the basis for our discussions with government on what barriers need removing, and what further opportunities can be explored.

We are mid-way through this debate and I feel this is a good time to take stock of what we have heard to date and I hope it will inspire others to share their ideas and thoughts. For me, there are two over-riding messages emerging from the debates:

England is made up of different local economies. The nuances are highly local. National strategies and initiatives often fail to recognise these local differences and are less effective as a result.

The levers of economic growth – skills, infrastructure, transport, investment, export, etc – are too centralised and local government needs to push hard for decentralisation.

What we have heard at the Town Hall debates so far is that we need to localise skills, strengthen the partnership between education and business, and demonstrate that regeneration funding should be devolved and pooled (building on the Growing Places Fund) and extend the City Deals more widely to other cities and places.

Finally, local government leaders must look at their own ways of supporting economic development - new approaches and skills are required to unlock local economic wealth and talent. Councils have always adapted and led the way for their communities through challenging times and I am confident in our ability to redefine our work to accommodate unprecedented national and international circumstances. There is an important role for the LGA in supporting councillors and councils to develop and network successful approaches to promoting local growth.

This paper sets out the early evidence and some of the issues which have been raised to date. I invite you to contribute to our debate. You can do this by emailing lgalocalgrowthcampaign@local.gov.uk or visiting our website www.local.gov.uk



Cllr Peter Box
Chair of LGA Economy and Transport Board



What leaders have told us so far...

Nationally, the economic statistics are very concerning – the economy contracted by 0.2% in the last quarter of 2011, and before Christmas we heard from the Office for Public Responsibility that growth for the whole of 2012 revised down to 0.7%, unemployment will peak at 8.7% and youth unemployment is already at over 1 million.

But do these figures disguise the way local people and businesses experience the economy? There are significant differences between places – for example the number of young people not in education, employment or training is less than 10% in York, but over 25% in Barnsley.

This is not a crude north/south divide – there are places that are struggling and prospering across the UK – for example average earnings are £530 per week in Warrington and £402 in Hastings.

These imbalances and local variations in economic performance and the inability of successive governments to let go of the micro-economic levers strongly suggests a new approach is needed, one that targets interventions much more effectively at circumstances at a local economic level.

What are the main themes emerging from our campaign so far?:

Councils are just doing it

One consistent message from civic leaders has been that councils have been driving economic development for over a century – from the founders of modern local government who built our cities to the modern-day innovators who are driving the Green Deal. There is a clear view that we continue to claim our space as the traditional drivers of local development.

In the West Midlands, Tata Motors recently announced a £355m investment in low-emissions engine plant capacity creating 750 skilled jobs. Local political leadership was key to this deal by investing in a junction to the nearest motorway.

In the Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough areas business and civic leaders have been successful in getting agreement to improvements in the capacity and performance of the A14, which is critical to the local economy. This agreement will now help unlock new housing development and employment locations as well as helping existing enterprises go about their business.

In response to Pfizer's decision to withdraw from their Sandwich site, putting at direct risk 2,400 jobs in the pharmaceutical industry, Kent County Council worked with Dover District Council and other public sector and business leaders to create the East Kent Recovery and Growth Package. This will provide support to business and investment in infrastructure. By packaging various sources of funding and support, including Enterprise Zone status and RGF, over 700 jobs are to be retained on site, with work continuing to realise the sites full potential.

The Greater Manchester LEP recently launched an investment framework to spend on priority projects aimed at driving economic growth. It will use funding from a range of sources, both capital (RGF, Growing Places Fund, Evergreen, unallocated ERDF) and revenue (enterprise zone revenue, pooled business rates, community infrastructure levy and section 106 planning agreements), available to the Greater Manchester LEP and the GMCA (Greater Manchester Combined Authority) in supporting the Greater Manchester Strategy. In many cases, the economic benefit of each pound invested is maximised through recycling to enable further projects to progress and be developed.

In Kirklees and the Leeds City region they are building on their strong manufacturing base across a number of sectors based on engineering which includes a concentration of world class companies, a strong manufacturing services sector, a national reputation in the creative and digital sectors, and an innovative partnership with the University of Huddersfield. Their key account programme works with 150 of the most significant employers across the district - the majority in manufacturing - acting as a facilitator to articulate business needs, overcome hurdles, put in contact with business support partners, promote research and development. Businesses are offered micro-business grants, audits and advice to help boost the green economy.

There are many other examples that show that councils are willing to take risks, and that councils and their partners already have ambitious plans to use new financial instruments such as Tax Increment Finance, municipal bonds, Public Works Loan Board, land and asset backed vehicles to stimulate growth and new jobs in their areas.



How can we do more and what further opportunities can be explored?

Whilst it has been clear that councils' cannot substitute for the private sector in creating jobs, the role of local government is critical in creating the right environment for business and employment to flourish.

Within this context, some key themes are emerging so that we can be even more effective in delivering growth.

Fit for purpose skills system

One of the biggest recurring themes at the town hall debates has been that our education and skills system need to be better at providing the skills people need to succeed in the labour market.

What we have heard:

- That our further and higher education systems need to be better at delivering the qualified people that current and future employers need; and that we need to move to a funding model that better rewards job outcomes, progression to higher skills and attracts private investment.
- That young people who have been through further and higher education are not leaving equipped with the right tools for the world of work; the challenge to the higher education sector is to better prepare students for a future working life by becoming more like work places by, for example, adopting a revised term structure.

The 'geography' of economic recovery

Whilst councils and their LEP partners have been tasked with the delivery of economic growth, via the town hall debates Councillors and officers have told us that the levers available to them are limited or require resources to be spent to stitch together national programmes that are run on a mismatched geography, and this is further worsened where government departments fail to join up around functional economic geography.

Many decisions about micro-economic policy are taken nationally in separate government departments or quangoes. They don't always fit with the needs of places, investment decisions nor placed-based economics. Issues raised:

- Can agencies such as the Highways Agency work better with councils and local partners so that their road infrastructure investments are more in tune with business and population growth?
- Local partners are disappointed with the delays and the bureaucracy attached to the Regional Growth Fund (RGF) which exemplifies that competitive bidding rounds based on national criteria lead to greater bureaucracy and less effective distribution of resources.

- The work of the CLG Select Committee calling for a joined-up regeneration budget for councils and LEPs (rather than a stream of national initiatives) has had wide-ranging support.

Transport

Key questions have been raised about our national transport programme and whether it is being considered as a primary instrument of growth. Evidence from both Scotland and the Netherlands showed that their transport programmes were being driven by economic and employment objectives and the growth potential of localities. The objectives of the Department for Transport were focused on the transport system, rather than on transport as a lever of growth.

At the Leeds debate which looked at this issue in depth, the more radical calls were for a first principles challenge of the role of transport policy.

- Should we offer an evaluation/assessment model for a scheme which is based on a better balance between economic value and technical merit?
- How do we join up the various devolved initiatives on buses, rail and road into coherent local programmes?

Building on the City Deals

In terms of targeting future public resources: for any future local difficulties, rather than await a new national initiative is there a case for targeting future public funded stimulants? So, rather than relying on a nationally distributed RGF is a more coherent and integrated approach required to delivery and investment within places? Community Budget pilots have demonstrated the potential of such an approach for complex families - a more radical shift to this kind of working across a wider set of policy issues and places would reap significant reward and get a better return.

The City Deals have been widely welcomed as an important step towards decentralisation along with the Cities Minister's commitment to extend the deals more widely.

But it is clear that there is an appetite in local government for a more whole sector deal on decentralisation that pulls together the flexibilities agreed within the City Deals and extended more widely allowing a much more effective targeting of micro-economic policy.

Commercialising innovation

Councils traditionally have been strong supporters of supporting innovation and its contribution to business growth, for example through provision of grants/loans or incubation space. Whilst this will be the topic of February's town hall event in Cambridge, it is felt that more can be done through local partnerships of public, private and higher education sector to maximise the local impact from centres of talent, such as universities.

What is our relative position in innovation compared to European and worldwide competitors? Are new growth opportunities, such as health and green energy/economy opportunities being exploited? Some universities are excellent at supporting commercialisation but can they be doing more to recognise their own economic footprint and make it beneficial to the local economy?



Topics to be explored further

Via our campaign we are hearing how councils are grasping existing and new powers to help stimulate local economies. However, there has been a clear challenge to councils from our partners (especially in business) for stronger local leadership. Below are some issues raised that we plan to explore further through the second part of our campaign.

Trade/ export

At all the debates that have taken place so far, the council's role in attracting inward investment and ensuring infrastructure in place for export has been raised. How do councils work together with overseas business to attract investment in their local areas? Whilst there are some good examples of this happening, there are cultural barriers that need removing to allow councils to be brave and innovative in working with overseas investors.

What more can we learn from our international colleagues? In New Zealand, there is an advanced team approach, with sub-regions agreeing specialities and working together to the same agreed outcome, which enables investors and local agencies to work together in a coordinated way.

The Jaguar investment in West Midlands further highlighted how investors value a clear leadership role from local councils. How do councils provide this and confidently take on a role?

This issue will be explored further at the March "town hall" meeting in EU House in London.

Economic footprint/local procurement

Councils are continuing to work to create the best environment for growth (rather than create jobs), and there are direct levers that councils have to use, including their purchasing power. This is a clear lever of growth, but councils may not have radically changed the way they deal with commissioning as the economic crisis has unfolded. A related issue has been whether EU procurement rules hamper council's ability to stimulate the local economy through local purchasing.

Culture and skills

Whilst the emerging evidence from our campaign is that councils are 'getting on with it' many leaders feel that councils themselves need to continue to adapt to the changing world of economic development if they are to do their best in supporting private sector growth. Lead councillors taking part in LGA member development workshops have stressed the importance of:

- The private and public sector working better together for growth.
- Councils and public sector working together to incentivise growth – especially without significant regeneration budgets.
- The different leadership styles and roles that councils will need to play.
- Knowing their local economies - their strengths and weaknesses. This means being clear about local economic assets, the nature of demand and competition and how they can support local growth and development.

Conclusion

The issues in this paper represent what we are being told via our 'Town hall debates' and the early ideas emerging from our campaign to date- they are not LGA policy. We hope this paper helps stimulate discussions in your own councils and across your LEP areas. The LGA local economic growth campaign will continue into spring 2012. We will publish our way forward in a Green Paper that is driven by local ambition for growth and to push for decentralisation to allow a more effective, targeted response to our economic challenges.

If you wish to take part in our campaign, then please come along to one of our forthcoming town hall debates. You can find details of these on our local growth campaign web page www.local.gov.uk/localgrowth. Alternatively, you can write in or email the LGA on lgalocalgrowthcampaign@local.gov.uk







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LGA local growth campaign

Findings to date and an interim update

February 2012



Transport Update

Purpose of report

For noting.

Summary

This report provides key updates on transport for members' information.

Recommendation

Members to note the report.

Action

Officer to take forward actions as directed by members.

Contact officer: Charles Loft
Position: Adviser
Phone no: 0207 664 3874
E-mail: charles.loft@local.gov.uk

Transport Update

Bus Market Competition Transport Select Committee

1. The LGA submitted written evidence to the Transport Select Committee's inquiry into the findings of the Competition Commission's inquiry into bus markets. The key messages were:
 - 1.1 Franchising by Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) will offer the most effective remedy to the problems caused by a lack of competition in the bus market and will provide a more efficient and effective service to the public in many cases. This option should be available to LTAs.
 - 1.2 Although we generally support the measures proposed by the Competition Commission, we do not believe these will effectively address the lack of competition in local bus markets, or deliver the wider benefits councils seek.
 - 1.3 There should be a single stream of subsidy to local bus services, locally controlled.
 - 1.4 We support DfT's moves toward localism and hope to work with the Department to ensure these deliver maximum benefit to users.
2. This was followed up by oral evidence from Cllr Shona Johnstone, PTEG and an officer from Essex Council also gave oral evidence at this session. LGA and PTEG are in broad agreement over franchising as a way forward.

External Bodies

3. Later this year the Committee will be invited to nominate four members each to the Bus Partnership Forum and the Transport Futures Special Interest Group. This is done on the basis that all political parties have representation.
4. Before re-nominations are sought in July 2012, the Board may wish to consider whether these are the most appropriate bodies for LGA representation in future.

Winter weather

5. Winter has passed without the levels of snow and ice seen in previous years. The sector has been credited for its preparedness and high salt stocks and members will be aware that properly stored salt keeps for several years. Therefore, this has been a good investment by councils. LGA is in discussions with DfT over

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future arrangements for the national strategic salt stockpile, acquired by the government during the winter of 2010-11 and made available to councils to purchase in times of short supply.

Rail

6. On 8 March the Government published its white paper Reforming our Railways: Putting the Customer First and a consultation on Rail decentralisation: devolving decision-making on passenger rail services in England.
7. The white paper argues that there is no case for significant reorganisation but that the industry must improve in four respects:
 - 7.1 securing value for the passenger
 - 7.2 reducing costs - aggressively searching out savings and sharing these savings with the taxpayer
 - 7.3 supporting economic growth – through public and private investment
 - 7.4 delivering our environmental goals – by reducing carbon emissions from trains and stations and by encouraging rail use.
2. The consultation on decentralisation which is open until June represents a major opportunity for the sector to have a say in the future of rail services. As well as general questions about decentralisation, DfT is inviting sub-national bodies – PTEs and local authorities – to indicate their interest and come forward with outline proposals for taking on decision-making responsibility for passenger rail services in their area.
3. We need to take careful note of DfT's drive for savings and the industry's ability to deliver as this represents a major risk and may deter councils from taking up the opportunities offered by devolution.

Local Major Schemes decentralisation

4. DfT published its consultation on the structure, sizing, configuration, governance and accountability arrangements for a new system of Local Major Schemes funding allocation beyond 2014-15 on 31 January. It published a clarification on 8 March. The consultation closes on 2 April. A draft response will be provided to members in the week commencing 26 March in order to meet this deadline.

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5. Key points of our response are below and members may wish to comment:

- 11.1 Clear welcome for the step towards devolution and localism and welcoming the opportunity to demonstrate the worth and innovation of councils and PTEs.
- 11.2 Concern that this represents one strand of DfT work and that a local integrated transport funds represents better value for money.
- 11.3 The need for flexibility over membership, preferred scale and geographical scope in forming local transport boards.
- 11.4 The need for democratically accountable control which will have significant implications for the role of LEPs in Transport Consortia.
- 11.5 Councils must be free to create their own evaluation criteria, rather than rely on cumbersome national rules.
- 11.6 Concern about the tight timetable for agreeing governance arrangements.

Other consultations

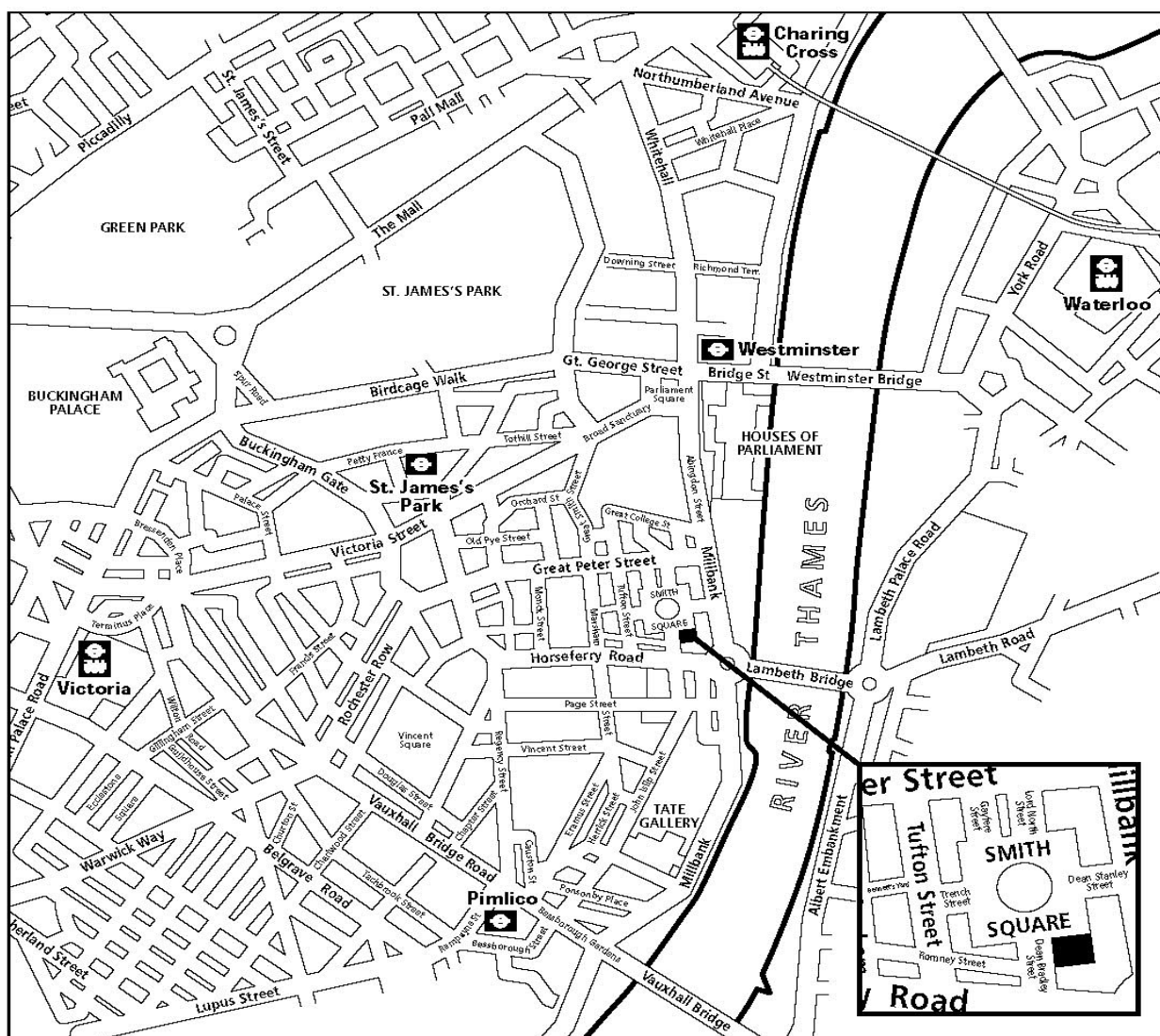
- 6. The Great Western franchise consultation deadline is 31 March. Our key issue will be to say that the ability of councils to be involved needs to be preserved in the franchise and not lost simply to meet the tight deadline.

Permit Schemes

- 7. DfT is inviting views on proposals to remove the current need for the Secretary of State to approve local authority applications to run 'permit schemes', which enable authorities to better manage street works. The consultation closes on April 25 and responses will be encouraged from individual authorities.

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LGA Location Map



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Public transport

Local Government House is well served by public transport. The nearest mainline stations are;

Victoria

and **Waterloo**; the local underground stations are **St James's Park** (District and Circle Lines); **Westminster** (District, Circle and Jubilee Lines); and **Pimlico** (Victoria Line), all about 10 minutes walk away. Buses **3** and **87** travel along **Millbank**, and the **507** between Victoria and Waterloo goes close by at the end of **Dean Bradley Street**.

Bus routes - Millbank

87 Wandsworth - Aldwych **N87**
3 Crystal Palace - Brixton - Oxford Circus

Bus routes - Horseferry Road

507 Waterloo - Victoria
C10 Elephant and Castle - Pimlico - Victoria
88 Camden Town - Whitehall - Westminster-
Pimlico - Clapham Common

Cycling Facilities

Cycle racks are available at Local Government House. Please telephone the LGA on 020 7664 3131.

Central London Congestion Charging Zone

Local Government House is located within the congestion charging zone. For further details, please call 0845 900 1234 or visit the website at www.cclondon.com

Car Parks

Abingdon Street Car Park
Great College Street
Horseferry Road Car Park
Horseferry Road/Arneway Street