

Item 2

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: Economy and Transport Board
Date and time: 11.00am, Thursday 19 September 2013
Venue: Local Government House, London

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Political Group	Council
Chairman	Peter Box CBE	Labour	Wakefield MDC
Vice Chair	Tony Ball	Conservative	Basildon DC
Deputy Chair	Heather Kidd	Liberal Democrat	Shropshire Council
Deputy Chair	Mike Haines	Independent	Teignbridge DC

Members	Ann Steward	Conservative	Norfolk CC
	Gillian Brown	Conservative	Arun DC
	Kevin Bentley	Conservative	Essex CC
	Jason Ablewhite	Conservative	Huntingdonshire DC
	David Westley	Conservative	West Lancashire DC
	James Lewis	Labour	Leeds City
	David Wood	Labour	Tyne & Wear ITA
	Tudor Evans	Labour	Plymouth City
	Michael Mordey	Labour	Sunderland City
	Jason Kitcat	Independent	Brighton and Hove City

Apologies

	Martin Tett	Conservative	Buckinghamshire CC
	Philip Atkins	Conservative	Staffordshire
	Lord Mike Whitby	Conservative	Birmingham City
	Joan Dixon	Labour	Derbyshire CC
	Chris Roberts	Labour	Greenwich LB
	Barrie Grunewald	Labour	St Helens MBC
	Roger Symonds	Liberal Democrat	Bath and North East Somerset

In attendance: Ian Hughes; Kamal Panchal; Piali Das Gupta; Jasbir Jhas; Charles Loft; Virginia Ponton (LGA); Martin McTague (FSB).

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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The Chair welcomed all and invited members to introduce themselves. He had written to all outgoing members of the Board to thank them for their work.

The Chair noted congratulations to Lord Mike Whitby on the announcement of his peerage.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

Decision

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

2. Chair's Report

The Chair presented the Chair's Report and urged new members to contact officers for any relevant documents.

Cllr Mike Haines updated the Board on the work of the High Street Forum.

3. Priorities for 2013/14

Ian Hughes introduced the item which set out three themes for the Board's work in 2013-14: local growth, transport and skills.

The Chair said that Lead Members felt it was important to focus on skills for employment, especially adult skills, and economic development in its broadest sense.

Cllr Tony Ball added that there is a need to retain the youth skills work as well as consider EU Social Funding in the work programme.

Members discussed:

- The need to engage with business partners on the priorities such as LEPs, chambers of commerce and business leaders.
- The need for funding certainty from government along with real and sustained devolution.
- Concerns about the bureaucracy involved in accessing funding and that councils cannot resource this work with reduced staffing.
- Historic problems with formulas and baselines for council funding allocations.
- Successful cross-party delivery of local government systems and the need for greater devolution.

Decisions

The Chair agreed for a roundtable meeting with partners to be arranged and for business representatives to be invited to future Board meetings.

The Board agreed the paper.

Actions

- Roundtable meeting to be arranged.
- Detailed delivery plans to be developed by officers.

Officers
Officers

4. Local Economic Growth

The Chair welcomed Martin McTague, Chair of the Local Government Policy Unit, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), who introduced himself and the FSB.

Martin said that small businesses are important as owners tend to live near their businesses, as part of the community, investing in the community. A large proportion of unemployed people are taken on by small businesses or become self-employed, and small businesses therefore have a role to play in social cohesion. Small businesses create a diverse and resilient economy. The relationship between business and local government could be stronger, especially in the areas of procurement, business support and LEPs. He welcomed the LGA's *Rewiring Public Services* document. Clear leadership, cross-border working, a focus on skills, transport and access to funding are all key for business. Businesses engage best with clear and focussed objectives, and action-focussed groups.

Members welcomed closer working between local government the FSB as well as other partners. Members discussed:

- Best practice examples of local government working well with small businesses.
- That small businesses and local government have a lot in common and can work together to hold government to account.
- Incentives to get business using public transport.
- Linking business and local government surveys and documents to ensure added meaning for each other.
- The need for the FSB to engage with newer more digital business.

Martin said that working together is positive and powerful. There are real solutions available through devolution and small business can release some of the resources.

The Chair said that the priorities for local government and small businesses are similar and that there is a need to work more closely. He thanked Martin and invited him to join the roundtable meeting.

Members continued discussion on concerns about changes to the New Homes Bonus.

The Chair stressed the importance of individual authorities responding to consultations, while the LGA works for the sector as a whole.

The Chair thanked members for a good discussion.

Decisions

The Board agreed the priorities for work on local growth in the paper.

Martin McTague agreed to attend the proposed business summit and to share best practice case studies and share relevant surveys and documents with the Board.

Actions

- Martin McTague to share further information.

**Piali Das Gupta /
Virginia Ponton**

5. Employment and Skills

Ian Hughes introduced the paper which suggested that the work on skills and young people should be expanded to include support for unemployed adults.

Cllr Kevin Bentley updated members on his attendance on behalf of the Board at a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister on skills, where he pressed the need for devolution and difficulties working with a centralised, fragmented system, which business, FE and young people do not understand.

Members discussed:

- Concern about how rural areas can engage with growth. Transport, matching skills and SME engagement are key for rural areas.
- The importance of adult skills and adult re-training for future demand.

Decision

The Board agreed the priorities for work on skills, with work to be developed to support adult skills.

Action

- Officers to develop a detailed work programme.

Jasbir Jhas

6. Transport update

Kamal Panchal introduced the item.

The Chair highlighted that the Secretary of State for Transport would attend the Board meeting in November.

Members discussed:

- The importance of public transport for younger people and older people.
- The importance of the relationship with National Rail in shaping

economic development and transport strategy.

- A better/decent roads campaign to bring all partners together to work on proactive, planned and sustained maintenance for long-term benefits and savings.
- The need to look at transport issues as a 'place'.

Decision

The Board agreed the priorities for work on transport and the development of a detailed proposal on roads policy.

Actions

- Officers to draft a focused agenda for the November Board meeting with the minister and to include business representatives to attend.
- Officers to send details of the DfT working group for the youth select committee on transport.

**Kamal Panchal /
Charles Loft**

7. Streetworks

Decision

The Board noted the report.

8. Outside bodies

Members nominated to the 2013/14 list of outside bodies to be finalised outside of the Board meeting.

Action

- Outside bodies appointments to be finalised and report sent to the LGA Executive.

Virginia Ponton

9. Economy and Transport Board at party conferences

Members discussed the importance of pressing messages at conference.

Decision

The Board noted the report.