

Note of last People & Places Board meeting

Title: People & Places Board
Date: Thursday 15 January 2015
Venue: Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

| Item | Decisions and actions | Action |
|----------|---|--------|
| 1 | Welcome, introductions and declarations of interest The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and also members of the RAND and Peer Review Teams. Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Bowles, Andrew Rhodes, Diane James and John Pollard. There were no declarations of interest. | |
| 2 | Peace Commission: Discussion of Interim report The Board discussed the Interim report for the “Peace Commission” and welcomed Lord Teverson to the meeting in his capacity as one of the Commissioners. He briefly introduced the report before the discussion. Lord Teverson, in introducing the report, stated that the Commission considered that something needed to be done about English devolution, particularly in light of the recent Scottish referendum and that fundamental change was needed in England without being bogged down in structures. Board members raised the following points in the discussion that followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councils would be keen to undertake greater powers on economic development and skills. Non-metropolitan areas needed to be empowered.• Local authorities have done a great deal of valuable work in public service integration and multi-agency working. This was particularly the case in areas such as LEP, social care and health.• Democratically elected authorities should ‘hold the ring’ and a rebalancing of powers between central and local government was needed. There should not be an emphasis on structures and governance alone.• Local authorities cannot raise monies as they see fit and a financial model needed to be acceptable and accountable to local | |

electorates. What were the areas that we would like to see devolved from central government?

- There was potential for devolving to non-metropolitan areas, e.g. LEP boundaries should be redefined. The LGA should have been consulted on this.
- Local Government needed to offer central government ways to demonstrate clearly how it had been cost-effective and had borne cuts of 40% but increased efficiency. Local Government had been successful in making savings and can demonstrate to central government that it could be trusted to undertake more devolved tasks.

Thanks were accorded to Lord Teverson for attending to the meeting and representing the Commission.

Decision

The Board noted the interim report and submitted their views to Lord Teverson as one of the Commissioners.

Action

Any further comments should be sent to John Wright via e-mail in the next seven days, for the Peace Commission to consider.

3 The Future Governance of England- Confidential

4 People and Places Programme- Update

Lead Members have worked with officers to develop the agreed work programme priorities.

The Chairman invited Lead Members to present briefly on progress before opening to Board discussion.

a) Public Service Transformation

This paper mainly updated Members on progress with the “One Place One Budget” research project to refresh the evidence and develop a model for public service transformation across the local public sector in non-metropolitan and city areas. It also briefly updated Members on the Independent Service Transformation Challenge Panel report, which was published in November 2014.

Dr Jeremy Lonsdale, Senior Research Leader at RAND Europe attended the Board and updated Members on progress. Leaders of Surrey and Derbyshire County Councils shared their emerging transformation case studies at the Board meeting.

Board members raised the following points in the discussion that followed:

- A continuing focus needs to be made in ensuring outcomes for residents, e.g. reducing violence and children in care. What are the benefits for them?
- Dealing with cultural changes and ensuring different agencies were able to collaborate at all levels and new ways of working/redesigning working methods.
- This publication will be taken forward in the context of the LGA's wider work on devolution and the Independent Commissions.

Decision

The Board noted the progress update on public service transformation, which would be taken forward as part of the LGA's wider work on devolution.

b) Planning and Infrastructure for growth, including broadband

This report set out recent LGA activity in relation to the agreed work programme in these areas and set out proposed next steps.

Board members raised the following points in the discussion that followed:

- Access to fast and reliable broadband is essential for the rural economy to thrive.
- The lack of competition in the supply chain remains a major concern for councils. Members said it was important that public investment in phase 2 was targeted at places where there was evidence of market failure.
- Members requested further detail on the recent mobile phone voluntary agreement that will increase access to basic text and voice coverage in rural communities.
- There are some concerns about BT's capacity to keep the broadband rollout on track.
- Members noted that upload speed is as important as download speed for businesses.
- Advertising should be clearer about the broadband speeds that will be delivered to consumers and businesses.

Decision

The Board noted the report and agreed with the paragraphs 5, 8

and 21 contained in the report.

The Board expressed concern about what they considered was BT's unacceptable business practices about Broadband speed and deliverability in rural areas.

Action

Officers to take forward the recommendations in line with Members' steer.

c) Employment and Skills update

The report summarised recent LGA activity and developments in relation to the Board's agreed work programme in employment, skills and economic growth issues. It also included a confidential appendix from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR).

Board members raised the following points in the discussion that followed:

- Powers needed to be returned to local authorities who were best placed to deal with employment and skills matters in their own localities.
- There needed to be greater business involvement to ensure that business views were taken into account concerning skill requirements.
- A continuing emphasis needed to be made concerning vocational skills.

Decision

The Board noted the report and progress against each of the key work programme areas.

Action

Any comments on the CESI report should be sent to Rose Doran within ten days.

d) Housing update

The report summarised recent LGA activity and developments in relation to the agreed work programme on housing issues and included an appendix setting out Sir Michael Lyons' Housing

Review briefing.

Members were concerned about changes to planning regulations.

5 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2014 were agreed.

Appendix A -Attendance

| Position/Role | Councillor | Authority |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Chairman | Cllr David Hodge | Surrey County Council |
| Vice-Chairman | Cllr Neil Clarke MBE | Rushcliffe Borough Council |
| Deputy-chairman | Cllr Anne Western | Derbyshire County Council |
| | Cllr Heather Kidd | Shropshire Council |
| Members | Cllr Vince Maple | Medway Council |
| | Cllr Jennifer Mein | Lancashire County Council |
| | Cllr Eion Watts | Bolsover District Council |
| | Cllr Philip Atkins | Staffordshire County Council |
| | Cllr Roger Begy OBE | Rutland County Council |
| | Cllr Gillian Brown | Arun District Council |
| | Cllr Paul Carter CBE | Kent County Council |
| | Cllr Paul Diviani | East Devon District Council |
| | Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE | Gloucestershire County Council |
| | Cllr Christopher Knowles-Fitton | Craven District Council |
| | Cllr Kenneth Meeson | Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council |
| | Cllr Roy Perry | |
| | Cllr Stan Collins | South Lakeland District Council |
| | Cllr Simon Galton | Leicestershire County Council |
| Cllr Angela Lawrence | Vale of White Horse District Council | |
| Apologies | Cllr Alan Rhodes | Nottinghamshire County Council |
| | Cllr Andrew Bowles | Swale Borough Council |
| | Cllr John Pollard | Cornwall Council |
| | Cllr Diane James | Waverley Borough Council |
| In Attendance | | |
| LGA Officers | | |

