

Note of last People & Places Board meeting

Title: People & Places Board
Date: Tuesday 18 June 2019
Venue: Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
8	Welcome, introductions and declarations of interest The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting, and noted apologies received (which can be found at <u>Appendix A</u>). No declarations of interest were made.	
9	The Post-Brexit England Commission Daniel Shamplin-Hall, Adviser, introduced item two. Daniels presentation focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The eight regional roadshow write ups held across non-metropolitan England.• The communication, public affairs and parliamentary engagement plan for the report.• Details around the final reports launch at the LGA's Annual Conference in July.• An update on the seven policy areas, three of which are specific to this board and outlined in paragraph four. Following the update from Daniel, the Chairman praised the strength of the report – how different voices from organisations are backing up our asks and aligning with LGA policy (as is with the Work Local campaign). The Chairman also mentioned the current Brexit situation, and stated that this is a good foundation for conversations for future policy of a new government. Members then made the following comments: Members offered an alternative statement for page 19 of the report, which discussed buying or renting properties. Daniel stated he would endeavour to change this in the final report.	

Members questioned if any Conservative leadership contenders for the Prime Minister would endorse the report, and discussed further details around the reports launch. The Chairman stated they were hoping to get the Secretary of State to do something.

Decisions

The following decisions were reached:

1. Members commented and agreed to the Commission's final report (**Appendix A**), and confirmed it met their expectations on content and tone.
2. Members approved the report for publication at the LGA Annual Conference 2019.
3. Members approved the write up of the Commission's regional roadshows (**Appendix B**).
4. Members agreed to the proposed communications, public affairs and parliamentary engagement plan.
5. Members noted the arrangements for launching the final report at LGA Annual Conference 2019.

10 The Future of Non-Metropolitan England

- a) The Post-Brexit England Commission Regional Roadshows

11 Employment and Skills Update

Jasbir Jhas, Senior Adviser, introduced item three. This included the main headlines detailed in the report, as well as introducing Barry Sheerman MP & the APPG he Chairs (look at paper). Jasbir stated that this was a brilliant opportunity to promote the LGA's Work Local campaign, and work with the APPG in the future to progress the skills policy work.

Jasbir's update specifically mentioned:

The Work Local Refresh, which included the changes to the policy landscape, and new initiatives announced. Jasbir stated that the LGA has reframed the report for the new incoming Prime Minister, which aims for a more tuned devolution skills system.

An overview of the Skills Task Force: Jasbir explained that the Work Local campaign needs support from government and further devolution. This has been achieved through the Skills Task Force, by engaging 28 external stakeholders and aligning their views with the LGA's message.

Piloting initiatives in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. The Work Local report to be re-launched on 3 July at the LGA's Annual Conference. Jasbir invited all members, as well as any local stakeholders and other organisations that may find Work Local beneficial, can promote the work and build further stakeholder relationships.

Jasbir also gave further updates on the Skills Task Force, which included:

- Letter to the Secretary of State, co-signed alongside the 28 external stakeholders, which outlines more of a coherent strategy.
- Plans to jointly work with the City Regions Board and the Children's and Young People Board. Further details of this to be explored at the next Board meeting in September.

The Chairman then invited members to comment, making specific reference to paragraph 16, and asking members for their ideas on how to maintain the momentum?:

Members expressed the need to include children in care, children leaving care and children with Special Educational Needs, as well as those living with disabilities. Members stated that there is a large vacuum in a specific demographic that needs both support and focus. Officers agreed with this.

Members referenced the 1.5 million population figure, and asked if this could be more bespoke to a county or combined authority population. Officers stated that this figure is based on a medium combined authority population, but offered to remove the figure if it is too controversial. The Chairman stated that this point had been raised before, and remarked that the figure doesn't take anything away from the report.

The Chairman then concluded with general improvement suggestions raised by members for the next steps of this work, as well as summarised members ideas to maintain momentum, such as third party quotes that back up our research and asks.

The Chairman then introduced Barry Sheerman MP. Barry's update included:

- His history as a local government Cllr, as well as 10 years as Chair of the Educational and Family Select Committee in the House of Commons.
- Barry stated that while education is a highly public interest, the skills agenda has no media response.

- Barry then used his own constituency of Huddersfield as an example, and stated that whilst it is wonderful to have a university in the town, it is vital to have a skills provision for local people to maintain local employment needs.
- Barry updated members on the Skills Commission that he co-Chairs, and stated that it is crucial to have a solid Further Education College (FE Colleges) and provisions, in order for local businesses to thrive. Barry gave Cornwall as an example, and stating that Small to Medium sized Enterprises feed into the FE Colleges curriculum, therefore plugging any potential skills gaps.
- He strongly advocates for evidence-based policy to make focused and reasoned suggestions. This evidence is the only way the issues around the skills gaps will be dealt with.
- Barry gave examples back on many reports and commissions that he had been involved with throughout the years, highlighting that the skills agenda is a long-standing issue.
- Barry greatly supported the levy for employers that give skills training.
- Barry broke down employment statistics for members, including that 60 per cent of people work in private services, 30 per cent for the public sector including education and the NHS, 10 per cent manufacturing, 1 per cent agriculture. The skills gap covers all of these different sectors.
- Barry gave different examples of new and emerging skills that we need to be able to deliver training on, as well as giving examples of young people who gain theoretical degrees that are unskilled.
- Barry concluded his presentation by stating that all communicates, both urban and non-urban, need to join up their practises and deliver skills training to fill each other's skills gaps.

Following Barry's presentation, the following discussions took place:

Members highlighted the increase in young people and their advanced computer and gaming skills, and how to use these in these in the skills agenda? Barry stated that this was a new emerging area that young people would thrive in. Barry went on to state that coding courses could be used to develop games, as well as stop internet fraud and build new computer systems used by everyone in both the private and public sector. Barry stated that the issues here lay with a lack of partnership working between FE and HE colleges, which should be building alliances

The Chairman stated that the Board and wider LGA had been working on this agenda for a number of years, and that currently we are

publishing the Work Local refresh report which looks at the long term future of local working and skills. With this in mind, the Chairman asked two questions:

1. How do we get away from a centre-focused skills system, to a more local one?; and
2. How to re-focus the government's attention, from devolution deals with urban areas only, to all areas that incorporate non-metropolitan and rural areas?

Barry responded:

1. Complete re-organisation within the Department of Education, which is terribly top-down. Barry advocated for a democratic link with local governments to ensure that all local areas do not face a skills gap.
2. He was not sure how to do this, given the current political landscape and Brexit dominating all national and international policy.

Barry concluded by promoting his Guide to the Skills System which is available for members, as well as praising Work Local. The Chairman thanked Barry for his time.

Decisions

Members agreed to the following, as outlined in paragraph 16 in the report:

1. Renew this area of work, with a focus on careers advice and guidance, and technical education (T levels) and transitions between pre-16 and post-16 years.
2. Working jointly with the Children and Young People board and the City regions Board, going forward into the 2019/20 Board cycle.

The following **action** was highlighted in the discussion:

1. A detailed paper on youth participation will be presented to the Board meeting in September.

12 Work Local - Moving the Conversation On

13 Letter to Secretary of State for Education

14 Trade and Inward Investment

Daniel Shamplin-Hall, Adviser, introduced item four. Daniel's presentation focused on:

- The LGA's Improvement work to support councils on trade and investment.
- The draft guide for local authorities on foreign and capital investment.
- The proposed next steps (paragraph 13-14)

The Chairman praised officers for the great work undertaken so far, but stated more is needed. Referencing the previous Department for International Trade visitor, the Chairman stated that it is not something the department is currently interested in pursuing. The Chairman concluded that it is something the LGA need to pause on for now, but must revisit in the future.

Decisions

1. Members noted the LGA's progress on trade and investment over the current bard cycle, including policy and public affairs activity, as well as improvement support (outlined in paragraphs 4-12).
 2. Members noted and agreed to the draft guide for local authorities on foreign and private capital investment (**Appendix A**).
 3. Members agreed to the next steps for engagement on trade and investment policy (paragraphs 13-14).
- a) Supporting Councils to Attract Foreign and Private Capital Investment into Local Infrastructure

15 Industrial Strategy Update

Philip Clifford, Senior Adviser, introduced item five. Philip's presentation covered the recommendations that have been made to the LEP Review, of which Cllr Anne Western attended on behalf of the Board. Officers are actively pushing for the government to implement these recommendations (which is detailed throughout the paper). Philip also mentioned the LEP boundaries, one particular recommendation of the LEP review. However, it has been reported that the government have said local areas have the right to choose their own boundaries, which is contrary to LEP procedures.

Philip also brought members attention to the two reports appended regarding Local Industrial Strategies (LIS), which both strengthens the

argument for further devolution and supports the arguments that local authorities need to be key partners for LIS agreements. Philip also mentioned the Greater Manchester and West Midlands LIS, and reported back how much capacity and enthusiasm has been seen in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Philip also mentioned the UK Shared Prosperity Fund; Philip reminded members that LIS were met a to guide this funding, however, the Secretary of State has said that the Spending Review (SR) announcement will guide how much there is for the UKSPF. Philip anticipated that rushing the allocation process, together with the urgency of Brexit, means there is a chance for the locality driving aspect of the UKSPF will get lost.

Finally, Philip concluded by drawing member's attention to **Appendix C**. Philip confirmed this had been seen by the City Regions Board yesterday, who requested on possible sharper wording of the letter. Members discussed if the letter should be sent before or after the appointment of a new Prime Minister, and after the wording has been sharpened.

Following Philip's presentation, the Chairman stated that it is still very true that local areas are unclear of the LIS development, but what is clear is the conflicting timeframes that are becoming clearer every day. He gave an example – no information about the UKSPF, nor wave three of LIS until the SR, and that will be no SR until a new Prime Minister has been appointed and the Brexit impasse has been resolved. The Chairman concluded by stating the timeframe is extremely short.

Decisions

1. Members noted the national developments and LGA activity delivered over the current board cycle in relation to the Government's Review of LEP's, LIS and the UKSPF.
2. Members agreed to the proposed next steps for engagement on the Industrial Strategy (detailed in paragraphs 15-16).

16 Appendix A - Metro Dynamics Report

17 Appendix B - Shared Intelligence Report

18 Appendix C - Confidential letter

19 End of Year Board Report

Item six was introduced by Benn Cain, Member Services Officer. Benn stated that the report was in two parts; the first part related to the Board's achievements against the Board's priorities in 2018/19; the second part detailed the Board's priorities for 2019/20.

Decisions

1. Members of the Board noted the Board's achievements against the Board's priorities in 2018/19.
2. Members of the Board agreed to the Board's priorities for 2019/20 (paragraph 24 – 29).

20 Rural Digital Connectivity Working Group

Item seven was introduced by Daniel Shamplin-Hall, Adviser. Daniel stated the report outlines on the work the Group has undertaken through the cycle. Daniel also stated that the report makes suggestions to end the working group now, and what should be the focus of this work during the next Board cycle, and the manner in which this done. Daniel advised that the ADEPT group no longer have capacity to administer the group, and that going forward, this should sit with the LGA.

Members then made the following comments:

Members stated that the recommendations set out in the report were both valid and good, and suggested there needs to be a sub-committee to deal with this work, in order to hit harder with the LGA's asks. There was a consensus from all parties how important that this policy is kept on the table, otherwise rural areas will fall behind. Members of the Group agreed that they would like to see the Group continue with this work, and that it is essential this work is carried on throughout 2019/20.

Members also made reference to SME's and stated that it vitally important for these to have strong digital connectivity. In order to plug the skills gap, ensure LIS are working and build the economy post-Brexit, it is vital that the UK has a strong connectivity throughout.

Members questioned when the guidance document will be ready for distribution, and commented that this is a valued document that will go out to both the government, local government and stakeholders.

Members agreed that the more we can use this the better. Daniel responded by stating that is ready and approved, due to be published in July. Member questioned if the document could be distributed at

the LGA's Annual Conference. Daniel responded that he will discuss this idea with the communications team, but gave assurances that if not, it will be a matter of priority after Conference.

The Chairman gave thanks and praise to Daniel for his tenacity and hard work, and commented that if the Board are not addressing this policy, nowhere else in the LGA will be pushing for faster digital connections – particularly within non-metropolitan areas. The Chairman made reference to Boris Johnson MP – a Prime Minister contender – rolling out fibre optic and 5G connectivity throughout the UK by 2025.

Decisions

1. Members reviewed the activity of the Working Group over the 2018/19 political cycle.
2. Members decided to conclude the Working Group, but agreed to ensure this policy area is a priority matter for the Board to focus on in 2019/20.

21 Note of last People & Places Board meeting

Members agreed to the notes of the previous People & Places Board that took place on Tuesday 19 March 2019.

22 Any Other Business

The Chairman stated that due to his term limit running out, this Board meeting will be his last, but has thoroughly enjoyed his time as Chairman and working with everyone on the Board. The Chairman stated that his last act will take place at Conference, lunching the Final Post-Brexit England Commission report, and invited everyone to attend the session. The Chairman thanked the hard work and dedication of all members and officers.

Lead Members Cllr Henig and Kidd paid tribute to the Chairman, and praised his tenacity, diplomacy, and the direction he has taken the Board.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Simon Henig CBE	Durham County Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council

	Cllr Bob Jennings	Epping Forest District Council
Members	Cllr Derek Bastiman Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick Cllr Keith Glazier Cllr Tim Hall Cllr Adrian Hardman Cllr Rory Love OBE Cllr David Thomas Cllr Rob Waltham MBE Cllr Azhar Ali Cllr Leigh Redman Cllr Sue Woodward Cllr Sarah Osborne	Scarborough Borough Council North Norfolk District Council East Sussex County Council Surrey County Council Worcestershire County Council Folkestone & Hythe District Council Torbay Council North Lincolnshire Council Lancashire County Council Somerset County Council Staffordshire County Council Lewes District Council
Apologies	Cllr Glen Horn Cllr Linda Robinson Cllr Peter Jackson Cllr Helen Grant	Mid Suffolk District Council Wychavon District Council Northumberland Council Richmondshire District Council
In Attendance		
LGA Officers		