

## Note of last People and Places Board meeting

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**Title:** People and Places Board  
**Date:** Monday 16 June 2014  
**Venue:** Bevin Hall, Ground Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

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### Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b> <p>Cllr Hodge welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies had been received for Mayor Tony Egginton, Cllr John Pollard, Cllr Andrew Bowles, Cllr Michael Jones, Cllr Kevin Bently, Cllr Vince Maple, Cllr Sherma Batson and Stan Collins. Cllr Chris Townsend attended as substitute for Mayor Egginton.</p> <p>Cllr Hodge also welcomed Cllr Geoff Duck (Tandridge DC) and Cllr Celia Motley (Chair, Sparse Rural SIG) who attended as observers.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<b>People and Places Work Programme</b>  <b>Housing</b> <p>Cllr Heather Kidd provided the Board with an overview of the three elements of the housing work programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Modelling the impact of a locally led approach to housing;</li><li>• Pressing for financial flexibilities to enable local authorities to build housing directly and in partnership; and</li><li>• Developing case studies and sharing good practice that demonstrates the role councils play in increasing housing supply.</li></ul> <p>Cllr Kidd proposed that these projects should report jointly to this Board and the Environment and Housing Board.</p> <p>Cllr Kidd also highlighted five short to medium term opportunities that would influence and help progress this work. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Deregulation Bill, where the LGA has already secured some amendments;</li><li>• The government commissioned review of the role of local authorities in housing supply;</li><li>• The Lyons review of housing, to which the LGA has already submitted evidence</li></ul>	

- The review of growth in non-metropolitan areas; and
- The LGA/CIPFA finance commission, which will also consider housing issues.

In the discussion that followed the following points were made:

- That the needs assessment and development of infrastructure must be integrated with planning for new/extended housing developments;
- Endorsement for the need to seek innovative ideas (esp from across Europe) at the same time considering how these might fit in with existing communities;
- That there needs to be an emphasis on understanding why sites, that have planning permission, are not subsequently being developed
- Acknowledgement of the role county councils play in providing the strategic 'glue' in pulling together local plans;
- Concern that ONS data appears not to be consistent with the data going into some plans;
- Recognition of the need to build communities that will have a positive impact on the wellbeing of older people;
- The benefit that might be gained if Councils could work with the construction industry to support growth in development and smooth out cycles of 'build and bust';
- Welcome the emphasis on reform of Right to Buy so that receipts are reinvested directly in local housing
- Noted the importance of engaging the MoJ and the MoD in developing local plans.

### **Action**

To extend an invitation to **Nick Faulkes, ?????**

### **Decision**

Members to continue to support the LGA in lobbying government on these issues.

### **Planning and infrastructure for growth, including broadband.**

Cllr Eion Watts introduced two papers, the first on Planning and Infrastructure for Growth, the second on Superfast Broadband.

### **Part 1: Planning and Infrastructure for Growth**

Cllr Watts set out the proposed outputs of this programme of work which would be a report with accompanying lobbying strategy and an event in late Autumn that will cover:

- Why infrastructure delivery is important and the key issues that need to be addressed ;
- The challenges and barriers to infrastructure delivery (including associated evidence);
- Councils' achievements in planning and delivering infrastructure; and
- Policy recommendations.

In the Board discussion, the following points were raised:

- Infrastructure must be considered jointly for different developments in a local plan and Local Economic Plans (LEPs) must also be part of the consideration especially given that they seem to be a better forum for infrastructure development;
- Integrated infrastructure development across neighbouring local plans is essential, especially given the difficulties that arise in attempting to join up retrospectively. The role of county councils was acknowledged as being important in the respect;
- Co-terminosity with other agencies is also an important factor in ensuring the joining up of different plans to inform infrastructure needs and development.

**Decision:**

Members **noted** the proposed work programme and the issues raised.

**Part 2: Superfast Broadband**

Cllr Watts provided an overview of progress in the Rural Broadband Programme and the Superfast Broadband Extension Programme and some of the concerns and issues raised by those councils involved.

In the light of these concerns Cllr Watts proposed the following five key tasks for the LGA project:

- a. Continuing to try to secure value for money for councils by **providing practical support through Local Partnerships** on contract management and by **supporting collaboration on procurement for the Extending Broadband Programme**
- b. opening up a dialogue with OFCOM on the **regulatory framework** for the telecommunications market
- c. pressing Ministers to ensure **proper competition for contracts** to reach the final five per cent of the population
- d. promoting **councils as best placed to join up the broadband rollout** with efforts to encourage people and businesses to get online, and wider public service transformation
- e. developing a **compelling account of digital infrastructure needs** in non-metropolitan places to inform Government's work on post-2015 digital infrastructure.

The outputs of the project will be:

- a. An event on **30 June 2014** for the 45 councils who have expressed an interest in the Extending Broadband Programme

to explore opportunities for collaborative procurement.

- b. **By September 2014** developed proposals for regulatory reform and opened up dialogue with OFCOM.
- c. **By Autumn 2014** influenced the final 5% project so that solutions are cost effective for councils.
- d. **By Autumn 2014** influenced the Government's work on post-2015 digital infrastructure to ensure that it takes account of the situation in non-metropolitan places. It is proposed that a joint meeting with Lead Members from the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board feeds into this.

In the discussion that followed the following points were made:

- The problem of lack of access to superfast broadband was acute for children at school in rural areas;
- That integration of the roll-out of broadband into local development and local economic plans was critical not only locally but important to the economic growth of the whole country;
- That BT have moved from 95% local targets to a target of 95% average across the country which will result in some areas failing to achieve a minimum of 95% roll-out;
- In some areas it may be worth seeking alternative connectivity solutions than broadband (learning from Tranche 1 of contracts) and perhaps the £10m fund should be focussed on new IT solutions for rural areas.
- That councils should start to look ahead to Phase 3 roll-out

#### **Decision:**

Members **noted** the proposed work programme and the issues raised.

#### **Employment skills and economic growth**

Paul Raynes gave a brief overview of the programme of work on welfare, employment and skills and its focus on integrating services around the needs of unemployed people and low income households at a local level.

11 localities have been selected to develop an evidence base for the Boards proposals. These are:

- Devon
- Essex
- Surrey
- Lincolnshire
- Shropshire
- Staffordshire
- Greater Manchester
- West Yorkshire combined authority (Leeds, Wakefield and Barnsley)
- Newcastle
- South London tri-borough (Lambeth, Southwark and

- Lewisham)  
• Southampton and Portsmouth

The following outputs are expected:

- Initial report setting out the challenge by place to be presented at LGA annual conference;
- A second report setting out the impact on residents which will be published during the autumn; and
- A final report, to be published by the beginning of 2015 which will pull together all of the findings and make some recommendations for the future design and delivery of welfare, employment and skills support to contribute to a model of devolved commissioning and delivery of welfare, employment and skills development services,

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

- The need to focus on skills and the mismatch between skills needs and education programmes in schools at a local level
- Links between primary schools and industry and commerce should be encouraged so that young people are exposed to ways of working from an early age.

**Decision:**

Members **noted** the proposed work programme and the issues raised.

**3 The Independent Commission for economic growth and the future of public services in non-metropolitan areas**

Carolyn Downs provided an overview of the progress in setting up the commission and its activities to date. The terms of reference and the call for evidence were briefly discussed. The Commission was formerly launched on the 27<sup>th</sup> May and seeks to offer a more radical set of proposals for improvement. It will produce an interim report at the LGA conference in July with a full report expected in October 2014

**Decision:**

Members noted the terms of reference and call for evidence

**Action**

Members were asked to talk to their business and voluntary communities, encouraging them to input evidence into the Commission..

**4 Minutes of the last meeting**

**Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr David Hodge	Surrey County Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Eion Watts	Bolsover District Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Mrs Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
Members	Cllr Roger Begy OBE	Rutland County Council
	Cllr Mrs Gillian Brown	Arun District Council
	Cllr Neil Clarke MBE	Rushcliffe Borough 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 Jennifer Mein	Lancashire County Council
	Cllr Sian Reid	Cambridge City Council
	Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
	Cllr Mrs Izzi Seccombe	Warwickshire County Council
Apologies	Cllr Sherma Batson MBE	Stevenage Borough Council
	DL	
	Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
	Cllr Andrew Bowles	Swale Borough Council
	Cllr Stan Collins	South Lakeland District Council
	Cllr Michael Jones	Cheshire East Council
	Cllr Vince Maple	Medway Council
	Cllr John Pollard	Cornwall Council
In Attendance		
LGA Officers		