

Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board

Agenda

Tuesday, 19 May 2020
12.00 pm

**Meeting will be held remotely – Zoom details will
be circulated separately**

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

Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board
19 May 2020

There will be a remote meeting of the Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board at **12.00 pm on Tuesday, 19 May 2020**.

Attendance:

Member Services will record attendance on the call.

Political Group meetings:

The group meetings will take place in advance of the meeting. Please contact your political group as outlined below for further details.

Apologies:

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting.

Conservative:	Group Office: 020 7664 3223	email: lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk
Labour:	Group Office: 020 7664 3263	email: Lewis.addlington-lee@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat:	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: libdem@local.gov.uk
Independent:	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk

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Carers' Allowance

As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of £9.00 per hour or £10.55 if receiving London living wage is available to cover the cost of dependants (i.e. children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.

Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board – Membership 2019/2020

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (7)	
Cllr David Renard (Chairman)	Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Peter Butlin	Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Mark Crane	Selby District Council
Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Patrick Nicholson	Plymouth City Council
Cllr Nicholas Rushton	Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Linda Taylor	Cornwall Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Sean Anstee CBE	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Richard Burton	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Cllr Catherine Rankin	Kent County Council
Cllr James Evans	Powys County Council
Labour (7)	
Cllr Darren Rodwell (Vice-Chair)	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council
Cllr Amanda Serjeant	Chesterfield Borough Council
Mayor Philip Glanville	Hackney London Borough Council
Cllr Ed Turner	Oxford City Council
Cllr Rachel Blake	Tower Hamlets Council
Cllr Michael Mordey	Sunderland City Council
Cllr Christopher Hammond	Southampton City Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Tom Hayes	Oxford City Council
Cllr Peter Mason	Ealing Council
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Cllr Adele Morris (Deputy Chair)	Southwark Council
Cllr Peter Thornton	Cumbria County Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Stewart Golton	Leeds City Council
Independent (2)	
Cllr Linda Gillham (Deputy Chair)	Runnymede Borough Council
Cllr David Beaman	Waverley Borough Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Loic Rich	Cornwall Council
Cllr Diana Moore	Exeter City Council
Cllr Tim Hodgson	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Agenda

Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board

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Zoom details to be circulated separately

Item	Page
1. Declarations of Interest	
2. Decarbonisation of Transport	1 - 10
3. EEHT Key issues paper	11 - 28
4. LGA Headline Work and Key Asks	29 - 42
5. EEHT Board Priorities and Work Programme	43 - 54
6. Minutes of the previous meeting	55 - 64
7. Any Other Business	

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 7 July 2020, 12.00 pm

Decarbonisation of Transport

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

This report the work that the Board Commissioned from researchers at the University of Leeds on Transport Decarbonisation. Professor Greg Marsden, Leeds University, has been leading the work that the LGA has commissioned and he will provide a short presentation about this work as well as provide members with expert insight and potential implications for future transport policy from these developments. Biographies for our guest speakers can be found at **Appendix A**.

The report goes on to describe some of the implications for public transport as a result of COVID19 and sets out recommendations and suggestions for future work.

Recommendation

That the Board consider issues and opportunities and challenges raised in the paper and by Leeds experts:

- To comment and endorse recommendations made in paragraphs 19 to 29.
- To note that the work programme may need to be reviewed as directed by the Board. A paper on the revised work programme can be found elsewhere in the agenda

Actions

Officers will act as directed.

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Decarbonisation of Transport

Background

1. As a result of the decision by the LGA to declare a climate emergency the board has been examining carbon reduction as one of its key priorities this year. Given that transport is the biggest single contributor to the UK's greenhouse gas emissions the board had asked for additional work to help councils in determining their role in decarbonising transport, including commissioning Leeds University's Institute for Transport Studies.
2. Since this work commenced, there have been further significant developments that will help frame the LGA's future work and policy direction with regards to the decarbonisation of transport agenda:
 - 2.1. The Department for Transport published "Creating the transport decarbonisation plan" which scopes out the current challenges and steps to be taken when developing the transport decarbonisation plan.
 - 2.2. With effect from 23 March the Government implemented widespread restrictions on the movement of people and closing down of certain businesses in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. This has had a dramatic effect on demand for transport across different modes.
3. There are both opportunities and challenges for councils from these developments which this paper explores, including potential policy implications for the board to consider. Professor Greg Marsden, Leeds University, has been leading the work that the LGA has commissioned. He will provide a short presentation about this work as well as provide members with expert insight and potential implications for future transport policy from these developments. He will be joined by Professor Jillian Anabel who will be able to take part in the discussion as necessary.

University of Leeds work

4. The University of Leeds has been commissioned to assist us with a programme of research which will involve capturing and disseminating best practice, expert views and initiate debate on the decarbonisation of transport. The project also seeks to disseminate practical advice for councils and elected members on issues such as modal shift, adoption of low/ zero carbon technologies and behaviour change, addressing issues such as:
 - 4.1. The role of local government and local leadership;
 - 4.2. What more councils can do;
 - 4.3. Identify policy and institutional barriers;
 - 4.4. Demystify the technology alternatives; and
 - 4.5. Identify mutual benefits.

5. The work will explore the implications of moving to a strategy of “Avoid, shift and improve”. i.e. avoid individual motorised transport; shift transport and travel demand from carbon-intensive to more sustainable modes like rail, public transport, cycling or walking; and improve efficiency and reduce total emissions, whilst recognising different geographic circumstances.

DfT transport decarbonisation scoping report

6. On 26 March the DfT published their [Creating the transport decarbonisation plan](#) policy paper. This is essentially a scoping document setting out the current challenges and steps to be taken in developing the Department’s transport decarbonisation plan.
7. The document helpfully sets out a clear statement of the scale of the challenge facing the transport sector if the country is to achieve its net zero target. It covers:
 - 7.1. How the Government intends to work with others to develop a transport decarbonisation plan
 - 7.2. The challenges in reducing transport emissions and ensuring we reach net zero transport emissions by 2050
 - 7.3. Reviews of existing climate policy in transport
 - 7.4. Reviews of existing forecasts of future transport emissions from each mode of transport, plus as a whole
8. The plan includes welcome commitments to active travel as the most important means of decarbonising short trips, an acknowledgement that simply electrifying current traffic levels will not achieve sufficient levels of reduction and that the solutions to these challenges need to be place-based and will differ across the country. Whilst the focus on modal shift to active and public transport is welcome there is very little emphasis placed on demand reduction.
9. The document included commitments to engagement with stakeholders, especially councils, and LGA officers have been in discussion with DfT about how this may be done under current social distancing requirements, ensuring a wide variety of local government views can be captured.

The impact from COVID19 pandemic and how transport and travel has changed

10. COVID19 has dramatically changed our transport networks within a matter of weeks. There has been a dramatic fall in traffic, traffic associated emissions and change in travel patterns which are predicted to have lasting longer-term impacts. This requires a review of the Board’s work. The practical interventions that were previously explored with councils may be impractical in the current and future circumstances. However, opportunities for swifter and more comprehensive action in other areas may have opened up. For example, reducing the demand for travel through greater virtualisation of

work is an area that has been completely transformed by the demands of the crisis. Its impact on emissions and the wider economy is a phenomenon that requires further exploration and building on.

11. The COVID19 crisis has not changed the underlying challenges of climate change. There is still a need to decarbonise the economy as quickly as possible to mitigate the damage that will be done by increasing global temperatures. The crisis has exposed the extent of behaviour change that will be necessary and the immediate public health challenge and economic recovery has led to a competing set of pressures to account for.
12. It is clear we need to deal with the public health crisis and support the economic recovery in a way that is consistent with the need to decarbonise the economy. These priorities are not incompatible, and the crisis may be a catalyst to allow us to change travel and other behaviour patterns. This could mean future LGA work and messaging needs to be predicated around the concept of a climate smart recovery where we simultaneously seek economic recovery from the crisis but in a way that is socially equitable and decarbonises the economy.

Potential impact of COVID 19 on the economics of transport

13. Prior to the crisis, the Government was demonstrating a greater policy focus on public transport, in particular buses, where the intention was to produce a National Bus Strategy. The LGA was very supportive of this direction of travel. The prospect for public transport has changed quickly and radically since the onset of COVID 19 and this raises questions about whether councils should take on a bigger role in the coordination and commissioning of local public transport.
14. Viable public transport is dependent on a level of patronage that is impossible to achieve in the current crisis and will be difficult to achieve in a stepped approach from lockdown unless significant public funding is made available. Most public transport in England is provided by the private sector. Nowhere in the country currently has sufficiently busy and dense travel corridors to support any public transport and operators signalled early in the crisis that they could not continue to operate in circumstances that would have meant substantial losses and bankruptcy; train operators and later bus operators threatened to withdraw services without Government support.
15. The Government quickly accepted the position, recognising the importance of the public transport networks to many key workers, and currently public transport that is still running is completely dependent on central and local government subsidy. Operators in both rail and bus sectors are now effectively operating management contracts with services running regardless of patronage with all the revenue risk and losses transferred to the public sector through a variety of funding streams. This is an emergency response to the crisis and direct payment to operators will potentially start to be withdrawn in the coming months. However:

- 15.1. Current travel patterns are unable to support any private sector provision of public transport
 - 15.2. With current social distancing rules, buses will be limited to around 15 per cent of their usual maximum capacity. Running normal services under these restrictions is not viable. For the network to return to any kind of normality we would need to see the safe relaxation of social distancing measures. The Government's plan for emerging from the emergency measures indicates that it will be several months before it is possible to do so safely
 - 15.3. The travel patterns we anticipate will be unlikely to support profit making public transport, at least for the foreseeable future
 - 15.4. Mothballed capacity will be extremely difficult to recover as people will adapt their travel patterns to the new reality
 - 15.5. Recovering the level of service will take significant up-front investment that is loss making for some time.
16. In this reality it seems the only public transport capacity that will be viable for some time will be state backed and any capacity that is lost will potentially be lost for many years.
17. The picture has been different for areas where light rail or other mass transit is supported by a public authority. In these circumstances the loss ultimately falls to the responsible authority who are unable to withdraw services or declare bankruptcy. They have essentially had to record large deficits and appeal to the Government for emergency support. These conversations are ongoing.
18. We need to ensure that we continue to make the case for public transport because of its importance in reaching zero-net carbon targets, achieving inclusive economic growth and ensuring access to transport in otherwise isolated communities.

Next steps

19. The developments described above present a unique opportunity to shape future transport policy. Officers have identified a number of practical steps that the Board could take over the coming months that could help:

Buses

20. In order for the bus industry to survive it will require state support. The current emergency support, via existing subsidy from local and central Government, is uncoupled from the actual service provided, with local government contracts continuing to be honoured and reliance on direct emergency payments from the DfT. These crisis measures will need to be rationalised. Many councils are already proposing that any future subsidy regime for buses should be through councils. Councils are best placed to allocate subsidy on the basis of their local knowledge for the core routes for their

network. This builds on our existing policies which already call for: greater oversight of bus services; for the Bus Services Operator's Grant to be devolved to councils; and for franchising rules to be simplified and be automatically available for all councils.

Active travel

21. There have been moves by some authorities to re-designate road space towards pedestrians and cyclists.
22. This has been made easier by the Government issuing temporary guidance on the publication of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). This is in response to fact that many local newspapers have ceased publication. The LGA has welcomed this temporary guidance and would urge the Government to look at the current regulations again post crisis. Councils can use more web-based publicity options to ensure people are consulted about TROs in a more effective and more efficient manner.
23. On 9 May the Government announced further support to councils to promote active travel by committing to spend £2 billion of the £5 billion identified earlier in February for buses and cycling improvement. This includes £250 million to be spent on immediate cycling measures, the bulk of which is expected to go to councils and allocation of the remainder is expected to be determined alongside this summer's updated Cycling and Walking Strategy. The recent announcement also included an extension of scooter trials via an invitation to all areas. Further details from the announcement can be found in the key issues paper.

Demand management

24. The pandemic has led to a massive increase in remote working with many sectors transferring their entire workforce to remote working at short notice. It has also increased the number of people using online shopping.
25. This behaviour is likely to accelerate the trend towards remote working and online shopping. This could have positive impacts on demand for transport and help the country reach its decarbonisation targets. It could also have a detrimental impact on footfall within our town centres both from the reduction of employees using shops and leisure facilities around their workplace but also in reducing demand for high street retailers. The Board is in a good position to consider the trends across transport and town centres as we emerge from emergency measures and start the recovery and the implications for councils and national Government policy.

Changing the approach to funding

26. Many of the funding models and mechanisms that currently exist for infrastructure will need to be reassessed as a result of the crisis. Whilst infrastructure provision will play a crucial role in stimulating demand for the recovery it is important to ensure that the infrastructure investments that are made are aligned with wider environmental goals.

27. The LGA has long called for local infrastructure decisions to be taken at as local a level as possible. Much of the funding councils currently receive is fragmented and reliant on competitive bidding processes which waste scarce resources and force councils to bid for projects which fit with central Government criteria rather than producing holistic packages of investment which could enhance and decarbonise local transport networks.

28. Before this crisis the DfT had indicated that it would like to simplify the process for allocating capital to local infrastructure programmes to allow councils to make long term decisions over programmes of works. This is work that we believe is vital for a recovery that delivers on councils economic, social and environmental goals for local transport.

Air Quality measures

29. Councils that have been mandated to produce clean air plans are currently facing difficulty in completing the necessary technical assessments. Councils are still legally obliged to complete their plans and implement them in the shortest possible time to bring emissions down to the legal limits. There are currently significant challenges in validating traffic models based on pre COVID information and undertaking the necessary public consultation in order to implement measures.

30. Emission levels are likely to have changed significantly as a result of this crisis and we propose that the Board now asks the Government to ensure that air quality policy fits in the new reality whilst also incorporating wider environmental goals.

Implications for Wales

31. Transport is a devolved matter. We will be happy to share information from the Transport Decarbonisation project with colleagues from Wales

Professor Greg Marsden PhD. Meng, FCIHT, FHEA

Greg is Professor of Transport Governance at the Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds. He has researched issues surrounding the design and implementation of new policies for over 20 years covering a range of issues. He is an expert in climate and energy policy in the transport sector and is the Transport Decarbonisation Champion for EPSRC. He is the Principal Investigator on the DecarboN8 network where he is responsible for integrating a new place based approach to decarbonising transport. Greg co-chairs the Commission on Travel Demand which has published influential studies on travel demand and shared mobility. He is the Secretary General of the World Conference on Transport Research Society and the Chair of the Special Interest Group on Governance. He has served as an advisor to the House of Commons Transport Select Committee and regularly advises local, national and international governments.

Professor Jillian Anable

Jillian Anable is Professor of Transport and Energy at the Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds. Her research addresses the potential for demand-side solutions to reduce carbon, local emissions and energy from transport. She has sat on a number of advisory boards and strategy panels for UK Government Departments, National Research Councils and NGOs, including currently acting as Chair to the Research and Evidence Group for the Scottish National Transport Strategy Review.

EEHT Key Issues Paper

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

This report is intended as an update of the work that has been underway in the LGA on EEHT themes during the crisis, but also as a basis for discussion of the issues we should be addressing going forward. Elsewhere in the agenda we pick up these themes in a proposed repurposed work programme.

Recommendation

That the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board reflect and provide comments on the issues raised in this paper.

Action

Officers will take action as directed.

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EEHT Key Issues Paper

Background

1. Since early March the work of the LGA has been focused almost exclusively on supporting councils as they serve their communities during the COVID-19 emergency. This has meant: working quickly with Government as it puts in place enabling legislation; helping to shape Government guidance on a range of issues; supporting the sector in its call for additional funding; and helping councils to deliver new services, such as the payment of grants to small businesses.
2. The Government has now introduced a new COVID alert system with five alert levels that will influence the rate and degree to which we exit from the emergency measures announced on 23 March. The alert level is determined by the number of cases and the R number, or transmission rate, of the virus. Level five is the most critical, and the UK is currently ready to move from level four to three. The timing and pace of the exit from emergency measures will impact in various ways across the Board's themes, not least on the scale of the economic impact.
3. We will recover into a changed economic, social and environmental context. The Board will want to consider its work programme under each of its themes to assess how the work areas need to adjust and to identify new priorities. Item 4 of the Board agenda will provide an opportunity for members to discuss proposed updated priorities and a corresponding work programme.
4. This report addresses the key issues that arise associated with the current position, including policy and legislative changes that are supporting councils, and brief updates on policy areas. It looks at some of the pressures that councils are facing and will face as the country begins to exit from the emergency measures and discusses the recovery phase and how we begin to articulate the future role and work of the Board.

Housing and planning

Current measures

5. On housebuilding, whilst the Government has advised that they can remain open, a significant number of construction sites across the country remain closed, including local authority new build programmes. This has obvious implications for the planned delivery of new homes. It also means some councils may fail to meet 5-year housing land supply and Housing Delivery Test requirements which puts them at risk of speculative planning applications. The LGA has asked Government to suspend the presumption in favour sanctions relating to these two measures.

6. Separately, the closure of construction sites means that some councils are at risk of having to return unspent Right to Buy receipts to the Government, that would otherwise have been used to replace homes sold under the scheme. The LGA has asked Government for an extension to the three-year spend period to at least five years.
7. There are also a number of income and cost pressures which may affect the future financial sustainability of Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA), including increased levels of rent and service charge arrears; void losses and loss of development income. There is a risk that these could have an impact on both councils' ability to deliver their responsibilities as local housing authorities as well as their housing delivery plans. This is in addition to other increased costs as a result of building safety reforms, as well those arising from a potential revised Decent Homes Standard, and a proposed Future Homes Standard. The LGA continues to raise these concerns with Government and will look to commission further work to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the HRA.
8. On planning, councils are continuing to consider applications and engage with local communities, despite the inevitable disruption from staff sickness and deployment of staff in some areas to support the frontline response to COVID-19.
9. The Government has been clear that councils should prioritise decision-making to ensure the planning system continues to function, especially where this will support the local economy.
10. Now that the necessary regulations are in place, many councils are taking forward remote planning committees for applications that need to be considered via that route. However, planning teams require additional flexibility in carrying out their duties. The LGA has asked the Government for further support in several areas to enable councils to continue to deliver planning services as effectively as possible during the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes: flexibility on the publicity requirements for planning application and Local Plan processes; flexibilities on statutory timescales; clarity on site visits; flexibility to temporarily defer Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments; streamlined powers to extend permissions which are due to expire and a temporary suspension of the ability to appeal against non-determination.
11. We have also made clear to the Government that any proposals to allow working hours on construction sites to be extended need to be negotiated with the relevant local authority, so that they can take into account any impact on local residents and businesses.
12. It is also important that the plan-making process continues to move forward where possible so that councils can get up to date plans in place. This will ensure that councils are on a positive footing for economic recovery. The LGA has asked the Government to issue guidance to the Planning Inspectorate to expedite the examination and adoption of Local Plan through a flexible light-touch approach and use of technology solutions which

enable virtual discussion and document sharing. For example, where there has already been a hearing, to allow completion through written representations. We have also asked for the requirement that councils make planning documents available at their principal office to be removed.

13. The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) have pulled together a series of resources, including Frequently Asked Questions, to support councils to change planning services in response to the outbreak and share good practice.
14. On council housing management, we have raised with Government a number of issues that have been hindering the ability of councils to deliver their responsibilities as local housing authorities and also their statutory homelessness duties. This has included the availability of parts, labour and equipment for urgent repairs and void works; transfers in and out of social tenancies and allocations and the need for clarity and flexibility regarding compliance with safety/regulatory standards e.g. gas safety checks, lift maintenance. In response the Government has provided some further guidance, particularly around local authorities responsibilities as both landlords and enforcement authorities and on allocations and transfers. Many of the issues around sourcing parts and equipment have now been resolved, but there remain some residual challenges.
15. On the private rented sector, councils are concerned that that there may be a spike in evictions once the emergency legislation extending the statutory notice period from two months to three and the 90-day suspension of possession proceedings is lifted. This could lead to increased flows into homelessness.
16. We welcomed the recent announcement from Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick that the Government are working on proposals to ensure added protections for tenants once the emergency measures are lifted but await further detail.

Recovery and future work

17. We have seen a number of housebuilders return to construction from early May and expect more to follow over the coming days and weeks. This is positive news for housing delivery, but it will be critical that this is done in a way which ensures the safety of workers on construction sites and avoids becoming a contributory factor to the spread of COVID-19.
18. In order to proactively address the challenge of building more homes in the wake of the pandemic, it will be increasingly important for councils to play a key role in both delivery of their own house-building programmes, but also in enabling the private sector to bring forward much needed development. We have started work on the development of a package of housing stimulus proposals that would enable councils to build more affordable, high quality and sustainable homes at scale, and at pace. This will include proposals for Right to Buy reform e.g. 100 per cent receipt retention, increasing the

proportion of receipts that can be used to meet the cost of a replacement home, ability to combine receipts with other Government funding streams.

19. The Board may also wish to consider what outcomes it would want from any potential stimulus package to support the private sector, and the role councils could play in supporting delivery of homes that meet the needs of local communities through their role as leaders of place.
20. In the light of COVID-19, the planning system is once again likely to face increasing scrutiny and there are already calls from some industries for a relaxation/simplification of planning rules to support economic recovery. We also still await the publication of the Government's Planning White Paper which is likely to reflect on how the planning system might effectively support recovery into a new economic environment.
21. Whilst it is too early to speculate, there is also potential for fundamental changes to the ways in which people live, work, play and travel in the future as a result of COVID-19. Councils, as leaders of place, will become more important than ever in ensuring the development of resilient local areas that meet current and future needs. The LGA will need to continue to advocate for a properly resourced local plan-led system and resist proposals that reduce local decision-making. We will continue to engage with MHCLG as they develop proposals for the forthcoming Planning White Paper.
22. Other projects which were underway before the COVID-19 outbreak are still on track for completion. These include a research report and practical toolkit for councils on improving the quality of the private rented sector and a report looking at the different models of partnership working between councils and housing associations that are enabling delivery of new homes.

Homelessness

Current

23. Councils' homelessness services are experiencing significant demand pressures as a result of COVID-19, and work from the LGA and central Government has focused on supporting councils to manage these pressures. LGA work on homelessness prevention and out of area placements has consequently been paused, with a view to repurposing as we move towards supporting councils with recovery.
24. One of the most immediate concerns for councils has been around the availability of accommodation for people who are least able to self-isolate, i.e. people sleeping rough or in dormitory-style accommodation. This work was made particularly urgent by the Government directive issued on 26 March, which stated that councils were to accommodate all people in this cohort (the "everyone in" directive).

25. MHCLG interventions to support with this have included the release of a £3.2 million emergency fund to accommodate rough sleepers, alongside two allocations of un-ringfenced funding totalling £3.2 billion. Government has also been working with accommodation providers including hotels to ensure that they can be available for local authority placements.
26. As a result of significant local efforts, 90 per cent of people on the streets at the beginning of the crisis and known to local authorities have been offered accommodation. This equates to over 5,400 rough sleepers.
27. The LGA has been liaising with MHCLG to highlight key areas where further support is needed to minimise public health risks and guide local approaches. We are asking for guidance on how councils should be delivering their duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act, e.g. conducting assessments, fulfilling administrative requirements. Limited guidance for councils from national Government means that homelessness teams are uncertain about how to deliver their duties under the Act in the context of extraordinary service pressures.
28. Councils are reporting issues relating to being able to effectively support the large numbers of people who have been accommodated. We are working with Government to highlight that the lack of national-level guidance poses a potential public health risk, due to a lack of clarity on personal protective equipment (PPE) and limited resource being allocated by the NHS towards supporting safe accommodation placements.
29. Council homelessness teams are taking a role in coordinating and providing support for homeless people. This includes providing them with accommodation, support services including for substance dependency, and additional support such as food, transport (where needed), supporting with claiming benefits, and personal items. Councils are also facing increased costs from staffing due to new working arrangements and increased sickness. This combination of higher demand and exceptional costs is having a significant effect on councils' financial reserves and the funding for homelessness services should be increased.
30. Councils are seeing continued flows into homelessness and rough sleeping, creating an urgent need for more temporary accommodation. This is likely to increase as the lockdown continues, due to increased incidences of domestic abuse and family breakdown, and discharge from hospital and prison services. We are asking Government to continue to support councils to identify and procure accommodation for placing people experiencing homelessness.
31. Councils have expressed concerns that the costs incurred from accommodating and supporting individuals since the "everyone in" directive may not be fully met by Government. We have urged MHCLG to demonstrate a commitment that additional demand-related costs will be met, alongside the costs of delivering business as usual

services with reduce income flows. We have also requested clear and consistent communications from Government departments about which funding streams are available to meet accommodation needs, including for individuals with no recourse to public funds.

32. The LGA has responded to the HCLG select committee inquiry on the impact of COVID-19 on private renters, rough sleepers and homeless people. We have highlighted the above concerns in our response, as well as issues relating to recovery and future work.

Recovery and future work

33. Councils are currently accommodating significant numbers of people on an emergency basis, many of whom might not meet the criteria for statutory homelessness support. We are concerned that there is a longer-term reputational and public health risk arising from the lack of clarity around a national-level 'exit strategy' for the large numbers of people who have been accommodated on an emergency basis. This risk is particularly acute for individuals with no recourse to public funds, as local authority support is unfunded.
34. We have highlighted to Government that councils require urgent clarity on on how they are expected to support the large numbers of people who are currently being accommodated on an emergency basis once the lockdown period ends in the forthcoming weeks. Significant Government intervention will be required to ensure that individuals are supported to move onto safe accommodation with appropriate support once the lockdown period ends.
35. On 2 May, MHCLG announced a taskforce, to be led by Dame Louise Casey, which aims to support councils in moving rough sleepers into sustained accommodation beyond the lockdown period. The taskforce will seek to engage with the LGA and with a group of senior local government officers, although the mechanism for engagement has not yet been detailed.
36. Work is also underway to explore how the LGA can directly support councils' homelessness services to plan for recovery and minimise the possibility of releasing large numbers of people back into street homelessness. We are looking to commission a resource for councils to support them to identify and procure temporary and secure accommodation.
37. In terms of wider homelessness, there are concerns that statutory homelessness services will experience a longer-term increase in demand after the lockdown period ends, and particularly once the ban on evictions has been lifted.

Environment

38. The Environment Bill and the Agriculture Bill are the main routes for Government to deliver the 25-year environment plan and will put in place key reforms such as reform of waste and recycling services and biodiversity net gain in new development. Both pieces of legislation have been paused and while they are still stated as a priority for Government it is unclear what the next steps will be.
39. Household waste and recycling services have been disrupted during the COVID-19 outbreak due to sickness levels and new operating practices to observe the 2-metre distancing rule. Core collection services of residual waste and recycling have been sustained with minor disruptions. Many councils temporarily suspended bulky waste and garden waste services, but these are recovering. Most household waste and recycling centres closed following the announcement of social distancing measures, allowing staff to be redeployed to other duties. Defra has issued non-statutory guidance to councils asking that household waste and recycling centres (HWRCs) should re-start as soon as possible to allow residents to dispose of waste where this is essential. Re-starting HWRCs is a local decision, as Government has recognised. Councils are making changes to HWRCs to allow for social distancing and to manage high levels of demand. Councils are reporting additional costs due to the impact of COVID-19 on waste services, which are likely to continue while social distancing rules are in place.
40. While policy development on climate change has been paused, projects commissioned from external suppliers have largely stayed on track, including research into decarbonising transport, and the development of renewable energy. Work is also underway looking at the potential to create green jobs, and a guide for scrutiny of climate change work.
41. We have engaged with most of the councils currently engaged in producing clean air plans, as a result in being mandated by DEFRA to bring NO_x levels down to comply with legal limits. There is concern that the current crisis may have an impact on the legal basis for any proposals as well as the policy direction the Government decides to take on this issue. We will be seeking urgent guidance for how authorities should proceed especially regarding public consultation and the modelling of any measures.

Recovery and future work

42. It will take some time for waste and recycling services to return to normal. Additional safety measures may need to be in place for some time, increasing costs and reducing capacity to collect waste. Restarting collections will need co-ordination with the waste industry to ensure that there are markets for material e.g. large electrical item. Prices and demand for recycled materials are likely to remain volatile and will be affected by global markets. There will need to be a period of transition and councils will have to manage pent up demand for services such as household waste and recycling centres.

43. Local Partnerships has completed a research project for the LGA on renewable energy. This identifies good practice to help councils understand the risks and opportunities associated with the development, purchase and ownership of large-scale renewable energy generation assets. The second part of the research considers the potential to decarbonise the national grid, which is a considerable national challenge. The report considers some of the strategic issues for councils and the LGA, for example in how this might affect the planning system. This work will be used as part of a wider discussion on the role of local government in a green recovery.
44. The consultation period on key environmental reforms will be squeezed if Government keeps to the original implementation timetable. The LGA will have early engagement with Government on how this is managed.

Public Transport

Current measures

45. Public transport has seen a collapse in ridership with the Government asking people to undertake essential travel only. Fewer people are travelling and those that are travelling are reluctant to use public transport because of social distancing as well as the lack of traffic making car travel relatively much more attractive. Ridership has reduced in many places by up to 90 per cent. It is impossible to run any commercial services in this climate.
46. The Government has responded by essentially supporting half the bus network through direct public subsidy to ensure a core network runs to allow key workers to get to work. The other half of the industry has been mothballed. The DfT is using a variety of funding regimes including BSOG, concessionary fares, supported services and home to school contracts. These funding pots are nominally the same as pre-crisis in order to maintain simplicity and get money to the industry as quickly as possible. None of them are operating how they are intended to, and funding levels no longer reflect the realities of the services that are being run.
47. On 9 May, the Secretary of State for Transport announced further measures to boost cycling, both in response to increased public demand but also as a means of reducing demand for individual car travel as travel restrictions are slowly eased as well as demand for reduced public transport capacity:
- 47.1. This will be supported by a £250 million emergency active travel fund. This is the first stage of a £2 billion investment, as part of the £5 billion in previously announced funding for cycling and buses. We expect that the initial allocations will be done on a formula allocation however this is yet to be confirmed.

- 47.2. The Government's drive to encourage people to choose greener forms of transport also includes bringing forward the e-scooter trials from next year to next month, with the trial being launched in the West Midlands. All areas in the country can also now apply to host a trial.
- 47.3. Drivers will be encouraged to purchase electric vehicles with an extra £10 million being committed to the on street residential chargepoint scheme which will allow councils to install new devices.
- 47.4. Apps are also being developed which will help people track transport capacity and advise on alternative modes of travel.
48. The rail industry has been temporarily taken into public control with train operators running management contracts for DfT who have assumed the fare revenue risk. DfT has committed to working on a rescue package for TfL and publicly operated light rail networks who were already running under this kind of arrangement and are now operating with large deficits.
49. The LGA has supported these emergency measures and has worked with DfT to ensure there is council oversight of the money spent and the level of service that is retained.

Recovery and future work

50. There will be important issues to consider in the medium term. The financial underpinnings of the public transport market will have been changed for the long-term by the crisis. It will take the DfT some time to remove this financial support without driving some providers out of business as the lockdown slowly unwinds. There will be reduced patronage for some time, and it is likely there will be a residual fear about people entering confined spaces at rush hour. It is also possible that the changes to working patterns during the crisis will change travel patterns permanently after the crisis. These factors mean that the public transport networks that exist post crisis are unlikely to look the same as the ones we had before. And yet public transport will remain vital to aid the economic recovery.
51. As the LGA we need to ask some key questions about what councils would want from a future funding regime. Public transport networks are vital to achieve our ambitions around decarbonisation, public health and economic recovery/ growth. In this light the Board may wish to consider what outcomes it would want from a new funding settlement for transport as well as what role councils may want in shaping these networks. This is covered further in the main board paper on decarbonisation of transport.

Economy

Current

52. The Government has put in place around £100 billion in grants and reliefs to support businesses and individuals through the current crisis. In addition, they have provided a loan guarantee scheme for around £330 billion of loans to small, medium and large businesses. In the case of small businesses, Government is guaranteeing 100 per cent of the loan value.
53. Councils have been given responsibility for paying out the Small Business Grant and the Retail Hospitality and Leisure Grants. Together these amount to £12.3 billion of support to businesses. Councils received this funding on 1 April 2020 and as of 10 May 2020 have paid out £9.1 billion or 74 per cent of the funding.
54. The LGA, drawing on the feedback from councils, made Government aware of the significant gaps in the support for businesses. Government has since established a local authority discretionary grant fund. This is a £617million fund (an additional 5 per cent uplift to the £12.33 billion Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund). Councils have raised concerns about the sufficiency of this, given the expected local demand. Further guidance on the fund is expected shortly.

Recovery and future work

55. Councils and Government are now thinking about economic recovery. A member level Economic Recovery Working Group has been established chaired by Simon Clarke MP, Minister of State, MHCLG, with representation from the LGA. The LGA also sits on officer/official groups looking at this issue.
56. Economic recovery is broadly being considered in three phases, restart, recovery and renewal. The first is the exit from emergency measures. The Government published its strategy for exiting the local down measures on 11 May. Immediately, this means that people are being encouraged to go to work, if their workplace is open; and there is a freeing up of travel restrictions for leisure. On or after 1 June non-essential shops will begin to open and schools will re-open for a limited number of whole year groups. On or after the 4 July a wider opening of outlets including restaurants and bars will be considered. Throughout there is no change to the social distancing requirements.
57. To accompany the strategy, the Government has also published a number of COVID Secure guides for workplaces, public spaces, transport and schools and childcare settings. We have raised with Government concerns about the capacity of councils to enforce the measures and have stressed that councils will need to make local decisions on how they prioritise their enforcement resources.

58. The second phase will look at consequences of the emergency for the structure of the economy recognising that we will be recovering into a new economic context. The latest data from the [ONS](#) shows that GDP fell by 5.8 per cent in March. This fall is approaching levels seen for the whole of the 13-month GDP decline seen during the financial crisis in 2008/09.
59. OBR produced a baseline scenario for the economy's performance over the coming months which indicates that the real GDP will have declined by 13 per cent in 2020, with a 35 per cent decline in Q2 2020. Its scenario suggests a V shaped recovery with real GDP growing by 27 per cent in Q3 2020. Several commentators have questioned the likelihood of a V shaped recovery, suggesting that with a slow emergence from lockdown, we might see a level of economic scarring that will slow any recovery.
60. Councils have shown extraordinary capability to lead their communities thus far and it is important that they are in the forefront of the economic recovery work. We know that councils have been working with their communities and businesses on their own local recovery plans. The social and economic task ahead is significant. We need an empowerment of place leadership through the convening power of local councils. We have asked Government to work with us as we bring together local public and private leaders to reshape services quickly and to customise them to the different needs of our villages, towns and cities.
61. Devolution becomes even more important because the recovery will look different in different areas of the county and only a locally coordinated response will be effective. We are anticipating that a Devolution White Paper to be published in September. Given the COVID 19 crisis, it is likely that that this will have an economic recovery focus. It might also reflect the Government's levelling-up agenda. We will want to see a devolution White Paper that devolves a core set of responsibilities to the local level, including skills.
62. Councils will need flexibility in the use of a range of levers as the emergency measures are lifted. We have written to Simon Clarke MP, Minister of State, MHCLG setting out some of our immediate asks for flexibilities (see **Appendix A**).
63. Councils will also want to reflect on the implications of the emergency period on the public's expectations around clean air and climate change and what this might mean for the economic recovery. A number of councils have raised the need for an economic recovery from the crisis that is socially equitable and decarbonises the economy. As we have said earlier, the LGA is undertaking work on the opportunities for green jobs and we will provide this to Board members when it is available.

Next Steps

64. Members are asked to consider and comment on the implications for the future work of the Board.

Implications for Wales

65. There are no immediate implications for Wales

From the Chairman of the LGA
Cllr James Jamieson

Simon Clarke MP
Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
4th Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

7 May 2020

Dear Simon

Following the recent meeting of the recovery group, I thought it would be helpful to provide some thoughts on where some changes to policy would help councils as leaders of place to support businesses and our communities as we emerge from the emergency measures. In the next 6 months we will need to bring flexibility and speed to our interventions to ensure that the economy is stabilised. Local government must be empowered to convene all public sector bodies in their areas, with those bodies empowered to make decisions reflecting differing public sector footprints

Bring Forward Council Investment Programmes

As we emerge from the emergency measures into recovery, there is a real opportunity for councils to prime the local economy through bringing public investment projects forward. To do this Government needs to confirm existing funding allocations, relax conditions on funding streams, provide planning and procurement freedoms and provide longer term funding visibility

- **For all current grant schemes HIF/Future High Streets/Stronger Towns/Growth Funds /Local Transport Schemes/ESIF**
 - Expedite allocations
 - Relax conditions so that Councils can get on and deliver, focus on delivery not process (e.g. HIF)
 - Enable cross virement to deliver
 - Extend deadlines and flexibilities on completion timescales
- **Provide a 5-year allocation for highway maintenance funding** providing certainty for the private sector partners and delivery organisations and will help councils to design transport infrastructure that meets the future needs of communities, reflecting their changing travel patterns
- **Schools Capital Funding**
 - Create a single, locally held schools' capital funding pot with a five-year settlement, will allow for available resources to be used as efficiently as possible and bring forward projects
 - Allow surplus school sites including Academies to be sold/redeveloped provided proceeds ringfenced for school capital

- **UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)** proposals should be brought forward at pace and underpin local efforts to drive medium and long-term economic recovery.
- **Planning and Procurement**
 - Continue with Procurement Flexibilities for Councils for all projects related to public housing and public building projects for 12 months
 - Incentivise use of Local Development Orders (LDOs) to allow Councils to introduce new locally-determined permitted development rights for all projects related to public housing and public building projects e.g. schools, health facilities, libraries, leisure centres
 - Change rules around 106/CIL such that councils can invest upfront in Schools/Roads etc and claw back from associated developments
 - Remove viability as a material planning consideration

Kick Start Commercial Investment

There are a number of measures and reforms that would enable councils to kickstart recovery by boosting the delivery of new homes and supporting infrastructure. These include:

- **Turbocharge One Public Estate programme,**
 - Enable Councils to acquire any public land identified as surplus or redundant by current Public Sector owner in their area to provide public facilities at the valuation determined by the District Valuer based on current use. Where project is commercial introduce a claw back arrangement for land value uplift
 - Councils to have first refusal on any Public land offered for sale
- **Acquiring Stalled Sites** Streamlined powers to enable councils to acquire other land where a sale or development has stalled.
- **Expediting the examination and adoption of Local Plans** through a flexible, light-touch approach, and use of technology solutions which enable virtual discussion and document sharing. In particular, where there has already been a hearing, allow completion through written representations. This will enable councils to quickly get up to date plans in place and ensure a positive footing for economic recovery.
- **Removing the requirement for councils to make planning documents available at their principal office** and other such places through amendment of Reg 35 1(a) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- **Introducing emergency powers to automatically extend planning permissions** which are due to expire in the next few months by a fixed period of time e.g. 6 months.
- **Right to Buy receipts**
 - Extend spend deadline from three years to five years.
 - Retain 100% of receipts
 - Right to Buy discount should not mean selling a property below build cost
 - Increase the proportion of retained Right to Buy receipts that can be used to meet the cost of replacement homes, currently capped at 30%
 - Combine Right to Buy receipts with other government grant funding streams

Local Transport

In addition to the infrastructure funding certainty and flexibilities outlined above, we would like you to consider other measures on transport will also greatly assist our collective response to recovery.

These include:

- **Grants to local transport authorities that allows them to specify and flex a bus network** during the recovery phase and deliver that network through secured bus service contracts with operators.
- **Making it easier to put Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) in place** so that councils can manage their networks in the recovery phase and undertake improvements to reflect new travel patterns, such as making it easier to close roads and pedestrianise streets.
- **Operationalising Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act** so that councils can manage and enforce against moving traffic offences to maintain better air quality and support public transport reliability.

Jobs and skills

Skills and training are going to be critical as we emerge from the immediate crisis. We will need:

- A **'Cobra' for jobs and skills** so Government Departments and agencies, local government, sector and trade bodies can co-ordinate and mobilise a response which ensures national skills and jobs investment lands well on the ground.
- A council/combined authority **multi-agency local skills and jobs taskforce** to coordinate local and national careers advice, employment, apprenticeships skills, and business support that is easy for residents and employers to access physically and online.
- A **Single flexible, local jobs and skills pot** combining all funds for non-levy apprenticeships, further education, careers advice, and back to work support, rolling in the new National Skills Fund and the National Retraining Scheme. This will help us make swift decisions including how to retrain those on Furlough and out of work. There is no time for multiple initiatives. If councils and combined authorities had the powers to strategically plan, and pool apprenticeship levy funds they would be in a position to address supply and demand side issues, widen participation to disadvantaged groups and specific cohorts.
- **Investment in locally commissioned, flexible job support schemes:** build on Future Jobs Fund and scale up local discretionary or devolved programmes. Contracting should be widened beyond 'prime providers' including recruitment agencies, and those that deliver employment services such as charities, housing associations, colleges and training providers, and local government. Those unemployed pre-COVID should not be last in the queue for support.
- **Young people:** with a reduced number of training and employment opportunities expected, the Government needs to engage councils and combined authorities and partners to plan and guarantee an education, employment and training place for all young people who were due to leave school or college.
- **Adults skills:** double the entire Adult Education Budget, increase investment in council-run adult and community learning, and publicly fund skills for three years to Level 3 qualifications.

- All investment prioritised to be based on **local labour market led careers advice and guidance** identifying which jobs will be generated. We must now move towards a joined up and locally relevant all age careers advice and guidance service as current provision is fragmented (young people) and patchy (adults).

Digital Infrastructure

Government must explore how to best leverage local superfast broadband projects already underway. It must streamline governance processes at Departmental level that see simple change requests by local areas or attempts to bring more premises into scope, take months if not years to approve. It must grant areas greater flexibility to use gainshare funding now to connect communities as soon as possible. It should explore the expanded use of voucher schemes to meet the immediate demand for broadband, particularly in more rural areas.

Creative, cultural and visitor economy

The creative, cultural and visitor economy will be important to the recovery:

- Councils need the finances and powers to convert and adapt buildings, including high street premises, into studios to facilitate the creative industries contribution to recovery.
- A wider **roll out of creative zones** would support councils in this and enable them to curate high streets.
- Funding locally led support to theatres and other venues that will not be commercially viable under conditions of social distancing but that want to reopen to improve community wellbeing and begin to use their multiplier effect on local economies.

I hope you find this helpful and I am happy to discuss any of these issues in more detail

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Jamieson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cllr James Jamieson
Chairman

LGA OVERVIEW OF ISSUES

Councils are working tirelessly to protect lives, livelihoods and the most vulnerable in our communities - to ensure that our most important public services keep running. This is a high-level summary of current and anticipated headline issues.

The immediate asks which have been put forward by councils are:

- **Social Care has become the front line of the battle against Covid-19 and councils and care providers need co-ordinated support to protect people using services and staff. While the focus has been rightly on care homes, and we share the government's ambition to build support to maintain resilience in the care home sector, councils support far more people outside care homes and we need a wider recognition of sector's role (and the risks) in supporting older people and people with disabilities as well as informal carers. The Government's Recovery Plan published on 11th May is welcome, but again makes the mistake of referencing social care principally in relation to its role in maintaining capacity in the NHS. We need genuine parity of esteem uniting the NHS and social care and a recognition that social care plays a huge societal role that goes well beyond supporting hospital discharge.**
- **The anticipated Plan to support care home resilience is needed urgently to support councils in providing the local leadership necessary across the health and care system as a whole.**
- **Access to PPE and testing continue to be key concerns for the sector and need to be addressed immediately.**
- **Grant funding worth £3.2 billion and cash flow measures have been welcome and provide additional certainty over the short term. The Government must continue to demonstrate a rock-solid commitment that it will meet the extra costs local authorities are facing due to the additional demands created by COVID-19, any additional costs of delivering 'business as usual' and the loss of income resulting from the lockdown. The total projected financial pressure in the year 2020/21 arising from the impact of COVID-19, including cost pressures, lost income and savings opportunities, nationally amounts to 3 to 4 times the £3.2 billion that has been allocated by Government so far. Projected income losses make up two thirds of this financial challenge.**
- **Councils are still encountering issues with the deliveries of food to shielded individuals and with the quality of the data provided by Government about these**

individuals. In addition, they are supporting vulnerable residents outside of the shielded cohort, but councils need Government's support in accessing supermarket delivery/collection slots for these people as well as in assisting those in a position of food insecurity.

- **Councils have effectively led their communities in lockdown. We need an empowerment of place leadership, through the convening power of local councils. The Government's plan, published on 11 May, sets out a stepped approach to emerging from the emergency measures. The plan envisages non-essential retail opening sometime after the 1 June and this will have an impact on the public realm. We are expecting COVID19 Secure Guidance on the public realm. Councils will need to be able to prioritise their resources locally to meet enforcement demands. We ask Government to work with us as we bring together local public and private leaders to stabilise our local economies and reshape services quickly, to customise them to the different needs of our villages, towns and cities. Councils will actively engage in how best they can support the Government's road map for reopening society and need to be enabled to move flexibly and quickly to meet the needs of their local communities.**

PROTECTING LIVES:

- **Social Care has become the front line of the battle against Covid-19 and councils and care providers need co-ordinated support to protect people using services and staff. Councils have a crucial role in supporting sector resilience and with local health services need to focus on working with local providers to access the workforce and clinical and financial support that they need. This is across the social care sector, including support for people to live at home, particularly domiciliary care and those using direct payments as well as support for informal carers. Any national oversight of this role must be balanced and proportionate and add value to council work.**
- **The sectors role in contact tracing needs further consideration with councils given advance notice of any additional responsibilities.**
- **We support Government ambition to ensure business continuity for all social care providers but for those that cater solely for the self-funder market, this should be addressed as a business support need rather than a council responsibility.**

Councils continue to ensure that comprehensive social care is delivered in their communities. They have had a central role in supporting national efforts to free up hospital beds and the discharge of hospital patients into social care has been an absolute priority for councils. This has contributed hugely to protection of our NHS. As the focus shifts out of hospitals, we need a commensurate shift of emphasis to protecting our social care and Government should make this a clear stated intention for the next period.

The focus recently has rightly been on care homes and we share the government's ambition to build support to maintain resilience in the care home sector. Councils have a crucial role in supporting sector resilience and need to focus on working with local providers. The anticipated plan to support care home resilience is needed urgently to support councils in providing the local leadership necessary across the health and care system as a whole. The support of local health services will be vital. National oversight must be balanced and proportionate and add value to council work.

Sector resilience also needs to embrace services to support people living at home, particularly domiciliary care and those using direct payments as well as informal carers. Crucially there needs to be a recognition that social care plays a huge societal role that goes well beyond creating and maintaining capacity to support hospital discharge.

Care providers and councils are still not able to access sufficient supplies of PPE. This continues to be a major concern and additional drops of PPE to LRF's have not significantly addressed this issue. Care workers and other staff are not being provided with the protection they need to carry out their roles looking after vulnerable people. This is putting workers and vulnerable people at risk. This has become a major credibility issue for the government and needs to be addressed in a manner which restores confidence to the sector. It is vital that the arrangements set out in the adult social care plan and associated guidance to education and children's settings are urgently translated to reality on the ground. The intended national "Clipper" system has been too slow to come on stream and providers are increasingly turning to alternative suppliers and facing inflated costs and lack of product assurance – giving rise to further risks.

"PPE is a huge issue – we were led to believe that PPE would arrive, and it didn't, although we did get a shipment of 50 fluid resistant masks. We are now seeking to source our own PPE" **Chief Executive**

"We are still critically low on clinical waste bags and containers, and less than 7 days endurance for body bags. LRF drops were significantly smaller than expected, so we really need accurate info about what is arriving." **SCG**

"We had a delivery of face masks that were not up to specification and had to be replaced. 7 boxes came damaged on last delivery" **County Council**

"LRF drops of PPE have had expiry dates of 2015 at worst and 2018/19 at best. We have decided that we will not use these." **Unitary Council**

It is welcome that the Secretary of State for Health has recognised the key role played in this crisis by care workers. Critical workers in social care and other key sectors should now be given parity with the NHS in terms of supply of PPE. There should be one system for the distribution of PPE rather than care workers and others being treated as second class workers.

Access to testing is critical to this work. The LGA welcomes the news that Baroness Dido Harding has been appointed to lead the programme of testing and tracing as part of the Government's ongoing response to COVID-19. Also, in a positive response to the calls of councils and the LGA, Ministers have asked local directors of public health to take charge of testing in care homes and to help inform local prioritisation of testing. The increase in testing availability is welcome but too many care workers are still unsure how to access tests and tragically we are seeing the number of deaths among care workers increase.

We are monitoring social care and workforce availability with private sector providers and continue to work with councils and providers on funding additional costs and managing provider cash flow. We are concerned that councils are being asked to support private sector providers who provide services entirely or predominantly to the self-funder market. We support government ambition to ensure business continuity for all social care providers but for those that cater solely for the self-funder market, this should be addressed as a business support need rather than a council responsibility. There are many calls on the £3.2 billion of funding allocated to councils and providing financial support to care businesses that do not contract with councils would only increase the gap between presenting pressures and resources available.

“Councils should be made aware of changing testing policy. Following the announcement of plans to include over 65s and those needing tests to return to work, our mobile testing unit site was inundated by people wanting tests without an appointment” **London Borough**

We welcome the Governments acknowledgement of our call to utilise the unparalleled skills, knowledge and experience of councils to help national efforts to track and trace coronavirus. Joining up local, regional and national responses to defeating this virus and getting them working effectively is crucial to beating it and lifting lockdown measures.

Councils know their communities best. It is vital that the Government capitalises on the significant work being done by Directors of Public Health to tackle the virus and increase local engagement in towns, cities and rural areas across the country. Councils’ must not be sidelined – they will be vital in supporting the national testing and contact tracing to halt the spread of COVID-19 and need to be included in the contact tracing programme. This means being given up-to-date infections data to enable them to target particular streets or communities to help to track previously unknown cases and encourage those with symptoms to self-isolate. This would also help address flaws in the NHS COVID-19 app which will not be able to reach every area of the country.

Costing an initiative like this is not straightforward as it could involve a significant amount of resource and for it to be in place for many months until a vaccine is ready.

FINANCE:

- **Cost pressures, the loss of income, and liquidity issues that all councils are experiencing are significant issues which need monitoring and addressing as they arise.**
- **Grant funding worth £3.2 billion and cash flow measures have been welcome and provide additional certainty over the short term. It is also welcome that the funding is not be ringfenced and that councils will be able to spend this on local priorities and pressures. The total projected financial pressure in the year 2020/21 arising from the impact of COVID-19, including cost pressures, lost income and savings opportunities, nationally amounts to 3 to 4 times the £3.2 billion that has been allocated by Government so far.**

- **Income losses constitute two-thirds of this financial challenge. This is due to predicted drops in collection of council tax and business rates income (60 per cent of projected income losses), as well as losses of fees, charges and commercial income (40 per cent of projected income losses).**
- **The Government must continue to demonstrate a rock-solid commitment that it will meet the financial challenges local authorities are facing due to the additional demands created by COVID-19 (including for services which were already under pressure such as social care, hardship and homelessness support), any additional costs of delivering ‘business as usual’ and the loss of income resulting from the lockdown. Only this will ensure council chief finance officers have the certainty they need to not consider issuing section 114 reports in the coming weeks and months.**
- **The payment schedule of the grant needs to be confirmed as soon as possible to allow councils to plan their cash flows. Other grants, such as the DHSC public health grant, should be considered for early payment in line with the approach taken to MHCLG social care grants.**

Certainty over sufficiency of funding and liquidity is vital to ensure that councils can successfully deliver the best possible response to COVID-19, but many councils are already finding themselves in a very challenging financial environment. Every council is seeing a huge drop in council tax, business rates and income they receive from fees and charges such as leisure services, commercial estate and parking. In addition, councils face increased costs to meet additional social care demand as well as those to support those in increased financial hardship.

Based on over 170 responses to the April MHCLG survey, which have been shared with the LGA, local authorities were projecting that, the 2020/21 annual financial pressure arising from the impact of COVID-19, including cost pressures, lost income and savings opportunities, nationally amounts to 3 to 4 times the £3.2 billion that has been allocated by Government so far.

Around two-thirds is due to projected losses in income, such as council tax and business rates (60 per cent of projected income losses) and fees and charges, commercial and other income (40 per cent of projected income losses). Councils fund anywhere between 5 and 70 per cent of their gross spending through sales, fees and charges, and council tax alone is worth around half of all council spending power. Therefore, drastic losses of this income have a very significant impact. Unallocated reserves would only cover up to half of the remaining shortfall on average.

The majority of the initial £1.6 billion allocation will have been spent on adult social care, which is in line with the Government’s approach to the distribution of this initial tranche of funding.

Different types of councils will face a different nature of pressures. For example, district councils are more exposed to losses in income, while county councils are dealing more with cost pressures on areas such as adult social care and children’s services. Unitary authorities will face a mix of both pressures which will be different in each area

“We had budgeted for £1m growth in 2020/21 – this will no longer happen. We have also developed best, medium and worst-case scenarios, and all of them draw on reserves”
District Council

“Our budget relies on income from fees and charges of £53m. Our current forecast is we will only collect £20m – a loss of £33m.” **Unitary Council**

“The funding shortfall in the region is over £900m from additional costs and loss of income; based on the first allocation of 1.6bn the region would need to receive 4-5 more funding top ups to cover this gap.” **Chief Executive**

Under existing regulations, Chief Finance Officers will need to consider issuing s114 reports if the Government does not provide sufficient guarantee and certainty that funding, and liquidity will be available as and when needed.

The Government has announced that implementation of both its review of relative needs and resources (‘Fair Funding Review’) and the move to 75 per cent business rates retention will now be postponed and not go ahead from April 2021. This will provide councils with more certainty over their 2021/22 budgets.

However, both reforms have been delayed on three separate occasions. The Government must provide clarity over the future of these reforms, including whether and when they will now be implemented, as soon as possible to help councils plan their medium-term financial strategies which will already be challenged by the impact of COVID-19.

THE MOST VULNERABLE:

- **Councils still need better data with greater detail about the shielded clinically vulnerable cohort, so they can ensure those who need assistance get the help they require.**
- **Councils are already supporting the NSV and need Government’s support in accessing supermarket delivery/collection slots for these people, as well as in assisting those in a position of food insecurity.**
- **Government needs to postpone or suspend the requirement to publish a wide range of data in order comply with the Local Government Transparency Code.**

With doorstep food deliveries to the clinically vulnerable 2.1m continuing, the main issues raised by councils relate to issues with the deliveries themselves, with for example, some individuals struggling to cancel parcels they do not need, while others who need parcels have not received them. Improvements in the timing, flow and quality of data between central government and councils about shielded individuals also needs addressing. For example, delays in updates to the NHS patient list data causing councils considerable problems in responding to the transfer of data on those shielded individuals the Government’s call centre has been unable to contact. As a result, councils are having to spend considerable time on data cleansing and are also struggling to report updates back to government. A simple

mechanism for councils to update centrally held data on contact councils have had with shielded individuals would also assist. Any processes put in place to assist those self-isolating with Covid-19 identified as a result of the development of tracing and testing measures need to build on and align with the support to the shielded group.

Councils have also established systems with their local voluntary and community groups to support the non-shielded vulnerable (NSV). Councils continue to provide high volumes of food parcels to this group, with one Northern unitary with a population of 140,000 delivering 9,000 food parcels per week. Similarly, councils have been supporting those in food poverty, even though they are not funded to do so, nor have statutory responsibilities to do so. Any nationally developed programme of support for the NSV and those in food poverty should build on these locally led and managed approaches, complementing and supporting councils' activity, not replacing it.

Defra's work to broker discussions with the supermarkets has resulted in an offer for councils to refer the NSV for the delivery/click and collect slots they need. Discussions continue with Defra and MHCLG on allocation of these slots and who they will be made available to. Consideration still needs to be given to how those NSV who are also digitally excluded can be supported, how rural and urban councils are supported to address the different circumstances they face, and how the NHS Volunteer Responders can assist in helping get food to the NSV, especially once social distancing measures are eased.

"There is a major issue with the national food parcel delivery service – our hub team have been contacted by people who had a food parcel the week before last, but didn't get one last week and have now run out of food so the council is having to deliver emergency boxes."

Chief Executive

"Emergency food demand to be fulfilled by boroughs is larger than anticipated, and government's expectations on what councils should be doing for those vulnerable but not shielded is unclear." **Unitary Council.**

Looking ahead to the transition from lockdown feedback from councils suggests that in addition to the surge in children's social care referrals referred to below, there will also be a surge in the reporting of domestic abuse cases. While there has been a considerable increase in demand on domestic abuse helplines this has not yet resulted in an increased number of cases being reported to councils. There are also concerns that supplies have been impacted by the lockdown which has resulted in drugs being cut with harmful substances and this practice will continue as lockdown restrictions are relaxed. There is also concern that drugs have been stockpiled by organised crime groups (OCGs) which will lead to greater availability and the possibility of escalating violence as OCGs re-establish county lines.

While additional flexibility for councils and partners to support children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) is welcome, we should continue to monitor whether further flexibilities are needed, for example on timescales to complete reviews and re-assessments.

Alongside this, the ongoing statutory requirement to publish data in line with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 is diverting authorities from other data priorities, such as managing and cleansing the data on shielded individuals. This requirement to publish a

wide range of data on items such as union facility time, parking spaces and pay multiples should be postponed or suspended at this time.

The Prime Minister's recent announcement about the nation's road map for reopening society has indicated a potential request for schools to consider limited reopening in June. Councils have seen a significant drop in referrals to children's social care since lockdown began. Action is being taken at a local level to address this and ensure that children are being kept safe, and referral rates are picking back up in some areas. We expect a surge in referrals when schools re-open. We are in discussions with DfE about all these issues and looking at how partners can work together on this.

KEEPING PUBLIC SERVICES RUNNING:

- **Councils have effectively led their communities in lockdown. We need an empowerment of place leadership, through the convening power of local councils. We ask Government to work with us as we bring together local public and private leaders to stabilise our local economies and reshape services quickly and to customise them to the different needs of our villages, towns and cities.**
- **As we move into the next phase of the Government's road map for reopening society councils should be enabled to deliver flexible and quick responses to the needs of their local communities. The effective delivery of the next phase will depend on all agencies working in partnership at the local level. Councils are best placed to convene this work.**

Councils have led their local communities in this time of crisis. They have kept public services running and communities are safe in the knowledge that if they need help their councils will be there for them. Across the country councils have worked hard to keep schools open for the children of key workers. They have got over 90 per cent of the homeless off the streets and into safe accommodation. 98 per cent of kerbside waste and recycling collections have continued as usual. Councils have also stepped up and overnight created new services for the vulnerable who need support whilst self-isolating. Local volunteers have stepped forward in their 1000's to support the communities' they live in.

The partnership between local and national Government is crucial in this time of emergency. The Government has now outlined its plan to emerge from the emergency measures, with the first relaxations taking place on 13 May. Councils are ready to support their communities and businesses as we begin the process of recovery and will flex local services accordingly. This means working in partnership with national Government to collectively develop service provision to meet the needs of local communities. As we have co-designed the emergency response, we will need to co-design the "new normal" and the support our communities will need to move towards exiting lockdown and moving towards recovery.

This COVID19 Secure Guidance on Workplaces published on 11 May 2020 highlights councils' enforcement role. We know that councils' regulatory teams are already stretched, and councils will need to have local flexibility to prioritise their use to best meet the needs of their communities. The Government has outlined its message on the road map for reopening society. National messaging around social distancing and carrying out vital activity needs to remain consistent so that councils can deliver effective local services in line with current resourcing pressures. Councils have come under recent pressure to reopen Household Waste

Correct as of 11.05.2020 at
19:00

Recycling Centres (HWRC), parks and cemeteries. Councils are working with Government to address these requests where possible, whilst maintaining public safety as the main priority.

The reopening of society and return to normal for councils requires a careful balancing of workforce resources as many staff are currently redeployed to provide the COVID response and cannot return to their original roles until it is clear which elements of COVID response are stopping. Similarly, there are some areas where additional demands (eg. on tracing) are being put on a relatively small workforce of environmental health officers. This is indicative of a medium-term risk to workforce capacity in some areas.

The social and economic task ahead is great. We will need to continue to work at speed and embed the new community spirit which has helped us through the worst weeks of the pandemic. We need an empowerment of place leadership (through the convening power of local councils). We ask Government to work with us as we bring together local public and private leaders to reshape services quickly and to customise them to the different needs of our villages, towns and cities.

*“Opening of HWRC sites needs to be considered in a co-ordinated way – we are concerned that doing this may not be consistent with lockdown messages.” **Unitary Council***

*“When we move toward an exit from lockdown, we need clear public messaging around what the public can, and can’t, do. This messaging needs to be consistent across government, for use in all local circumstances.” **Unitary Council***

SUPPORT FOR BEREAVEMENT:

- **The Government’s message that funerals should not be delayed by families is welcome but in parts of the country demand at crematoria remains well below capacity. Stronger messaging may be needed if delays continue to be a problem.**
- **It will be essential to keep funerals operating at capacity. This will mean ensuring that Funeral Directors and all funeral staff have the PPE they need.**
- **Councils have incurred significant additional costs to secure additional capacity based on SAGE modelling. These costs will need to be recognised in future funding decisions.**

Significant additional capacity has been put in place by LRFs across the country as deaths increase. It is welcome that the national pods are also now beginning to be delivered. The risk to storage capacity proving to be inadequate can be minimised by two things: adequate PPE and reducing delays. Firstly, without adequate PPE for those involved in deaths management, there is the risk of funeral directors or others refusing to handle COVID 19 cases, or staff becoming ill themselves or having to self-isolate if colleagues become infected. This will reduce the capacity to hold funerals and create additional pressure on body storage capacity. Lack of social distancing at funerals can also heighten this risk to staff. Secondly, while it is completely understandable that many families wish to delay in the hope that current restrictions will be lifted, if this becomes routine even the enhanced storage capacity could prove inadequate. As restrictions begin to be lifted, there needs to be national messaging that

funerals cannot be delayed, and that social distancing must continue to be observed at funerals.

The inclusion in the recent survey sent to CFOs of costs resulting from deaths management was welcome. Many councils have incurred significant costs on behalf of their LRFs in order to provide the capacity that Government figures suggested would be necessary. It will be important that these costs are fully recognised in future funding decisions. As central modelling of expected COVID-19 deaths changes, communicating the latest figures are quickly to LRFs will help ensure adequate capacity is put in place without incurring unnecessary costs.

*“A local crematorium has allowed mourners inside its building, resulting in an influx of families from outside the district choosing this service, rather than their local service, due to differing restrictions.” **Unitary Council***

LIVELIHOODS and ECONOMIC RECOVERY:

- **Councils have worked incredible hard to ensure that business grant payments are made as quickly as possible since the funding was received on 1 April. Councils have made significant progress in making payments to small businesses. The introduction of the discretionary grant scheme for small businesses that are not eligible for existing grants is welcome. However, we remain concerned that the size of the fund, £617 million will be insufficient to meet demand.**
- **The hardship fund must be funded to enable councils to meet the increasing costs and to administer a discretionary element**

As we move to a stepped approach to emerging from the emergency measures there will need to be a degree of coordination. Schools will begin to open after 1 June with nurseries, reception year 1 and year 6 children going back first and with thought being given to years 10 and 12 having some face to face teaching before the end of the school year. Opening-up the economy will in part depend on the availability of childcare and schools; we are already hearing that in some areas, there are difficulties with people being expected back at work but having no access to childcare. With schools not opening fully before September, and issues around parents being unwilling to send children back, this will have an impact on the pace of the recovery. It will be important for the new Economic Recovery Task Force to influence the direction of national fiscal policy in the recovery period as well as the practical measures that can be put in place at the national, regional and local level.

Businesses and communities are rightly worried about their income and livelihoods. Councils have been given the task of delivering a local hardship fund, providing business rates holidays for leisure/retail and getting grants to SMEs. It is becoming clear that the amount is not sufficient given the impact on our local economies. Councils have received the funding for the two grant schemes and this money is being paid out to businesses across the country. Public messaging by Government about the payment of these grants should seek to support councils in delivering this function.

Uncertainty over the continuation or reduction of the Job Retention Scheme causes issues for councils and local businesses alike as employers are not confident that they will be able to rely on the scheme beyond the end of June even though some sectors will remain closed. Guidance on the use of the scheme is still inconsistent posing difficulties to councils both as

users of the scheme and as sources of information for other employers. The restrictions on furloughed employees' ability to do anything for their employer also limits the responsiveness of businesses throughout the supply chain who may not want to call people back to work during a three week furlough period and risk losing the scheme's financial support.

There are still gaps in support for individuals and some businesses including those who are newly self-employed and cannot access the self-employed income support scheme. The discretionary grant for small businesses that do not qualify for Small Business Grant Scheme or the Retail Hospitality and Leisure Grant Scheme is welcome, but the size of the funding for this grant, at £617 million is a concern to councils that will administer the grant, because it is unlikely to meet demand, support is needed for businesses that are in shared office space or in council or privately owned business parks, where businesses are not individually rated and where business rates are rolled into rent payments. Evidence from just one council, Plymouth, shows that there are 400 of these businesses in that area, accounting for over 3000 employees. Clarity is also needed on some elements of grant guidance, particularly around state aid, where the government has sought a derogation for the schemes from the EU. This has not yet been agreed.

A key issue for the hardship fund is sufficiency with many councils not expecting there to be any money available for the discretionary element of the scheme once the council tax relief for vulnerable households has been funded especially given the substantial rise in benefit claimants.

*"We have received a 74.76 per cent increase in the number of new council tax support claims." **District Council***

*"Recovery needs to be social and economic, addressing inequalities such as health and educational attainment gap" **Unitary Council***

Councils will need flexibility in the use of a range of levers to support the economic recovery as the emergency measures are lifted. Government can support this by bringing forward: proposals for UKSPF, a devolution White paper that devolves a core set of responsibilities to the local level, including skills; lower borrowing rates for council investment; and proposals to streamline a range of funding pots, with local flexibility on how the pot is used. Councils will want to consider how local economies can build on the recent transformation in working practices and consider the impact of accelerating trends in sectors such as retail.

During the pandemic, councils' role as leaders of place has been emphasised as never before. The next journey will be the road to recovery. The scale of the economic, environmental and community challenges that we now face should not be underestimated. The Government has agreed to establish a Task Force between the LGA and MHCLG ministers to address economic recovery. This will which bring together economic and social partners to ensure a common purpose in driving and coordinating recovery at both a national and local level. The task force will be supported by an advisory officer group drawn from across local government.

ANTICIPATED ISSUES

The LGA currently holds a COVID-19 incident log. During the period 24th April to 6th May, 155 cases were logged. More than two thirds of all cases were notable practice examples or for information purposes only. These are not included, and neither are the few cases asking specific questions about the LGA.

The remaining cases asked for guidance or support. Forty-seven per cent of these were concerned with keeping public services running, 17 per cent were about protecting lives, 14 per cent focused on data, 11 per cent were about supporting the most vulnerable and a further 11 per cent were about protecting livelihoods.

PROTECTING LIVES

- As the course of the virus evolves local spikes in infection rates are expected. It will be essential to ensure local political leadership of actions to address these local spikes as part of the work of the national biosecurity centre.

FINANCE

- Many councils will continue to face extreme difficulties to remain financially afloat in the coming months – this will become more of an issue with likely drops in collection of council tax and business rates.
- Businesses in the secondary supply chain, such as agriculture supporting restaurants, will need further support – these economies need to be acknowledged and appropriately supported.

VULNERABLE PEOPLE

- Further guidance will be required in the coming weeks to ensure councils can continue to provide appropriate levels of support to non-shielded residents, individuals who have “fallen through the gaps,” vulnerable children, and victims at risk of domestic abuse and consequential homelessness.
- Public expectation around the provision of support from councils is very high – consideration will need to be given to how councils can harness understanding of local services to move away from dependency and towards coproduction.

RECOVERY

- Councils are concerned about unexpected requests to reopen facilities and businesses, and whether this will continue during the recovery period. The reopening of public transport and the management of public spaces needs clear national guidance.
- Councils’ recovery planning is mainly focused on boosting local economies, so clarity on the future of the high street and towns fund will be crucial: councils ideally want these to be combined and fast-tracked so they can deliver efficient recovery projects.
- Homelessness recovery is flagged as a key issue for councils to plan for, specifically when hotels reopen to the public. Many homeless were relocated to the same area to live within one or two hotels so this will have a big impact on these communities.
- Councils have concerns around planning issues; the five-year land supply was already an issue for most councils and several developments are ending without planning extensions.
- During the lockdown a two months backlog in registrations of births has built up and weddings have had to be deferred. Councils need adequate warning around changes in the guidance to holding weddings so they can properly plan to hold weddings while also ensuring social distancing measures are respected, and telephone registration of births would also assist.

WORKFORCE

- Public expectations on councils is extremely high, and councils do not have adequate resources to help the police enforce lockdown measures. This is likely to become a bigger issue as some local organisations are starting to blur the lines.
- Councils are deeply concerned about staff welfare: in many cases staff have been deployed from operational tasks to dealing with community distress at speed and therefore with little training. Most imperatively, staff working within care homes need to be supported to avoid any PTSD.
- Councils are struggling with the lack of guidance on the government furloughing scheme, and councils within the same region are receiving different advice from HMRC.

GOVERNANCE

- Political dynamics are becoming challenging for some councils due to the postponed local elections and by-elections. In some places, a third of current councillors were due to stand down in the 2020 local elections, so councils may need to start reviewing their local constitution because of this.

WASTE

- As councils begin to reopen HWRCs, local determination will be important. Consideration needs to be given to how councils should enforce social distancing, ensure safety of staff and create new queuing systems to manage the inevitable high levels of demand. Councils should be able to decide at a local level when and how to reopen, as they will be unable to instantly redeploy staff if all centres are required to open at short notice.

EEHT Board Priorities and Work Programme

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

This report sets out updated draft priorities for the Board together with a draft work programme for the period to December 2020. An updated draft work programme is set out in **Appendix A**.

Recommendation

That the Board considers and agrees a final version of the updated Board's priorities and work programme.

Action

Officers will take action as directed.

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EEHT Board Priorities and Work Programme

Background

1. The Board [priorities and work programme](#) up to July 2020 were finalised and agreed following the October 2019 EEHT Board meeting.
2. Given the ongoing COVID 19 emergency, it is timely to consider how the Board's work programme under each of its themes needs to adjust, in order to support councils as we exit from emergency measures and recover into a changed economic, social and environmental context.
3. In re-prioritising, the Board will also want to be aware of the issues that were being raised by councils prior to the COVID 19 emergency, which have informed the LGA's [2019-2022 business plan](#) priorities and take into consideration the Government's own priorities. The Board will also want to make a judgement on where it can make the most significant contribution.

The Updated Work Programme

4. The Work Programme, set out in **Appendix A**, updates the priorities agreed in October 2019 and sets out proposed specific actions up to the end of December 2020. There are important issues that the board will want to keep on the agenda and these are reflected in the proposed work programme. The key proposed changes to the work programme, reflecting COVID19 are that the Board has an increased focus on:
 - 4.1. **Place leadership in local recovery:** working with Government to ensure that councils have the right tools to support to convene local public services and businesses for a joint endeavour to recovery.
 - 4.2. **Climate smart recovery** – where we seek economic recovery from the crisis but in a way that is socially equitable and decarbonises the economy.
 - 4.3. **Planning** – The flexibilities necessary to support councils manage their services
 - 4.4. **Housing** – Working with councils and Government on a package of support to stimulate house building
 - 4.5. **Housing improvement** – Reorienting our work to reflect the additional challenges councils face as a result of COVID19
 - 4.6. **Transport** - Securing the future buses and supporting councils on active travel

- 4.7. **Business support** – Understanding councils' role and best practice in supporting businesses to recover
- 4.8. **Town Centre renewal** – refreshing our work on town centres to reflect the changed economic and social circumstances
- 4.9. **Homelessness** – Working with councils and Government to understand and respond to future demand for services as we emerge from the emergency measures and seek to keep previous rough sleepers in safe and appropriate accommodation
- 4.10. **Service costs** – Understand the cost pressures on services including waste
- 4.11. **Air quality** – Work with councils and Government on the priorities and action

LGA Priorities

- 5. Two of the LGA's six priorities, as set out in the latest business plan, are particularly relevant to the work of the Board:
 - 5.1. Places to live and work: Councils lead the way in building the homes that people need, driving inclusive and sustainable economic growth and creating safe and resilient communities that are great places to live.
 - 5.2. Sustainability and climate action: Councils take the lead in driving urgent actions in their local areas to combat climate change and its impacts and to deliver zero net carbon by 2030.

Government's priorities

- 6. Housing and planning will remain a key Government priority, not least in supporting economic recovery. [Planning for the Future](#), sets out the Government's plans for housing and planning following announcements in the 2020 budget and is a preface for the forthcoming Planning White Paper. The Government has also previously outlined proposals for a [National Design Guide](#), to drive up the quality of new homes, a [Future Homes Standard](#) to cut carbon emissions from residential property through energy efficient new build homes starting from 2025, and [First Homes](#), a discounted home ownership product for first-time buyers, funded through developer contributions. The Building Better, Building Beautiful commission has also published its recommendations to Government on how to promote and increase the use of high-quality design for new build homes and neighbourhoods.
- 7. Building on the successful lobbying that resulted in the lifting of the housing borrowing cap, the Board will want to continue to make the case for councils to have the funding,

powers and flexibilities to play a key role in increasing supply through delivery of their own house-building programmes.

8. This should include continuing support for councils to have the flexibility to require standards above the building regulations to ensure they can meet their own ambitions to achieve net zero carbon, support better quality housing, and develop and grow a skills base in the newly emerging green economy.
9. With potential for fundamental changes to the ways in which people live, work, play and travel in the future, councils as leaders of place, will also become more important than ever in ensuring the development of resilient local areas that meet current and future needs. It will be important that the Board continues to advocate for a properly resourced local plan-led system.

Transport

10. Transport will play a key role in any economic recovery as well as helping people and business ease out of travel restrictions when these begin to be lifted. The current restrictions have had a dramatic impact on people's travel patterns, with many fewer journeys by car and public transport, although there has been significant increases in cycling and walking. This has resulted in significant reductions in carbon and other harmful transport related emissions. From the Board's perspective and the priority, it has placed on decarbonisation of transport, it will be important that opportunities from changing travel patterns (such as active travel and walking) are captured and maintained whilst risks are minimised (e.g. the risk to provision of local bus networks and big increases in car journeys). However, these will need to be managed carefully as it will be important that councils are able to support economic recovery as well.
11. Prior to the COVID 19 pandemic, buses and active travel were seen as a key part of the solution to the decarbonisation of our transport networks. However, bus networks outside of London, are at particular risk as they have been dependent on commercial fares income. Since travel restrictions were placed, the operators are now dependent on state funding and it is highly likely that this will be the case for the medium to long term as it is envisaged that it will take considerable time for passenger numbers to recover. The Government have indicated that they will continue to provide financial support to the buses and light rail sector beyond the immediate support.
12. It will be important to continue to make the case for public transport because of its importance in reaching our goals concerning decarbonisation, inclusive economic growth and ensuring access to transport in otherwise isolated communities. The Board will need to consider whether the LGA is supportive of a more direct role for councils in the co-ordination and commissioning of local public transport. Similarly, there is an

opportunity to build on the increased appetite for walking and cycling. However, councils are constrained in their ability to plan for longer term improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure as funding remains fragmented, short term in nature and subject to competitive bidding. It will be important that the Board continues to call for much more streamlined and certainty in funding with greater local flexibility.

13. Capacity and capability may remain challenges in individual councils' ability to develop active travel schemes and be able to effectively shape bus networks. The Board may wish to prioritise further work on this.

Economic recovery

14. Achieving economic recovery as we emerge from the COVID19 lockdown is a national and local priority. The OBR has published a baseline scenario which indicates that the real GDP will have declined by 35 per cent in Q2 2020. It's scenario predicts a V shaped recovery with real GDP growing by 27 per cent in Q3 2020. A number of commentators have questioned likelihood of a V shaped recovery, suggesting that with a slow emergence from lockdown, we might see a level of economic scarring that will slow any recovery. Trends that we saw before the onset of COVID19 including the decline in high street retail might be accelerated by the period of emergency measures. It seems clear that social distancing and other measures to slow the infection rate will be with us for some time. Councils are preparing their economic recovery action plans and will want to consider how they can support the restart and stabilisation of the economy and also economic renewal to reflect the innovation that has emerged, and expectations around a green recovery and reducing inequalities.
15. The Government has now set out its [plan](#) for exiting the emergency measures, which stepped approach in which those businesses which can open are being encouraged to do so now, with non-essential retail possibly opening after 1 June and cafes, restaurants and bars being considered for opening after 4 July.
16. The Furlough Scheme has also been extended beyond June when it will provide up to 60 per cent of the wages of those staff furloughed by companies.
17. Not surprisingly unemployment has seen a significant spike with 1.8 million households making Universal Credit claims between 16 March and 28 April. A significant proportion of these new claimants are young people who have been working in low paid jobs. It is not clear to what extent the ending of the furlough scheme, when it happens, will lead to further unemployment claims.

Relevant Government Legislation

18. Amongst the new Government legislation and other measures announced over the last few months, a number are of particular interest to the work of the Board:

- 18.1. Environment Bill: this bases environment protection on environmental principles overseen by an Office of Environmental Protection (OPE); and it contains measures to address improved biodiversity, waste reform, air pollution, single use plastic and the resilience of water and wastewater services. The Bill was re-introduced after the General Election. Progress has been paused due to the COVID-19 outbreak.
- 18.2. Rail reforms: in 2020 the Government will publish a White Paper informed by the recommendations of the Williams Review.
- 18.3. National Infrastructure Strategy: this was due to be brought forward alongside the Budget 2020 to set out a long-term vision to improve the nation's digital, transport and energy infrastructure, but has been delayed.
- 18.4. Building safety: The Government will bring forward laws to implement an enhanced building safety framework, taking forward the recommendations from Dame Judith Hackitt's independent review of building safety, and in some areas going further.

Implications for Wales

19. Many of the policy areas covered by the work of the Board are devolved matters for the Welsh Government. In matters of UK wide policy, and in general where it makes sense to collaborate, we will work with the Welsh LGA.

Financial Implications

20. There are no financial implications at this time.

Next steps

21. Members are asked to:

- 21.1. Consider and agree a final version of the Board's updated priorities and work programme.

Updated EEHT Objectives to end of December 2020	Outcomes	Actions	Timelines
Environment			
Waste and resources reforms	A waste and resource system that meets the needs of local communities; improves the use of resources; and significantly increases the funding for the system provided producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to represent Members' interests as the Government finalises its reforms through the Environment Bill and subsequent consultations, when Parliament resumes normal business Work with councils to understand the cost pressures on waste and recycling services resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak and social distancing measures, and uncertainty over timetable for the implementation of Government reforms 	Ongoing
Climate change and environmental protection	Councils and communities set on a path to meet national and local carbon zero ambitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to understand how councils can support economic recovery through the green agenda Establish cross-Whitehall/local gov climate task force (interrupted by COVID-19 outbreak) Review of LGA lobbying position on green energy Explore and share best practice on approaches to decarbonise local transport, including modal shift. Participate/ support DfT's engagement programme on decarbonisation. Hold a Climate change Conference (completed) 	Ongoing April 2020 March 2020 June - September 2020

Flooding	Communities better protected from flooding incidents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to seek reforms to the allocation of flood prevention funding 	Ongoing
Air quality	Communities air quality improved in areas where it does not meet national standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represent member's interest on the clean air provisions of the Environment bill. Call for the implementation of Traffic Management Act 2004 Part 6. Seeking to understand whether we could introduce trials of the powers. Engage with local authorities on their air quality priorities/ action in light of COVID19 pandemic measures and reduction of emissions. 	May 2020 Ongoing May/ June 2020
Housing planning and Homelessness			
Delivering more homes	Councils build more council homes and facilitate the delivery of housing that meets the needs of their local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Government to establish a package of economic stimulus for housing Make the case for councils to have the powers and funding to deliver more homes that are affordable, sustainable and meet the needs of communities Make the case for right to buy reform and flexibilities including 100% retention of receipts and ability to set discounts locally Work with councils to understand the impact of income and cost pressures resulting from COVID-19 on council housebuilding programmes Lobbying for increased funding for council housebuilding through the new Affordable Housing Programme 	May/June 2020 June/July 2020 July/August 2020 May-July 2020 Ongoing

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with councils and Government to influence policy on improving the quality of the private rented sector. 	Ongoing
Build safe, healthy and prosperous places that are well supported by infrastructure and services	A planning system which supports the building of good quality, sustainable homes and supports inclusive, sustainable economic recovery and growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobbying for increased flexibilities for local planning authorities to ensure continued delivery of effective planning services during ongoing COVID-19 outbreak Pursue options for: streamlining the local plan process; giving councils greater powers to act where housebuilding has stalled; 'infrastructure first' approach; removal of national permitted development rights; removal of sanctions where councils do not meet 5 year housing land supply or Housing Delivery Test requirements; locally-set planning fees Continue to influence the Planning White Paper Work with Homes England and other stakeholders on skills and capacity issues that are slowing housing growth Press for payment of outstanding Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) allocations to councils and an acceleration of the proposed Single Housing Infrastructure Fund to provide the infrastructure needed to support new homes and post COVID-19 economic recovery 	<p>May/June 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>May/June 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Reduce homelessness	The rise in homelessness and rough sleeping is slowed (or even reversed) and the cost of temporary accommodation (TA) is arrested.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with councils and government to identify and manage impact of COVID-19 on services • Continue to work with councils and government to influence policy on homelessness prevention, including the Homelessness Reduction Act review, Government’s review of homelessness data, and the Spending review funding settlement • Develop out of area placement protocol against context of large numbers of COVID-19 related placements • Influence other policies creating pressure on councils’ provision of temporary accommodation, including welfare reforms. • Support local authorities to utilise evidence and to share best practice and learning with other relevant authorities 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>To influence next spending review</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Housing Improvement Programme	Councils in a better to position to meet their housing challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a series of national sector-wide projects and bespoke support to address housing delivery, planning and homelessness challenges in line with wider improvement work on economic and housing recovery. 	<p>Ongoing</p>
Transport			
Infrastructure and maintenance	Better progress in addressing the maintenance backlog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying for the end of fragmented bid-based funding, and for adequate funding to address the maintenance backlog with specific emphasis on funding for cycling and walking infrastructure, 	<p>April – July 2020</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> building on gains made in travel patterns during COVID19 pandemic Engage in planned future review of Treasury Greenbook (the 'rule book' used by central Government departments to determine whether public funds should be invested or not in projects) 	Tbc 2020
Future transport & decarbonisation	Councils have the knowledge and tools to facilitate the move to electric vehicles within a context of overall decarbonisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on establishing the resource needs and regulatory changes to support the move to electric vehicles (EV) Respond to Transport Committee inquiry and Dft regulatory review on e-scooters Respond to DfT consultation on moving the date for transition to electric vehicles forward 	Autumn 2020 May 2020 June 2020
Public transport	Communities benefiting from effective public transport provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure local government has the powers to play a full role in shaping future bus services, building on the special measures implemented during COVID 19 pandemic Submission to Transport Committee's COVID 19 inquiry Lobbying for full funding for concessionary fares and for devolution of BSOG. Seek another round of total transport funding, spreading the lessons of the first round and seeking greater buy in across public agencies Continue to influence rail reform through the Government's proposed White paper on the Williams' recommendations 	To influence next spending review May - June 2020
Economy			

Empower place leadership	Recovered local economies with councils supported in their practical leadership role addressing the local UK's economic challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Government to ensure councils have the powers and flexibilities to lead economic recovery locally. 	December 2020
Town centre revitalisation	Improved town centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue support for councils' leadership role in place and town centre revitalisation. Call for acceleration and expansion of Government's town centres programmes (Future High Streets Fund and Stronger Towns Fund) in support of post-COVID19 economic recovery of high street business and town centre regeneration. 	Ongoing 2020
COVID 19 Economic Recovery	Ensure that Councils are able to support their local economies to restart, recover and renew, over the next year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Government to ensure that councils have the right tools to support their local economies. (We have set out our initial asks in a letter from the Chairman to Simon Clarke MP who is chairing the MHCLG economic recovery taskforce) Climate smart recovery – where we seek economic recovery from the crisis but in a way that is socially equitable and decarbonises the economy. Work to understand the practical work that councils are doing to support their businesses and publicising best practice 	May to Dec 2020

Note of last Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board meeting

Title:	Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board
Date:	Tuesday 11 February 2020
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
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1	Declarations of Interest
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There were no declarations of interest.

2	Understanding pressures on the housing revenue account
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The Chairman stated that this was a confidential item and therefore asked any press or public present to leave the room.

He then asked Priya Thethi to introduce the report and also welcomed Steve Partridge, Director at Affordable Housing Consultancy, Savills to the meeting.

Priya explained that in August 2019, the LGA's Building Safety team commissioned Savills to estimate the future cost to stock owning councils of implementing a) the new building safety framework recommended by Dame Judith Hackitt; b) the Future Homes Standard – net zero carbon dwellings; and c) Decent Homes 2. In addition, she said that Savills were asked to model councils' capacity to meet these costs over a 10 or 30 year period whilst also delivering new housing. She said that the report (paragraphs 10-12) outlined 3 potential policy solutions to the scale of investment identified by Savills and she asked Board members for their comments on these. Priya then asked Steve to present Savills' findings.

Steve explained that Savills had been working closely with both the LGA's network of Housing Finance Advisers and the National Housing Federation (NHF) to try and quantify the implications for the sector of the Government's priorities. He set out in detail the standards and stock investment requirements arising from these priorities and said that a "London" and "Out of London" set of costs had been modelled. He went on to talk about the estimated number of properties that would require work under the 3 priorities and said that their estimates were in line with MHCLG figures. The conclusions from the first part of their research were that the gross investment requirements nationally over 30 years would be £41 billion which could be reduced to a cost over 10 years of £16 billion if the zero carbon work was phased over later years. He also emphasised that this figure was for full compliance with all building safety standards (compliance plus) and that compliance could still be achieved at a

lesser level, which would reduce the 10 year cost by a third.

Steve then went on to talk about the new homes delivery aspect of Savills' research. He said that they had modelled 4 scenarios – 4,000 per annum (current delivery), 14,000 per annum (current potential capacity within the HRA subject to 30% grant/receipts deployment), 25,000 per annum, and 50,000 per annum. The latter two options would contribute to meeting the total national affordable need of 140,000 per annum. He said that, at the top end of the spectrum, the funding required for the 50,000 per annum scenario with compliance plus standards would require a total funding contribution of £62 billion over 10 years. Finally, he showed modelling of the Office for Budget Responsibility new build planned growth targets of 10,000 homes per annum with compliance plus which would require funding of around £1.6 billion per annum for 10 years.

Steve said that the broad conclusion from the research was that in order to deliver on the Government's stated priorities, it would require considerable levels of national investment.

Following the presentation, Board members raised the following points and questions:

- Scepticism was expressed about using waiting list data to measure housing need.
- How did the regional capacity redistribution model work and what did this mean for individual local authorities? Steve said that the region with the lowest capacity (the North West) was used as a baseline with the rest pro-rata'd based on demand.
- What happened to existing priorities and commitments that local authorities might have within their HRAs? Steve said that the model assumed that these still went ahead and the current work was in addition to that.
- Caution was urged about pitching this work to Government in its current form in the wake of the recent lifting of the HRA borrowing cap. There was a risk that the Government might balk at providing funding in addition. It was suggested that lobbying should focus on one aspect, such as building safety, in the first instance as the Government might be more likely to be receptive. It was further suggested that the LGA's lobbying pitch should highlight how much money the Government would save in housing benefit payments if the new homes were built.
- Some local authorities had earlier targets for achieving zero carbon than 2050. How would this be reflected in the model? Steve said that for authorities with earlier deadlines, the spending would be concentrated into earlier years.
- Members were clear that, in reference to paragraphs 10-12 of the report, the LGA should not be advocating lowering standards in order to reduce the potential cost of works.
- It was considered too simplistic just to present an overall funding requirement to Government, as this detracted from the difficulty of delivering new homes

and refurbishments at a local level.

The Chairman thanked Steve for his thorough presentation and asked officers if they wanted to add any further points and summarise how this would now be taken forward.

Eamon Lally reiterated that the LGA was working closely with the NHF on this work, as there was real value in putting forward a joined-up case to Government.

Priya suggested that the LGA could commission further research in 3 particular areas. These were i) local regeneration and what councils were currently planning around their asset management strategies; (ii) modelling of potential knock-on effects to the public purse, both positive and negative, of carrying out this work; and (iii) quantifying the broader social value of carrying out this work, for example, to health and wellbeing – benefits that would accrue to public bodies other than councils.

The Chairman suggested that these 3 issues be explored by officers over the coming months with progress being reported to Lead Members and the Board. This approach was agreed.

Finally, Eamon reminded Board members that the research was still confidential at this stage and a date had not yet been set for when it would be made public.

Decision

Board members noted the report and the results of the research and agreed the areas for future research and subsequent reporting arrangements.

3 Delivering a local, plan-led system

The Chairman asked Jo Allchurch to introduce the report.

Jo said that local planning was once again coming under the Government spotlight with their proposals for a Planning White Paper, and she outlined some of the measures that this was likely to include. With this in mind, Jo asked members for their views on whether the areas listed in paragraph 9 were the correct ones for the LGA to be lobbying on.

Jo then briefed Board members on First Homes, the Government's latest scheme to provide homes to buy for local key workers. She said that under the scheme, councils would be required to allocate a percentage of the affordable homes in s.106 agreements to First Homes, and that the properties would be discounted by 30 per cent and subsequently in perpetuity. Jo said that the LGA supported home ownership schemes but that this should not be at the expense of providing affordable housing for rent, and officers' concern was that First Homes would do that.

Following Jo's introduction, the Chairman asked Board members for any comments or questions:

- Members strongly agreed with point 9.2.4 – i.e. removing the presumption in

favour of sustainable development in cases where councils were unable to demonstrate a 5 year land supply. It was considered that this undermined the local plan-led system.

- Concern was expressed about the First Homes scheme and it was suggested that developers would use it as a pretext for bringing financial viability arguments to the fore in negotiations with councils. It was also stated that a 30 per cent discount would still not make homes affordable to buy for key workers in many parts of the country. It was further suggested that the proposal for the discount in perpetuity would place a sizeable administrative burden on councils. Members agreed that the LGA should lobby for local authorities to be given discretion over aspects of the scheme.
- Members urged the Government to bring some stability to the planning system and suggested that constant reform and change created uncertainty and discouraged investment.
- Members stated that councils were approving many more planning applications than were being built out by developers and that the LGA needed to make this point more forcefully to Government. The example of Southwark was given where approx. 40,000 homes had been given approval but only half had been built. Members agreed with point 9.2.5, that the burden of proof for deliverability of sites should go back onto developers and that practices such as ‘flipping’ should be clamped down on in the planning process.
- Concern was expressed about the effectiveness of the Planning Inspectorate. Jo said that a review of the Inspectorate had recently taken place and its findings were being implemented.
- Members considered that there needed to be a more stringent definition of implementing a planning permission. Currently, developers were able just to dig a hole in the ground and say they had started building.
- The practice of renegotiating s.106 agreements once planning permission had been obtained was questioned.
- The Government’s recognition of the ‘infrastructure first’ principle was considered to be a good ‘win’ for the LGA and it was suggested that a return to county Structure Plans would help with infrastructure delivery.
- Several members said that there needed to be a more sensible conversation around green belt policy with more flexibility for councils in allocating land. It was considered to be too restrictive with a lot of the boundaries being drawn back in 1947.
- Members considered arguments over viability to be one of the biggest problems for councils. It was suggested that developers were overpaying for sites and subsequently trying to avoid making affordable housing contributions. Jo said that changes to viability assessment were brought in a couple of years ago and she would be interested to hear of cases where this wasn’t working.

- It was stated that more thought was needed about the implications of climate change on the local plan making process.
- It was suggested that confidential pre-apps and the payment of commuted sums instead of affordable housing on site, should be stopped.
- It was suggested that proof of paying rent for 2 years could be used as proof of suitability for obtaining a mortgage.
- It was stated that for large sites, Homes England funded infrastructure up front and then the money was paid back once the homes were sold. Could the LGA lobby the Government to use this approach for smaller sites?
- It was stated that under the Welsh planning system, if developers fail to build out sites they can be prevented from bringing them forward in subsequent development plans. This acted as a good incentive and could be copied in England.
- It was considered that greater weight should be given to Neighbourhood Plans.

The Chairman thanked members for their comments and said that the views expressed were unanimous, which gave the LGA a strong mandate to make its case to the Government.

Jo said that she would circulate a briefing to the Board when the White Paper was published and it was agreed that the Planning Minister should be invited to a Board meeting following the publication.

Decision

Subject to the comments made during the debate, Board members agreed the proposed future LGA activity as set out in paragraph 9 of the report.

Action

Jo Allchurch to circulate a briefing to Board members upon publication of the Planning White Paper and to invite the Planning Minister to the next Board meeting.

4 Climate Change and Environment Update Report

The Chairman asked Sonika Sidhu to introduce the report.

Sonika said that Councils were seeking a clearer steer from central Government about implementing measures to address locally declared climate emergency motions. She said that LGA officers were therefore, currently working with MHCLG to establish a climate change task force involving a range of Government departments. She added that productive talks had also been taking place with DEFRA.

Sonika went on to outline emerging policy and legislation which would impact on councils' work. These included the Environment Bill, the Agriculture Bill and the

Government consultations on the future of resources and waste management. She added that the LGA was currently exploring how best to engage with the COP 26 conference in Glasgow and had applied for 'observer' status.

Sonika said that the recent Climate Emergency Conference and regional climate change workshops had generated a number of policy asks from councils which were outlined in Appendix A and she asked for Board members' comments on these.

Following Sonika's introduction, the Chairman asked Board members for any comments or questions:

- Was any peer support being offered by the LGA on climate change as there would be a high demand for this? Eamon said that the LGA was currently working on a programme of support and they were trying to determine whether peer review or specific tailored advice would be most effective way of delivering this.
- More clarity was sought on what practical measures councils should be looking at now after declaring climate emergencies.
- More work should be done on quantifying co-benefits of the various proposals – this could be useful in prioritising actions that delivered wider societal benefits.
- It was suggested that English councils could learn from best practice in Wales where, for example, there were some of the best recycling rates in the world.
- Members expressed frustration about the length of time the Government was taking over the resource and waste management work. Could the LGA apply some pressure to speed this up?
- Concern was expressed about working with partners such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth who were considered to be activists rather than independent experts. The Chairman replied that there were plenty of scientific experts involved in the Climate Change Conference.
- Greater consistency and clarity was sought over what it meant in practice for a council to become carbon neutral, as different councils had different characteristics in terms of transport and energy infrastructure.
- More guidance was sought from the LGA and others on the impact of housing refurbishment vs. new build redevelopments.
- It was suggested that there needed to be market stimulation, especially around transport, to deliver solutions which local authorities could tap into.
- Concern was expressed that stringent zero carbon standards could suppress the delivery of affordable housing.
- The importance of the LGA having a strong and coherent lobbying strategy over climate change was stressed.
- It was suggested that more urgency was needed, especially with COP 26 rapidly approaching. The actions laid out in paragraph 11 should be reported

back to Lead Members rather than waiting until the next full Board meeting. Sonika said that engagement with Government had stalled somewhat in recent months due to the General Election and Brexit but she was confident that discussions were now moving on much faster. The Chairman added that the LGA's Executive Advisory Board were also keen to move the agenda forward at pace.

- Members flagged up two upcoming events on Electric Vehicles at Oxford on 23 June and the LGA on 24 March.

Specific comments on the list in Appendix A were as follows:

- Electrification of buses should be included as well as taxis.
- Some actions on restoring/increasing biodiversity should be included. Sonika said that the LGA had been working closely with DEFRA on this.
- The points made at the previous Board meeting discussion on climate change, recorded in the minutes, were not fully reflected in Appendix A.
- Members were not supportive of the proposal to link energy performance ratings to council tax. They considered that this would unfairly penalise those on lower incomes. It was agreed that this proposal should be removed from the list.
- Flooding was considered to be an important omission from the list.
- Retrofitting should not just apply to housing but also other buildings such as schools.
- Actions on increasing tree planting should be included – this was considered to be something positive that councils could do relatively easily.
- Development of hydrogen vehicles should be included – it was suggested that they were a better longer-term option than electric vehicles. The cost of installing electric vehicle infrastructure, and increasing power supplies to support them, were considered serious obstacles to wider rollout.
- There should be stronger support for the agriculture sector – productive land should be kept for farming, not tree planting, otherwise more food would need to be imported.
- Promotion of nuclear energy should be included, particularly exploring the possibilities of small modular nuclear plants. It was considered that nuclear power would be crucial in enabling the transition to electric vehicles.

Decision

Members of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board:

1. Noted the table in **Appendix A**, and agreed the amendments that emerged from the discussion
2. Approved the next steps for testing out the messages as outlined in paragraph 11.

5 Housing Update Paper February 2020

Due to time restrictions, the update paper was tabled without introduction.

Decision

Members noted the update.

6 LGA Business Plan for 2019-22

Due to time restrictions, the update paper was tabled without introduction.

Members suggested that the climate change workstream should be at the top of the list of policy priorities. Eamon said that the document had already been published but he would feed this back.

Decision

Board members noted the new Business Plan.

7 Minutes of the previous meeting

Members suggested that in the record of the debate on the Ashden work, the point about co-benefits should be highlighted more strongly.

Decision

With this amendment, the minutes were agreed.

8 Other Board Business

The Chairman asked Eamon Lally to introduce the report.

Eamon highlighted the Government announcement from earlier in the day of £5 billion of additional investment in bus and cycle infrastructure for 5 years from 2021. He said that there was little detail at this stage but he would update members at the next Board meeting.

Decision

Board members noted the update.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr David Renard	Swindon Borough Council
Vice-Chairman		
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Adele Morris	Southwark Council
Members	Cllr Peter Butlin	Warwickshire County Council
	Cllr Mark Crane	Selby District Council
	Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
	Cllr Patrick Nicholson	Plymouth City Council
	Cllr Linda Taylor	Cornwall Council
	Cllr Ed Turner	Oxford City Council
	Cllr Rachel Blake	Tower Hamlets Council
	Cllr Michael Mordey	Sunderland City Council
	Cllr Christopher Hammond	Southampton City Council
	Cllr Peter Thornton	Cumbria County Council
	Cllr David Beaman	Waverley Borough Council
Apologies	Cllr Nicholas Rushton	Leicestershire County Council
	Cllr Darren Rodwell	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council
	Cllr Amanda Serjeant	Chesterfield Borough Council
	Mayor Philip Glanville	Hackney London Borough Council
	Cllr Linda Gillham	Runnymede Borough Council

