

Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board

Agenda

Tuesday, 7 July 2020
12.00 pm

Zoom details will be circulated to Board
Members

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

Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board
7 July 2020

There will be a remote meeting of the Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board at **12.00 pm on Tuesday, 7 July 2020**.

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: Martha.Lauchlan@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

LGA Contact:

Alexander Saul
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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

Tuesday 7 July 2020

12.00 pm

Zoom meeting details will be circulated separately to Board members

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Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 27 October 2020, 12.00 pm, Venue TBC

Rail Delivery Group Eight-point plan in response to Williams’ Review

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This is an opportunity for EEHT Board members to discuss the Rail Delivery Group’s (RDG) proposed eight-point plan to deliver a new system in response to the William’s review of the structure of the whole rail industry and the way passenger rail services are delivered. Included in their proposal is to “bring decisions about local services closer to home” which members may wish to explore as to what this could mean in practice, such as integration with local transport and future fares integration. This discussion follows on from a previous discussion that the Board had on the Williams review last year.

The discussion will be led by Andy Bagnall, Chief Strategy Officer, RDG.

Recommendation

That the board notes the report and continues to influence the development of the rail industry and its structures.

Action

Officers will act as directed.

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Rail Delivery Group Eight-point plan in response to Williams’ Review

Background

About the RDG

1. The Rail Delivery Group brings together the companies that run Britain’s railway into a single organisation that works to advance the strategic goals of the industry and the network as a whole.
2. All the passenger and freight rail companies are members of the RDG, as well as Network Rail and HS2. They provide services and support to enable their members to succeed in transforming and delivering a successful railway, benefiting customers, taxpayers and the economy.
3. The RDG also provides support and gives a voice to freight and passenger operators, as well as delivering national ticketing, information and reservation services for passengers and staff on behalf of member companies.

About the Williams Review

4. The Williams Rail Review was established in September 2018 to look at the structure of the whole rail industry and the way passenger rail services are delivered. The review will make recommendations for reform that prioritise passengers’ and taxpayers’ interests.
5. It was led by an independent chair, Keith Williams. Keith is deputy chairman of the John Lewis Partnership and former chief executive of British Airways. He was supported by a panel of experts from across the country with expertise in rail, freight, business and passenger interests.
6. The review’s findings and recommendations were due to be published in a Government white paper in autumn 2019. Reform was intended to commence in 2020. The Brexit debate, general election and COVID crisis have led to delays.
7. Last week the Secretary of State for Transport announced that the Department will be reforming the railways and will respond to the review. However, the emergency measures taken in response to COVID 19 may mean that a white paper is unnecessary. The franchising system has been effectively ended by the pandemic and the Government may use the opportunity to implement reform.

LGA view

8. In 2019 the Board gave a response to the Williams review. The Board’s view was that rail has a vital role to play in serving the people and places we represent across the country, with a pivotal role in supporting businesses, creating the conditions for local growth and supporting residents in their everyday lives. Councils wish to see a successful rail industry that supports local growth and is properly connected with the fabric of local economies. Many councils feel that the relationship between rail and local government should be stronger. With the changing local government landscape, councils continue to find it difficult to engage with national agencies, such as Network Rail and Train Operating Companies (TOCs).

9. The Williams Rail Review therefore provides an opportunity for improvements in the way local government and the rail industry can work together for the benefit of passengers, local transport networks, and local economies as well as for taxpayers. The main crosscutting point that applies to all areas, and where the review is seeking input, is how rail industry structures interact with localities. Further engagement is required in how structures could be reformed to allow local government to interact with all levels of the rail industry successfully.
10. Our response is focused on what a successful rail industry would look like from the perspective of local government and that it is for the rail organisations and the Government to decide on the most appropriate structures for the rail industry.
11. The main calls in our full response were for:
 - 11.1. All parts of the rail industry engaging constructively with local government as partners.
 - 11.2. The rail industry, and especially the owners and operators of stations and land assets, to recognise and understand their role as place shapers.
 - 11.3. More effective outwards communication at all levels of the rail industry.
 - 11.4. More tolerance of a culture of risk and entrepreneurialism in non-safety focussed areas of rail industry management.

RDG view

12. The RDG has proposed an eight-point plan to deliver a new system in response to the review:
 - 12.1. **Deliver easier fares for all:** Update decades of regulation to enable a fares system which is much easier for passengers to use and better value for money, introducing pay as you go with a price cap across commuter markets, and reducing overcrowding on some of the busiest long-distance services while encouraging more people to use the network at different times of day. This fully reformed system would be backed up for the first time by an industry 'best fare guarantee'.
 - 12.2. **Put a new independent organising body in charge of the whole industry:** Form a new independent organising body which removes the politics from the running of the railway as far as possible and acts as the glue that binds it together, joining up decisions, making sure customer needs are prioritised and holding the industry to account with penalties where it falls short.
 - 12.3. **Introduce responsive, customer-focussed 'public service contracts', replacing the current franchising system:** Create a new system of contracts that would be more responsive to what our customers are asking for. Our new 'public service contracts' system would be made up of TfL-style single branded 'concessions' where usually an integrated transport body effectively runs the service, or new 'customer outcome-based' contracts, in place of today's tightly specified inputs-based model, which better incentivise

the private sector to innovate to improve, while only rewarding good performance.

- 12.4. **Give customers more choice of operators on some long-distance routes:** For some long-distance routes, having more rail companies competing for passengers means they could be offered a range of different services based on what they want. Whether it's quicker more comfortable journeys or faster Wi-Fi, demand would shape the market; meaning rail companies would have to adapt to the needs of passengers if they want to keep their business.
- 12.5. **Make sure track and train are all working to the same customer-focussed goals:** Introduce a single thread of consistent targets and incentives running through the whole industry, from CEOs to frontline teams and between the track and the train, so that all parts of the railway pull together – ending the blame game.
- 12.6. **Bring decisions about local services closer to home:** Where appropriate, for example in larger city regions which serve commuter markets, customers would benefit from local transport bodies being given more power to design and specify local services, bringing decisions about the railway closer to the communities it serves.
- 12.7. **Enhance freight's central role in delivering for Britain's economy:** We want to work with government to develop a clear national framework to put freight at the core of the government's business, environmental, and transport strategic policy making. It is important that freight obtains the access it needs to the whole rail network to keep supermarket shelves stacked, the lights on and the economy moving in a global marketplace.
- 12.8. **Invest in our people to deliver positive long-term change for our customers:** Develop a new approach to working with the unions, governments and the industry which provides our people with the skills, resources and rewards they need to deliver generational change in the railway.
13. Delivered in full, this plan opens the door to TfL-style concessions in more cities across the country, with services on other parts of the network contracted against tough passenger-centric targets. These services would be complemented by some long-distance routes offering more competition to customers. In all cases the plan would be underpinned by a modernised, easier to use fares system with tap in tap out and a price cap in urban areas, matching the way people live and work today. The new system would be overseen by a single organising body, independent of government and industry, ensuring decisions about trains, infrastructure and services are joined up and all players are held to account. All of this would be run by a skilled, diverse workforce working in partnership to deliver a singular focus on the customer.

Next steps

14. The LGA has a developing relationship with the rail industry. Given the end of the previous franchised-based regime, the RDG's commitment to localising more decisions and the Government's commitment to reform the rail industry it will be important for the LGA to continue to develop that relationship with the RDG to aid future collaboration with local government.

About Andy Bagnall

15. Andy is the Chief Strategy Officer at the Rail Delivery Group. Andy joined the RDG in September 2018, leading its media, public affairs and strategic communications functions.
16. Before RDG, Andy was KPMG's Director of External Affairs, and he previously spent five years at the CBI as Director of Campaigns. Andy has held a number of policy and campaigning jobs. He has a background in election organisation at both local and national levels. As a campaign consultant, he advised on state elections in Sydney, Australia. He was a special adviser to the UK government, serving two cabinet ministers in three departments over four years.

Decarbonising the energy grid

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

The LGA has been working with Local Partnerships to understand the role renewable energy can play in meeting carbon reduction targets. Outputs from this piece of work include a good practice guide and a discussion paper setting out the nature of the challenges for local government from large scale development of renewable energy. Jo Wall, Strategic Director for Climate Response at Local Partnerships will provide a short presentation about this work as well as providing members with expert insight and potential implications for renewable energy generation.

Recommendation/s

That members consider the issues raised in the report and presentation to the Board meeting

- To note the strategic questions set out briefly in paragraph 8 and the next steps in paragraph 13

Action/s

Officers will act as directed

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Decarbonising the energy grid

Background

1. The Board identified renewable energy as an area to develop as part of the LGA's climate emergency work programme. Local government has a strong track record in delivering local renewable energy schemes. The research from Local Partnerships looks ahead to the challenges of scaling up the delivery of renewable energy, and the impact this could have on local authorities.
2. In undertaking this work, Local Partnerships, who are part owned by the LGA and the Treasury, have drawn on its experience of advising and supporting councils on energy projects and its connections with the energy industry.

Demand and supply issues

3. The background to the discussion includes an analysis of current energy provision and a look ahead to changes in demand for energy. While smart technology is expected to reduce energy use, this will be offset by a growth in demand due increasing numbers of electric vehicles and the switch to electric heating.

Table 1: Modelling demand and potential for renewable energy:

Item	Current	By 2050
Annual electricity demand	285 TWh	Up to 422 TWh
Peak demand	60 GW	Up to 82.5GW
Total installed generating capacity (i.e. still includes gas generation)	108 GW	Up to 227 GW
Low carbon and renewable energy installed capacity	52 GW (48%)	Up to 162 GW (71%)
Total storage capacity	4 GW	Up to 58 GW (including vehicle to grid capability)

4. Work undertaken by both National Grid (Future Energy Scenarios) and UK Fires (a research-based consortium led by University of Cambridge) indicates that the UK will require around four times as much renewable energy as we currently have if it is to meet the 2050 net zero requirement.

5. Current planning policy is generally supportive of renewable energy, but there is no obligation to provide renewables and some changes to regulations (such as the 2016 Energy Act) and the removal of supporting subsidies has meant that there is almost no new onshore wind development in England. Solar PV is limited to certain areas of the country with lower quality agricultural land. A practical limit on growth is that the choice of locations for schemes are driven to a very significant extent to available capacity on the electricity grid.
6. The lockdown measures associated with Covid-19 have had a short-term effect on UK energy demand. This has resulted in there being no requirement for coal fired generation throughout April and May.
7. When electricity production exceeds demand, National Grid manages this by paying power consumers to increase and paying power generators to stop generating. Historically this has been invisible with the coal and gas power stations coming offline. In more recent years the sight of idle wind turbines has often led to a misconception that they are broken or not working, when they are, in reality, performing the vital function of grid balancing. Covid-19 economic impacts are unlikely to lead to a significant long term shift in demand patterns, and even if they do, it will still not offset the need for more renewable energy as the gas fired power stations still need to be decommissioned to achieve net zero.

Strategic questions for local government

8. If the UK is to meet its legally binding net zero target, then there is a need to accommodate a significant additional quantity of onshore renewable energy generation and storage. To a very significant extent the locations for renewable energy schemes are driven by the location of available capacity to connect to the electricity grid. In forming a view as to how to support the deployment of the additional energy generation Members are invited to consider the following areas, to be discussed in more detail at the meeting:
 - 8.1. The impact of the current planning framework and whether that may need to change to recognise the challenge of scaling up renewables and providing the necessary infrastructure
 - 8.2. Community engagement, and balancing off public support for the principle of renewable energy with local opposition
 - 8.3. Competing demands for land use and how this will affect the development of renewables
 - 8.4. Community energy ownership is actively encouraged, but largely only benefits those who can afford to invest and is unlikely to deliver at either the scale or pace required to meet the challenge. Should these schemes be prioritised?

8.5. Most renewable energy developments are not subject to developer contributions (s106 or Community Infrastructure Levy) contributions – but instead rely on a vaguer requirement for community contributions. Is this the best approach for local areas? For example, an alternative would be to have a local levy on schemes (or increase the business rates) and ring fence this for local greenhouse gas reduction and fuel poverty alleviation measures.

8.6. The electricity grid is a major constraint to development. What levers or additional powers could be used to unlock investment?

9. Implications for Wales

10. The Welsh Assembly has set its own strategy for decarbonising energy generation in Wales. We will share the findings with the Welsh LGA although some aspects may not be applicable due to devolved powers. Jo brings her experience of working with local authorities in Wales in a previous role.

Financial Implications

11. This activity is within the scope of the current work programme. No financial implications have been identified.

Next steps

12. Local Partnerships has prepared a draft discussion document setting out the issues above in detail. Following the Board meeting we will review and publish the discussion paper.

13. Members are invited to consider:

13.1. Whether any key messages on decarbonising the grid should be developed and communicated as part of broader climate emergency asks

13.2. Whether they wish to direct officers to undertake any further work or activity, noting the competing pressure from other priority work areas

Planning reform

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

Simon Gallagher, Director of Planning at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has been invited to attend the EEHT Board to provide an update on the Ministry's work relating to the operation of the planning system both during the COVID-19 pandemic and looking to the future.

This report provides a brief update on the Government's recent and proposed reforms to the planning system. It also sets out the LGA's main asks in relation to planning and members may want to pick these up in their discussion with Simon.

Recommendation

The item is for update and comment.

Action

As directed by Members.

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Planning reform

Background

1. There is continued national interest in the effectiveness of the current planning system in England and '[Planning for the Future](#)' published in March 2020 set out the government's plans for housing and planning following the announcements in the 2020 Budget. This included the intention to publish a Planning White Paper in the Spring with proposed measures to speed up the end to end development management process including: planning fees reform; options to increase build out rates; expanding the use of zoning tools to simplify the process of granting planning permissions and improving the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders.
2. Whilst COVID-19 has inevitably delayed the publication of the White Paper, it is still expected to come forward, although the timescales are currently unclear and it is likely that any measures will have an increased focus on economic recovery.
3. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic the government has introduced a number of temporary measures to enable the planning system to continue to operate effectively throughout the various phases of the lockdown. This includes flexibility on publicity requirements for planning applications and the ability to run virtual planning committees.
4. The recently published [Business and Planning Bill](#) will introduce further measures including: a new process for developers to request changes to construction hours; flexibility for the Planning Inspectorate to use more than one type of procedure for planning appeals and an extension of planning permissions which have expired since the beginning of lockdown or are due to expire before the end of the year. Our briefing on the Bill can be found [here](#).
5. The government has also recently laid secondary [regulations](#) for a new permitted development right allowing work for the construction of up to 2 storeys to create new flats on the topmost residential storey of a building which is an existing purpose-built, detached block of flats. These regulations also add to the conditions of prior approval for permitted development rights allowing change of use to houses, that a local planning authority must also consider the provision of adequate natural light to all habitable rooms.
6. On the 20 June, the Prime Minister announced a series of significant planning reforms to come into effect by September including: more types of commercial premises having flexibility to be repurposed through reform of the Use Classes Order; permitted development rights for a wider range of commercial buildings to be allowed to change to residential use; removal of the need for a normal planning application to demolish and rebuild vacant and redundant residential and commercial buildings if they are to be built

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as homes; a fast track approval process to allow property owners to build additional space above their properties.

7. It was also announced that the government will launch a planning Policy Paper in July which will set out a plan for comprehensive reform of the planning system. Whilst there was limited detail on this in the announcement, there have been a number of recent media reports suggesting that a package of more radical planning reforms might include a move to zonal planning, such as the one proposed in the Planning Exchange [report](#). It has also been reported that there could be a new fast-track planning system for developers of high quality, well-designed buildings as recommended in the [report](#) by the Building Better, Building Beautiful commission and that democratic involvement in the planning process could be brought forward to the plan-making stage or removed completely.
8. We have reiterated in our [response](#) to the announcements that planning powers must remain at a local level, to enable councils to deliver resilient, prosperous places that meet the needs of their communities.
9. The Secretary of State for the Ministry, Robert Jenrick MP, has also recently reaffirmed his view that there needs to be ambitious reform to the planning system. In Policy Exchange's recent [publication](#) of essays on planning reform he states that *'it's time to re-think planning from first principles'* and that *'the time has come to speed up and simplify this country's overly bureaucratic planning process.'*
10. The LGA's policy position on the planning system is as follows:
 - 10.1. A local plan-led system is the best way to deliver sustainable homes and places that meet the needs of people in different circumstances and at different stages in their lives – as well as ensuring that they are well supported by the necessary services and infrastructure. Councils continue to approve 9 in 10 planning applications, with the number of planning permissions granted for new homes almost doubling since 2012/13.
 - 10.2. In recent years the LGA has called for a range of measures that would improve the operation of the planning system, whilst retaining a democratically accountable plan-led approach. These have included
 - 10.2.1. The process of getting a local plan in place should be further simplified and streamlined and the Planning Inspectorate should expedite the examination of local plans through a more flexible, light-touch approach
 - 10.2.2. Councils need to be able to set planning fees locally in order to achieve full cost recovery

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- 10.2.3. The current approach to identifying a five-year supply of land needs to be improved, to better reflect the long-term benefits of a balanced portfolio of future sites
- 10.2.4. The presumption in favour of sustainable development in cases where councils are unable to demonstrate a 5-year land supply and/or do not meet the Housing Delivery Test requirements should be removed
- 10.2.5. There needs to be further reform to the viability system – this could include removing the requirement to factor in an agreed developer or landowner return or removing viability as a material planning
- 10.2.6. Councils need stronger powers to direct the diversification of products within sites and financial penalties to incentivise build out rates, as well as streamlined powers to enable councils to acquire stalled sites
- 10.2.7. National permitted development rights enabling change of use into homes without the need for planning permission need to be revoked
- 10.2.8. Councils need to maintain the levers to deliver the right mix of homes – to rent and buy – in a way that addresses need identified locally as part of the planning process
- 10.2.9. Assessments of local housing need should be determined locally based on the most relevant up to date information, so that they can properly take into account complex and changing local housing markets
- 10.2.10. ational exemptions from s106 affordable housing contributions and exemptions from the Community Infrastructure Levy should be removed

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Implications for Wales

- 11. This work only covers England

Financial Implications

- 12. None

Next steps

- 13. The LGA will continue to press the government on funding and powers to support a continued local plan-led system that retains democratic oversight.

Financial Implications

None

Update on Economic Recovery Work

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This report provides commentary on the economic impacts of COID-19 and the prospects for recovery. It provides an update on the work that the LGA has been doing on economic recovery.

Recommendation

That Board Members consider and discuss the issues raised in the report and the approach that is being taken by the LGA in representing councils on issues of economic recovery.

Action

Officers will take actions as directed.

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Update on Economic Recovery Work

Covid-19 Economic Impact

1. Covid-19 and the response to it has had a significant impact on the economy. During the lockdown period up to April, GDP fell by 25 per cent, with a 20.4 per cent decline in April itself.¹
2. The impact on people has been significant. Between 1 March and 16 June 2020 over 3.2 million individuals have made a universal credit declaration (providing information to begin a UC claim)² There are currently around 9.2 million furloughed workers. Between March and May 2020, the number of paid employees has fallen by more than 600,000.³
3. Nearly all sectors of the economy have been negatively affected compared with pre-Covid-19 levels of activity, with construction down by 44 per cent; manufacturing down by 28 per cent and services down by 24 per cent.⁴
4. The Government has provided unprecedented financial support to individuals and businesses throughout the period of lockdown. Amongst the range of support, the Government has paid out £23bn via the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, £7.6bn via the Self-Employment Income Support scheme,⁵ and around £11bn in grants to small businesses via councils.⁶ These payments, along with loan guarantees, tax deferrals and reduced income, as a result of the stalled economy, has meant that the Government has had to borrow. Public sector net debt now exceeds 100 per cent of GDP, the first time this has happened since 1963⁷.
5. As the lock down is lifted more businesses are now trading. ONS business survey data for the period 18 May 2020 to 31 May 2020 found that 84% of businesses that responded said that they were currently trading, up from 72% in the period between 23 March and 17 May 2020.⁸
6. The Treasury's latest comparison of independent forecasts, published on 18 June, indicates that the economy will contract by -9.2 % in 2020. The overall decline in 2020 and the rate of recovery into 2021 will depend on the level of scarring in the economy. According to the Bank of England's Chief Economist, "the trough in activity was reached in the middle of April, with a steady recovery thereafter".⁹ The Bank of England's reading

¹ ONS, 14 June 2020, [GDP monthly estimate, UK: April 2020](#)

² DWP, 23 June 2020 [Universal Credit Declarations and Advances, management Information related to Universal Credit declarations and Advances from 1 March 2020 to 16 June 2020,](#)

³ ONS, 16 June 2020 [Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, UK: June 2020](#)

⁴ ONS, 14 June 2020, [GDP monthly estimate, UK: April 2020](#)

⁵ [HMRC coronavirus \(COVID-19\) statistics](#)

⁶ BEIS, 23 June [Local authority grant payments as of 21 June 2020](#)

⁷ ONS, 19 June 2020, [Public sector finance](#)

⁸ ONS, 18 June 2020 [Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK](#)

⁹ Andrew Haldane, 30 June 2020, [The Second Quarter](#), Bank of England

of the data is that the economy is bouncing back at a faster rate than previously expected. However, the future path for the economy is still uncertain. A key factor will be labour market and what happens when the furlough scheme begins to taper off in August and comes to an end in October 2020. There is a risk that the scheme is masking unemployment. High levels of unemployment could stall a consumer led recovery.

Government investment programme

12. Substantial public investment will be needed to boost the economy into the recovery. In a [press release](#) accompanying a speech on 30 June 2020 the PM outlined an initial programme of investment in infrastructure:

- 12.1. £1.5bn this year for hospital maintenance, eradicating mental health dormitories, enabling hospital building, and improving A&E capacity.
- 12.2. £100m this year for 29 projects in the road network
- 12.3. Over £1bn to fund the first 50 projects of a new, ten-year school rebuilding programme, starting from 2020-21. These projects will be confirmed in the Autumn, and construction on the first sites will begin from September 2021.
- 12.4. £560m and £200m for repairs and upgrades to schools and FE colleges respectively this year.
- 12.5. £142m for digital upgrades and maintenance to around 100 courts this year, £83m for maintenance of prisons and youth offender facilities, and £60m for temporary prison places.
- 12.6. £900m for a range of 'shovel ready' local growth projects in England over the course of this year and next, as well as £96m to accelerate investment in town centres and high streets through the Towns Fund this year. This will provide all 101 towns selected for town deals with £500k-£1m to spend on projects such as improvements to parks, high streets, and transport.

Devolution

13. The Devolution White Paper is expected in the early Autumn. Recent ministerial comments have linked devolution to economic recovery. In a recent answer to a parliamentary question Simon Clarke MP, Minister for Local Government, stated that the White Paper will "set out our transformative plans for economic recovery and renewal, and for levelling up opportunity, prosperity, and well-being across the country". The Minister went on to link the plans for economic recovery to "restructuring our local institutions".

The work of the LGA

9. The LGA has been engaging with Ministers and officials to represent the interests of councils in the economic recovery. While the initial focus of government has been on the relaxation of the lock down and reopening retail, we have also been able to raise longer-term issues. We have pushed for the focus of the medium and longer-term recovery discussions with Government to be on: employment and skills; housing; a green and inclusive recovery; and continuing support to business. We have drawn on existing LGA policy and worked to provide a single voice for local government, stressing the importance of moving forward quickly to implementation.

Council finances

10. The ability of councils to support communities and businesses through the Covid-19 crisis and into economic recovery is dependent on their continuing financial wellbeing. The LGA's latest analysis of survey data shows that the funding gap faced by councils as a result of Covid-19 has widened. The Government has provided £3.2 billion of emergency funding to councils and CCGs have provided funding of £300 million which has helped meet some of the pressures so far - leaving councils facing a funding gap of £7.4 billion. The LGA has called for the Government to urgently bring forward details of its comprehensive plan to ensure the financial sustainability of councils this year and next.

Opening High streets

11. As the lock down measures have been lifted, councils have had a significant role to play in working with businesses and communities to ensure that the town centres and high streets are configured to support the safe return of shoppers. The LGA has sought to work with Government to ensure that the guidance being provided to both councils and businesses appropriately reflects the balance of responsibilities between the two. We have also responded to councils concerns about the limits on how the Reopening Highstreets Safely Scheme (RHSS) can be used. There are still concerns that RHSS does not allow for expenditure on wardens. Government has no immediate plans to change the guidance to allow this type of expenditure, citing underlying ERDF rules.

Employment and Skills

12. We have argued that a co-designed, locally integrated and delivered employment and skills offer within a broad, flexible national policy and funding framework is needed. Components of the offer must include a flexible apprenticeship programme; increased investment in employment support; job creation; increased coordinated skills investment; with specific support for young people and adults. To achieve this, we are proposing: a national Cobra for skills; local jobs and skills taskforces; and a multi-year, flexible, outcome driven local funding pot.

Housing and planning

13. We have published a [housing stimulus package](#) that makes the case for measures and reforms that would support councils to work towards delivering a new generation of 100,000 high quality social homes per year. The report also highlights the need to and the benefit of investing in existing stock – including investing in energy retrofit to improved energy efficiency and support the achievement of the national zero carbon target. This would also provide jobs.

Green and inclusive recovery

14. We have published a report on [Green Jobs](#) which highlights that nearly 700,000 direct jobs could be created in England's low carbon and renewable energy economy by 2030, rising to more than 1.18 million by 2050. In our recent conference publication, [Rethinking Local](#), we set out our offers and asks on a green recovery. Councils can build on the public's new sense of ownership of the environment and local green recovery, but we need Government to facilitate this with funding flexibilities to stimulate the economy and as part of long-term allocations guaranteed for councils which will allow them to invest in green housing, jobs, infrastructure and other environmental measures locally and for the long term. We have also published research into [inclusive growth](#) which provides evidence of the importance of local leadership and sets out a number of lessons based on the work that councils are currently doing. The report explicitly acknowledges the exacerbating aspect of Covid-19 and it stresses the need to build more inclusive economies even at a time when growth is a challenge.

Support to Businesses

15. We have worked with the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in supporting councils to deliver grants to Small Businesses; the Small Business Grant Scheme; the Retail Hospitality and Leisure Grant Scheme; and the Local Authority Discretionary Fund Scheme. As at 29 June 86% per cent of the original allocations had been paid out to 90% of those properties identified. Councils have done everything that they can to identify eligible businesses, but it is likely that there will be an underspend on the original allocation.
16. The Government announced that an amount equal to 5% of the original allocation of grant funding, £617million, would form a Local Authority Discretionary Grant Scheme (councils can spend an amount equal to 5% of their original allocation). The aim is to provide support for small businesses that did not qualify for the original grants. With this scheme councils are required to use any underspend from the original allocation before requesting any additional funding from Government. Councils have said that the Discretionary Fund is too small to meet demand.
17. It is anticipated that there will be an underspend of the original small business grant schemes allocation. We are asking that this underspend should be reallocated to councils so that it can be used to support businesses and the recovery.

Responses to select committee inquiries

18. We are currently responding to the BEIS select committee inquiry into post-pandemic economic growth. This is a very wide-ranging enquiry which covers areas of interest to the Board, and referred to in this paper, including the levelling up agenda and greening the recovery. In addition, the Environmental Audit Committee has published a call for evidence on 'Greening the post-Covid Recovery', and we will also be responding to this inquiry.

Next steps

19. We will reflect on and update our economic recovery work following comments from members.

Implications for Wales

20. We continue to work closely with the Welsh LGA on matters related to Covid-19.

Financial Implications

21. There are no immediate financial implications.

Housing, planning and homelessness update - July 2020

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

An update of the housing, planning and homelessness work that has recently been carried for the Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board.

Recommendation

That Lead Members reflect and provide any comments on the issues and proposals raised in this update.

Action

Officers to take forward any member comments for future policy work.

Contact officer: Jo Allchurch
Position: Senior Adviser
Phone no: 07900 931045
Email: jo.allchurch@local.gov.uk

Housing and planning update - June 2020

Planning

1. Item 4 provides more detail on the Government's recent and proposed reforms to the planning system and LGA activity in this area.
2. We will be shortly be launching a public campaign, to promote the importance of a local plan-led system, democratic accountability and public participation in planning.

Housing

3. We have published a report detailing our proposals for a housing stimulus package that would enable councils to build more affordable, high-quality and sustainable homes at scale, and at pace. Our proposals include Right to Buy reform, a consistent approach to rents policy, provision of additional capacity and improvement support for housing delivery teams, increased funding of the Affordable Homes Programme and access to other finance, borrowing and land to deliver council housebuilding programmes. We have sent a copy of the report to the Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick and other government Ministers and will continue to promote our asks over the coming months.
4. We have continued to raise concerns with government that some councils are at risk of having to risk of having to return unspent Right to Buy receipts to the government. In response, the government has granted councils an extra six months to spend Right to Buy receipts that were due to be spent by the end of June and an additional three months to spend those due to be spent by the end of September. We continue to push for a longer extension, so that councils have at least five years to spend receipts. We are still awaiting the government's response to the Right to Buy consultation which closed in 2018.
5. Stock-holding local authorities have been feeding in information about the cost and income pressures on their Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA) as part of MHCLG's monthly monitoring of COVID-19 impact on the financial health of local councils. We are working with MHCLG and councils to understand the range of scenarios that may result and the different options available.
6. We have convened (OPE) a housing delivery discussion group, consisting of senior Housing and Regeneration Leads from a number of local authorities across England, to understand and collectively think about the challenges and opportunities for councils to deliver housing in both the short and medium – long term. The first session was jointly hosted by the LGA and OPE in partnership with Homes England and provided invaluable insight for shaping our support offers to members and informing our engagement with government - including our recommendations for the housing stimulus package.

07 July 2020

7. We have run a webinar focusing on the role councils have to play in building again following COVID-19 as part of our housing improvement support offer.

Homelessness

8. Homelessness services continue to experience significant pressure, both in terms of continuing to accommodate and support people in hotels under the "everyone in" initiative, and identifying safe and suitable move-on options.
9. We have sought clarity from MHCLG on whether the "everyone in" policy still applies to councils, and they have confirmed that it does. In June, Cllr Renard wrote to Luke Hall MP to ask that any decision to end "everyone in" was made nationally, and with clear public health evidence, and that councils are fully reimbursed for any accommodation and support provided up to the programme's end. We are working with Public Health England to understand when "everyone in" could safely end.
10. On 28 May, Luke Hall wrote to council chief executives to ask for the return of high-level move on plans for people currently in emergency accommodation. To support councils in completing these returns, we worked with Local Partnerships to publish a [briefing note](#) on options available for accommodation for rough sleepers. This is a live document and we will continue to update it, including with further technical briefings, subject to demand.
11. We have also been lobbying government for key policy and funding changes needed to ensure that councils avoid being put in the position of returning people to the streets. In particular, we have lobbied through [press work](#) and direct communication with ministers for the temporary and universal lifting of the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition, and an expedited end to Section 21 evictions, as proposed by the government in their June 2019 consultation.
12. On the 24 June, the government announced an additional £105 million to help local authorities implement a range of support interventions for people placed into emergency accommodation, as well as a further £16 million to provide specialist treatment for substance dependence. This is in addition to funding announced on 24 May to provide 3,300 homes for vulnerable rough sleepers this year. The Government has also temporarily, nationally suspended an EU derogation to enable councils to accommodate and support a specific group of EEA nationals who are sleeping rough for up to 12 weeks. This does not extend to access to statutory services or welfare benefits.
13. In June, MHCLG hosted both the Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel and a local authority discussion group, which is feeding into the recovery workstream being led by Dame Louise Casey (referred to as a "taskforce"). We attended both to raise councils' concerns and will continue to do so. Dame Louise also agreed to participate in a successful webinar that we held on homelessness.

14. We are also engaged in a working group on possession proceedings being chaired by Mr Justice Knowles. This has been set up as a result of the Civil Justice Council's review of the impact of COVID-19 on the operation of the civil justice system. It is looking at how the courts can best manage the backlog of housing possession proceedings that are expected once the courts recommence at the end of August. This includes: consideration on how cases should be prioritised, potential strengthening of the pre-action protocol, potential relaxation of mandatory grounds for possession to reflect the circumstances created the pandemic and ensuring that defendants and their representatives can effectively participate in hearings.

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

Title:	Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board
Date:	Tuesday 19 May 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	Action
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1 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

No apologies had been received and there were no declarations of interest.

The Chairman outlined the key purpose of the Board meeting - to help develop LGA policy and instruct LGA officers on how to proceed, as the country entered the next phase of lockdown.

2 Decarbonisation of Transport

Kamal Panchal (Senior Policy Officer, LGA) updated members on recent work being carried out on its behalf by the University of Leeds and outlined details of the Government's scoping paper which set out the parameters under which it would develop its plan to decarbonise transport. and brought the previous work of the LGA into focus.

The Chair introduced guest speakers Professor Jillian Anable and Professor Greg Marsden, Institute for Transport Studies (IST), University of Leeds.

Members received a presentation updating them on current transport patterns under the pandemic; on the work done so far on addressing the climate emergency and mapping transport approaches and priorities. The latter included discussion on approaches under 'achieve-shift-improve'; where 'avoid' is about measures to reduce car use; 'shift' is about encouraging change from car travel to less carbon intensive travel, such as cycling, walking and public transport, and 'improve' is about where you cannot do 'avoid' or 'shift' then measures to reduce carbon emissions are considered, such as electric vehicles.

Key points noted were:

- More work was needed to tackle limited understanding of how to set targets by local authorities; this includes both the process of setting climate change targets and specific targets for transport emissions. t;
- Looking at overall opportunities to achieving carbon reductions from transport from workshop participants, the balance was 26% in favour of 'avoid' measures. 44% in favour of 'shift' measures and 30% in favour of improve.
- Future advice needs to contain a diversity of opportunity to reflect different local circumstances and focus on positive messages about what councils can get on with.

Professor Marsden stated that his team were predominately looking for a steer - both at a local and central level – of the levels of ambition at these levels. Members noted gaps in terms of ambition for both. He also referred to current travel patterns under the pandemic and future anticipated effects. An economic recession was anticipated which historically led to falls in road travel and a downward pressure on car use, although he stated that upward pressures around social distancing and use of public transport might initially lead to greater car use.

Members heard about changes being made to road space in order to enable alternatives to the use of public transport. Key issues for consideration were:

- Statistically, 2/3 of journeys were under 5 miles in length but only making up 18% of total mileage therefore more would need to be done with other car journey, beyond short trips, to make a significant impact on carbon output;
- As social distancing restrictions persist for office work, there may now be much greater opportunity to reduce commuting and business travel for an extended period and for much of this to stick in the long-term. The sale of SUVs would be also driving up emissions; in 2018, SUVs accounted for 21.3% of new passenger car sales in the UK compared to just 13.5% in 2015
- In order to reach net-zero emission targets, there needs to be longer-term commitment to public transport;
- Public funding should be used to stimulate different measures and towards maintenance and sustainable modes and home working;
- There needs to be greater clarity and understanding on the role of local authorities in freight carbonisation by national and local government.

The Chair invited questions and comments from the Board. Members made the following points:

- Specific differences between rural and urban areas were

highlighted - the LGA needed to look at the analysis around drawing on different transport choices;

- Covid19 would have long term effects on travel and a massive increase in homeworking and investment in technology. Was there any analysis on the impact of a reduction in commuting?
- Were there any views on how the drop off in fuel duty would affect local authorities?
- Looking at evidence from other countries and differences in social distancing rules, the extent of future homeworking and the provision of parking spaces needed to be quantified. The contents of the paper had been overtaken by events.
- The Covid-19 crisis represented a golden opportunity to reshape transport policy. The LGA needed to push forward the bus strategy and should also look at coordinating of equipment such as road signs etc;
- Concerns were raised about isolation in particular for residents of rural areas;
- Sharing of best practice was considered to be vital and members suggested a role for the LGA in pulling this together.
- Prior to lockdown, there was already a decline in bus use. Had any research been carried out into the reasons for this?
- Concerns were expressed about large old buses running half empty and the duty of local authorities to support those people who couldn't work from home.
- Provision of smaller sustainable buses and smart ticketing outside of London should be considered.
- The findings of the report echoed what councils needed to do and support needed to be given to colleagues in order to develop a more pragmatic approach both socially and financially. Consideration to developing of a cohesive framework that worked across the whole of the UK was needed.

Professor Marsden agreed that the cost of decarbonisation was very different in different parts of the country. He pointed out that bus numbers were declining, perhaps as a cost issue. Motoring had been getting cheaper whereas the cost of public transport had been increasing. He referred to social distancing and medical advice and guidance referring to enclosed spaces. He agreed that it would be difficult to convince people that public transport was safe and that there was therefore a need to commit public funding for the longer term as this would not be resolved quickly.

Professor Anable spoke about the work that Leeds University were involved with in researching the legacy impacts from COVID 19, including attitudes to motor transport and social distancing. In relation to buses – particularly in rural areas - there was potential for public transport to become one of the safest environments by which to travel. For example,

smart ticketing could include tracing apps. It was vital that that scope for working from home was properly examined – she felt it could be as many as 50 per cent of jobs.

The Chairman thanked Professors Marsden and Anable for stimulating an interesting debate and said that it should help enable both the LGA to develop its policies on decarbonising transport as well as practical advice to councils.

Decision

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

- endorsed the recommendations made in paragraphs 19 to 29 of the report
- noted that the work programme may need to be further reviewed and developed.

3 EEHT Key issues paper

Eamon Lally, Principal Policy Adviser, gave members a brief overview of the various key issues set out in the paper. He then invited his colleagues to highlight specific points from their areas of work:

Housing and planning: Jo Allchurch reported that in addition to the information in the report:

- There was positive news on flexibility around publicity for planning applications. This was currently only temporary but that the LGA was lobbying for it to be made permanent.
- virtual hearings and submissions were going ahead, and plans were being made publicly available online.
- There needed to be local discretion around planned flexibilities on construction working hours.

Members then raised the following points:

- There was not capacity for local authorities to house evicted people – a further period of extension of protection should be sought.
- House builders would need public money to get the industry moving. There was potentially an opportunity for training/retraining and apprenticeships. Quality of builds needed to be fit for the future and not just to get economy moving.
- Could quick wins and lobbying positions be pushed through by the LGA?
- Local authorities needed to be really proactive in protecting high streets and local people during the recovery.
- Planning processes needed to be sped up. There was a need for more flexibility about revised use of office space with more people working

from home.

Homelessness: Priya Thethi, (Adviser LGA) summarised the key issues in the report around the Everyone In cohort.

Members then raised the following points:

- Experiences had generally been positive but there were situations where individuals' behaviour had been unacceptable or people had chosen not to engage.
- Problems around buy-to-let properties and paying for rehabilitation were cited. It was suggested that intervention in the market-place was needed in order to avoid even greater homelessness.

Environment: Hilary Tanner introduced the report summarising key issues

Members raised the following points:

- Members spoke about best practice examples – including appointment systems for waste centres and tips. It was recommended that this be shared via the LGA's Chief Executive bulletin.
- Members pointed out that now was a good opportunity to seize the opportunity and embed climate change issues in councils' work. Work was needed to continue encouraging carbon target work on top of immediate environment issues.

Transport: Andrew Jones, Adviser LGA, updated the Board on the release of the funding formula from the Department for Transport, and the need for them to make processes quicker.

Members asked whether London was eligible. Andrew confirmed that this had not yet been resolved. London Councils were pushing for clarity, but the assumption was that they would not be.

Concern was expressed by members about the difficulties in responding to the Government's 5pm briefings. They asked for consensus and structure to the responses. Eamon agreed to take this issue forward with senior management in the LGA.

Economy: Eamon introduced this section of the report

The Chairman noted that economic recovery would be a significant focus of work for the Board

Members raised the following points:

- That key infrastructure projects that were in the pipeline and needed to be unlocked.
- There were concerns about the shift of risk on infrastructure projects to councils.

Members noted the latest letter from the Chairman of the LGA to MHCLG.

Decision

Members of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board noted the key issues report.

4 LGA Headline Work and Key Asks

In conjunction with the discussion on agenda item 3, the key points from the LGA's latest Headline Work and Key Asks paper in relation to the work of the Board were highlighted and noted.

Decision

Members of the Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board noted the LGA Headline Work and Key Asks document.

5 EEHT Board Priorities and Work Programme

Eamon Lally introduced the proposed EEHT Board priorities and work programme up until December 2020 and asked members for feedback.

The following points were raised:

- Clearer points on timescales for climate change were requested.
- A strong focus on local economies and the high street.
- Covid-related work and lobbying should take priority on the work programme.

Decision

Members of the Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board agreed the updated priorities and work programme, subject to the comments above.

6 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 February 2020 were approved.

7 Any Other Business

There was no other business and the meeting was closed.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr David Renard	Swindon Borough Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Darren Rodwell	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Adele Morris	Southwark Council
	Cllr Linda Gillham	Runnymede Borough 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 Nicholas Rushton	Leicestershire County Council
	Cllr Linda Taylor	Cornwall 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
	Cllr Peter Thornton	Cumbria County Council
	Cllr David Beaman	Waverley Borough Council
Apologies		
In Attendance	Professor Jillian Anable	University of Leeds
	Professor Greg Marsden	University of Leeds

