

People & Places Board

Agenda

Tuesday, 15 September 2020
1.00 pm

Online via Zoom.

People & Places Board

15 September 2020

There will be a remote meeting of the People and Places at **1.00 pm on Tuesday, 15 September 2020**.

Attendance:

Member Services will read out a register at the start of the meeting.

Apologies:

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

Conservative:	020 7664 3223	email: lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk
Labour:	020 7664 3263	email: Martha.Lauchlan@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat:	020 7664 3235	email: libdem@local.gov.uk
Independent:	020 7664 3224	email: independent.group@lga.local.gov.uk

LGA Contact:

Thomas French, Member Services Officer.

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.

People & Places Board – Membership 2020/20221

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (12)	
Cllr Kevin Bentley (Chairman)	Essex County Council
Cllr Morris Bright MBE (Vice Chairman)	Hertsmere Borough Council
Cllr Rachel Bailey	Cheshire East Council
Cllr Marc Bayliss	Worcester City Council
Cllr Hilary Carrick	Cumbria County Council
Cllr Neil Clarke MBE	Rushcliffe Borough Council
Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Diane Marsh	Gravesham Borough Council
Cllr Eddie Reeves	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Bradley Thomas	Wychavon District Council
Cllr Rob Waltham MBE	North Lincolnshire Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Colin Davie	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Jane Murphy	South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council
Labour (5)	
Cllr Simon Henig CBE (Vice-Chair)	Durham County Council
Cllr Sue Woodward	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Leigh Redman	Somerset County Council
Cllr Kyle Robinson	Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
Cllr Doina Cornell	Stroud District Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Alan Waters	Norwich City Council
Cllr Peter Moss	Preston City Council
Cllr Rosanne Kirk	Lincoln City Council
Liberal Democrat (3)	
Cllr Heather Kidd (Deputy Chair)	Shropshire Council
Cllr Sarah Osborne	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Stan Collins	Cumbria County Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Allan Knox	Ribble Valley Borough Council
Independent (2)	
Cllr Bob Jennings (Deputy Chair)	Epping Forest District Council
Cllr Helen Grant	Richmondshire District Council

<i>Substitutes</i>	
Cllr Geoff Knight	Lancaster City Council
Cllr Kevin Etheridge	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Cllr Emily O'Brien	Lewes District Council

Agenda

People & Places Board

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Item	Page
1. Welcome, introductions and declarations of interest	
2. People and Places Board 2012/21: Terms of Reference and Membership	1 - 6
3. Board Work Programme 2020/21	7 - 10
4. Building Digital UK	11 - 16
5. Devolution Update	17 - 22
6. Youth participation update	23 - 32
7. Cross Cutting Policy Issues	33 - 48
8. Board Update Paper	49 - 56
9. Minutes of the last meeting	57 - 62

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 10 November 2020, 1.00 pm

Membership and Terms of Reference for 2020/21

Purpose

For discussion.

Summary

For members to note the membership and agree the Terms of Reference for the People and Places Board for 2020/21.

Recommendations

The People and Places Board is asked to:

1. Note the membership of the Board for 2020/21 at **Appendix A**;
2. Agree the Board's Terms of Reference for 2020/21 at **Appendix B**
3. That the Board identify a Member to be the Equalities Advocate for the Board.

Action

Officers to take any actions as required.

Contact officer: Thomas French
Position: Member Services Officer
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Appendix A People and Places Board – Membership 2020/21

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (12)	
Cllr Kevin Bentley (Chairman)	Essex County Council
Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
Cllr Rachel Bailey	Cheshire East Council
Cllr Marc Bayliss	Worcester City Council
Cllr Neil Clarke MBE	Rushcliffe Borough Council
Cllr Hilary Carrick	Cumbria County Council
Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Diane Marsh	Gravesham Borough Council
Cllr Eddie Reeves	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Bradley Thomas	Wychavon District Council
Cllr Rob Waltham MBE	North Lincolnshire Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Jane Murphy	South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr Colin Davie	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council
Labour (4)	
Cllr Simon Henig CBE (Vice-Chair)	Durham County Council
Cllr Sue Woodward	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Leigh Redman	Somerset County Council
Cllr Kyle Robinson	Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Alan Waters	Norwich City Council
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Cllr Sarah Osborne	Lewes District Council
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Cllr Allan Knox	Ribble Valley Borough Council



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Cllr Bob Jennings (Deputy Chair)	Epping Forest District
Cllr Helen Grant	North Yorkshire County Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Kevin Etheridge	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Cllr Emily O'Brien	Lewes District Council
Cllr Geoff Knight	Lancaster City Council

Appendix B: Terms of Reference: People and Places Board

1. The People and Places Board represents the interests of non-metropolitan authorities. Its remit includes place-based inclusive growth with a particular emphasis on more rural areas, devolution, the implications of Britain's departure from the European Union for non-metropolitan areas, digital connectivity, skills and employment support, public service reform and wider issues relating to place-based leadership.
2. The Board should seek to involve councillors in supporting the delivery of these priorities (through task groups, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), regional networks and other means of wider engagement); essentially operating as the centre of a network connecting to all non-metropolitan councils and drawing on the expertise of key advisors from across the sector.
3. The People and Places Board's responsibilities include:
 - 3.1. Ensuring the priorities of non-metropolitan councils are fed into the business planning process.
 - 3.2. Developing and overseeing a work programme to deliver the business plan against agreed priorities relevant to their brief, covering lobbying, campaigns, research, improvement support in the context of the strategic framework set by Improvement & Innovation Board, and events, linking with other boards where appropriate.
 - 3.3. Sharing good practice and ideas to stimulate innovation and improvement.
 - 3.4. Representing and lobbying on behalf of the LGA including making public statements on its area of responsibility.
 - 3.5. Building and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders.
 - 3.6. Involving representatives from councils in its work, through task groups, Commissions, SIGs, regional networks and mechanisms.
 - 3.7. Commissioning LGA officers and resources, where appropriate, to respond to specific issues referred to the Board by one or more member councils or groupings of councils.
4. The People and Places Board may:
 - 4.1. Appoint members to relevant outside bodies in accordance with the Political Conventions.

- 4.2. Appoint member champions from the Board to lead on key issues, with responsibility for liaising with portfolio holders on key issues that require rapid response/contact with councils.

Work Programme

5. The Board to set its own work programme which is agreed at the start of each meeting cycle in early Autumn.

Quorum

6. One third of the members, provided that representatives of at least two political groups represented on the body are present.

Political Composition

7. The composition by political party is recalculated each year and reflects the political proportionality of the wider group of councils from which their membership is drawn. The current composition is:

Conservative group:	12 members
Labour group:	4 members
Liberal Democrat group:	3 members
Independent group:	2 members

8. Substitute members from each political group may also be appointed.

Frequency per year

9. Meetings to be held five times per annum.

Reporting Accountabilities

10. The LGA Executive Advisory Board provides oversight of the Board. The Board may report periodically to the LGA Executive Advisory Board as required, and will submit an annual report to the Executive Advisory Board's July meeting.

Equalities Advocate

11. The Executive Advisory Board have asked each Board to identify a member to be an Equalities Advocate within each Board to raise the profile of any equalities issues within that Board's workstream. The advocates will work together to coordinate the messaging across the organisation and to report back to the Executive Advisory Board.

Board work programme 2020/21

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

The report reflects on the major policy developments which have taken place over the past year and anticipates the key areas of focus for the future work of the LGA. Within this context, the paper then sets out the overall priorities for the Board in 2020/21.

Recommendation

That Members comment on and agree the proposed work programme.

Action

Officers to use members' comments to inform the work of the People and Places Board.

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Board work programme 2020/21

Background

1. As set out in the terms of reference, the People and Places Board represents the interests of non-metropolitan councils within the LGA. It shares a number of areas of interest with the City Regions Board and works jointly with them on issues such as devolution, skills and employment, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and local economic growth. The Boards' makeup allows them to take a different focus or perspective on common interests, most notably concerning progress on devolution in England, where the LGA works with the principle of differential devolution.
2. The People and Places Board also leads the LGA's policy development on digital connectivity (mobile and broadband) and the role for councils in the future of rural land management in England.
3. This paper sets out a proposed work programme for 2020/21. While officers have attempted to set out a programme for the whole year, it is likely that national or local priorities will change over that time. The Board and Lead Members will direct officers to adapt the work programme as and when this happens. While the current plan allows for some flexibility, adding new or expanded work may involve other work being scaled back to fit available resources.

Current context for local government

4. 2019/20 was an unprecedented year for the Board and for the nation. Early in the board cycle a general election was called returning a majority Conservative government. The Government was clear in setting its direction prioritising exiting from the EU and negotiating a trade agreement. It also gave clear indication of its intention to follow a "levelling up" agenda and to publish a devolution white paper.
5. The latter half of the year saw the country hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and a lockdown which we are still only just emerging from. The pandemic saw councils working at breakneck speed to reconfigure services to protect the vulnerable and support communities in a wide-ranging manner including creating new offerings and ensuring the continuation of key frontline services.
6. The long-term impact of COVID-19 will take some time to fully determine. However, councils immediately need additional funding to cover the full costs they have incurred from having to deal with the pandemic and the loss of income they have suffered. Councils across the country are now in the phase of focussing on recovery. This will continue for some time heavily influenced by the national picture around economic recovery and any potential second wave of the virus or local outbreaks.

7. Post lockdown the LGA has clearly set out how the sector wants to move forward on recovery and its relationship with government in its Rethinking Local publication (embed a link). Over the next few months we anticipate the policy agenda for the LGA being driven by the Economic Recovery and Devolution White Paper, EU Exit preparations and the Spending Review.

Board priorities

8. 2019/20 was a successful year for the People & Places Board as outlined in the end of year board report (embed link). It has left us well positioned to ensure that the interests of non-metropolitan councils can be heard and anticipate that the Local Recovery and Devolution White Paper will be a key vehicle for us to influence.
9. Given the above, the following priorities are suggested for the Board in 2020/21, building on its work in 2019/20.
 - 9.1. Within the context of COVID-19 and the forthcoming English devolution white paper the board will pursue a programme of engagement with Government and rural stakeholders to ensure councils in non-metropolitan England have the powers and resources to lead a successful and sustainable recovery and drive improved outcomes for their communities.
 - 9.2. The Board will continue to take forward the LGA's lobbying work on skills, making the case for the Work Local model and continuing to engage with key stakeholders. The Board may want officers to focus on the role employment and skills will play in the Government's recovery plans.
 - 9.3. The Board will continue to play a leading role in driving forward the digital connectivity agenda.
 - 9.4. The Board will seek to ensure the key elements of place-based growth – Rural Land Management, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, trade and investment fit with the priorities and ambitions of non-metropolitan authorities.
 - 9.5. Reflecting on feedback from lead members the Board will identify cross cutting policy issues which it would like to work on with other boards in order to help shape LGA lobbying lines e.g. planning, transport, housing.
10. **Board members are invited to comment on the overall balance of the work programme and priorities.**

Implications for Wales

11. Wales is on its own devolution journey. We continue to work with the WLGA on issues of shared importance, including the role of local government post-Brexit and the details of the UKSPF.

Financial Implications

12. The Board's activities are supported by budgets for policy development and improvement. Resources will be allocated as directed by members in support of individual objectives.

Next steps

13. Officers to develop a detailed programme of activity in line with members' steer.

Rural Digital Connectivity

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

This paper and separate confidential briefing provide members with an update on digital connectivity policy in preparation for the visit of Raj Kalia, Chief Executive, Building Digital UK (the broadband delivery arm of Government) to the Board. It also proposes a set of actions for the Board to pursue over the upcoming political cycle.

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

1. **Note** the current digital connectivity policy context outlined in **paragraphs 2-15**.
2. **Comment** on the set of actions for the Board to pursue over the new political cycle in **paragraph 16**
3. **Note** the separate briefing to support discussions with Mr Kalia at the Board

Action

1. Officers will proceed as directed by members.

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Rural Digital Connectivity

Background

1. This paper and separate confidential briefing provide members with an update on digital connectivity policy in preparation for the visit of Raj Kalia, Chief Executive, Building Digital UK (the broadband delivery arm of Government) to the Board. It also proposes a set of actions for the Board to pursue over the upcoming political cycle.

Connectivity during the Covid-19 pandemic

2. The Covid-19 emergency has served to further highlight the importance of fast and reliable digital connectivity and has given the Government fresh impetus to deliver its pledge to roll out gigabit-broadband across the UK by 2025.
3. Ofcom has reported that the UK's broadband networks held up well over the course of the pandemic with only small degradation to speeds.¹ However, in rural areas in which only slower speeds are available, any degradation of speed however small will have had a significant effect on user experience.
4. Throughout the crisis, LGA officers were in regular contact with telecommunication providers and Government to understand the work being undertaken to keep networks running. This included exploring how councils could enable providers to undertake essential maintenance to digital infrastructure on public sites and roads while ensuring their communities and workforces remain safe.

The National Policy Context

Broadband

5. Following the success of the local government-led Superfast Broadband Programme, the Government has committed to rolling out gigabit broadband to all premises by 2025, bringing forward the previous government target by eight years.
6. Over the last eight years, almost 50 councils have held responsibility for contract managing publicly funded roll out in local areas and, as such, have developed significant expertise, local knowledge and coverage datasets to help hold broadband providers to account on their delivery and achieve the value for money for the taxpayer. To deliver on its new ambitions however, the Government has chosen to take the contract management in-house and run the publicly funded gigabit broadband programme centrally from Whitehall.
7. Since June, the LGA and BDUK have been engaging on the design of the future roll out programme. The LGA Chairman and Cllr Mark Hawthorne, LGA Digital Connectivity Spokesperson met with Matt Warman MP, Digital Infrastructure Minister to outline the important contribution that councils can make to help Government deliver on its ambitions faster. This was followed by detailed discussions between Building Digital UK CEO Raj Kalia, People and Places Board Chairman, Cllr Kevin Bentley, and Cllr Mark Hawthorne.
8. BDUK confirmed at those meetings that the decision to bring contract management in-house has now been finalised. However, both the Minister and civil servants were keen to

emphasise the importance of central and local government working in partnership to successfully deliver the future programme. What remains to be decided is the form this partnership will take, the specific responsibilities and influence local government will have over local roll out, and how local council officer capacity will be funded once the Superfast Broadband Programme completes.

9. During these meetings, and as part of the LGA's response to the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review consultation we have called on Government to provide funding for local government to put in place a local digital champion to help co-ordinate delivery locally. This must also be complemented with a top-up fund which councils can access to recruit extra capacity within highways and planning teams to respond to surges in local roll out activity, such as streetworks permit requests or planning applications, that take place when a provider commences roll out in a specific area.
10. Accompanying this paper is a briefing to guide members' discussions with Raj Kalia, Chief Executive of BDUK (biography **Appendix A**). His visit to the Board provides members with a key opportunity to outline the value that councils have brought to the local roll out of superfast broadband and make clear the risk that an overly centralised Whitehall programme could pose to local delivery. Members have been provided with a confidential briefing to support their conversations.

Mobile connectivity

11. Over the past four years, the People and Places Board has campaigned for improved mobile coverage to be provided to rural communities. Many have outlined the disconnect between mobile network operators' coverage claims and the real-life mobile experience of their residents. Using evidence from councils on the ground, earlier this year the LGA issued a press release calling on Ofcom and Government to act. It recommended local areas should be given annual health checks by Ofcom via on-the-ground testing to verify mobile operators' coverage claims. The release was picked up in [The Independent](#), [The Sun](#), [The Daily Telegraph](#), [The Daily Mail](#), [ITV](#) and Cllr John Fuller appeared on BBC Radio 4 You and Yours.
12. This media coverage will provide a good platform to engage the new Ofcom Chief Executive, Melanie Dawes on this important agenda. An introductory meeting is being set up between the new Chief Executive and the LGA's Digital Connectivity Spokesperson to address this key issue.
13. At the start of the year, the Government also confirmed a joint commercial agreement with mobile network operators' to form a new "Shared Rural Network" (SRN) to improve rural coverage. The proposal commits all four operators to improving their network coverage to 92 per cent of the UK's geography by 2025 with an aggregate of at least one operator covering 95 per cent. This will be achieved through MNOs opening and sharing existing masts and infrastructure between each other.
14. The SRN will also include a £530 million publicly funded scheme in areas that are total not spots with no coverage from any provider.

15. The LGA has noted the SRN as a positive step forward from the industry. However, as part of its [response to the Government's recent mobile connectivity planning consultation](#) we outlined it should not be at the cost of planning deregulation.
16. Since that response, the Government confirmed it will proceed with proposed planning reforms that will demote planning requirements for taller masts from a planning application to permitted development. The LGA will use the Government's upcoming technical consultation on the reforms to re-emphasise the importance of community engagement in these decisions.

Next steps

17. This upcoming Board cycle is an opportunity for members to build on their work to date influencing the Government's design of the gigabit-broadband roll out and supporting councils to catalyse improvements to mobile connectivity. In this regard, members are requested to give their steer on the suitability of pursuing the following areas of focus.

17.1. Work to influence councils' role in the roll out of gigabit-broadband

- 17.1.1. Continue the Board's focus liaising with Government to understand the role councils can play helping achieve the Government's full fibre by 2025 ambitions. It is suggested the Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman be invited to a Board in the New Year.

17.2. Continue the strong proactive focus on mobile connectivity including

- 17.2.1. Seek an introductory meeting between the LGA's Digital Connectivity Spokesperson and the new Ofcom Chief Executive to raise key lines relating to mobile connectivity.
- 17.2.2. Liaise with the mobile operators on their plans for a shared rural network, and lobbying Government and Ofcom to ensure MNOs will be adequately held to account in any future agreement.

18. Members are invited to comment on the proposed priorities for the Board to pursue over the coming political cycle

Implications for Wales

19. Digital infrastructure policy is a devolved responsibility.

Financial Implications

20. The Board's activities are supported by budgets for policy development and improvement. The research will be funded from the Board's budget for policy development.

**Appendix A Raj Kalia, Chief Executive,
BDUK**

Raj is the CEO of Building Digital U.K. (BDUK) leading delivery of digital infrastructure programmes for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. He leads the Department's work on the UK Full Fibre Programme, the Superfast Broadband Programme, Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) and the Rural Gigabit Connectivity scheme.

Prior to this position, Raj spent 14 years at TalkTalk in roles including the Director of Innovation, Director of Major Projects, and Director of Technology Transformation.



Devolution Update

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

Update for the People and Places Board members on the policy work around Devolution and local government reform.

Recommendations

1. Members are asked to consider and agree the draft principles set out at **paragraph 8**
2. Consider the range of public affairs activity set out at **paragraph 10 – 12**
3. Note the proposed approach to responding to the White Paper
4. Note that a range of resources in support of devolution

Action

Officers to take forward comments from members for future policy work.

Contact officer: Philip Clifford
Position: Senior Adviser
Phone no: 0207 187 7383
Email: Philip.Clifford@local.gov.uk

Devolution Update

Background

1. The Local Government Association has consistently made the case for greater powers, funding and responsibility to flow to democratically elected local leaders.
2. In our 2018 Annual Conference publication we called for an English Devolution Bill to enhance the devolved powers of all areas across England¹. In the December 2019 Queen's Speech the Government announced an English Devolution White Paper proposing to set out *further detail on our plans for full devolution across England, levelling up powers between Mayoral Combined Authorities, increasing the number of mayors and doing more devolution deals.*
3. Following this announcement, the LGA began a programme of work, guided by member councils, to refresh and strengthen our policy position on devolution, built around four elements: establishing an English devolution baseline; expanding the focus of devolution beyond economic growth to encompass wider priorities for public service reform; making the case for greater fiscal devolution; and, asserting the constitutional position of English councils within the context of a strengthened United Kingdom.
4. While the emergence of the Coronavirus pandemic in March disrupted much of this work, the role of councils leading their communities through the crisis and towards recovery has been a consistent theme over the last six months. This was highlighted in the LGA's 2020 Conference Publication, which called on the Government *to deliver a devolution white paper for England that enables recovery in its broadest sense, to be led locally.*²
5. In July Simon Clarke, the Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government announced that the Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper would be published in September and contain proposals that will: *"redefine the way in which local government serves its communities by establishing the unitarization of councils as a vital first step for negotiating [these] mayoral devolution deals in future."*
6. Since this announcement the question of local government reorganisation has rapidly gone up the agenda, albeit with little clarity from national government on details of the likely scale, process and timetable. Consequently, there is now a risk that a core argument in favour of devolution, to bring powers and resources closer to communities and businesses, could be lost amidst a welter of competing proposals relating to structure and governance.

¹ https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/5.39%20Brexit_v06WEB.pdf

7. With the White Paper expected within the next month this paper sets out a range of issues and proposed activity for the People and Places Board to consider with a view to ensuring a continued focus on devolution as a process to strengthen place leadership and improve local outcomes.

Discussion

Policy Principles

8. To date, the LGA's work on devolution has been informed by a set of broad principles. Reflecting on the developments of the last 12 months the following are proposed as a guide to shape our response to the White Paper in the coming weeks:
 - 8.1. **Devolution deals should be locally led:** there should be no one-size-fits all approach on governance, no standardised deals crafted in Whitehall and those areas able go furthest, fastest should be able to do so.
 - 8.2. **Devolution deals should leave nothing off the table:** councils should be able to access the widest possible set of powers including fiscal devolution and the ability to 'defragment' national agencies at a local level to tackle issues such as skills and unemployment.
 - 8.3. **Devolution must be backed by adequate resources:** any newly devolved powers and responsibilities must be fully funded and sit alongside a long-term sustainable funding settlement for local government.
 - 8.4. **Individual devolution deals must form part of a new push towards localisation:** Whitehall must become more joined up in working with places, powers returning from the EU such as freedoms and flexibility on state aid and procurement should be passed down to the local level, grants and funding from national government should be consolidated around local areas and their needs.
 - 8.5. **English councils must have a stronger voice on the national stage:** commitment to replicating the functions of the EU Committee of the Regions must be delivered, arrangements such as brexit delivery board and ministerial working groups should form basis of new partnership approach which works for all.
9. **Members of the People and Places Board are asked to consider and agree these draft principles as a guide for the LGA's upcoming policy and lobbying work around the devolution and local recovery white paper and to support a lobbying focus on improving outcomes through local devolution.**

Public Affairs Activity

10. While the precise date of the White Paper's publication remains uncertain, there is a broad expectation that it will emerge within the next six weeks. In anticipation of this we have continued to take forward work commissioned within the previous board cycle, including: the submission to Government of research by Metro Dynamics into Subnational Governance Structures; the publication of research by Shared Intelligence into the drivers of collaboration in two-tier areas; and, hosting a meeting of the Devolution All Party Parliamentary Group on fiscal devolution drawing on research undertaken by Europe Economics and Localis.
11. Looking ahead, work is underway to provide members of the People and Places and City Regions Board with an opportunity to engage directly with a Government representative and to use both the HCLG Committee Inquiry and the Devolution APPG Panel Inquiry to further push the case for local devolution and a place based approach across Whitehall.
12. In taking forward this work, the LGA will work with the Executive Advisory Board to ensure consistency between our response to the White Paper, our Comprehensive Spending Review submission and the LGA's ongoing #CouncilsCan campaign.
13. **Members of the People and Places Board are asked to consider the range of public affairs activity identified above and provide officers with a steer on any additional elements they would like to see.**

Responding to the White Paper's Publication

14. Once the White Paper is published LGA officers will begin to pull together a draft response drawing on existing policy lines and the principles set out above. We will use our existing networks and contacts within the relevant Special Interest Groups and work with the People and Places and Cities Boards to develop the detail of our response. Working on the basis that consultation arrangements around the White Paper will follow a traditional course, we expect a period of around 12 weeks to respond to the consultation. A detailed engagement timetable will be circulated once the date for publication is known and it is proposed that the LGA's Executive Advisory Board provides final sign-off for the LGA's response.
15. While there remains a degree of uncertainty around the contents of the White Paper it is anticipated that a primary objective will be to set out how local areas will be able to access greater powers to drive economic growth. Alongside this the White Paper may also contain proposals relating to health and social care, police and crime commissioners, the repatriation of powers and functions following transition from the EU and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Notwithstanding any views members may already have on these matters the LGA will work to ensure that a joint position regarding these matters is agreed with the relevant LGA policy board. In support of this it is proposed that an item on health devolution is considered at the next meeting of the People and Places Board.

- 16. Members of the People and Places Board are asked to note the proposed approach to responding to the White Paper, agree that an item be taken on health devolution at the next meeting of the board and that further cross-cutting work will be developed once the detailed proposals from government emerge.**

Combined Authorities Engagement and Supporting Devolution

17. The LGA has a programme of support for devolution deal areas³ and continues to commission research and facilitate a range of thematic discussion groups between senior officers from established and emerging combined authority areas. The publication of the Local Recovery and Devolution White Paper has the potential to herald a significant increase in the number of mayoral combined authorities. This will increase the demand for guidance and support on issues related to devolution and the LGA is already in the process of developing a support package made up of a refreshed online resource, a reconvened officer contact network and commissioned research, which will seek to map out the process of going from striking a devolution deal to delivery.
18. In the longer term the White Paper also creates an opportunity to re-engage the established combined authorities and consider how best to work together in the context of greater incidence of devolved governance. In order to ensure also this meets the needs of constituent local authorities, it is proposed that this programme of engagement will be steered by members of the People and Places and City Regions board. A paper will be brought to the next board meeting setting out the parameters and progress of this work.
- 19. Members of the People and Places Board are asked to note that a range of resources in support of devolution are being developed in parallel to the LGA's policy and lobbying efforts and that a paper will be brought to the next board meeting setting out next steps.**

Next Steps

20. Members of the People and Places Board are asked to:
- 20.1. Consider and agree the draft principles set out at paragraph 8 as a guide for the LGA's upcoming policy and lobbying work around the devolution and local recovery white paper and to support a focus on improving outcomes through local devolution.
- 20.2. Consider the range of public affairs activity set out at paragraph 10 – 12 and provide officers with a steer on any additional elements they would like to see.
- 20.3. Note the proposed approach to responding to the White Paper and agree that an item be taken on health devolution at the next meeting of the board

³ <https://local.gov.uk/devolution-our-offer-support>

- 20.4. Note that a range of resources in support of devolution are being developed in parallel to the LGA's policy and lobbying efforts and that a paper will be brought to the next board meeting setting out next steps

Document is Restricted

National planning reforms

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

The Government has recently published two consultations which include proposals for both long-term structural changes to the planning system in England and more immediate amendments to existing processes.

This report summarises the proposals in those consultations and highlights emerging areas of concern for councils.

Recommendation

This item is for update and comment.

Board members are asked to feedback on the key issues that need to be addressed in the LGA's consultation responses.

Action

Officers will use the feedback from Board members to shape the LGA's response to the

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National planning reforms

Introduction

1. On 6 August the Government published the [Planning for the Future White Paper](#) consultation paper with proposals for long-term fundamental structural changes to England's planning system. The consultation period closes on **29 October**.
2. Alongside this, they also published the consultation paper [Changes to the current planning system](#) which includes proposals for more immediate amendments to existing processes. The consultation period closes on **1 October**.
3. This report summarises the proposals in the consultations and highlights potential areas of concern for councils. The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT) Board is leading the response to the consultations on behalf of the LGA.
4. The LGA, through the work of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, has been lobbying Government for some time on areas of planning that would improve the ability of councils to shape their areas for the benefit of communities, as well as supporting the Government's aim of building 300,000 homes per year. The Board re-confirmed its positions on planning [at its meeting on 19 May](#).
5. LGA officers are currently working with councils to develop the detailed responses to both consultations. This includes: working with our planning officers' steering group to better understand the implications of the reforms; holding webinars for members and officers across local government to gather views and gathering feedback from other LGA Boards, including both the People and Places and the City Regions Boards.
6. To date we have heard a range of concerns from councils. These include:
 - 6.1. The implications of a new 'zoning' system
 - 6.2. The role of councillors in the new proposed system and concern about a reduction in democracy
 - 6.3. The implications of a new system of developer contributions on the provision of affordable homes and infrastructure
 - 6.4. The resourcing of the planning system and its capacity to absorb the proposed changes
 - 6.5. The impact of transitioning to a new planning system on investment and housing delivery in the short to medium term

- 6.6. Changes to environmental assessments
 - 6.7. Changes to the standard method for assessing housing numbers in strategic plans, with concerns being raised both by those who could see their numbers increase and those who could see their numbers reduce
 - 6.8. The lack of additional incentives in the proposals for developers to build-out existing permissions.
7. We will be lobbying to ensure that the concerns of councils are heard in Government. However, we will also want to work pragmatically with officials to try and design the reforms and how they are introduced in the best interest of councils.

Background

- 8. Following the 2020 Budget, on 12 March the Government set out their plans for housing and planning reform in the policy paper [Planning for the Future](#) (this is separate to the 6 August White Paper). This signalled the use of zoning tools together with other measures.
- 9. During the COVID-19 pandemic the Government continued to signal its intention to radically reform the planning system. On 30 June the Prime Minister announced that through a “New Deal” to ‘[Build, Build, Build](#)’, new regulations would be introduced to allow the regeneration of vacant and redundant buildings without requiring planning permission.
- 10. In July the [Business and Planning Act 2020](#) introduced changes that come into force on 1 September; such as a fast-track process for varying planning conditions relating to working hours on construction sites, time limits for development (extending the dates on which planning permission, outline planning permission and listed building consents might otherwise expire), and planning proceedings (giving the Planning Inspectorate more flexibility in deciding whether certain local planning appeals should be heard by way of written representations, a hearing or a local inquiry). Our [briefing on the Bill](#) noted that during COVID-19 councils had been working with the development industry to get developments moving again as safely as is possible.
- 11. Also taking effect from 1 September are changes to the [Use Class Order](#), including new use classes Class E (commercial, business and service), Class F1 (learning and non-residential institutions) and Class F2 (local community).
- 12. We have continued to lobby for a locally led planning system through our ‘[Keep Planning Local](#)’ campaign, especially as we rebuild and recover from the pandemic. In our recent [post-pandemic planning stimulus package](#) we reiterated the critical role planning departments played during the pandemic, even though they are increasingly under resourced.

13. To respond to the White Paper and Changes to the current planning system consultations, we will be consulting with members over the coming weeks to ensure we provide a robust, evidence-based response. Going forward it will be important to consider that immediate planning changes will be one of the many challenges that councils will take on in the autumn. The scale of the changes and the process to bring them into use, in conjunction with other legislative changes, needs to be well thought through. We will continue to work with MHCLG to seek to influence the proposals through our engagement with officials and others operating at the centre of Government.

White Paper: Planning for the Future

14. The White Paper proposes a fundamental review of the existing planning system requiring changes to primary and secondary legislation. A number of key proposals, such as having a rules-based system with land divided into three types of areas (Growth, Renewal and Areas that are Protected), have been drawn from [Policy Exchange's think tank report](#) in January, and [subsequent collection of essays](#) in June.
15. The focus of the proposals appears to be on housebuilding and land-use planning, to the exclusion of the many roles planning undertakes to create places. Councils have raised concerns that a wholesale overhaul of the existing system and change to a new system, including its legislation, will create uncertainty and take many years to deliver and implement across all of Whitehall and the wider planning sector such as developers, consultants, lawyers, and academia. Communities need to be made aware about how and when they can engage in the new planning process. In addition, the proposals need to take a more joined up approach, recognising and accounting for changes to other relevant legislation such as the Environment Bill and any changes as a result of the forthcoming Devolution White Paper.
16. After many years of LGA lobbying, the Government has acknowledged that resourcing of planning departments is an area that needs additional support. However, whilst the White Paper identifies a skills strategy for local authorities, there is no detail regarding how this will be resourced. There is considerable concern from councils about their already stretched capacity. Councils will need to upskill officers to undertake the transition process locally and then implement the new planning regime over many years. Planning affects other areas of council business, and any changes to the system will have impacts well beyond planning departments, across all council operations as a whole.
17. Councils are concerned that the proposals will lead to a loss of local democracy, with the removal of the right to be heard in person at plan enquiries, and the removal of democratic accountability of planning applications in growth areas.
18. The White Paper has 24 individual proposals, some with multiple options, across four themes, summarised below:

- 18.1.Planning for development – 30 month deadline for local plans to be in place, streamlined plan-making, a new rules-based system, and standardised digital tools
- 18.2.Planning for beautiful and sustainable places – locally prepared design guidance and codes, a chief officer for design and place-making in each council, a fast-track for beauty, emphasis on sustainability and energy efficiency to achieve net-zero by 2050
- 18.3.Planning for infrastructure and connected place – a new Infrastructure Levy to deliver affordable housing
- 18.4.Delivering change – a resource and skills strategy for the planning sector, strengthened enforcement of powers and sanctions.

Planning for development

19. Every area will be required to have a Local Plan developed through a streamlined process whereby councils will need to have an up to date plan within 30 months of the legislation being brought into force, i.e. by December 2023. There will be sanctions for failing to meet this deadline, although this is not elaborated on. Local planning authorities who have adopted a Local Plan within the previous three years or where a Local Plan has been submitted to the Secretary of State for examination will have 42 months from when the legislation is brought into force, or upon adoption of the most recent plan, whichever is later.
20. Local Plans will need to set clear rules rather than general policies for development. General development management policies will now be set nationally in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with a more focused role for Local Plans in identifying site and area specific requirements, alongside locally-produced design codes.
21. The White Paper proposes early enhanced engagement with neighbourhoods and communities at the Local Plan stage. There is no detail on what the engagement process will be, nor does it recognise the importance of community engagement with developers prior to making their application. Far fewer individual applications will go through planning committees and councillors will not be able to represent their communities where there are local concerns about individual applications. The council and councillors' role in other areas where communities need support such as enforcement is not detailed. Overall the paper does not explain how the new process will help improve better engagement or reach a wider local audience, at the plan making stage; this is particularly problematic when this may be communities only opportunity.
22. Local Plans will need to be significantly shorter, visual and map-based, based on the latest digital technology and standardised using a new template of no more than 50 pages. The current Sustainability Appraisal system will be replaced with a single statutory "sustainable development" test. This will consider whether the plan contributes

to achieving sustainable development in accordance with policy issued by the Secretary of State. There will no longer be a requirement to consider viability or a 'Duty to Cooperate', although further consideration will be given to strategic cross-boundary issues, e.g. major infrastructure or strategic sites.

23. Local Plans would need to identify all land in one of three categories:

23.1. Growth areas – suitable for substantial development which will receive outline planning permission with no need for planning committee

23.2. Renewal areas – suitable for development, presumption will be in favour of development

23.3. Protected areas – will require full planning permission, and include land such as Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Conservation Areas, etc.

24. The paper proposes two alternative 'area' options. The first alternative option suggests combining Growth and Renewal into one land typology (with sub-areas), that would be granted permission in principle, not outline planning permission. A second alternative option, which does not need new primary legislation, would identify only Growth areas and grant them permission in principle.

25. Although not called zones in the paper, the 'areas' approach is based on zonal planning systems, first raised in the January Policy Exchange report, followed by the Government's Planning for the Future policy paper in March. The White Paper suggests that contrary to England, countries where zonal planning systems are used, including Japan, the Netherlands and Germany, provide greater certainty up front. However, the paper fails to recognise that Japan has a top-down system of government and processes; the Netherlands has a spatial planning system whereby decisions are made at the national, regional and local levels and land-use planning is a key spatial planning tool; and Germany, which has a similar spatial planning system to the Netherlands, has a highly devolved system of government. These examples do not provide off-the shelf options for England and it is therefore unclear how the new areas will work in detail.

26. The White Paper also proposes a new nationally determined binding housing requirement, consistent with the delivery of 300,000 homes annually, that local planning authorities would have to deliver through their Local Plans. This would be focused on areas where affordability pressure is highest. The intention is that it will factor in: land constraints; the size of existing urban settlements; the relative affordability of places; the opportunities to use brownfield land; allowance for land required for other development; and a buffer to ensure enough land is provided. No further details are given, but the White Paper references changes to the standard method for assessing housing

numbers, outlined in the current planning system consultation, which will form part of the process of setting the binding housing requirement.

Planning for beautiful and sustainable places

27. Proposals in this section are largely influenced by the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission's report [Living with Beauty](#). The first includes a proposal to fast-track or expedite 'beautiful buildings'. To do this: the NPPF will be updated to ensure that schemes which comply with local design guides and codes have a positive advantage; by requiring that masterplans and site-specific codes are agreed as a condition of the permission in principle which is granted through the plan; and by widening and changing the nature of permitted development so that popular and replicable development can be approved quickly to enable 'gentle intensification'. The use of 'pattern books' would be reintroduced to articulate standard building types, options and associated rules (such as heights and setbacks) in Renewal areas. There is scant detail about the role of heritage.
28. Additional proposals aim to protect green spaces, allow for more building on brownfield land, and require that all new streets be tree lined. Whilst the paper talks about protecting and promoting the stewardship and improvement of the countryside and environment there is little detail and no mention of farming, agriculture, or ecosystem services.
29. From 2025 homes will be expected to produce 75-80 per cent lower CO2 emissions compared to current levels to become 'zero carbon ready', with the ability to become zero carbon over time. The Government intends to review the Future Homes Standard roadmap to align with this proposal. In [our response to the Future Homes Standard](#) consultation in February 2020, we recommended the more ambitious option for higher fabric standards, and strongly opposed the proposal to restrict local planning authorities from setting higher energy efficiency standards for new homes.
30. There will be a new system for sustainability appraisals (SA) and environmental impact assessments (EIA). No details have been provided. Councils have raised concerns about this, and that the removal of environmental assessments will need to be aligned with the goals of the Environment Bill.

Planning for infrastructure and connected place

31. The paper proposes a new Infrastructure Levy to replace the existing developer contributions system of S106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The levy would be charged as a fixed proportion of the development value above a threshold, with a mandatory nationally-set rate or rates. The current system of planning obligations will be abolished. Revenues would continue to be collected and spent locally.
32. In areas where land value uplift is insufficient to support significant levels of land value capture, some or all the value generated by the development would be below the

threshold, and not subject to the Infrastructure Levy. In higher value areas, a much greater proportion of the development value would be above the exempt amount, and subject to the Infrastructure Levy. To better support the timely delivery of infrastructure local authorities would be allowed to borrow against Infrastructure Levy revenues so that they could forward fund infrastructure.

33. It is unclear what impact these reforms would have on the overall level of developer contributions and their distribution, or on the number of on-site affordable houses provided. Councils have raised concern that the huge variance in the market value of developments across the country, could result in some areas having greater capacity to benefit and fund local infrastructure needs and secure affordable homes than others. It will be important that local government is involved in the design of any new system for securing developer contributions.

Delivering change

34. This final section identifies measures required to transition from our current to the new planning system, and the role of local planning authorities and the Planning Inspectorate in that transition. As new skills will be required in urban design, masterplanning and community engagement, a skills strategy for the planning sector is proposed to support the implementation of the reforms. Local authorities will also be subject to a new performance framework, as well as being required to place more emphasis on the enforcement of planning standards and decisions. It will be important that local government is involved in the design of any new skills strategies.
35. Planning fees would continue to be set on a national basis and cover at least the full cost of processing the application type based on clear national benchmarking. However, the LGA has lobbied for councils' ability to set fees locally to ensure they can recover the true cost of processing applications.
36. Leading local economic recovery will be one of the biggest issues for councils. There needs to be confidence in the current planning system to deliver recovery and kick-start construction projects in the autumn. Many councils have told us that the level of overhaul to the planning system is likely to create significant uncertainty, and that now more than ever we need stability and certainty in planning. We will want to work with the Government on the transitioning process.

Changes to the current planning system proposals

37. [Changes to the planning system](#) sets out changes to policy and regulations that can be implemented immediately. It proposes the securing of First Homes through developer contributions. This includes requiring 25 per cent of all affordable housing secured through developer contributions to be First Homes sold at a minimum 30 per cent discount. The proposals also include changes to the standard method for assessing local housing need; temporarily raising the small sites threshold below which developers will not be required to contribute to affordable housing (up to 40 or 50 units) to support SME builders; and extending the current Permission in Principle to major development.

38. On the affordable housing threshold, current national policy is that affordable housing contributions should not be sought for developments of fewer than 10 homes. In designated rural areas a lower threshold of five homes or fewer is allowed. The consultation proposes increasing the trigger threshold so that sites of 40 or possibly 50 homes will be exempt from providing affordable housing. Councils have raised concerns that this could result in increasing numbers of applications below the 40 or 50 site affordable housing trigger, where sites could be delivering more. This could have the unintended consequence of delivering less homes overall, as well as no affordable homes.
39. The Government has indicated that it intends to introduce a First Homes exception site policy to provide affordable housing for local people. In [our response to the First Homes](#) consultation in May we raised concerns that the implementation of First Homes could lead to a significant reduction in other types of affordable homes locally, particularly for those who are currently the least able to afford to buy. We are pleased that the government has listened to our concerns and that 25% of affordable homes will be First Homes, which is considerably lower than the 40, 60 or 80 per cent options outlines in the earlier consultation. However, we remain concerned about the impact of a top-down arbitrary target on the ability of councils to meet local housing needs and will be raising this in our consultation response.
40. We have continued to lobby the Government to support the delivery of 100,000 new social homes per year. In our June 2020 [post-pandemic Housing Stimulus Package](#) we noted that investment in a new generation of social housing could return £320 billion to the nation over 50 years, and as an economic stimulus will grow stronger post COVID-19.

New method for the standard method of assessing housing numbers in strategic plans

41. Analysis of the new method reveals that in terms of housing numbers there are some stark impacts in different parts of the country, and across different rural/urban areas. This demonstrates that a nationally set formula will always struggle to reflect local need. Simply raising the numbers without incentivising or compelling developers to build will not lead to more homes. The method also does not appear to support the Government's ambitions to level up and build more on brownfield land in urban areas.

Next steps

42. Officers will use members' comments to help shape forthcoming EEHT led workshops being held with members and officers, as well as conversations with MHCLG and our response to the consultations.

Home to school transport

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The report summarises LGA work on home-to-school transport as part of the post lockdown return to school process and highlights areas of interest that fall into this Board's remit.

Recommendations

That the Board notes the report, including LGA action and Government support.

That members share any insights and information on experiences from their own areas.

Action

Board feedback is used to shape the LGA's lobbying work

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Home to School transport

Background Home to school transport

LGA work on this issue

1. The LGA has been involved in discussions on home-to-school transport through spring and summer via discussions with council chief executives and both DfT and DfE, through regular recovery focused meetings which have also involved council representatives and home-to-school operators. The LGA has consistently made it clear that returning all children to school under the initial lockdown social distancing requirements would involve significant logistical and financial difficulties for councils
2. From an early stage we have urged the Government for the need to urgently plan for the full reopening of schools in September. The LGA and individual councils have consistently raised issues regarding local transport capacity and supply side constraints in some areas and particular issues around SEND (Special Educational Needs) transport
3. Despite our calls for urgent action it took the Government substantial time to secure additional funding to support home to school travel and also to publish the relevant [guidance](#), which eventually came out on the 11th August, after schools had broken up, causing issues for councils and schools in planning for the autumn.
4. In addition to the guidance, the Department for Transport also produced a Travel Demand Management (TDM) [Toolkit](#) which sets out a framework for Combined and Local Transport Authorities (LTA) in England to develop and implement effective TDM plans. The purpose of a TDM plan is to help councils influence the travel behaviours of all transport users in order to address gaps in capacity due to social distancing and related Covid-19 measures.
5. We continue to monitor the roll out of home to school transport as schools have now re-opened. This is a live issue – at the time of writing this report it was only the first full week back for most schools in England. So far, no significant issues have been reported to us by councils and the new arrangements appear to be working well.

Safety in the COVID guidance

6. Local authorities will not be required to uniformly apply the social distancing guidelines for public transport on dedicated school or college transport. However, the full opening for schools' guidance also sets out that distancing should still be put in place within vehicles wherever possible
7. In particular:

- 7.1. social distancing should be maximised within vehicles wherever it is possible, between individuals or 'bubbles'
- 7.2. it is very important to maximise the ventilation of fresh air (from outside the vehicle) on dedicated school and college transport, particularly through opening windows and ceiling vents
8. It is now the law that children and young people aged 11 and over must wear a face covering on public transport. This law does not apply to dedicated school transport. However, it is recommended that local authorities advise people aged 11 and over to wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated school transport to secondary school or college from the start of the autumn term. This does not apply to those who are exempt from wearing a face covering on public transport.
9. Home to school provision should take the following steps to prevent outbreaks:
 - 9.1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell
 - 9.2. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual
 - 9.3. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
 - 9.4. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach
 - 9.5. Minimising contact and mixing
 - 9.6. Personal protective equipment (PPE) is not normally needed on home to school transport
10. By PPE, the guidance means equipment such as fluid-resistant surgical face masks, disposable gloves, disposable plastic aprons and eye protection such as a face visor or goggles. Not face coverings, advice on which is set out above.

Funding

11. Following our calls for further financial support local transport authorities will receive more than £40 million funding for the autumn term to support additional home-to-school transportation costs. This funding will help them create extra capacity and allow hundreds of thousands more students to use alternatives to public transport, while social distancing measures remain in place. Councils were allocated funding based on the number of children and young people they have in their area, and how far they need to travel. The money is available for spending on pupils travelling to education and training, and anyone supervising or escorting students to education provision. The Government have committed to review further arrangements in the future should it be

necessary. Councils should have received their allocation to provide extra capacity for the autumn term.

12. As home-to-school services will not have to adhere to the same social distancing requirements as services for the public the need for additional capacity is not as great as initially feared it may be. Councils have been urged to continuously re-assess their need for home to school transport as the school term progresses. We will continue to monitor the situation and if the initial allocation proves inadequate, we will work with councils and the Government to ensure the full costs of the new arrangements are reflected in future grants.

Rural areas

13. The guidance published by the DfT acknowledges that many school journeys especially in remote or rural locations will be further than two miles and therefore it is inevitable that some kind of provision will have to be made. The Children and Young Peoples Board has done considerable work in this area and the difficulty rural authorities face in providing this service has been examined.
14. The COVID pandemic is likely to exacerbate some of the underlying issues in the provision of home-to-school transport. As rural areas have further distances for journeys and settlement patterns are less dense there are additional costs associated with the need to provide home to school transport. The additional costs associated with extra provision to meet COVID requirements are likely to also be greater for the same reasons.
15. Rural councils will also be procuring into smaller and less diverse transport provider markets and so it may also be difficult for them to procure additional capacity. These issues with rural provision are well understood nationally and we will continue to ensure they are reflected in discussions about ongoing support for this service.
16. The People and Places Board has also asked about the impact on carbon emissions. It is worth noting that the new guidance and existing practise has always had a presumption in favour of encouraging children to travel to school via active means. Many home-to-school journeys will be less than two miles and therefore not eligible for free school transport, where this is the case councils have always encouraged pupils to walk, cycle or use some other active means. This is the best means of decarbonising short journeys.
17. For longer journeys it is worth noting that by providing a collectivised service by coach or by bus home-to-school transport is already making a contribution to decarbonisation. Using a bus, even a diesel powered one, at maximum capacity is likely to result in a carbon saving when compared to making the same number of trips by car.

18. In the long term in order to meet our carbon zero targets as a country we will need to transition the home to school fleet towards ULEV vehicles. At the moment there are a number of challenges in delivering this change. Firstly, electrification options work best for smaller vehicles. There are some electric double decker buses currently on the market however these tend to have higher upfront costs than conventional vehicles. There are also associated upgrade costs for operators' depots to ensure they have sufficient charging capacity to fully charge their vehicles. Whilst a commercial case can be made with cheaper overall lifetime costs it is currently a finely balanced case, with a large capital outlay leading to a long-term revenue saving.
19. Many of the providers in the transport industry are facing an uncertain future in light of the COVID pandemic and so will need to take decisions about their programmes of capital renewal. Over time as more ULEV vehicles work their way into the vehicle fleet the capital costs will reduce. However, given the life of a commercial bus or coach is typically around 15 years this is likely to be a slow process.
20. The Government is providing grants to the bus sector to purchase ULEV vehicles and this is likely to speed the transition. There are also other potential technologies like hydrogen in development that could offer a different model of operation. These grants and other emerging technologies have not yet reached sufficient scale to ensure widespread adoption in the near future, but they are important to catalyse the industry's transition.
21. It is important to note that these are not reasons to excuse or exempt home to school providers from the decarbonisation agenda. They are merely offered so Board members can understand why this industry may not decarbonise at the same speed as other types of transport and logistics where the commercial case is more straightforward. In order to reach our net zero targets all sectors of the transport industry will have to invest in new engine technologies and operate in different and more efficient ways.

Implications for Wales

22. This policy is a devolved area

Financial Implications

23. None

People and Places Board Update Paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper provides members with a brief update on issues and policy areas not covered by other items on the agenda.

Recommendation

Members are to note the contents of the report.

Action

Officers to take forward any comments from members.

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People and Places Update Paper

Skills and employment

1. The LGA continues to engage its member authorities to shape our views and policy around the COVID-19 crisis and what is needed for a jobs and skills recovery. An LGA position can be viewed [here](#) and is being updated in light of national policy developments.
2. We are proactively discussing these issues with policy and decision makers, including:
 - 2.1. A roundtable on young people with Gillian Keegan MP, the Minister for Skills and Apprenticeships, discussed elsewhere on this agenda.
 - 2.2. A meeting between the LGA Chairman and Mims Davies MP, Minister for Employment, on 8 September to discuss how local government can work more closely with DWP on the co-design of recovery initiatives.
 - 2.3. An LGA response to the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee inquiry into employment and Covid-19 which sought views on immediate and longer term measures needed to protect and create jobs.
 - 2.4. Following our [green jobs analysis](#) the LGA wrote to all relevant parliamentarians, with some resulting in meetings (Luke Pollard MP, shadow environment secretary), and we organised a Devolution APPG session with a focus on green jobs, LGA's Work Local proposals, jobs and skills recovery including several Board Members.
 - 2.5. Cllr Abi Brown represented the LGA on a Getting Britain Back to Work panel session at the Learning and Work Institute's employment and skills Convention in July to talk about the added value of local leadership in delivering a jobs and skills recovery.

Freeports

3. The Chair of the People and Places Board is due to give evidence on the issue of freeports to the International Trade Select Committee on 9 September.
4. Our key asks of the committee are:
 - 4.1. The Government should consider the risks of economic displacement and ensure powers and funding available to freeport areas to support regeneration are made available elsewhere to support local economic ambitions in all parts of the country.

- 4.2. The Government's proposals for freeports should address the issue of regulation and provide greater clarity on where responsibility for upholding regulatory standards would lie.
 - 4.3. Any proposals, and subsequent decisions, to create a freeport should demonstrate clearly how the potential environmental impacts have been considered.
 - 4.4. A better-resourced, locally-led planning system is crucial to provide stability and certainty. The Government should scrap permitted development rights and local communities should be able to have a say on new developments, such as freeports, in their area.
 - 4.5. The Government should use the creation of freeports to spark better engagement with local government on trade and investment and policy within the context of the UK's transition from the European Union.
5. A verbal update following the Select Committee will be available at the Board meeting.

EU Funding, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Growth Funding

6. A key priority of the LGA is to ensure that the ESIF programme is fully realised. The Government has prioritised using the new European Commission flexibilities to help tackle COVID-19 and the economic recovery. LGA members of the Growth Programme Board has helped secure funding for social distancing measures in high streets as well as grants for the visiting economy and SMEs delivered through Growth Hubs from the ERDF programme. From the ESF programme, funding will be used to support areas tackling the digital divide.
7. The remaining ESIF programme (through the reserve fund) runs until the end of 2020 with 3 years further to deliver programmes, with flexibilities allowing programmes to be commissioned beyond the end of 2020. The Government has confirmed that it is likely that the UKSPF will be operating from April 2021. While there is no longer a funding cliff edge, there is uncertainty for essential employment and SME support programmes that are due to end before April 2021.
8. Through press and Government channels the LGA has raised concerns that the ESIF programme will not be fully spent due to the centralised, bureaucratic and lengthy appraisal process that DWP chose to adopt to manage the ESF programme. DWP have introduced measures and additional capacity which has started to see improvements, including halving the number of applications awaiting appraisal. Growth Programme Board Members will monitor progress. The key issue now is to make sure that Government does not make the same mistakes when designing the domestic replacement – the UKSPF.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund and wider Growth Funding

9. There continues to be a lack of detail regarding the design of the domestic replacement for the ESIF Programme – the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This is despite the LGA making representations to Government for the need to provide clarity.
10. The Government has indicated there will be a cross departmental review after the Comprehensive Spending Review and the UKSPF is one of the LGA's key asks. In addition, members have made representations at the Ministerial Local Transition Delivery Board based on the LGA's key lines. The Government has also indicated that the UKSPF will likely be introduced in April 2021, leaving little time for consultation. It is therefore essential that Government codesign UKSPF with councils and combined authorities as a matter of urgency.
11. The LGA are commencing the organising of a stakeholder roundtable on wider growth funding. This is to develop a cross sector partnership to provide clear, consistent and coherent input to government on the future of local economic growth funding. It will also foster strong collaboration between partners with an interest in growth funding, and understand the funding streams that are needed to help local communities recover from the Covid-19 crisis, and achieve the Government's commitment to "levelling up", tackling inequalities and increasing prosperity. Members are welcome to contribute any thoughts towards the event.

Economic Recovery

12. The LGA continues working with the Government on economic recovery. As outlined at the previous board meeting, the Ministerial Economic Recovery Group continues to meet on a regular basis. The group has cross party representation from the LGA and is chaired by Simon Clarke. It also includes Core Cities, Key Cities, District Councils Network, County Councils Network, Association of County Chief Executives, the M9 Mayors and the LEP Network. It has been one of our routes for lobbying around the recovery. These meetings initially began to address issues around the reopening of the economy and the management of the public realm. Over the past few meetings they have become more focussed around specific sector issues.
13. At the most recent meeting on 24th June the group discussed **Employment and Skills**. The LGA lines on employment and skills, previously discussed and agreed in P&P and Cities Boards, formed the basis for these discussions. There was a good degree of consensus across councils and combined authorities about the importance of an approach which involved co-designed programmes with local delivery. Ministers are keen to continue to work with councils on these issues. The group will next be meeting in September.

14. The Ministerial Group is also being supported by a series of officer led working groups. These groups have an LGA officer sitting on all of them and cover a range of issues including:
- 14.1. Labour markets and skills
 - 14.2. Business communities and sectors
 - 14.3. Rural recovery
 - 14.4. Urban recovery
15. **The Rural and Visitor Economies Group** is jointly chaired by a county and district chief executives, nominated by the County Councils Network and District Councils' Network respectively. The remaining members are made up of other district and county chief executives and LEP representatives. The group has been tasked to look at what short term interventions Government could make to spur on visitor and rural economic recovery. To date conversations have been very much focussed on "quick wins" following steers from Government officials. Those suggested have ranged from extending wedding locations to other venues; encouraging school trips to rural locations and enabling more businesses to operate outdoors into the autumn and winter. The Group will meet again towards the end of September and will submit a paper to the main officer-led Recovery group for consideration.
16. **The Labour Market, Employment and Skills Task and Finish Group**, chaired by Joanne Roney (Chief Executive, Manchester City Council) and Frank Rogers (Chief Executive, Liverpool City Region), brings together representatives from the M9, Core Cities, LGA, DCN, CCN and the LEP Network. Its aim is to develop the place angle to jobs / skills recovery issues. To date, it has met twice and focused on shaping Kickstart. The LGA has drafted a *Kickstart: what good looks like* paper, on behalf of the group with based on input from all member bodies. The aim of it is to support local and national discussions on the design, commissioning and delivery of Kickstart. It is being cleared by the group. Alongside this, we have also developed information that might be useful to councils should they wish to get involved in coordinating or delivering the programme with JCP locally. Further meetings are expected to include a focus on apprenticeships and adult retraining.
17. Alongside our policy and lobbying work with Government the LGA is also monitoring the key issues for councils around recovery at a local level, these include:

Education

17.1. In predominantly rural areas where many pupils are reliant on school transport to attend school, access to education may be harder. Either these services may have stopped, or previously operated close to capacity, making it difficult to socially distance. As most schools return to full capacity in the autumn, pupil transport will become a bigger issue.

Economic Growth

17.2. Areas with struggling high streets are likely to face challenges in recovering from lockdown, as businesses are either not in a financial position to re-open, or if they do re-open find that much of their business has moved online in the preceding months.

17.3. The £50m Safer Reopening of High Streets Fund to councils was a helpful step in the initial phase of coming out of lockdown, but councils have found that there were too many limitations on it, and additional funding will be needed to rebuild healthy high streets.

17.4. Areas dependent on one industry, such as those near airports with a high proportion of residents working in the aviation sector, still require funding from Government for specific issues otherwise regional recovery will be hampered. This is also an issue for predominantly rural areas highly dependent on a specific sector for employment – there are 37 specific sectors that provide at least 5% of employment in one or more predominantly rural area.

Sustainability

17.5. Urban areas have moved quickly to install new cycle lanes, modal filters, and widen pavements to encourage active travel and reduce air pollution and carbon emissions. Many of these changes were made on a temporary basis, and there is likely to be a period of readjustment as some of these changes are made permanent, while other, less successful or popular changes are removed.

17.6. Improving sustainability through travel is likely to be a greater challenge in rural areas, where it is less possible for many residents to exclusively travel by cycling, walking and public transport.

17.7. COVID-19 has led to many projects (such as those on energy efficiency in the home) being paused. As lockdown is eased, these projects can resume, but there remains a challenge about how to carry these out in a safe, socially distanced way.

Culture and tourism

17.8. Many cultural organisations (such as theatres) are still unable to open, and we expect that cultural organisations are likely to be among the slowest to recover. This presents significant challenges for regions dependent on visitors to cultural sites for

income, as the furlough scheme is likely to end before these venues are able to return to capacity.

17.9. The tourism industry has been hit hard by COVID-19, with fewer international visitors this year, and although more UK residents are holidaying domestically this year, there is still likely to be a significant financial gap for regions particularly dependent on tourism. Visit Britain forecast a central scenario (as of June 30th) of £39.2bn in domestic tourism spend in England in 2020, down 48% on 2019 when spending by domestic tourists in England was £75.9bn.

Community cohesion

17.10. Extremists may continue to use the post-COVID landscape to further their narratives; economic decline and rising inequality (or perceptions of these) in particular, have traditionally provided fertile territory. As protective instruments such as the furlough scheme and pause on evictions are removed as lockdown eases, regions with strained community relations are likely to be at greater risk of rising extremism.

17.11. COVID-19 has exacerbated existing inequalities, meaning the gaps between regions are likely to become wider too. Urban areas have slightly higher levels of inequality than rural areas, with a greater gap between the number of areas in the upper and lowest quintiles. Between April 2020 and May 2020 the number of people claiming Universal Credit or Job Seeker's Allowance increased by 24 per cent in predominantly rural areas compared with an increase of 30 per cent in predominantly urban areas.

Key issues coming out of local lockdowns

17.12. There has been a lack of local lockdown recovery plans in areas under observation. Currently Leicester is the only area with a local lockdown recovery plan. Other areas only have wider post COVID-19 Recovery Plans which mostly focus on economic recovery and renewal.

17.13. There have been challenges in managing large scale sporting events and permissions being given to open at a national level e.g. horse racing events, but no choice in doing so. There have been many challenges at managing such events at council level, e.g. volumes of racegoers travelling around, public transport, policing etc.

18. The LGA has also identified improvement funding to support the work of councils on economic recovery. Potential projects have been identified focussing on:

18.1. Jobs and skills planning

18.2. Developing the local digital economy

18.3.Councils role in developing diverse and successful micro-businesses

18.4.Toolkit for areas which have lost a major employer

18.5.Action learning sets for councils focussed on recovery

Spending Review

19. In late July the Chancellor re-launched the 2020 Spending Review process, with a deadline for submissions of 24th September. The Spending Review will cover three years' worth of day-to-day spending and four years' worth of capital spending and will set the scene for the rest of this Parliament. The LGA is currently working on its submission to Government.

20. The devolution of funding and powers will be a fundamental element of the entire response. Some of our key asks will focus on lines agreed at People and Places Board on:

20.1.Fiscal devolution

20.2.Skills and employment

20.3.Digital connectivity

20.4.UK Shared Prosperity Funding

Note of last People & Places Board meeting

Title:	People & Places Board
Date:	Wednesday 10 June 2020 & Wednesday 24 June 2020
Venue:	Online Meeting, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

This board meeting was held over two days and the agenda and membership stayed the same.

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions
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1 Welcome, introductions and declarations of interest

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting.

Cllr Rachel Bailey declared an interest in item 4.

2 Economic Growth

Mark Bretton, Chair of the National LEP Network gave a presentation on the Role of LEPs in recovering from the profound economic disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Members made the following comments

- There are good relationships between LEPs and local government and this should be extended to other local partners. If some areas do not have a good working relationship, the period of economic recovery is the time to build it.
- LEPs need to consider rural transport for those who use it for work. Young People in rural areas will see a more stressed economic recovery from after COVID-19 and will need to see transport investment early on in the recovery.
- There is a problem with working from home from a statistical point of view, how do you measure local GVA if most people are working for employers based elsewhere?

Mark Bretton responded

- LEP boards have seen positive feedback around developing relationships with local government, but more can be done to include stakeholders.
- Transport is a consideration that is being looked at but needs to be widened to look at post 16 education transport needs.
- Re-skilling and re-training will be very important in the post covid-19 recovery.

Decision

Members noted presentation

3 Subnational Bodies

Ben Lucas from Metro Dynamics gave a presentation to members on research commissioned by the LGA into subnational bodies. Metro Dynamics highlighted the lessons learned from the research and went on to recommend areas for further development that might be considered as part of the local recovery and devolution white paper..

Members made the following comments

- There are many different institutions branded as subnational bodies and it would be good to get clarity on what these bodies cover, as it often just feels like transport.
- There are concerns that subnational bodies do not cover rural issues and many rural authorities can be ignored when subnational bodies are formed.
- Scrutiny by and engagement with elected members can be patchy.
- It feels like elected urban mayors have a bigger say in these bodies than non-metropolitan local authorities.

Metro responded

- The term subnational bodies is not widely used or understood. Part of the research has been to provide a definition that can be helpful. For example, the northern powerhouse is two subnational bodies covered by the brand of northern powerhouse.
- This research will include views from towns, rural areas and non-metropolitan local authorities.
- Representative governance structures will be key in setting up any body and should mirror how local authorities consider scrutiny.

Decision

Members noted presentation.

4 County/District Collaboration

Daniel Shamplin-Hall introduced the item on district and county council collaboration and outlined the research that has been undertaken thus far.

Members made the following comments

- The report was welcomed as a helpful resource for councils looking to improve relationships within the two-tier system.
- Members agreed that positive working relationships between different officers and members from neighbouring councils is key to collaboration.
- Overall, residents do not raise concerns about governance structures; they talk about how well their local services are being run.

Decision

Members noted the report.

Action

Officers to publish the report.

5 Past the Peak

Philip Clifford introduced the report and asked members to send any comments they have to Officers after the meeting.

Decision

Members noted the report.

7 Note of last People & Places Board meeting

Members agreed the notes from the last board meeting.

8 Employment and skills recovery

Jasbir Jhas updated members on the policy work around employment and skills, including our asks around jobs and skills in light of the Covid-19 crisis. Bushra Jamil gave an update on youth participation, highlighting that unemployment, as a result of Covid-19 crisis, will disproportionately affect young people, and those facing disadvantage. There is an urgent need for relevant employment measures / support to be in place for these groups.

Members made the following comments

- Current Apprenticeship Levy restrictions need to be loosened to maximise the impact it has on local areas, especially if we are to be able to support local businesses through the crisis.
- Post Covid-19 recovery, young people leaving education may not be taking up university places and will need greater support, including additional careers advice, in their post education options.
- Child carers should be within scope of The Apprenticeship levy to help the children's social care sector. Rural areas are particularly affected by this, as is home schooling.
- Transport to access opportunities is an issue for many in rural areas.
- Positive that we are focusing on adult reskilling, but this needs expanding.

Officers responded

- Member comments will be factored into future work.

Decision

Members noted the report and agreed the steer for work going forward

9 People and Places Board Update Paper

Sonika Sidhu presented the board update papers, highlighting policy work not covered in other reports.

Decision

Members noted the report.

Action

Members asked for a briefing from the LGA Executive Advisory Board on LGA engagement with the government and the recovery board.

Members asked for an update on the broadband issues to come to a future board

10 End of year report

Thomas French introduced the report, that provides an overview of the issues and work the board has overseen during the last year. It sets out key achievements in relation to the priorities for the People and Places Board in 2019/20 and looks forward to next year's priorities.

Decision

Members noted the report.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
Vice-Chair	Cllr Simon Henig CBE	Durham County Council
Deputy-chair	Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
	Cllr Bob Jennings	Epping Forest District Council
Members	Cllr Rachel Bailey	Cheshire East Council
	Cllr Marc Bayliss	Worcester City Council
	Cllr Hilary Carrick	Cumbria County Council
	Cllr Neil Clarke MBE	Rushcliffe Borough Council
	Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
	Cllr Diane Marsh	Gravesham Borough Council
	Cllr Eddie Reeves	Oxfordshire County Council
	Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council
	Cllr Bradley Thomas	Wychavon District Council
	Cllr Rob Waltham MBE	North Lincolnshire Council
	Cllr Sue Woodward	Staffordshire County Council
	Cllr Leigh Redman	Somerset County Council

Cllr Kyle Robinson
Cllr Doina Cornell
Cllr Sarah Osborne
Cllr Helen Grant

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
Stroud District Council
East Sussex County Council
Richmondshire District Council

