

Note of last People & Places Board meeting

Title:	People & Places Board
Date:	Tuesday 7 June 2022
Venue:	Hybrid meeting (via Microsoft Teams OR Beecham Room, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ)

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest The Chair welcomed Members, officers and guests to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Cllr Doina Cornell. Cllr Emily O'Brien declared an interest as she works for a national food charity on the Sustainable food places programme.	
2	Minutes of the last meeting A question was asked which related to retrofit. An officer confirmed that a report covering retrofitting would be submitted to the next Board meeting. The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.	
3	Business in the Community update The Chair welcomed Lord Steve Bassam, Chair of the Business in the Community (BITC) Place Taskforce, and invited Esther Barrott, Adviser, to introduce the report. Esther introduced the report which provided Board Members with a brief overview of the BITC Place Taskforce and the Board's involvement to date to support a discussion with Lord Steve Bassam. Lord Bassam set out the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background information which related to the report and the work of the taskforce to date.• The need to emphasise the importance of business engagement to ensure that resources were allocated to achieve the targets set out in the 12 missions that government had established for levelling-up.• The 14 recommendations set out within the report, which focused	

on:

- Collaboration
- Business leadership driving successful partnership and place-based
- The unique resources of each partner and the need for leveraging
- Government's approach to ensuring that businesses were involved in relation to levelling up.

Board Members made a number of comments and asked questions which related to the following points:

- Potential programmes to develop new skills, focused on the green skills agenda and retrofitting.
- Funding sources and the need for resources and targets to be brought together.
- The need for a business input that did not dominate the business agenda.
- Future collaboration with the LGA post-publication.
- The planning agenda and the need to make highstreets an attractive place to live, to allow businesses to thrive.

Lord Bassam responded to Board Members' comments, setting out the following points:

- There was a strong case from both the LGA and local authorities for much more place-based action in relation to climate change.
- The need to develop upskilling in place and drawing the talents of people within local communities in relation to the changing nature of local economies was emphasised.
- BITC continued to engage with government officials to encourage collaborative working to achieve targets, it was suggested that this be in concert with the LGA.
- The relationship between combined-authorities and government, and the need for a more equal distribution of funding was acknowledged.
- The need to create a more diverse workforce within economies was recognised.
- The importance of continuing to work in partnership with Councils, Councillors and the LGA in the future was emphasised.
- Joint representations would be made to government in terms of implementing the report.
- Planning shaped all communities and more thought needed to be given in the future in relation to reviving highstreets.

Lord Bassam thanked both the LGA for their continued help and support also Cllrs Abi Brown and Simon Henig, for their invaluable contributions to the report.

The Chair, on behalf of the Board, expressed thanks to Lord Bassam and other BITC colleagues for their hard work and also to Cllrs Abi Brown and Simon Henig.

Decision:

- Board Members noted the report.

Action:

- Officers to ensure that all LGA council leaders received a copy of the BITC report and that recommendations be addressed with BITC colleagues.

4 The role of councils in addressing the rising cost of living

The Chair welcomed Rose Doran, Senior Adviser in the Children, Welfare, Equality and Democracy (CWED) officer team, and invited Esther Barrott, Adviser, to introduce the report.

Esther introduced the report which provided an overview of the LGA's current work on support for low-income households, led by Rose and the Resources Board.

Rose set out the following points:

- Background information which related to the Resources Board and policy join-up.
- Council finances being impacted by the rising cost of living was being considered.
- Work in relation to addressing the rising cost of living had increased significantly as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and continued to increase post-pandemic.
- The need for a positive narrative was emphasised, as well as highlighting the challenges and the need for a properly resourced welfare system to ensure a sustainable approach to having greater resilience within communities.
- The need to better protect communities in the future was emphasised and would be a key theme at the LGA annual conference 2022.
- A workshop had been set up which focused on council's engagement with service users in relation to anti-poverty.
- At a recent Resources Board meeting, it was suggested that a steering group be set up to discuss the role of councils in addressing the rising cost of living. Input would be required from a representative from each Board.
- The steering group would deliver action learning and bring together key focuses and specific issues.

Board Members commented on the issues that the rising cost of living had brought, including:

- Fuel poverty.
- The need to retrofit properties.
- The need to promote and prioritise closer co-ordination with voluntary and community sectors.
- Access to public transport, employment opportunities and support services in rural and coastal areas.

- The Agricultural sector and food security.
- Planning and use of land.
- Heating oil costs.
- The lack of battery storage technology.
- Increased mortgage and interest rates.
- The need for rural proofing.
- Digital infrastructure.
- The lack of affordable housing.
- The need for planning permission regulations to change to ensure that more residential lets were available.

It was agreed by the Board that Cllr Emily O'Brien represent the Board on a cost-of-living steering group.

Rose noted all of the points raised by Board Members and confirmed that she'd continue to link in with other Boards in relation to the rising cost of living issues, and the Board's representative, Cllr Emily O'Brien.

Cllr Emily O'Brien thanked the Board for the endorsement.

Decision:

- Board Members noted the report.

Action:

- Officers to provide regular update/progress reports to future meetings of the Board.

5 Levelling Up Locally

The Chair invited Esther Barrott, Adviser, to introduce the report.

Esther introduced the report which provided a short update in relation to the Levelling Up Locally inquiry.

Board Members made the following comments:

- The importance of leadership and working together was emphasised.

Decision:

- Board Members noted the report.

Action:

- Officers to provide regular updates to Board Members regarding the development of the Inquiry.

6 Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill Update

The Chair invited Eleanor Law, Adviser, to introduce the report.

Eleanor introduced the report which provided an overview of provisions within the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill related to devolution and levelling up missions.

Board Members made a number of comments and asked questions which related to the following points:

- Equality in relation to powers between different devolution deal areas.
- Concerns in relation to powers transferred to combined authorities without consent and the exclusion of districts.
- Cllr Emily O'Brien asked that it be minuted that extensive discussions had recently taken place within the independent group in relation to a strong opposition to devolution powers being conditional on an elected mayor, and also, concerns about the move towards larger authorities.
- The importance of planning, green field sites, renewable energy and the nuclear programme was emphasised.
- Roles of parish and town councils and associated responsibilities.

Decision:

- Board Members noted the report.

Action:

- Officers to work with councils, government and parliamentarians to identify opportunities and challenges posed by the Bill.

7 People and Places Board Annual Report

The Chair invited Rebecca Cox, Principal Policy Adviser, to introduce the report.

Rebecca introduced the report which summarised the Board's activity over the past year. It set out key achievements in relation to the priorities for the People and Places Board in 2021/22 and looked forward to next year's priorities.

Board Members made a number of comments and asked questions which related to the following points:

- The importance of inclusiveness.
- The Chair suggested that the final report be circulated to all LGA council leaders to highlight the work of the Board, with a brief summary of the People and Places Board at the start of the report. The Chair asked that the final report be signed by all Members of the Board prior to being circulated.
- The importance of rural proofing.
- The importance of digital connectivity.
- Rural resilience in terms of networks.
- Green skills and retrofitting.

- Access to services in rural and coastal communities.

Rebecca confirmed that all LGA Boards produced an annual report of their own to be submitted to the Executive Advisory Board meeting in July. Once agreed by the Executive Advisory Board, officers would look to see whether a Member-friendly document could be circulated to LGA council leaders.

Decision:

- Board Members noted the report.

8 Forward look on employment and skills

Please refer to the confidential minutes document for more information related to this item.

9 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Future of Growth Funding

Please refer to the confidential minutes document for more information related to this item.

Appendix A - Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
	Cllr Emily Smith	Vale of White Horse District Council
	Cllr Simon Henig CBE	Durham County Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Emily O'Brien	Lewes District Council
Members	Cllr Rachel Bailey	Cheshire East Council
	Cllr Marc Bayliss	Worcester City Council
	Cllr Peter Butlin	Warwickshire County Council
	Cllr Hilary Carrick	Cumbria County Council
	Cllr Jordan Meade	Gravesham Borough Council
	Cllr Eddie Reeves	Oxfordshire County Council
	Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire Council
	Cllr Phillippa Williamson	Lancashire County Council
	Cllr Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council
	Cllr Damien Greenhalgh	High Peak Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council
	Cllr Caroline Leaver	Devon County Council
	Cllr Stan Collins	Cumbria County Council
	Cllr Kevin Etheridge	Caerphilly County Borough Council
	Cllr Sue Roberts	South Oxfordshire District Council
Apologies	Cllr Doina Cornell	Stroud District Council
In Attendance	Cllr Peter Heydon	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
	Cllr Michael Mullaney	Leicestershire County Council