

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

Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board

Tuesday, 21 March 2023

Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#)

Item	Decisions and actions
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1 Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest

The Chairman welcomed members to the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board meeting.

Apologies were received from Mayor Paul Dennett, Cllr Martin Gannon, Cllr Pippa Heylings, Cllr Claire Holland, Cllr Carl Les, and Cllr Paul Marshall.

No declarations of interest were made.

2 Active Travel England

The Chairman introduced Danny Williams, Chief Executive, and Brian Deegan, Director of Inspections, from Active Travel England (ATE) to give an update on their activities with councils and provide a look ahead at future work and funding.

ATE directly funds active travel schemes and as well as inspects and reviews them. From the summer, ATE would become a statutory consultee on large new housing developments. They also develop and deliver training for users and officers. Another focus was developing tools and datasets to be used by officers for a strong nationwide active travel sector.

Members made the following comments:

- There was often support for active travel infrastructure with a “loud minority” causing delays to take place, it was queried how to address opposition
- Funding was a challenge for councils, with issues such as road fixing already a priority
- It was queried if a framework or guidance be introduced to planning authorities
- It was suggested that ATE have a say on not only planning applications but local walking and infrastructure strategic plans

- It was suggested that ATE engage with Sub-national Strategic Transport Bodies.

In response, Danny and Brian from ATE made the following comments:

- The aim was that 50% of all journeys would be walking or cycling by 2030 with a focus primarily on walking infrastructure rather than cycling
- It was emphasised that ATE did not wish to have a “top down” approach and wanted to work with councils to deliver what they feel is best for their communities
- To address opposition to active travel infrastructure, it was suggested that councils should press ahead with schemes and then engage with those opposing to address specific concerns
- There were roles at ATE set up specifically for regional engagement

Kamal Panchal, Senior Adviser made the following comments:

- There were inflationary risks which could have an impact on local transport funding to watch
- That we should remember the wider role of Department for Transport in setting national policy and the role it has in funding local transport and highways investment.
- It was important that elected members are also supported on active travel, given the local sensitivities with such schemes. It was suggested that the LGA support members by working with ATE to provide advice and guidance for councillors.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report and discussions

3 Building Safety Update

The Chairman invited Mark Norris, Principal Adviser to give an update on LGA's building safety work including remediation, the Building Safety Act and improvement work with councils.

The following was highlighted to Members:

- Councils with building stock would be expected to start registering their buildings from April. Once the regime would be in place, the LGA would seek to engage with stock owning authorities to hear if there are any issues they were experiencing or anticipating for October.
- There had been discussions on the definition of a building, the definition introduced could make it more difficult for the regulator to treat certain buildings as a whole
- Members were encouraged to sign up for the LGA's building safety e-learning module and encouraged to give feedback.

Members made the following comments:

- It was important that government is lobbied to ensure buildings are not excluded from the regime
- Joint inspections from both councils and the fire brigade had caused some confusion

Regarding inspection, it had been raised that an implication for the definition of a building is that for some buildings, some parts of the building would need to be checked by the fire brigade and another part would need to be checked by the council with then the building safety regulator doing further inspections.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

4 Waste and Recycling

The Chairman invited Nick Porter, Senior Adviser, to present the report which gave an update on the Resource and Waste Strategy reforms and looks at other current and long-term issues relating to waste and recycling services.

The Chairman advised that he had met with the Minister for Environmental Quality and Resilience to reiterate the LGA's policy concerns.

Members made the following comments:

- Concerns were raised over the costs that councils could face with waste providers following the reforms
- Deposit return schemes were welcomed but it was stressed that this service should be accessible to all residents.
- The behaviour of residents should be considered when reforming the systems, such as how likely they are to separate food waste and green waste if required.
- There was some support for introducing regular food waste collections everywhere
- The use of data and tracing back to buyers should be considered to address fly tipping

Decision:

Members **noted** the report with the above comments.

5 Updates / Any other Boards business

The Chairman invited Eamon Lally, Principal Adviser, to present the report. It was noted that there had been lots of engagement with councils.

The following updates from the Spring Budget were highlighted to members:

- The Government is bringing forward a new discounted Public

Work Loans Board (PWLB) policy margin to support local authorities borrowing for Housing Revenue Accounts and the delivery of social housing. This will provide much-needed additional support for vital council housebuilding projects. However, this will not mitigate the impact of the Government's 7 per cent social rent cap for 2023/24.

- In recognition of the scale of the impact, the Spring Budget announces further support to ensure 'nutrient neutrality' obligations can be efficiently delivered, thereby reducing the risks facing developers building homes in affected areas.

Members discussed the LGA's work lobbying government on climate change. It was noted that whilst some progress on engagement was taking place, such as engagement with the Net Zero review, meetings with Ministers and the Skidmore report, it was not translating to significant change to policy delivery. The policy directorate at the LGA was focusing on core "punchy" messaging for manifestos and influencing ahead of a general election.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

6 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2023 were agreed as accurate record.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr David Renard	Swindon Borough Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Darren Rodwell	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Loic Rich	Cornwall Council
Members	Cllr Kelham Cooke	South Kesteven District Council
	Cllr Mark Crane	Selby District Council
	Cllr Jonathan Ash-Edwards	Mid Sussex District Council
	Cllr Linda Taylor	Cornwall Council
	Mayor Philip Glanville	Hackney London Borough Council
	Cllr Philip Bialyk	Exeter City Council
	Cllr Emily Darlington	Milton Keynes Council
	Cllr Vikki Slade	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
	Cllr Diana Moore	Exeter City Council
Apologies	Cllr Paul Marshall	West Sussex County Council
	Cllr Carl Les	North Yorkshire County Council
	Cllr Martin Gannon	Gateshead Council
	Mayor Paul Dennett	Salford City Council

Cllr Claire Holland
Cllr Pippa Heylings

Lambeth London Borough Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council

In Attendance

Danny Williams
Brian Deegan

Active Travel England
Active Travel England

LGA Officers

Georgina Brightwell
Eamon Lally
Mark Norris
Kamal Panchal
Emilia Peters
Nick Porter
Andrew Richmond
Jacqueline Smale