

Minutes of last People & Places Board meeting

People & Places Board

Tuesday, 14 March 2023

Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A**

Item	Decisions and actions
------	-----------------------

1 Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed Members, officers and guests to the meeting.

Apologies were received by Cllr Etheridge, Cllr Smith, Cllr Tett and Cllr Doherty. Cllr Kemp, Cllr Gunner and Cllr Topping served as substitutes.

No declarations of interest were made.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2023 were agreed as an accurate record. It was noted that Cllr Lewis's attendance at the meeting was not recorded in the minutes, which were duly amended.

3 Second homes

As Members had expressed an interest in understanding the LGA's activity around second homes, **Rebecca Cox, Principal Policy Adviser**, introduced the paper, which set out some of the key issues.

At a previous meeting, comments from Members included:

- Members had expressed the wish to undertake work around second homes and ongoing challenges.
- A lack of data made it difficult to understand the impact of second homes and holiday lets on the housing market.
- Members felt they lacked the appropriate tools and powers to have any control over that part of the housing market.
- In a meeting to discuss short-term lets convened by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, there was a strong agreement from councils and businesses that a registration scheme would be a positive way forward, to ensure that health, safety, and fire regulations were in place and being followed correctly.
- The LGA has been approached by Localis with a proposal for a project

on Community Land Trusts (CLTs).

The Chair invited **Jonathan Werran, Chief Executive of Localis**, to address the meeting. Key points included the following:

- The proposal looks at the effectiveness of Community Land Trusts.
- Research from the project will be launched in the summer.
- Four key areas of interest: the lack of risk capital or professional expertise for community groups and the sporadic nature of help; the expense of land itself as an issue and the necessity of high grant rates and the need for cross-subsidies; affordable rents; and the role in planning in local plans.
- The work will review how the housing market works for first-time buyers, renting in tourist hotspots and how it differs from other parts of the country.
- There is a practical case study from East Cambridgeshire Council concerning using mainstream political rhetoric to support community-led developments.

Members made the following comments:

- A Member believed the current methodology for calculating affordability was often distorted, particularly in the areas with second homes, as there are many new residents with high pensions. He proposed an alternative measure, aimed at people between the ages of 20 and 35, reviewing how many of them could afford to buy within their area of choice.
- Another Member believed the scope of our understanding of key workers, citing fishermen as a key example, should be widened.
- There was a view that the more councillors can understand current pressures, then the more they can review what powers might be needed to regulate this space as well as protecting residents.
- Jonathan Werran said the work could widen in scope to look at the distorting impact and role of the private rental market and maybe try to determine what is causing such distortion.

Recommendation:

Board Members **commented** on the LGA's policy work to date; **shared** their views on second homes data and **agreed** to fund Localis' Community Land Trust proposal.

4 Rural levelling up

Esther Barrott, Adviser, provided background relating to levelling up rural areas before introducing **Tim Goodship, Head of Rural Policy at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)**, who then presented to the Board. Key points from the presentation included the following:

- Digital connectivity is the main issue raised by rural areas and local politicians.
- Lack of public transport is a key part of rural hardship.
- In September, DEFRA launched the £110 million Rural England

Prosperity Fund as a top-up to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in eligible rural areas.

- A £3 million Fund for village halls was opened for applications in December, which received a good response rate.
- There is ongoing work to review the support that the infrastructure levy might provide for affordable housing schemes and ensure it will be comparable to what was previously provided under Section 106.

The Chair introduced **Minette Batters, President of the National Farmers' Union (NFU)**, who made the following points:

- There is a new policy framework, with a very different approach to food production and environmental delivery.
- The environmental land management schemes are extremely different to what was previously in place with direct support payments. Previous land-based payments made a large contribution to farm business income, particularly for grassland and livestock.
- The economy, particularly in rural areas, has suffered from poor productivity and connectivity.
- She said it is often underestimated how much farming food production underpins the rural economy.
- Energy costs and the war in Ukraine were highlighted as issues in the reduced egg production in 2022.
- It was her hope that future governments would commit to a self-sufficiency target and a statutory reporting duty.

Members made the following comments:

- Members reflected on some of the issues facing rural areas, including transport and connectivity.
- A Member asked what local authorities can do to help alleviate current difficulties.
- How do we ensure that farmers get paid, what it costs to produce food?
- A Member highlighted that the United Kingdom spends less than 8% of annual income on food.
- A Member agreed with the view that there needs to be policy work that focuses on rural needs and asks.

Recommendations:

Members **noted** the background, context and data analysis which informs this workstream and **had a wider conversation** with key stakeholders from DEFRA and the NFU to inform the development of the Board's key asks of the rural sector.

Action/s

Following the discussions officers will **take away the emerging themes and bring back the key messages** for a wider debate with Board members to test and ensure they align with other organisations. The key asks and offers from the rural sector **will then be passed on to the next Board** and a wider discussion will take place in the new cycle around their dissemination under new Board leadership.

Tim Goodship will **provide** a copy of the slides from his presentation.

5 People and Places forward plan

Rebecca Cox, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced the paper which set out future Board dates with proposals for discussion topics. The Chair reminded Members that the June meeting would be his last as Chair of the Board.

Recommendation:

The Board **agreed** the forward plan.

6 Green Jobs and Skills Update

Please refer to the confidential minutes documents for information relating to this item.

7 The role of councils in supporting economic inclusion: Unlocking talent to level-up

Please refer to the confidential minutes documents for information relating to this item.

8 Levelling Up Fund

Please refer to the confidential minutes documents for information relating to this item.

Index A - Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Emily O'Brien	Lewes District Council
	Cllr Amanda Serjeant	Chesterfield Borough Council
Members	Cllr Marc Bayliss	Worcester City Council
	Cllr Peter Butlin	Warwickshire County Council
	Cllr Hilary Carrick	Cumbria County Council
	Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen	Breckland Council
	Cllr Jordan Meade	Gravesham Borough Council
	Cllr Eddie Reeves	Oxfordshire County Council
	Cllr Phillippa Williamson	Lancashire County Council
	Cllr Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council
	Cllr Simon Henig CBE	Durham County Council
	Cllr Erica Lewis	Lancaster City Council

Cllr Damien Greenhalgh

Cllr Caroline Leaver

Cllr Stan Collins

Cllr Dr Sue Roberts

Cllr Colin Kemp

Cllr Shaun Gunner

Cllr Jane Evison

Cllr Caroline Topping

Cllr Steve Norman

High Peak Borough Council and
County Council

Devon County Council

Cumbria County Council

South Oxfordshire District Council

Woking Borough Council

Arun District Council

East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Suffolk County Council

Lichfield District Council

Apologies

Cllr Emily Smith

Cllr Lynne Doherty

Cllr Martin Tett

Cllr Kevin Etheridge

Vale of White Horse District Council

West Berkshire Council

Buckinghamshire Council

Caerphilly County Borough Council