

Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board - End of Year Report

Background

1. The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board provides strategic oversight of the LGA's policy, regulatory and improvement activity in relation to the economy and environment, including transport, economic development and business support, housing, planning, waste and climate change, in line with the LGA priorities and any specific regulatory and LGA European lobbying priorities as they relate to this activity.

Achievements

Housing

2. The LGA was successful in influencing elements of the Housing and Planning Act that have most concerns for local government through policy and lobbying work with the Departments, with Parliament and the media. Major successes include the Government's decision to abandon implementing the High Income Social Tenants policy (known as 'Pay to Stay'), to, at the very least, delay any plans to implement the forced sale of higher value assets, and to significantly reduce requirements for starter homes on new developments. We are continuing to push for clarity of direction on the forced sale and starter home policies.
3. The LGA's housing commission has helped place the sector at the forefront of the debate in resolving the countries housing crisis. It engaged over 100 different partners across the housing, planning and health sectors, held a number of successful events, and launched a preliminary and final report that was well received by partners and gained significant press attention. The final report was developed alongside sustained engagement with the Government and in advance of the Government's own Housing White Paper (see below), which had adopted ideas put forward by the LGA.
4. The Government's Housing White Paper acknowledged that the housing market is broken and adopted a number of arguments pushed by the LGA.(see Housing Commission) It also pledged to further explore issues raised by the LGA, such as providing more older people's housing, and exploring options for land value capture to fund infrastructure. However there are some risks for councils in the white paper and it could have been more ambitious, and the LGA will continue to work with the Government on next steps.
5. The LGA was instrumental in ensuring the final version of the Homelessness Reduction Act was practical; working with Bob Blackman MP who introduced the Private Members Bill, the Government who supported the Bill, and with councils.
6. The LGA has completed a project and launched a report looking at the different ways that councils can enable housing growth. This includes practice in establishing a housing company, supporting community land trusts, and entering into a joint venture with

housing associations and private developers. The LGA is close to completing a project capturing council innovation in providing temporary accommodation (TA) innovations in reducing the demand for TA, in sourcing new TA, or in finding alternatives to TA. The LGA is also close to completing a project looking at how councils can meet the housing need of an ageing population, in ways that integrate housing with health and care.

Environment

7. The Board has worked on responses to the Government's consultations on its clean air plan and the proposals to introduce Clean Air Zones. We have convened a series of seminars with officers from affected areas as well as engaging directly with DEFRA making the case that local government can only help the Government deliver on its clean air responsibilities if we are adequately resourced and are given the necessary powers to tackle the problem.
8. We have focused on working with councils to understand what our future approach should be to waste and recycling as we prepare to exit from Europe
9. A successful involvement in the commercial waste judicial review has meant the LGA has protected the sector from potential loss of income of around £77 million per year.
10. An additional £700 million of funding was made available for flooding in the 2016 budget. The LGA has been working closely with the government to ensure that this is focussed on localised flooding projects.

Transport & Growth

11. The Bus Services Act 2017 received Royal Assent on 27 April 2017. The LGA has called for more flexibility for local authorities to intervene in local bus markets to deliver better results for passengers. We therefore supported the Bill in its passage through Parliament and are glad that the Government has provided a framework for making it a reality. As part of our work on the act we hosted a buses conference for officers and members in February. The conference explored ways in which councils could help increase bus patronage as well as discussing new powers available through the Act.
12. At the Government's Autumn Statement the Chancellor announced £1.3 billion for improvements to Britain's roads and to tackle congestion. The LGA welcomed the Government's acknowledgement of our repeated calls for more investment in local road networks.
13. The Government announced, as part of their litter strategy, that they will bring forward proposals to allow local authorities to fine the registered keeper of a vehicle when someone in the vehicle commits a littering offence. This is a change that the LGA has called for for some time and we welcome the Government's position.
14. The LGA were successful in getting the Government to review and withdraw its proposals for improving roadworks, in particular tackling unattended roadworks at weekends. The Board has renewed our calls for the full roll out of lane rental powers which have proved effective in London and Kent.

15. The board continues to support changes to how freight movements are managed. We have re-iterated our call for full implementation of the Traffic Management Act 2004 Part 6 to allow councils to enforce weight limits and HGV bans in areas where they are not appropriate. We have also called for the Government to make it compulsory for HGVs to use commercial sat navs.
16. Following joint study visits to Southampton and Milton Keynes councils, the LGA and British Property Federation launched a report on [local development, growth and regeneration through successful public/private collaboration](#) at an event attended by leaders from local government, the development and investment industries and central government.
17. The EEHT Board led on developing the [LGA's response](#) to the Government's green paper on the Industrial Strategy. The response highlighted the importance of local leaders across the country being able to access appropriate levers of growth, such as on skills and employment, infrastructure and housing in order to raise productivity, achieve inclusive growth and match the economic performance of their global competitors.

Programme of work and priorities 2017/18

18. A draft work programme for 2017/18 will be presented at the Board's October meeting. In proposing the programme a number of factors will need to be taken into account including:
 - 18.1. Make the case for councils to have the powers and funding to deliver more better homes that meet needs and are affordable to communities, to build prosperous places well supported by services and infrastructure, and to reduce homelessness.
 - 18.2. Growth and future national and local policy on transport and infrastructure, including emerging legislation in relation to Connected and Autonomous Vehicles and the Government's response to the Air Quality Plan consultation.
 - 18.3. To fully understand the impact of exiting the EU on waste and recycling policy.
 - 18.4. To develop clear lobbying lines on waste and recycling which reflect where councils want to be once we have exited the EU.
 - 18.5. To influence government thinking on local energy policy and promote the role of local leadership.
 - 18.6. To continue to work in partnership with DEFRA on flooding.

Financial Implications

1. All work programmes are met from existing budgets and resources.