

## **Note of last Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board meeting**

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| <b>Title:</b> | Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board                |
| <b>Date:</b>  | Friday 23 February 2018  |
| <b>Venue:</b> | Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ |

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### **Attendance**

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

| <b>Item</b> | <b>Decisions and actions</b> |
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### **1 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

The Chair welcomed members and officers to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Alistair Auty, Cllr Lynne Duffy, Cllr Blake Pain, Cllr Colin Davie, Cllr Helen Holland and Cllr Tony Newman.

Cllr Philip Broadhead, Cllr Stephen Parker and Cllr Shaun Davies attended as substitutes.

No declarations of interest were made.

### **2 Flood risk management**

The Chairman welcomed Alison Baptiste from the Environment Agency and Jonathan Moxon from Leeds City Council who attended as guest speakers and delivered their presentations on the current situation and the future of flooding. These presentations followed a request from the Board when they indicated that it would be useful to discuss flooding at a time which would enable the development of a longer term strategic approach.

Sonika Sidhu, Senior Adviser, introduced the report and explained that the Government committed to investing £2.5 billion in capital funding for flood defences for the period 2015-16 to 2020-21 and that the majority of the funding for flood and coastal erosion management is through grants from DEFRA to the Environment Agency. In addition, The Chancellor announced in the Autumn Budget 2017 that an additional £76 million will be spent on flood and coastal defence schemes over the next three years.

Sonika explained the LGA's current lobbying position on flooding: the key issue being capital and revenue funding for flood defence projects to be devolved into a single, place-based pot to allow local areas to support a more diverse set of outcomes. Sonika informed the Board that DEFRA will shortly be undertaking a review to look at how flood defence funding is structured post-2021. We are lobbying for local government to

be a key stakeholder in this review.

### **Discussion**

In the discussion which followed, these points were made:

- Members noted that local authorities are clearly encouraged to get third party contributions for flood defences, yet this is a real challenge. They requested instances where funding from the private sector for flood defence has been acquired to be shared with the Board.
- Members agreed that after the 'blue light services' have left it is then the local authority's responsibility to deal with the aftermath on communities for years to come. Members suggested linking this to the Board's economy portfolio with the risk of companies/businesses simply moving from flood-risk areas.
- Members highlighted the effectiveness of local authority allotment and front garden schemes for managing water, especially in urban environments. The Board requested officers to share some best practice evidence of this.

### **Decision**

The members of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board gave direction for LGA engagement with government on future flooding policy and flooding. The Board also reconfirmed the LGA's flooding position.

## **3 Waste and Recycling update**

Sonika Sidhu, Senior Adviser, introduced the report which confirms the work the Board has been doing to review different methods for measuring waste and recycling in the future.

Sonika provided an update on China banning imports of cheap plastic and mixed paper. She explained that the situation is constantly evolving, around 40 councils are stockpiling waste which brings with it health and safety concerns. A national survey is in the process of being compiled. Sonika agreed to share intelligence with Board members.

### **Discussion**

In the discussion which followed, these points were made:

- Members requested the LGA to be stronger on producer responsibility and on food wastage.
- The Board reaffirmed the LGA's position on the landfill tax, that all proceeds should be returned to local authorities to help with recycling. Members requested a section to be included in the report on the work of the LGA and local authorities on landfill.
- Members expressed concern surrounding China rejecting imported waste as residents have said 'there is no point recycling as China will not accept it.'
- Members stressed that it was important the LGA's calls are not framed as de-

regulation post-Brexit.

### **Decision**

The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board members formally agreed the recommendations in section 8 and 11 of the report.

### **Action**

Cllr Rachel Blake highlighted food waste compost schemes Tower Hamlets run, Sonika requested to have a conversation.

## **4 Housing, planning and infrastructure**

Eamon Lally, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced this report which provides a summary of the key elements of the Budget 2017 proposals and how they fit with the Government's wider agenda.

Eamon stressed that following direction from the Board, the LGA is undertaking a range of activity focusing on ensuring homes with planning permission are built.

Eamon clarified for the Board that the current LGA policy is that all funds achieved through right to buy sales are returned to local authorities to enable them to replenish the housing stock.

### **Discussion**

In the discussion which followed, these points were made:

- Members stressed the need for upfront investment from developers in the infrastructure before we build new homes otherwise current infrastructural capacity will not be able to cope.
- Members also expressed their concern of developers building upwards and the fact that there is no section 106 attached to this.
- Members requested further analysis on 16.4 which mentioned the further £1.5 billion for the Home Building Fund, providing loans specifically targeted at supporting small and medium-sized enterprises who struggle to access finance to build.
- Members raised their concerns relating to landbanking where developers delay building to maximise their profits. They agreed it would be beneficial to establish clarity on what 'start on site' actually means, national guidance of this would be very useful.
- On landbanking members stressed the difference between land scale schemes and smaller ones. They feared that smaller schemes will not be the focus of the Letwin Review yet these are the ones which cause the most difficulty for local authorities.

### **Decision**

The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board members considered and

provided steer on future LGA activity as set out in paragraphs 14, 19 and 24.

The Board agreed to the proposals in paragraph 14.

The Board agreed to the proposals in paragraph 19.

The Board agreed to the proposals in paragraph 24.

### **Action**

Cllr Rachel Blake explained that in her authority of Tower Hamlets they have some very good officers working on Viability. Officers to hold conversations about the possibility of officers from Tower Hamlets presenting at a future Board.

## **5 General Board Update**

Eamon Lally, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced this report which provided the Board with a general update on activity in relation to transport and planning since the last Board meeting.

### **Discussion**

In the discussion that followed, these points were made:

- Members agreed on the importance of the future transport work, they commended the useful discussion held at the previous Board meeting. They requested that this remains a focus of the Board. Eamon responded explaining that a report will be sent to all councils summarising the key issues and the presentations held at the Future Transport seminar.

### **Decision**

The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board noted the updates detailed in the report.

## **6 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

## **7 Any other business**

No further items of business were raised.

## **Appendix A -Attendance**

| Position/Role   | Councillor            | Authority                      |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Chairman        | Cllr Martin Tett      | Buckinghamshire County Council |
| Vice-Chairman   | Cllr Judith Blake CBE | Leeds City Council             |
| Deputy-chairman | Cllr Adele Morris     | Southwark Council              |

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|              | Cllr Rachel Eburne   | Mid Suffolk District Council   |
| Members      | Cllr Simon Cooke<br>Cllr David Renard<br>Cllr Mark Mills-Bishop<br>Cllr Philip Broadhead<br>Cllr Stephen Parker<br>Cllr Ed Turner<br>Cllr Rachel Blake<br>Cllr Gillian Campbell<br>Cllr Michael Mordey<br>Cllr Shaun Davies<br>Cllr Peter Thornton<br>Cllr Linda Gillham | Bradford Metropolitan District Council<br>Swindon Borough Council<br>Broxbourne Borough Council<br>Bournemouth Borough Council<br>Hart District Council<br>Oxford City Council<br>Tower Hamlets Council<br>Blackpool Council<br>Sunderland City Council<br>Telford and Wrekin Council<br>Cumbria County Council<br>Runnymede Borough Council |
| Apologies    | Cllr Alistair Auty<br>Cllr Lynne Duffy<br>Cllr Blake Pain<br>Cllr Colin Davie<br>Cllr Tony Newman<br>Cllr Helen Holland  | Wokingham Borough Council<br>Wychavon District Council<br>Harborough District Council<br>Lincolnshire County Council<br>Croydon Council<br>Bristol City Council  |
| LGA Officers | Eamon Lally<br>Sonika Sidhu<br>Harry Parker  | Principal Policy Adviser<br>Senior Adviser<br>Member Services Officer  |