Transport and growth update

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The report provides an update on Board issues where there have been further developments regarding Traffic Regulation Orders reform; Bus Strategy; Pavement Parking; ANPR for cycle lanes; and High streets and town centres funding.

Recommendation

That Board members note the update

Action

As directed by lead members.

Contact officer: Kamal Panchal

Position: Senior Adviser

Phone no: 0207 664 3174

Email: kamal.panchal@local.gov.uk

Transport and growth update

**Traffic Regulation Orders reform**

1. The Government have begun a review of TRO data. They are currently examining the legislation in this area and how it could be reviewed.
2. The LGA has called for the publication requirements for Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) to be reformed. Councils are currently required to publish each TRO in a local newspaper. This requirement applies even if authorities that don’t have a local newspaper and also means that publishers can charge a premium for public notices.
3. The LGA have repeatedly lobbied the government to update the requirements to allow online notifications. A new set of guidelines for publication that allowed councils to explore other publication routes through council websites and online mapping tools could reach far more people than local newspapers at a fraction of the price. The LGA intends to participate in this review and encourage the Government to make the necessary changes to statutory publication requirements.

**Bus strategy**

1. The Government has announced its intentions to produce a national bus strategy in order to provide a focal point for its policies and investments in the bus industry. It is an acknowledgement from Government that there is a need to produce more joined up support to address the reduction of patronage and services in the bus industry.
2. The LGA has longstanding asks connected to supporting the bus industry:
   1. Closing the concessionary fares gap. This national scheme is administered locally by councils but underfunded by at least £652m a year according to LGA analysis. The Government needs to fully fund this scheme as a matter of priority.
   2. Devolving Bus Services Operators Grant (BSOG). Currently bus operators are offered a subsidy based on the amount of fuel they use. The LGA would like to see this subsidy devolved so it can be targeted at supporting unviable but socially useful services.
   3. Allowing councils to enforce moving traffic offences. Powers to enforce moving traffic contraventions have been on the statute book since 2004 but never turned on by the relevant Secretary of State. They would help tackle congestion which has a significant impact of the viability of bus services. Our findings of the recent survey of councils on Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 can be found [here](https://www.local.gov.uk/traffic-management-act-2004-survey).
3. The LGA will be seeking to ensure these issues are addressed as part of the strategy.

**Pavement Parking**

1. The Department for Transport has completed a review of pavement parking but has not yet published the results. Currently in London there is a default ban on pavement parking but councils can choose to allow it in designated areas. The position is the opposite in the rest of England, it is default allowed except in areas where it is specifically banned. The LGA has called for the law to be harmonised across England with the London position being used. The LGA are also calling for simplification of the process to create exemptions.
2. The Transport Select Committee has made the same call and DfT is obliged to respond to this by November. We will expect their response to include details of the Government’s intended course of action.

**ANPR for cycle lanes**

1. The Department for Transport’s cycle safety review proposed allowing ANPR enforcement against cars parking in cycle lanes. This is currently not allowed as a legacy of the previous Government’s policy of banning parking tickets being issued by CCTV. Whilst the Government has announced their intention to allow CCTV enforcement for these contraventions this they have not yet proposed the required amendments to the secondary legislation.

**High streets and town centre funding**

1. Members may be aware of the announcement made by the Prime Minister earlier this month, and confirmed in the Spending Round, of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund.
2. There has been some confusion amongst local authorities as to how much of this is new money and how it will be allocated and this has now been clarified. £3.6bn includes a £1 billion increase in investment for the Stronger Towns Fund and a £325m increase in funding for the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF).
3. Following this announcement, an additional 50 places were announced that would be invited to work with the Government to develop a business case to access FHSF money and more recently, 100 towns were announced where the Government want to work with local areas to develop town deals with up to £25 million available in each town. There were a number of places that overlap across the two funds.
4. Our understanding is that the 100 towns identified under the Stronger Town Funds element were arrived at using a needs formula with a final decision by Ministers. Chief Executives of relevant local authorities had this confirmed to them via a letter from the Cities and Local Growth Unit.
5. A prospectus setting out the application process is expected soon. It is unclear whether and how much of the additional funding will be set aside for areas to bid into competitively. Originally £600 million was set aside for this.
6. There is further planned work to support member councils on their town centres and high streets:
   1. Two 2 day [residential learning events](https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership/leadership-essentials) on 3/4 December at Warwick University and 30th/31st January in Loughborough for lead councillors under the [Leadership Essentials programme](https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership/leadership-essentials).
   2. A joint conference with [Revo](https://www.revocommunity.org/), who are a membership organisation for commercial property owners in February 2020.