

## **Economy and Transport Board – report from Cllr Peter Box CBE (Chair)**

1. As we head back to our Town Halls after the election period, one issue that engaged us all on the doorstep was the economy. How your council deals with employment and jobs should be a big issue in any election. Indeed, the turnout may have been significantly higher if local partners had more economic levers to help drive local growth. People may have had a better reason to vote.
2. It is with regret that the next Board will be without the leadership of the Board's Vice-Chair and Conservative Group Leader, Cllr Tony Ball. Tony, who lost his seat in Basildon, made a great contribution to the Board and the work of the LGA. He was dedicated to local government and I will miss his contribution to the Board and national policy making.

### **Growth Deals**

3. At our last Economy and Transport Board meeting in March, members discussed why progress on devolution through the City Deals process seems to have stalled despite a promising start with the first wave of Deals. Members who have been directly involved in the negotiations observed that a lot of the blockages have come from a return to "bureaucracy as usual", with a tendency on the part of Government departments to shift the goalposts mid-way and require local partners to invest a disproportionate amount of time and resources in the process compared to what was on the table in terms of funding and powers.
4. Broader feedback from member authorities is that these concerns have only amplified as Local Enterprise Partnerships have worked on the Strategic Economic Plans that will be the basis for Growth Deal negotiations. The Board's discussions have led to the conclusion that we need a frank exchange at political level to try to regain some of the momentum as we go into the Growth Deals process. To that end, I am delighted that Lord Shipley, LGA Vice-President and Cities Adviser to the Government, has accepted our invitation to attend the next meeting of the Board on 5 June to discuss how we can make the most of the Growth Deals.

### **Totalling Hidden Talent**

5. We are continuing to work with the Children and Young People Board on employment and skills for young people. As part of this joint work, we have published a report demonstrating that a third of young people would be unemployed or underemployed by 2018 unless youth employment and skills services were reformed to better help them locally. I would encourage colleagues to read [Totalling Hidden Talents](#), which shows that around 40 per cent of young people are not working to their potential wanting an additional 2 billion hours, which was growing well before the recession. The research highlights significant geographical variations, and will be used to help make the case for more devolved youth engagement, employment and training provision.  
<http://www.local.gov.uk/hidden-talents>

## Parking

6. We are also continuing to support councils concerns that the proposal to ban CCTV enforcement will put schoolchildren at risk by preventing councils from tackling dangerous and illegal parking outside schools. In addition, it will prevent councils from stopping drivers blocking bus lanes and essential loading bays for businesses and delivery firms, and protecting disabled pedestrians against reckless motorists parking on pavements. We have raised this matter during the consultation process and I wrote to the Secretary of State to recommend to the Government that they convene a working group of all relevant stakeholders to discuss what amendments could be made to existing statutory guidance and legislation, which would help achieve the Government's objectives without jeopardising the safety of our children and other vulnerable groups, or the availability of essential loading areas. Subsequently we have engaged in constructive dialogue with the Freight Transport Association and British Parking Association.
7. To support this call for a more constructive and agreeable way forward, the LGA has prepared a template letter for councils to send to their Members of Parliament, requesting their assistance with calling for such an approach. I would be very grateful if you would consider sending a form of the template letter, amended however you see fit, either on behalf of yourself, your political group, or ideally your council, recommending that Government form such a working group with the LGA and others to discuss an approach that we could all agree on without any adverse effects. Please feel free to contact Charles Loft ([Charles.loft@local.gov.uk](mailto:Charles.loft@local.gov.uk)) in the LGA's policy team, or our Public Affairs Manager Tom Coales ([Thomas.coales@local.gov.uk](mailto:Thomas.coales@local.gov.uk)) for the template letter.

**Contact officer:**

Ian Hughes

**Position:**

Head of Programmes

**Phone no:**

020 7664 3101

**E-mail:**

[ian.hughes@local.gov.uk](mailto:ian.hughes@local.gov.uk)