

Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board – report from Chairman Cllr David Renard

Conferences Meetings and External Events

1. Cllr David Renard meet with George Freeman MP, Minister of State for Transport on 22 October 2019 to discuss a range of issues including buses, future of mobility, decarbonisation of transport; devolution; and funding.
2. Cllr Darren Rodwell chaired the Housing Advisers Programme (HAP) Learning Event on 15 October 2019. This event brought together councils from across the country to hear about the learning and good practice from those that had been supported in 2018/19 HAP programme.
3. Cllr Adele Morris participated in a panel discussion at the launch of the Localis report on Clean Growth on 22 October 2019.

Publications, statements, press releases, and other correspondence

4. Environment Bill – was published on 15 October and the LGA provided a briefing for member councils setting out the main provisions and reiterating our positions on various elements of the Bill. The LGA has also prepared a 2nd Reading briefing for parliamentarians. These briefings are available on the LGA's website.
5. Long-term delivery of social and affordable rented housing inquiry - We submitted written evidence to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee inquiry into the long-term provision of social and affordable housing. Our submission outlined the savings that the Government could make nationally by investing properly in social housing at scale. We also called for the scrapping of permitted development rights, the reform of right to buy and for councils to have certainty over rent setting. The LGA will give oral evidence to the Inquiry on 5 November.
6. Joint work with the National Housing Federation – we have worked with the National Housing Federation (NHF) and PlaceShapers to support our members to form partnerships where this can benefit all parties. We have published a series of case studies from across the country to share best practice and information about the types of partnership that can work.
7. Parliamentary briefings - we have briefed MPs ahead of the following debates: [British house building industry](#); [Local Housing Allowance \(LHA\) and homelessness](#)
8. Survey of planning departments – the LGA and MHCLG commissioned the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) to carry out a survey of planning departments. 120 councils responded providing a rich picture of how departments of various shapes and sizes view their skills, capacity and longer-term outlook. A high-level overview of the results have been published and more detailed studies have been sent to participating councils.

9. Social housing regulation and rents policy- we responded to the Regulator of Social Housing consultation on a proposed new Rent Standard from 2020. In it we reiterated our concerns that applying the Rent Standard to local authorities is a step back from giving them local control over income. We also raised concerns that whilst the Rent Standard describes a process that allows the Regulator to grant an exemption to private registered providers where the Rent Standard would risk their financial viability, there is no mention of exemptions or flexibility for local authority landlords.
10. Private rented sector – MHCLG has published two consultations. The first sought views on widening access to a register of rogue landlords and property agents. The second related to implementation of the Government's decision to reform tenancies by removing the option of Section 21 evictions. The LGA has responded to both consultations, and our responses are published on our website
11. All-Party Parliamentary Group for Housing in the North – we responded to the APPG's inquiry into property standards in the North's Private Rented Sector (PRS), outlining a number of approaches that councils are taking to improve quality of the PRS, and making the case for new powers and sustainable funding that would enable them to do more.
12. Specialist Supported Housing - The LGA, Association of Directors of Adult Social Care (ADASS), NHS England and NHS Improvement, supported by the Housing Learning and Improvement Network (LIN), have published a joint briefing for clinical commissioning groups (CCG), local authority learning disability commissioners and Directors of Housing in response to the Social Housing Regulator's statements and findings related to a number of specialist housing providers. The regulator is concerned about the long-term financial viability of specialist supported housing (SSH) providers who rely solely or heavily on the lease-based model of housing supply. Following a roundtable in September we will issue further advice on how commissioners approach the situation and what type of solutions and reassurance may be available to them regarding this much needed type of accommodation.
13. Accessible Housing – the Chancellor announced in the Spending Round that MHCLG will consult on mandatory accessible housing standards in building regulations, ensuring new properties are built with good accessibility standards to reflect the needs of older and disabled people. We agree that new homes should be accessible or easily adaptable for people of all ages and needs and it is vital that national rules incentivise the building of accessible homes. We will be responding to the consultation.
14. Working together with housing associations – Following a series of regional events held with the National Housing Federation, the LGA and NHF have jointly published a report, "Housing associations and local authorities working together to end homelessness", which highlights good practice in joint working around housing delivery and homelessness prevention. This report is now available on our website.

15. Councils in charge: making the case for electric charging investment – published in August 2019 this guide is intended for councillors to help them understand the current landscape for electric vehicle charging infrastructure and engage with their officers, colleagues and the wider public with more confidence.
16. Press releases – We have issued a number of proactive press releases generating substantial national and trade media coverage: [Bus journeys fall by more than 300 million in five years](#) [Climate change goals hinge on funding and powers for local areas](#); housing crisis – spending on B&Bs for homeless rockets since 2010; [boom in barns converted into homes fuels rural fears](#); [right to buy rules undermining council efforts to boost housebuilding](#); [a primary school's worth of children face becoming homeless this summer](#)
17. We have also made public statements on the following: [Queen's Speech: LGA responds to Environment Bill](#); [CIEH environmental health campaign](#); [funding for councils to improve air quality](#); [responding to Public Works Loans Board rate rise](#); [responding to latest house building statistics](#); [responding to ONS figures on the number of deaths of homeless people](#); [responding to government planning announcement](#); [responding to launch of No Homeless Veterans Campaign](#); [responding to NHF 'State of the nation' housing crisis report](#); [responding to New Economics Foundation research on affordable homes](#); [responding to Homes for Later Living report](#); [responding to latest homelessness statistics](#); [responding to Crisis' Cover the Cost campaign to prevent homelessness](#); [responding to new planning rules showing how developers' cash is spent on communities](#); [responding to Children's Commissioner report on homeless children](#); [responding to the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System \(HHSRS\) review](#); [responding to HCLG Committee report on modern methods of construction](#); [responding to government planning proposals](#); [responding to PAC report on planning and housing market](#); [responding to Prime Minister's housing announcement](#); [responding to calls to repeal Vagrancy Act](#); [responding to local government homelessness commission report](#); [responding to Habinteg's accessible homes report](#); [responding to affordability report by Affordable Housing Commission](#); [LGA responds to Waste and Resources Strategy consultation response from DEFRA](#); [LGA responds to RAC report on driver fines for idling engines](#)

Upcoming publications events and other highlights

18. Climate Change – the LGA has written to the Secretaries of State for MHCLG, BEIS and DEFRA, seeking a cross Whitehall/LGA task force to address the delivery issues of meeting net zero carbon emissions. The LGA is also running a [Leadership Essentials](#) event on climate emergency in November.
19. Compulsory purchase – we are running a technical masterclass for local authorities on understanding compulsory purchase orders and compensation in November. We also undertook a joint LGA/Shelter survey of local authorities earlier in the year to identify challenges around the use of compulsory purchase powers to acquire land for residential development. A report on the findings will be published in the Autumn.

20. Probity in planning – we have commissioned an update to the 2013 Probity in Planning guide for councillors and officers which will be published in November. This useful resource will support councillors to get involved in discussions on plan making and on applications, on behalf of their communities in a fair, impartial and transparent way.
21. Future Homes Standard consultation – the government has published a consultation which looks at how the government's commitment to reducing emissions can be achieved through new homes building guidance. This is the first of a number of consultations. It focuses on energy efficiency and ventilation. The aim is to bring the Standard in 2025, but there will be revisions to the Part L and F standards proposed to be implemented in 2020. One of the proposals is to remove the ability of local planning authorities to set higher energy efficiency standards than those in the Building Regulations. We will be responding to the consultation.
22. National design guide – the government has published a national design guide which is a high level document that includes examples of best practice design and outlines the considerations that will feed into a proposed National Model Design Code, to be consulted on early in 2020. We will be responding to the consultation.
23. Local Homelessness Strategies – our guidance for local authorities on formulating, delivering and governing local homelessness strategies has now been completed, and is due for publication in the Autumn. This is intended to support local authorities, as well as inform Government work to reform the structures that support partnership working and accountabilities in homelessness.
24. Leadership essentials homelessness – the LGA has launched a leadership essentials programme focusing on homelessness. It is aimed at leaders, deputy leaders, and relevant portfolio holders, and is designed to support political leadership in reducing the risks and levels of homelessness in local areas. The session will take place in December 2019.
25. Out of area placements – The LGA is nearing completion of its protocol, outlining the actions to be taken by councils when moving households from one council area to another. This work was carried out by a steering group, comprised of local housing authorities and children's services, to develop an approach whereby the LGA could add value in supporting positive working between councils in a way that best supports families and services.
26. Housing Adviser Programme (HAP) update – We launched the 2019/20 programme in July and are now funding 14 successful projects, supporting more than 70 councils to meet their local housing need via direct grant funding through which councils can secure specialist expertise. The projects are diverse and wide ranging, covering our key themes of housing supply, housing strategy, homelessness and planning. We also ran an event for councils to embed and share learning from projects funded in 2018/19.

27. Housing Springboard programme – We will soon be launching a programme of masterclass events, developed and delivered by the Housing & Finance Institute to investigate the different options available to them in order to enable housebuilding. It brings councils together with industry experts to provide business, technical and leadership support relevant to their needs.
28. Leadership essentials housing – the LGA has launched a leadership essentials programme focusing on housing. It is aimed at leaders, deputy leaders, and relevant portfolio holders, and is designed to help participants develop their leading role in shaping the local housing market to meet the needs of people and places. The session will take place in January 2020 and is now fully booked.
29. Traffic Regulation Orders reform – The Government is examining the legislation in this area and how it could be reviewed. 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 don't have a local newspaper and also means that publishers can charge a premium for public notices. The LGA has repeatedly lobbied the government to update the requirements to allow online notifications. The LGA will participate in this review and encourage the Government to make the necessary changes.
30. Bus strategy – 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. The LGA has longstanding asks connected to supporting the bus industry:
- 30.1. Closing the concessionary fares gap which is £652m a year according to LGA analysis.
 - 30.2. Devolving Bus Services Operators Grant (BSOG) to councils.
 - 30.3. Allowing councils outside London to enforce moving traffic offences. Our findings of the recent survey of councils on Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 can be found [here](#).
31. Pavement Parking – 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 is also calling for simplification of the process to create exemptions. 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.

31 October 2019

32. ANPR for cycle lanes – 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 ban on parking tickets being issued by CCTV. The Government has now announced its intention to allow CCTV enforcement for these contraventions, but it has not yet proposed the required amendments to the secondary legislation.
33. High streets and town centre funding – The Spending Round confirmed a £3.6 billion Towns Fund, which includes a £1bn increase in investment for the Stronger Towns Fund and a £325m increase in funding for the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF). 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. A prospectus setting out the application process is expected soon. The LGA continues to support member councils on their town centres and high streets upcoming events include:
- 33.1. Two 2 day [residential learning events](#) on 3/4 December at Warwick University and 30th/31st January in Loughborough for lead councillors under the [Leadership Essentials programme](#)
- 33.2. A joint conference with [Revo](#), who are a membership organisation for commercial property owners in February 2020.

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