

## **Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board – report from Cllr David Renard (Chairman)**

### **Conferences, Meetings and External Events**

1. I gave a keynote address at Government Events' conference on 'Developing A Multi-Agency Approach To Tackling Homelessness'. I also spoke about local authorities' delivery of homelessness services and their implementation of the Homelessness reduction Act.
2. The LGA hosted its first leadership essentials programme focusing on homelessness on 5 and 6 December 2019. Aimed at leaders, deputy leaders, and relevant portfolio holders, it is designed to support political leadership in reducing the risks and levels of homelessness in local areas.
3. The LGA ran a technical masterclass for local authorities on understanding compulsory purchase orders and compensation in November.
4. Officers from the National Audit Office presented to our board meeting on 18 December about two pieces of related work on buses and public transport:
  - 4.1. An interactive mapping exercise examining access to public services and public spaces by private and public transport across England; and
  - 4.2. Improving bus services in England (outside London) – a value for money study which will include evaluative conclusions and recommendations (publication planned for Spring 2020)
5. Given national interest during the election campaign and recent announcements, including proposals for a national bus strategy, further funding for local authorities and potential extension of bus powers, the NAO's work provides an ideal opportunity to strengthen the evidence base for local public transport. Board members fed into the work outlining our views on the bus industry and the support we need to boost patronage.
6. I met with George Freeman MP, Minister of the State at the Department of Transport with a remit that includes devolution, digitalisation and decarbonisation. There was a productive conversation about how councils fit into all these agendas and the work the LGA has done on them recently. We hope that we can continue to work with the new Government productively as they prepare strategies on infrastructure and decarbonising the vehicle fleet.
7. I co-chaired the LGA Climate Change Conference with Cllr Adele Morris, Deputy Chair of the Environment, Economy Housing and Transport Board, on 22 January 2020."

### **Publications, statements, press releases, and other correspondence**

8. Local Homelessness Strategies – our guidance for local authorities on formulating, delivering and governing local homelessness strategies has now been published on our website. 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.
9. Probity in planning – we published a Probity in Planning guide for councillors and officers in December. This useful resource will support councillors to get involved in discussions

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on plan making and on applications, on behalf of their communities in a fair, impartial and transparent way.

10. Parliamentary briefings - we have briefed MPs ahead of the following debates: [Building out extant planning permissions](#)
11. Press releases – We have issued a number of proactive press releases generating substantial national and trade media coverage: Over 13,5000 affordable homes lost through office conversions; [successful applicants for LGA Housing Advisers Programme](#)
12. We have also made public statements on the following: [LGA responds to new funding to crackdown on criminal landlords](#); [LGA responds to homelessness funding announcement](#); [LGA responds to Crisis report on sofa surfing](#); [LGA responds to latest homelessness statistics](#); [LGA responds to launch of new accessible homes coalition](#);

### **Upcoming publications events and other highlights**

13. Out of area placements – In Spring, the LGA will consult the sector on 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.
14. Homelessness prevention – the LGA has conducted research with councils on policy changes needed to support the effective delivery of homelessness prevention services. A summary of the findings will be published in January.
15. Accelerated Planning White Paper - MHCLG have committed to publishing an Accelerated Planning White Paper to reform and speed up the planning system. We will be convening a round table with senior planning officers and relevant partner organisations in February to help inform our response.
16. Preventing youth homelessness – the LGA is supporting St Basils, a youth homelessness charity, to host a series of regional events on the theme of Preventing Youth Homelessness by Design. The events will bring together local authority officers to discuss how they can prevent and relieve homelessness for young people and develop housing opportunities which enable young people to live, learn and work.
17. Working effectively with the voluntary sector – the LGA has been working with Homeless Link to publish a short joint guidance note on how voluntary sector organisations can seek to work strategically with councils to tackle local homelessness issues. We held a consultation event with members from both organisations in December 2019, and will publish the guidance in Spring.
18. Joint work with the National Housing Federation – we will shortly be commissioning a piece of work to illustrate the range of partnership approaches that housing associations and local authorities are using to enable the delivery of new housing supply.
19. Housing, Planning and Infrastructure Conference – this will be held on 17 March 2020. Delegates will hear from leaders across the housing, planning and infrastructure sectors about how working in partnership can help us collectively overcome challenges and maximise opportunities to meet local housing needs.

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20. Future Homes Standard consultation – we are engaging with councils and other stakeholders to inform our response to this consultation which looks at how the government's commitment to reducing emissions can be achieved through new homes building guidance.
21. Housing Adviser Programme (HAP) update – The LGA launched the 2019/20 programme in July 2019 and we are pleased to have funded 19 successful projects. Councils are now able to secure specialist expertise to deliver their projects and meet their local housing need. As part of the programme's key learning element, we plan to run another shared learning event in the Spring to support participating councils with project evaluation.
22. Housing Springboard programme update – We have now launched the Springboard programme and successfully delivered the first of three masterclass events in December 2019. It was well attended, with over 30 participants from 20 different councils. The programme is developed and delivered by the Housing & Finance Institute to investigate the different options available to councils in order to enable housebuilding. It brings councils together with industry experts to provide business, technical and leadership support relevant to their needs. The second masterclass will take place on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2020.
23. Improving the quality of the private rented sector – the LGA has commissioned a piece of research on improving the quality of the private rented sector in partnership with the Housing Quality Network (HQN). The purpose of the research is to produce a publication and toolkit that brings together good practice to support councils to improve the quality of the private rented sector and we are expecting to publish the findings in Spring.
24. 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.
25. Decarbonisation of transport - We have commissioned the University of Leeds to assist us with a programme of research which will involve capturing and disseminating best practice, expert views and initiate debate on the decarbonisation of transport. We are also seeking to disseminate practical advice for councils and elected members on issues such as modal shift, adoption of low/ zero carbon technologies and behaviour change. Briefings on the key issues will be made available over the spring leading up to our annual conference. This programme will explore:
  - 25.1.the role of local government and local leadership;
  - 25.2.what more councils can do;
  - 25.3.identify policy and institutional barriers; and
  - 25.4.demystify the technology alternatives.

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