

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

Title:	Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board
Date:	Wednesday 18 December 2019
Venue:	Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

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

Item Decisions

1 Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Cllr Darren Rodwell (Lab), Cllr Ed Turner (Lab), and Cllr Nick Rushton (Con).

The following substitutes were also noted; Cllr Tom Hayes (Lab) and Cllr Peter Mason (Lab).

There were no declaration of interest.

2 National Audit Office - Bus Studies

The Chairman welcomed Abdool Kara, Executive leader for Local Service, and Antonia Gracie, Manager for transport value for money attending from the National Audit Office to the meeting of Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board.

Antonia gave a presentation on the National Audit Offices work in improving bus services in England (outside London) – a value for money study which would include evaluative conclusions and recommendations. Antonia emphasised that they were looking into bus services as they were in decline despite still having a crucial role in the transport system. She also explained that this work was in response to the incoming national bus strategy. She informed Members that the National Audit Office had been across the country in pulling this work together and that a report was expected to be published in late Spring 2020.

In the discussion that followed, the following points were made:

- In response to a query on the definition of value for money Antonia confirmed that they were using a broad definition that incorporated what money was being spent, what are the objectives and how well set up are these to achieve these objectives.
- Concerns were raised as to the impact of rising fares on bus use.

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- Views were expressed that local authorities would need more money and powers to put this information into practice an improving local bus services.
- In response to a query raised as to how environmental concerns should be measured alongside value for money Antonia emphasised they were mindful environmental objectives such as air quality would be crucial in improving bus services.
- Abdool emphasised that this work was cross departmental.
- Abdool also emphasised that London would be referenced in this piece of work, but not assessed.
- A view was expressed that all alternative provision for transport in rural areas would need to be looked into. Antonia reassured Members that they were aware of these issues and the many individual markets involved.

Antonia introduced the second piece of work the National Audit Office was undertaking in bus services, an interactive mapping exercise examining access to public services and public spaces by private and public transport across England. Antonia emphasised this had generated a great deal of interest. Members attention was brought to the wide range of data available to be measured in this interactive map app including service accessibility, distance from nearest secondary school and quality of services.

In the discussion that followed, the following points were made:

- Views were expressed that access to specific services from hospitals would be valuable to be measured.
- Abdool emphasised that they will continue to build new sources of data into the app after its release.
- A view was expressed that public confidence in bus services needs to be built back up to reverse the decline in use and that for this to be achieved reliable services would need to be invested in.
- A view was expressed that this app would be really beneficial in giving due consideration to congestion.
- A view was expressed that the role of other forms of community transport in some areas would need to be considered when using this data.

Decision

The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board;

1. Noted the report; and
2. Discussed and provided input into the NAO's work, in particular based on their own local experiences.

Action

Officers to invite the National Audit Office to attend a future meeting of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board to discuss this ongoing work.

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3 Climate Emergency Update

The Chairman welcomed Cara Jenkinson, Cities Manager, and Simon Brammer, Head of Cities, who were attending from the environmental charity Ashden to give a presentation on the most effective action a council can take on climate issues.

Simon informed Members that they had developed a list of the 31 most effective actions councils can take on climate change. These he explained were evidence based actions which are measured in how they deliver against co-benefits. It was also raised that Ashden had many examples of projects working with local authorities through their sustainable cities programme. He highlighted that a major part of climate change strategy would be building resilience to the impact of climate change.

Cara explained to Members that these 31 actions had been developed with Friends of the Earth. She brought further attention to the examples of where they had already worked with local areas, emphasising that successful projects came from a broad range of different local authority areas. Cara also emphasised the importance of these actions in combination.

Sonika Sidhu, Senior Adviser, also brought Members attention to the examples of climate change best practice from a wide range of Councils that had been circulated for their information. Members expressed their gratitude to Bethany Vella, Adviser, for pulling these examples together.

In the discussion that followed, Members raised the following points;

- In response to a query as to whether Ashden would endorse a more regional approach to planning policy Cara confirmed that they would, in particular where sustainable energy is concerned.
- Members raised the importance of toolkits being tailored for different local authorities.
- A concern was raised as to where environment planning would stand on protecting Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Views were expressed that the need for more money and powers to Councils to better respond to climate change was of crucial importance.
- A view was expressed that the LGA should lobby for government build on what they already committed to as part of the Environment Bill.
- The importance of community led projects in biodiversity was also emphasised.
- Regarding a query around how Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) could be best used Cara emphasised that uses of TPOs was being more explored by Ashden's partners in Friends of the Earth.
- Support was given for the LGA Executive to continue to explore and push policy asks around climate emergency.
- Sonika raised that there would be a Climate Emergency Update at each meeting of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board.
- Views were expressed that Local Plans and building control legislation was often contradictory in planning for greener housing and that this needs to be rectified.
- Cara emphasised Ashden endorse higher standards of energy efficiency to be

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pursued by Councils.

- A view was expressed that a policy adopting solar panels for all roofs going forwards would be beneficial.
- A view was expressed that it could be beneficial to lobby for all streets lamps to be LED by a certain time.
- Sonika informed Members that the LGA have surveyed Councils on their carbon footprint.
- A view was expressed information on local authorities carbon footprints would be of value and could be centrally tracked and resourced by the LGA.
- A view was expressed that the public sector should take the lead on reducing the amount of emissions they are directly responsible for.

Following this discussion Eamon confirmed that Officers would pull together the points from this discussion and that it would all be reflected in the report.

Decision

The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board considered the questions put to the Board by Ashden.

The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board also approved the following actions;

1. To publicise the list of 100 council best practise examples.
2. To provide the LGA Executive with update on our climate emergency work at January 2020 meeting.
3. Officers to review key policy lines across planning, transport, housing, waste and energy to ensure consistency with LGA's climate emergency position.
4. Officers to develop further LGA's energy lines and to work with councils to establish what further support they need.
5. Officers to work with other LGA Boards to ensure join up with the LGA's climate emergency position.
6. To renew discussions with new government about climate change task force.
7. The LGA to undertake a climate change baseline survey.
8. Further consideration given to the LGA climate conference in January 2020 being followed up by policy specific workshops culminating in LGA conference and possible COP26 session.

Action

That officers carry out the recommendations and provide a further update at the next board meeting.

4 New Government: implications for EEHT

In response to a view expressed that many of the manifesto commitments referred to in the report had been lobbied on for years by the LGA, Eamon Lally, Principal Policy Adviser, emphasised that lobbying work on these areas was ongoing and that the LGA Chairman had raised those issues in his letters to senior Ministers immediately following the Conservatives forming the new government.

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A concern was also raised that there were implications for how Section 8 of the Housing Act 1988 could be used in possessing a property. Eamon confirmed officers would look into this concern.

Decision

Members of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board noted the Update detailing the Conservative manifesto commitments in the areas of Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport following the election.

Actions

Officers to look into concerns raised by Members.

5 Housing Update Paper

The Chairman introduced the update of the policy and improvement work that has been carried out for the Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board covering housing, planning, homelessness and building safety since the last Board.

Members emphasised the importance pushing government on those Green Papers, such as the Social Housing Green Paper, which have continued to have delayed publications.

In response to a query Eamon Lally, Principal Policy Advisor, advised that the LGA guidance for local authorities on formulating, delivering and governing local homelessness strategies will be published before Christmas.

Decision

The Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board noted the update.

6 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 October 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

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Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr David Renard	Swindon Borough Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Adele Morris	Southwark Council
	Cllr Linda Gillham	Runnymede Borough Council
Members	Cllr Peter Butlin	Warwickshire County Council
	Cllr Mark Crane	Selby District Council
	Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
	Cllr Patrick Nicholson	Plymouth City Council
	Cllr Linda Taylor	Cornwall Council
	Cllr Amanda Serjeant	Chesterfield Borough Council
	Mayor Philip Glanville	Hackney London Borough Council
	Cllr Rachel Blake	Tower Hamlets Council
	Cllr Michael Mordey	Sunderland City Council
	Cllr Christopher Hammond	Southampton City Council
	Cllr Peter Thornton	Cumbria County Council
	Cllr David Beaman	Waverley Borough Council
	Apologies	Cllr Nicholas Rushton
Cllr Darren Rodwell		Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council
Cllr Ed Turner		Oxford City Council