

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

Conferences, Meetings and External Events

1. I gave oral evidence at the House of Lords Economic Affairs Select Committee's session on Building More Homes. I used the opportunity to make the case for investment in social housing; a local, properly resourced planning system and right to buy reform.
2. The LGA supported 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.
3. The LGA hosted its first leadership essentials programme focusing on housing on 23 and 24 January 2020. Aimed at leaders, deputy leaders, and relevant portfolio holders, it was designed to support political leadership in shaping the local housing market to meet the needs of people and places.
4. The EEHT Board met in February and discussed what the key policy asks need to be around climate change. Our work on identifying best practise continues but we are now moving towards identifying key policy for which the sector requires legislative or financial support. The table detailed in the Board meeting agenda at [Item 4: Appendix A](#) provides members with a useful indication of policy areas which have been flagged up by councils so far.
5. Following on from discussions at the EEHT Board and Executive Advisory we launched an LGA survey on climate change on Friday 28 February. This survey has gone out to all councils. It has been emailed to Directors of Environment or equivalent officers. Please ask your officers to ensure their councils the respond to the survey as this will form a key part of our lobbying asks as we move forward. If your council cannot locate its survey link please contact james.harman@local.gov.uk.
6. Another session of the Climate Emergency Leadership Essentials programme was delivered over the weekend of 28 February. This programme continues to be very popular with members and well attended.
7. The Environment Bill and Agriculture Bill have both come back to parliament. Officers are in the process of developing amendments and briefing documents to accompany the progress of the bills.
8. DEFRA has been convening a number of preliminary workshops in preparation for the second round of waste and recycling consultations. These consultations are likely to be published sometime after the summer. The LGA will be holding sounding boards with councils to understand key concerns for the next round.
9. The LGA held our first decarbonisation of transport workshop facilitated by the academics from the University of Leeds in 18 Smith Square this week. It was attended by board members and members from a number of councils as well as officers involved in this area. The workshop is the first part of a project aimed at understanding the size of the task councils face in delivering our net zero commitments in transport. The workshop

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examined the levers councils have at their disposal as well as the impact measures would have on overall carbon reduction.

10. At the end of January we ran a residential Leadership Essentials programme at Loughborough University for lead councillors focusing on the different facets of town centres that need to be considered by local leaders in their endeavours to repurpose and revitalise their high streets; covering topics ranging from the role of planning, engaging young people, and grasping the opportunities from the experiential economy.

Publications, statements, press releases, and other correspondence

11. We produced a [briefing for the debate on energy efficiency measures in buildings to achieve net zero, House of Commons, 26 February 2020](#).
12. We also [briefed on the debate on technological and lifestyle efforts to address climate change and to meet the 2050 net zero carbon emissions target - House of Lords, 06 February 2020](#).
13. Future Homes Standard consultation – we have [responded](#) to this consultation. We strongly rejected any proposals that would restrict local planning authorities from setting higher energy efficiency standards for new homes than those set in building regulations; raised concerns that the government's preferred approach was not ambitious enough and stressed the importance of ensuring that any proposals are properly aligned with building safety reforms.
14. We have briefed MPs ahead of the following debates: [Opposition day debate on homelessness](#) and a housing on planning debate on 3 March.
15. We have issued several proactive press releases generating substantial national and trade media coverage: [Housing backlog – more than a million homes with planning permission not yet built](#); [over two-thirds of council homelessness services pushed into red](#) and national discounts threatening future of Right to Buy.
16. We have also made public statements on the following: [LGA responds to end of Local Housing Allowance freeze](#); [LGA response to Shelter survey of private renters](#); [LGA response to CPRE report on new housing design](#); [LGA response to rough sleeping announcement](#); [LGA response to Building Better, Building Beautiful report](#); [LGA responds to discounted First Homes consultation launch](#); [LGA responds to latest rough sleeping figures](#); [Mandatory mattress recycling needs imposing on manufacturers to reduce fly-tipping](#); [Child car seats need to be recycled by manufacturers to stop landfill scandal](#); and [responding to reintroduction of Environment Bill](#).

Upcoming publications events and other highlights

17. As a result of the first decarbonisation of transport workshop we will be holding a further workshop in Leeds on 12 March and as a result of the discussions we will be producing a series of policy briefings examining the issues discussed. If you would be interested in taking part in the Leeds workshop please contact Andrew.jones@local.gov.uk.
18. Work is underway with Local Partnerships to provide guidance for councils around energy projects and how to decide which ones are best suited for different councils. This publication should be available in time for LGA conference.

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19. 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.
20. MHCLG have committed to publishing an Accelerated Planning White Paper to reform and speed up the planning system. We convened a round table with senior planning officers in February to help inform our response.
21. MHCLG have launched a First Homes consultation seeking views on the design of a First Homes policy and options for its implementation. First Homes are proposed to be homes for sale for first-time local buyers at a minimum discount of 30 per cent. We will be responding to the consultation.
22. Regarding joint work with the National Housing Federation – we have commissioned 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. The report will be published in the Spring.
23. The LGA will host events in London and Manchester in partnership with the National Housing Federation on 17 and 20 March 2020. These events will bring together officers from councils and housing associations to hear about successful homelessness prevention and contribute to joint efforts to tackle homelessness.
24. Our Housing, Planning and Infrastructure Conference 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.
25. The LGA has commissioned a piece of research that is looking at the range of activity being undertaken to improve the quality of the private rented sector and to understand the key challenges. The final report and a practical toolkit for councils will be published in April 2020.
26. 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.
27. 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 March.
28. We will be running a technical masterclass in the Spring for local authorities to support them in meeting their duties under the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act.
29. The LGA will host its second leadership essentials programme focusing on homelessness on 18 and 19 November 2020. 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.

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