

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

Parking

1. The LGA has successfully lobbied for exemptions to the government's ban on the use of CCTV for parking enforcement, allowing CCTV to be used to enforce restrictions. Alongside a broad coalition of transport groups, headteachers, charities and the British Parking Association, we have consistently argued that the safety of children would be put at risk if the restrictions outside schools were abolished; that road safety would be further compromised and congestion worsened without the clearway exception; that vulnerable passengers would face considerable hardship if bus stops were not exempted and that banning CCTV enforcement of parking restrictions in bus lanes would delay bus services.
2. In addition the government has now published the results of its consultation on parking which include further wins for LGA lobbying on their parking proposals. These include: the removal of a proposed 15 minute grace period for parking in prohibited areas (yellow lines), replacing "catch-all" regulations where local authorities have not followed the statutory guidance with further consideration of specific alterations to tackle examples of bad practice, putting on hold plans to introduce a 25 per cent discount to those who pursue an appeal unsuccessfully to adjudication and rejecting changes to the system of awarding costs to appellants.

Growth Deals

3. An announcement about the Growth Deals, including the first year allocations of the Local Growth Fund, is expected in the first half of July. The Board discussed the Growth Deals process with Lord Shipley, LGA Vice-President and Cities Adviser to the Government, at its 5 June meeting. Members registered their strong concerns that after all of the intensive investment of time and resources that councils and LEP partners put into developing long-term plans, what they are set to get is a short-term commitment to fund specific projects. That is simply no way to run an economy at national or local level so the LGA will be ramping up efforts to regain the momentum towards ambitious devolution in the months leading up to the next general election.

Funding reports

4. As councils await news from Government about how Local Growth Fund is to be allocated, the LGA is publicising two pieces of research showing how inefficient and fragmented government funding for local growth and regeneration still is. It paints an even more fractured picture than Lord Heseltine uncovered in 2012 with over 120

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funding streams across 20 departments or agencies. Almost half of these funding streams are allocated on a competitive basis, which, shows that millions of pounds and hundreds of days of officer time are tied up just in trying to access funding. Both pieces of analysis confirm that the way the system operates has negative impacts on local growth by creating significant delays in delivering projects and generating confusion and frustration for businesses. In launching this research, I emphasised that the money should be spent on improving the economy rather than costly bureaucracy for councils and businesses.

Pensioners Parliament

5. On 18 June I addressed a session of the Pensioners Parliament in Blackpool devoted to busses, setting out the tough choices facing councils over bus funding, the need for more local powers over busses and over transport generally and long term certainty over funding if we are to avoid gridlock in the next 25 years.

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