

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

Housing, planning and homelessness

1. We have issued two proactive press releases generating substantial national and trade media coverage: [100,000 social a year needed as part of COVID-19 recovery](#); [Councils call for suspension of No Recourse to Public Funds](#)
2. We have also made public statements on the following: [LGA responds to Shelter research](#); [LGA responds to rough sleeping funding announcement](#); [LGA responds to new construction industry measures](#); [LGA responds to eviction ban extension](#); [LGA responds to Crisis report on rise in homelessness](#); [LGA responds to housing for ageing population report](#);
3. We have published a [report](#) detailing our proposals for a housing stimulus package that would enable councils to build more affordable, high-quality and sustainable homes at scale, and at pace.
4. We have launched a public campaign, to promote the importance of a local plan-led system, democratic accountability and public participation in planning. An open letter on 'keeping planning local' has been published and signed by a range of stakeholders.
5. We have run webinars focusing on the role councils have to play in building again following COVID-19, how planning departments have continued to run effectively and how councils have successfully accommodated approximately 15,000 people sleeping rough, as part of our housing improvement support offer.
6. We will run a webinar on 8 Sept about the importance of creating great places to live work and play, especially in the wake of COVID-19.
7. To support councils with the development of move on plans for people currently in emergency accommodation, we worked with Local Partnerships to publish a [briefing note](#) on options available for accommodation for rough sleepers.
8. 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 August 2020.
9. The LGA and Homeless Link will publish a short joint guidance note in July 2020 on how voluntary sector organisations can seek to work strategically with councils to tackle local homelessness issues.
10. The LGA has partnered with the National Housing Federation to commission a report looking at how housing association and local authority partnerships are successfully delivering new homes. The final report will include case studies and will be published later this summer.
11. The Business and Planning Bill has been laid in Parliament. Officers have been developing amendments and briefing documents to accompany the progress of the bill.

12 March 2020

12. We produced a [briefing](#) on changes to the planning system as a result of COVID-19.
13. We have submitted evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee inquiry on 'Energy efficiency in existing homes', emphasising that councils are best placed to understand the priorities and opportunities in their local area and deliver local solutions for the decarbonisation of housing.
14. Housing Advisers Programme (HAP): The LGA launched the 2019/20 programme in July 2019 and have funded 24 projects. Following project delays as a result of Covid-19, we are continuing to work with these councils and have adapted the programme's learning elements so that they can be delivered virtually. This includes the 'Telling your Story' evaluation event due to take place in March 2020 which will now be delivered over a series of webinars. We are pleased to confirm the launch of HAP 2020/21 later this year to support councils in their housing, planning and homelessness recovery from Covid-19.
15. Private rented sector improvement project: The LGA has commissioned a piece of research that is looking at the range of activity being undertaken by councils 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 by August 2020.
16. Green Finance improvement project: The LGA is working with Local Partnerships to develop support for councils on green finance as part of their green economic recovery. The aim of the work is to offer innovative approaches to accessing green finance and practical guidance, by looking at domestic and international best practice. This good practice advice will be aimed at local authority members and officers.

Environment

17. One of the EEHT Boards priorities is to support a climate smart recovery from the pandemic and so as chair of the Board I was very pleased to have been able to take part in a couple of LGA webinars.
18. The first of these was a webinar on the decarbonisation of transport, which is a key priority for the Board, where as chair I was joined by partner organisations from Leeds University, Sustrans and the DfT. Discussion ranged from the DfT's emerging decarbonisation plan, to strategies for reallocating road space and the challenges and opportunities for local authorities. Slides from the webinar are available [here](#).
19. I also took part as a panellist on the LGA's spotlight on a green reset [webinar](#), where we were joined by experts from Local Partnerships and Wirral Council to discuss learning from the current pandemic and Waltham Forest where we heard about their work on creating a 'mini-Holland'.
20. Both webinars were extremely well attended, with a combined attendance of over 600 participants.

Contact officer:	Eamon Lally
Position:	Principal Policy Adviser
Phone number:	0207 664 3132
E-mail:	eamon.lally@local.gov.uk