

27 October 2020

EEHT Update paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper provides updates on a range of issue within the remit of the Board

Recommendation

That the Board note the update

Actions

Officers will take action as directed

Contact officer:

Eamon Lally

Position:

Principal Policy Adviser

Phone no:

0207 6643132

Email:

eamon.lally@local.gov.uk

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EEHT Update Paper

Housing, planning and homelessness

1. We have responded to the Government's '[Changes to the current planning system](#)' consultation. We raised concerns that the standard method for assessing local housing need does not accurately reflect local need or support government ambitions to level up and build more on brownfield land. We also raised concerns that implementation of First Homes will displace other types of affordable homes and that proposals to raise the threshold for affordable housing requirements will have a significant impact on affordable housing delivery. and that proposals to raise the threshold for affordable housing requirements will have a significant impact on affordable housing delivery.
2. We are developing our response to the Government's [Planning for the Future White Paper consultation](#) due on 29 October. We've held two joint workshops with the District Councils' Network (DCN) and County Councils Network (CCN) with presentations by MHCLG and feedback discussion groups and have been engaging with our Planning Sounding Board to get input from around the country. Councils are concerned about the wide-ranging proposals such as a shortened 30-month Local Plan timeframe; land in future Local Plans being allocated into one of three areas - Growth, Renewal, Protect; a new Infrastructure Levy; and the reduction of councillor and community input.
3. The Housing, Communities, and Local Government Committee will be holding a parallel inquiry to [investigate the Government's proposals to reform the planning system](#). The inquiry will examine how well the proposed reforms would support the Government's wider building strategy, including their target of 300,000 new homes a year. We will be providing evidence to the Committee by the 30 October deadline.
4. We have briefed MPs for parliamentary debates on [planning reform and housebuilding targets](#) and [motions related to planning](#). On homelessness, we have briefed on debates on No Recourse to Public Funds and the stay on possession proceedings.
5. We also ran a successful parliamentary briefing session on housing and planning, which I spoke at. This was attended by over 20 MPs and peers.
6. We [submitted evidence](#) to the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) inquiry on 'Energy Efficiency of Existing Homes'.
7. We recently published our research and hosted a webinar on [Improving the private sector: a guide for councils](#) which looks at the role of councils in improving the quality and standards of homes that best meet the needs of local residents and places. There is a report, a set of case studies and a toolkit which together form a good practice guide for councils.

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8. We contributed an essay to the [Localis Building for renewal: kickstarting the C19 housing recovery](#) report. This outlined the important role that councils could play in kickstarting housing delivery, given the right flexibilities, powers and funding. I also stressed the importance of a local, plan-led system in ensuring that councils and the communities they represent have a say over the way places develop.
9. The LGA published a joint guidance note on how [voluntary sector organisations can seek to work strategically with councils](#) to tackle local homelessness issues.
10. We have commissioned Local Partnerships to provide a briefing on the lessons learned for local authorities' homelessness and rough sleeping services from the COVID-19 emergency response. The briefing will be published in early November.
11. [The LGA has now published its research on Fragmented Funding](#), which found that English councils received at least 448 government grants between 2015/16 and 2018/19. Our report calls for the Government to use core funding to allow councils to plan with certainty and flexibility as opposed to using short-term grants to meet demand pressures.
12. Councillor David Renard, chaired a webinar on managing homelessness as we exit lockdown. This featured Police Constable Hayley Langmead, who gave an insight into the multi-agency approach to supporting people sleeping rough in Essex, and learning for other councils.
13. Councillor Adele Morris chaired a webinar about the importance of creating great places to live, work and play, especially in the wake of COVID-19 and I also took part in an external webinar on council direct delivery of new homes.

Moving traffic offences

14. The board celebrated a major lobbying win with the decision by the Government to allow councils to access all the powers contained within the Traffic Management Act 2004 part 6. This commitment was made in the Government's plan for active travel and will allow councils to enforce moving traffic offences like weight limits, banned turns and one-way streets. The LGA and member councils have been calling for local authorities to be able to access these powers since the implementation of other parts of the act over a decade ago. LGA officers are now working with civil servants to work on the details of implementation.

Pavement Parking

15. The Government is consulting on whether to legislate for a default ban on pavement parking which the LGA has welcomed. We have consistently called for a default ban in legislation. The government are also consulting on whether the problem could be solved

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through TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) reform or decriminalising enforcement of obstruction of the highway.

16. Our view is that these changes could also be helpful but the long-term solution for this issue is a ban which will be consistent and easy to understand. It is currently the way the issue is managed in London. Our initial view is that the government undertakes all the options: reform and simplify the TRO process, decriminalise the enforcement of obstruction and transform the default position. We will be responding to the consultation and would welcome any feedback from members.

Decarbonisation of Transport

17. The Board's decarbonisation of transport project has published a number of policy briefings to help councils understand the practical steps they can take to decarbonise their transport networks and reach our net zero targets. The briefings were compiled with support from academics from the University of Leeds after a series of workshops with councils that took place last year. The briefings offer a challenging message to our sector given the scope of changes that will be needed in order to meet the country's net zero carbon target by 2050. The briefings are on the following topics:

- 17.1. Getting carbon ambition right
- 17.2. The role of buses
- 17.3. Accelerating the uptake of electric vehicles
- 17.4. Climate smart parking policies
- 17.5. The role of land use, localisation and accessibility
- 17.6. Travelling less and the role of online opportunities
- 17.7. Growing cycle use

18. The briefings can be accessed at <https://www.local.gov.uk/decarbonising-transport>. Each briefing is also being accompanied by a supporting webinar which can also be accessed through the web hub. We have four remaining webinars remaining on the following dates:

- 18.1. Climate Smart Parking Policies - 12 November 2020
- 18.2. Land Use, Localisation and Accessibility - 17 November 2020
- 18.3. Travelling less and the role of online opportunities - 24 November 2020
- 18.4. Growing Cycle Use - 10 December 2020

Flooding

19. The House of Commons EFRA Committee inquiry into the management of flood risk in last winter's floods resumed after a pause due to the break in Parliamentary activity. I gave oral evidence to the Committee on 2 September and shared the experiences of local government, highlighting the impact on areas that suffered from repeated severe

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floods. This generated further questions and we sent in a third and final written submission to the committee.

Implications for Wales

20. There are no implications for Wales

Financial Implications

21. There are no immediate financial implications

Next steps

22. The Board is asked to note the items for information in this report