**Note of last People & Places Board meeting**

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| **Title:** | People & Places Board |
| **Date:** | Tuesday 15 September 2020 |
| **Venue:** | Online via Zoom |
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**Attendance**

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

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| **Item** | **Decisions and actions** |  |

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| 1.
 | **Welcome, introductions and declarations of interest**The chairman welcomed members to the first People and Places Board of the 2020/21. |  |

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| 1.
 | **People and Places Board 2012/21: Terms of Reference and Membership**Thomas French introduced the Terms of Reference for the People and Places Board 2020/21 and asked members to note the continuing membership of the board.**Decision** Members noted the membership and agreed the Board’s Terms of Reference for 2020/21.**Action**Officers to refer the Equalities Advocate position back to the political groups. |  |

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| 1.
 | **Board Work Programme 2020/21**Sonika Sidhu introduced the Board Work Programme and stated that the report reflects on the major policy developments which have taken place over the past year and anticipates the key areas of focus for the future work of the LGA. **Decision** Members agreed the Board Work Programme 2020/21. |  |

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| 1.
 | **Building Digital UK**Raj Kalia, Chief Executive, Building Digital UK updated the board on government work on connectivity. Raj Kalia highlighted the following government projects:* Local Full Fibre Network programme (now UK Fibre)
* Superfast Broadband Programme
* Rural Gigabit Connectivity programme
* Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme

Members made the following comments:* Rural areas need to understand that to get better connectivity, this also comes with increased infrastructure in their local area.
* Local Plans may see a cost to local authorities in the procurement stage. Local plans need to consider local knowledge from local councils on digital connectivity.
* Reliability in the local infrastructure and being able to respond to local concerns as projects go on is important for government to consider.
* This has been the first that many leaders have heard of many of these projects, this shows a lack of true engagement with local government and partners. It is hard to pass on news to residents about better connectivity when leaders feel unconnected.

Raj Kalia responded:* There are different solutions for rural areas to see an increase in connectivity without having large scale infrastructure.
* There will be increased engagements with local government and as these projects expand, staff will be based all over the UK not just working from Westminster.
* Connectivity and access to networks is a concern, which can be result of bad local services when setting up infrastructure.
* Super-fast teams within authorities have been engaged with, which should have seen information on projects being spread to memebers. However, more engagement is coming to stakeholders.

**Decision**Members noted the presentation**Action**Building Digital UK to attend a future board and detail where future engagement with local government will be implemented.Officers to draft a guide about connectivity for members. |  |

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 | **Devolution Update**Philip Clifford updated the People and Places Board members on the policy work around Devolution and local government reform. Philip Clifford highlighted that LGA work would be informed by these key themes:* Devolution deals should be locally led
* Devolution deals should leave nothing off the table
* Devolution must be backed by adequate resources:
* Individual devolution deals must form part of a new push towards localisation
* English councils must have a stronger voice on the national stage

Cllr Martin Tett discussed experiences from Buckinghamshire on the process around unitary status.Members made the following comments:* Parish Councils have been efficient in the response to Covid-19, and are at the heart of the community, and any devolution plans needs to consider parish, city and town councils.
* Government wants councils to run services in a more far-reaching way and devolution is the way to achieve that.
* The conditions that the government currently allows for greater devolution is very strict and government needs greater explanation to justify this. Population also seems to be a concern from government to allow for devolution, which affects rural councils. Councils should decide when they want greater devolution.
* The principles behind the white paper and suggested responses all make sense. The problem is that the creation of huge councils with mayors does not fit well with the concept of localism. Forcing the unitary concept doesn’t necessarily fit with allowing regions to determine their own destiny under the heading of locally led.
* Devolution needs to allow for councils to set their own local taxes to fund services, not just towards residents, but also businesses and organisations.

Officers responded* Once the white paper is out, board work can be refreshed on what the government asks are of devolution.

The chairman stated that Devolution will be an ongoing board issue and members should be raising concerns to officers and within their political groups as the board year goes on. **Decision**Members noted the report and agreed the response to the white paper.**Action**Officers to consider a member meeting on the devolution white paper, as the timeline allows. |  |

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| 1.
 | **Youth participation update**Bushra Jamil introduced the report and provided an update on the development of a youth participation policy and an employment and skills update, including the impact of Covid-19 on young peoples’ employment and skills.Members made the following comments:* The signposting in this report will be important for members and needs to be seen by key workers who support families.
* Government needs to recognise that local government is best placed to support families in their communities.

The chairman suggested Gillian Keegan, Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills should be invited to a future board meeting.**Decision**Members noted the progress of the report**Action**Officers to invite Gillian Keegan MP to a future board. |  |

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 | **Cross Cutting Policy Issues**Jo Allchurch presented the report on National planning reforms, highlighting the two separate government consultations:* The Planning for the Future White Paper
* Changes to the current planning system

Members made the following comments:* Affordable housing is a welcome focus for the board to consider.
* Neighbourhood plans could see greater design for affordable housing, but there is a risk it will have no local input. Who will enforce the design standards if local government has no say?
* On area zonal planning, there needs to be assurances that residents impacted by development will see increased infrastructure and not just more housing.
* When multiple developments are agreed on small amounts of housing stock, this will mean little affordable housing will be developed.
* Small communities often don’t see affordable housing, and this leads young people being economically pushed out of their local area.
* Infrastructure needs to be constructed at earlier stages than at present. After the 500th house has been completed is not soon enough,

Kamal Panchal presented the report Home to school transport, summarising LGA work on home-to-school transport as part of the post lockdown return to school processMembers made the following comments:* Supporting SEND children has come with increased pressures around Covid-19 and transport is a key area.

**Decision**Members noted both updates.**Actions**Officers to provide anonymised numbers of affordable housing across authorities.Officers to provide the LGA response on the two housing consultations to the board. |  |

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| 1.
 | **Board Update Paper**Sonika Sidhu provided members with a brief update on issues and policy areas not covered by other items on the agenda, including:* Skills and employment
* Freeports
* The UK Shared Prosperity Fund
* Economic Recovery

Members made the following comments:* One of the positive sides of the Covid-19 Pandemic has been the positive community cohesion that members have seen across their authorities.

**Decision** Members noted the contents of the report. |  |

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| 1.
 | **Minutes of the last meeting**Members agreed the sets of minutes from Wednesday 10 June 2020 and Wednesday 24 June 2020. |  |

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**Appendix A -Attendance**

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| Position/Role | Councillor | Authority |
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| Chairman |  Cllr Kevin Bentley | Essex County Council |

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| Vice-Chairman |  Cllr Morris Bright MBE | Hertsmere Borough Council |
| Vice-Chair | Cllr Simon Henig CBE | Durham County Council |

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| Deputy-chair |  Cllr Heather Kidd | Shropshire Council |
|  | Cllr Bob Jennings | Epping Forest District Council |

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| Members |  Cllr Rachel Bailey | Cheshire East Council |
|  | Cllr Marc Bayliss | Worcester City Council |
|  | Cllr Hilary Carrick | Cumbria County Council |
|  | Cllr Neil Clarke MBE | Rushcliffe Borough Council |
|  | Cllr Keith Glazier | East Sussex County Council |
|  | Cllr Diane Marsh | Gravesham Borough Council |
|  | Cllr Eddie Reeves | Oxfordshire County Council |
|  | Cllr Martin Tett | Buckinghamshire County Council |
|  | Cllr Bradley Thomas | Wychavon District Council |
|  | Cllr Rob Waltham MBE | North Lincolnshire Council |
|  | Cllr Sue Woodward | Staffordshire County Council |
|  | Cllr Leigh Redman | Somerset County Council |
|  | Cllr Kyle Robinson | Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council |
|  | Cllr Doina Cornell | Stroud District Council |
|  | Cllr Sarah Osborne | East Sussex County Council |
|  | Cllr Stan Collins | Cumbria County Council |
|  | Cllr Helen Grant | Richmondshire District Council |

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