

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

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EEHT Update Paper

Housing Improvement

1. After some delays due to the impact of COVID-19 we are now moving forward with our Housing Improvement work for 2020/21. This breaks down into two main strands:

- 1.1. *Housing Advisers Programme*

The 2020/21 Housing Advisers Programme (HAP), which is designed to support councils seeking to innovate in meeting the housing needs of their communities, opened for applications on 12 November 2020 with a closing date of 7th January 2021. For more information visit www.local.gov.uk/housingadvisersprogramme

- 1.2. *Leadership Essentials Course - Housing*

Following the success of our first Housing Leadership Essentials residential course in January, we are [running a second](#) in February 2021. The programme is designed to help participants develop their leading role in shaping the local housing market to meet the needs of both people and places. The delivery format of this programme is subject to change depending on COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time.

2. **Right to Build webinar**

On 18 November we held a webinar on the obligations and opportunities for custom or self-build housing. The webinar, chaired by Cllr Renard, included presenters from MHCLG's Right To Build Task Force and Mid Devon District Council.

3. **Building post-pandemic prosperity report**

Together with the National Federation of ALMOs and the Association of Retained Council Housing we commissioned published [a report](#) by Pragmatix Advisory demonstrating that a post-pandemic building boom of 100,000 new social homes for rent each year would meet demand for affordable homes and deliver a £14.5 billion boost to the economy. The report was [cover story in The Observer](#) and covered in other media channels.

Environment and Climate Change

4. **Ten Point Plan:** The government published its [Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#) in November, which sets out the approach that government will take on the UK's path to net zero. It outlines investment and support for developing the low carbon economy, in areas such as clean transport, green jobs, renewable energy, homes and public buildings, carbon capture and storage, nature and innovation. Key commitments include bringing forward the ban on selling new petrol and diesel cars to 2030, creating 250,000 jobs and mobilising £12 billion of government investment. It also provides a

target for publishing The Energy White Paper by the end of 2020. The LGA provided a response, stating that councils share the government's ambition for a green revolution and want to work with government and businesses to establish a national fiscal and policy framework for addressing the climate emergency, supported with long term funding.

5. **Carbon Budget:** The Committee on Climate Change is publishing its recommendations on the level of the Sixth Carbon Budget (the limit on UK emissions for 2033 – 37) and a pathway to net zero by 2050, on 9th December. An accompanying publication on local delivery for councils and city-regions has also been produced. We are working to understand what the recommendations mean for councils and their role in delivering them locally.
6. **Financing Green Ambition practical guide:** The LGA has worked with Local Partnerships to publish a practical guide to help councils understand the options available for financing their green ambitions and how these might apply to different types of projects. This is now available on our [website](#) and a webinar was held on 2nd December.
7. **Environment Bill:** The House of Commons has resumed its debate on the Bill and the Committee Report is expected in early December. It will have a third reading in the House of Commons then the Bill will be debated in the House of Lords.
 - 7.1. **New clauses:** The government has proposed a new section of the Bill on species conservation strategies and protected habitat strategies. These are intended to protect species and habitats at risk, while allowing development to go ahead. We are working with Defra and Natural England to understand the implication of the new clauses. Defra has also set out plans for the new UK Office for Environmental Protection to operate on an interim basis. Its powers will not be available until the Environment Bill has been passed.
 - 7.2. **LGA amendments:** One of the LGA's amendments is due to be discussed in the House of Commons Committee stage. The proposed amendment to the Nature and Biodiversity chapter would ensure that an assessment is made of how the new duties for local authorities are operating into the future and that they are sufficiently funded. The LGA [briefing](#) sets out the detail of this amendment and others that were discussed with the Bill Committee back in March.
8. **Environmental Audit Committee Inquiry on biodiversity and ecosystems:** Councillor Glanville gave evidence to the Inquiry on 12 November. The Committee were interested to hear the LGA's views on the introduction of biodiversity net gain in new development, the role of local leadership and council resources.

9. Climate change improvement update:

- 9.1. Net Zero Innovation and Design in the Public Sector Programmes:** 96 applications were received across the two programmes. The list of project awarded funded has been published along with a brief description: [Design in the Public Sector](#) and [Net Zero Innovation Programme](#)
- 9.2. Webinar: Locking in positive behaviours and co-benefits of green recovery:** This online event covered how local government can continue to embed the behaviours we have seen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to climate action. You can find the link to a [blog post](#) and the [slides](#) on our webpage.
- 9.3. Webinar: [Seeing the Wood for the Trees](#)** on 11 December 2020. This webinar will examine the case for planting trees in terms of finance and carbon, the challenges this presents for local authorities and the benefits of urban tree planting
- 9.4. Sustainable procurement guide:** The Improvement Team is currently engaging on and writing guidance on sustainable procurement which will be available around March 2021.
- 9.5. [Climate emergency leadership essentials programme](#):** A further session will run from 28 to 29 January 2021 and is open for booking.

Transport & Infrastructure

- 1. National Infrastructure Strategy** The Government has launched its long delayed National Infrastructure Strategy (NIS) which is a response to the National Infrastructure Assessment (NIA) carried out by the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) and published in 2018. The strategy sets out the Government strategic infrastructure priorities for the coming parliament. We were disappointed that the Government did not fully implement the NICs recommendation that cities should have five-year guaranteed funding settlements for transport infrastructure. Instead the Government is only seeking to guarantee these budgets for Mayoral Combined Authorities. We will continue to push the government to make long term settlements available to all areas to allow them to create long term infrastructure plans based on guaranteed and predictable funding.
- 2. Buses** The Government's national bus strategy was expected this autumn but has now been delayed to early 2021. We anticipate the release of the strategy in late January or early February. The board commissioned research from Systra on what role councils wish to have in their recovery of bus provision post pandemic. We will be releasing the final results of this research before Christmas and we will be holding

a webinar to discuss the results of the research and our future role in bus provision on 19th January. Board members are invited to attend and join the discussion.