

Note of the last Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board

Title:	Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board
Date and time:	Tuesday 27 October 2020
Location:	Zoom Videoconference

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions
1	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest <p>The Chairman welcomed and introduced members to the Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP, Minister for Housing.</p> <p>Mayor Philip Glanville declared that he is Chair of London Council's Transport and Environment Committee.</p>
2	Board Membership, Terms of Reference and Outside Bodies 2020-21 <p>The Chairman introduced the report and informed the Board that this was an annual report for approval, highlighting how the Board operates and how the LGA works to support the objectives and work of its member authorities.</p> <p>Kamal Panchal, Senior Adviser, introduced the Outside Bodies 2020-21 report and highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustrans, a UK walking and cycling charity was formerly represented by Cllr Peter Thornton.• HS2 Environmental Forum may cease to exist or may be potentially on hold as no further communication has been received on future forum meetings. However, as agreed at the last Board meeting Cllr Martin Tett shall remain appointed as the representative, once further clarification of the forum is received.• Canal and River Trust was formerly represented by Cllr Peter Thornton who is looking to remain appointed, but Cllr Mark Hawthorn and Cllr Rachel Blake have both shown keen interest in being appointed to the role. <p>The Board has agreed that Cllr Peter Thornton was to remain as the representative on Sustrans and Cllr Martin Tett to remain appointed as the Conservative representative on HS2 Environmental Forum with Labour to appoint a member.</p>

- Following the discussion, Members made the following comment:
- If the LGA was being represented by members on Outside Bodies or merely collating information to feedback? Presumably members would take the position of the LGA rather than their own authorities. Kamal responded that the LGA doesn't have a position on HS2 and representatives to the HS2 Environmental Forum have been chosen to represent the wide range of views on this issue and the LGA does not provide a briefing. For other Outside Bodies, it would be expected that the views of the LGA are represented.

Actions:

- Officers to check whether HS2 Environmental Forum has potentially put meetings on hold and resume in the following year.
- Lead Members to discuss Outside Bodies representatives for Canal and Rivers Trust. Officers will approach the canal and Rivers Trust to see if additional places can be provided.

Decision:

The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board noted Board Membership and agreed the Terms of Reference and nominations to Outside Bodies 2020-21.

3 Planning Reforms

The Chairman informed the Board that as Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP, Minister for Housing, has sent his apologies and would not be able to attend the meeting and that we would be looking to invite him to the following Board meeting.

Jo Allchurch, Senior Adviser, introduced the report which provided an overview of the Board's recent activity in relation to the Government's proposed planning reforms. Jo confirmed that the LGA's draft response had been cleared by Board Lead Members.

Following the discussion, Members made the following comments:

- As Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP was unable to attend the meeting, would it be best to wait for a response from government on the consultation of the Planning for the Future White Paper or, invite him to the next Board meeting as proposed by the Chairman. Jo responded that MHCLG would not be able to provide a date as to when the Ministry will receive a response to the consultation.
- Several questions raised by the Board about the White Paper fell into grey areas and that it would be helpful to address these to the Minister as soon as possible. The Chairman responded that he was happy to take that approach to the Minister of Housing.
- Rather than waiting for a response from the Ministry and missing the opportunity, continuing a dialogue with the Minister of Housing was important before the results from the consultation were published.
- If there was a Comms plan linked to the submission? As there are a number of councils that do not have resources needed to create their own submission. Jo commented that the Comms team had press releases lined up and will continue engagement with parliamentarians.

Action:

- Invite the Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP, Housing Minister to the next Board meeting and to engage earlier if available.

Decision:

The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board noted the proposed planning reforms.

4 The future of Bus provisions in England outside of London

Andrew Jones, Policy Adviser introduced the report and briefly discussed the long-term and short-term crisis in the public transport market and the LGAs work with NAO and SYSTRA.

Antonia Gracie, Audit Manager, NAO introduced the Value for Money study into the bus industry outside of London and highlighted key recommendations from the report which include the following:

- a clear, consistent vision of the future of bus travel, that encourages and supports local authorities to make long-term plans for their own local needs.
- a detailed, transparent delivery plan with clear objectives, responsibilities and accountabilities for the Department and others.
- good quality data and measures of success.
- An active role in supporting local authorities to access evidence and experience to support improvement.
- the amount and form of funding, for both local authorities and operators, that is necessary to achieve the objectives of the bus strategy.

Neill Birch, Business Director, SYSTRA introduced initial conclusions on the work that the LGA commissioned them to undertake on councils' role in the future of public transport. Neill highlighted key potential responses which include the following:

- That authorities have the ability to inform and make decisions on future network changes, understand the impacts of potential schemes, and have the evidence to justify policy decisions, schemes, and spending.
- Immediate urgent help (skills, processes and funding) may be required for data gathering and market engagement to help inform network redesign.
- Further engagement with local authorities could lead to a better understanding of the level of inequality which exists in relation to data collection and analysis matters, and identify support requirements for areas which are lacking in ability to understand what the past, present and future looks like for their transport network.
- The need to buy in expertise, transfer knowledge and train staff, set up processes for collection, analysis and modelling, and to address lack of day-to-day staff to use data.
- Some areas do better than others, with access to good data analytics and transport modelling tools which can be used to develop informed business cases to support actions.
- Partnerships for standardised central collection, management and use of data and forecasting resources may have a role.
- Open data, e.g. operators opening up fares and routing data.

The Chairman thanked Antonia and Neill for their detailed presentations and for taking the time to address the Board.

Following the discussion, Members made the following comments:

- Personal safety in rural areas is a huge concern as people are not willing to use buses as a means of transport during COVID-19 pandemic and it cannot be assumed what may work in urban areas will work in rural areas.
- The industry will potentially get worse before it gets better. Concerns around public health, which have and will continue to have a significant impact, as government advice has suggested not to use public transport unless strictly necessary; coupled with this councils will be making cuts. Is it realistic to ask government for more support when they already have pressure to provide further funding? Neill responded that it will be challenging to get funding from government, but it is much needed in the industry to keep it going as there are many impacts involved.
- There has been a slow decline in bus use and during the pandemic, in rural areas, the use of concessionary travel has reduced as car use has increased. COVID-19 has created a new reality and people have adapted to working from home, once we get back to normal what will that look like for bus usage? Neill responded that operators they have spoken to believe that patronage has stabilised to 20-25% lower than last year and may take 12 to 18 months to get back to previous levels. There may be a shift in peaks of demand as people choose to travel later in the day. At the moment there is no definitive data to suggest what bus usage will look like post-COVID.
- More clarity is needed around funding provided by the government and the basis for that funding. Kamal responded that the LGA has been lobbying on this point and has released a press release over the weekend on this issue.

Action:

- Officers to work with SYSTRA to reflect Board's views on the buses research.

Decision:

That the Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board noted the conclusions of the NAO and SYSTRA reports.

5 Climate Change and Environment Update

Hilary Tanner, Senior Adviser, introduced the report which provided an update on the climate change work being carried out and included an update on the blueprint coalition, parliamentary activity, research and events and, the climate change improvement and support programme.

Hilary informed the Board that the LGA's Comprehensive Spending Review submission clearly highlighted the case that the Government should work with councils and businesses to establish a national fiscal and policy framework for addressing the climate emergency. With local plans that deliver on this agenda and invest in solutions for a green recovery and future. As the framework is

unavailable this has been brought back to the Board for their steer and comments.

Hilary also highlighted further updates including the following:

- The LGA was waiting for the government to publish the Comprehensive Spending Review.
- The latest amendment paper for the Environment Bill has been published and the LGA is looking to call for amendments to be made to the Bill.
- The government is due to set a Carbon Budget later this year, with The Committee on Climate Change due to publish its recommendations on the level of the Sixth Carbon Budget (the limit on UK emissions for 2033 – 37).
- The United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties will be held in the UK in November 2021.

Following the discussion, Members made the following comments:

- Improvement and Innovation Board have a climate change working group and would be good to work with them or receive updates. Hilary commented that there is an update in the report from the climate change working group and can look in the future for the Boards to share and work collaboratively
- Whether the Blueprint for accelerating climate action and green recovery at local level had been formally agreed by the Board to support the five immediate priorities. Hilary responded that the LGA has not agreed to the Blueprint document. It is an invitation that would need a formal response with no particular timeframe.
- Several local authorities are aligned to other organisations that support tackling climate emergency and it would be worth linking these bodies together to form a joint streamlined view across the sector.

Actions:

- Officers to review the blueprint document and provide more information to the Board.

Decision:

That the Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board noted and agreed on the update.

6 Economic Recovery

Eamon Lally, Principal Policy Adviser introduced the report which outlined the work of the EEHT and other boards on economic recovery, highlighting the challenge of moving from response to recovery as the second wave of Covid-19 hits.

Following the discussion, Members made the following comments:

- The paper could be more coherent in terms of how local economies work as there are some clear gaps in the housing market and should be referenced in the paper.
- There is a strong focus on high streets and toolkits, which has received

huge amounts of support over the last few years and it would be better for the Board to focus their resources into providing bespoke advice and support into local authorities.

- Resources Board needs to consider longer-term thinking on business rates as a result of the pandemic.

Action:

- Officers to provide an update from Resources Board on business rates.

Decision:

That the Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board noted the update.

7 Other Board Updates

The Chairman introduced the report which provides updates on a range of issue within the remit of the Board, including:

- Housing, planning and homelessness
- Moving traffic offences
- Pavement parking
- Decarbonisation of transport
- Flooding

Following the discussion, no comments were made by the Board.

Decision:

That the Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board noted the update.

8 Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting are to follow at the next Board meeting scheduled for Wednesday, 9 December 2020.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 9 December 2020, 12.00 pm, Via Zoom

Appendix A – Attendance

Position		Authority
Chairman	CLlr David Renard	Swindon Borough Council
Vice-Chair	CLlr Darren Rodwell	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council
Deputy Chair	CLlr Adele Morris	Southwark Council
Deputy Chair	CLlr Linda Gillham	Runnymede Borough Council
		Warwickshire County Council

Committee Member	Cllr Peter Butlin	
	Cllr Mark Crane	Selby District Council
	Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
	Cllr Patrick Nicholson	Plymouth City Council
	Cllr Nicholas Rushton	Leicestershire County Council
	Cllr Linda Taylor	Cornwall Council
	Cllr Asher Craig	Bristol City Council
	Mayor Phillip Glanville	Hackney Borough London Council
	Cllr Ed Turner	Oxford City Council
	Cllr Rachel Blake	Tower Hamlets Council
	Cllr Michael Mordey	Sunderland City Council
	Cllr Christopher Hammond	Southampton City Council
	Cllr Peter Thornton	Cumbria County Council
	Cllr David Beaman	Waverly Borough Council
	Cllr Richard Burton	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
In attendance	Antonia Gracie	NAO
	David Molony	NAO
	Neill Birch	SYSTRA
Apologies	The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick	MP