

Note of last People & Places Board meeting

Title: People & Places Board
Date: Tuesday 12 January 2021
Venue: Online via Zoom

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	Welcome, apologies and substitutes, declarations of interest The Chairman welcomed Members, officers, and guests to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Cllr Diane Marsh (sub Cllr Colin Davie) and Cllr Kyle Robinson. The Chairman declared an interest as he was the Chairman of Transport - East. Cllr Keith Glazier declared an interest as he was the Chairman of Transport - South East. Cllr Rob Waltham declared an interest as he was a Member of the Transport North Board and Rail North.	
2	Transport Update The Chairman invited Kamal Panchal, Senior Adviser, to introduce the update. Kamal introduced the report which provided members with an update on the sub-national transport bodies, work on decarbonisation of transport as led by the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT) Board and upcoming projects. Members made the following comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is important to re-emphasise the significance of sub-national transport boards (STBs). There is very positive work taking place across the country in bringing together local authorities and local bodies. We need to encourage others to become involved in the sub-national transport board over the next 18-24 months.• We want to continue to encourage people to get out of cars and do more exercise, how could we convert temporary cycle lanes into being permanent cycle lanes and ensure that government create extra investment to increase the number of cycle lanes and paths?	

- There are greater challenges in the North, we need to focus on governance and building partnerships.
- It's important to focus on connecting with outer, more rural areas and continue to lobby government for rural transport funding.
- Whilst electric vehicles are a step in the right direction, they do not solve congestion-related issues, sustainable alternatives need to be in place.
- We need to improve the mindset of people and to do that we need the relevant infrastructure in place.

Kamal responded to the comments made by Members:

- In relation to STBs, a lot of the points being raised by Members of this board have and continue to be raised.
- Underpinning this work is the need for particularly government policy to reflect the 'no one size fits all' principle.
- People should avoid travelling by car if possible. Where people do need to travel by car, they should try to change the vehicle that they are using to an environmentally friendly car.
- As part of the ongoing work, we are focusing on tackling issues which relate to pavement parking.

Decision:

Members noted the report.

Action/s:

Officers to note the comments made by Board Members and to continue to feed those comments into ongoing work.

Officers to submit further updates to a future meeting of the People and Places Board.

3 Broadband Update

The Chairman welcomed Justin Leese, UK Gigabit Programme Director - Building Digital UK, Cllr Mark Hawthorne, Digital Connectivity Champion, and Andrew Carter, Chief Executive of the Centre for Cities. He then invited Justin to introduce the update.

Justin introduced the report and the separate confidential briefing which provided members with an update on the government's downgrading of its gigabit-broadband-for-all target. He referred specifically to the current policy position, market investment the engagement work that continued to take place and existing and upcoming projects/interventions.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne provided a brief update in relation to the timelines for the new rollout, local intelligence to form responses to the spending review and project funding. He referred to a recent meeting with the Department

for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and confirmed that workshops would be held by the DCMS focusing on access to land and relieving tensions between local governments and providers. He reassured Members that there would be a local government voice at the workshops.

Members made the following comments:

- With regards to rural broadband, it would be more economical and efficient for incoming broadband providers if Councils be funded to put multi-channel ducting into roadside verges.
- I have some concerns with regards to the reduction in targets. We need to emphasise the increase in broadband use, especially during lockdown and because of the COVID-19 pandemic. How can we put more pressure on companies to ensure that we are delivering better and more comprehensive broadband at a higher level?
- Should the LGA recommend that all new or refurbished car parks should incorporate ducting to carry the cables for car charging so that when it becomes necessary, it can be installed without major building works?
- Broadband supply feels very different in smaller suppliers prepared to commit capital; it seems as though suppliers will tend to the easier jobs first. Government need to use influence on providers to make them accountable, fair, and equitable.
- The voucher scheme could be risky, some providers are taking advantage of the scheme and sending bills to customers.
- Suppliers must provide broadband using the 'outside in' process, because many rural communities are still waiting for sufficient broadband, with people working from home more due to COVID-19 and parents home schooling their children, a good broadband connection is very important.
- Cross-border issues are very significant, and some are very rural. How do you join it up and what duty do you have to make sure we have an equitable cross-border?
- The commercial sector needs to be on same timeline as government.

Justin, Andrew and Cllr Hawthorne responded to the comments made by members:

- We have various projects and pilots running on the strategic road network, we're building duct infrastructure with some fibre but there is capacity for more fibre, we've added to the existing duct network and that's been put into co-operative ownership. We're working with the Department for Transport (DfT) and network rail to deploy a fibre cable from Manchester to York which is being opened for

wholesale access.

- With regards to policy, it is now is entirely megabit focused and the infrastructure in place must be capable of delivering the megabits.
- In relation to our targets, the target is at least 85%. We will be prioritising individuals who do not have Superfast broadband yet.
- There are lots of providers joining the Superfast programme. We are regularly reviewing structures and looking at suppliers' contribution as well as our own.
- In relation to cross-border delivery, the Superfast programme had a very hard definition around local authority areas. For the new programme, we'll look more closely at hard to reach areas and find out about paying for services and combining areas to provide a more attractive offer.

Decision:

Members noted the report and the information contained within the confidential briefing.

Actions:

Cllr Mark Hawthorne to report back to a future meeting of the People and Places Board in relation to the outcome of the DCMS workshops.

Officers to send Justin's details to Cllr Martin Tett as he had to attend another meeting during this item.

Justin to report back to a future meeting of the People and Places Board in the next few months re a progress report.

Officers to note the comments/concerns raised by members.

4 Youth Employment and Skills Update

The Chairman invited Bushra Jamil, Adviser, to introduce the update.

Bushra introduced the report which provided an update on the development of a youth participation and employment and skills policy which related to young people. The paper had been well received at the Children and Young People Board.

Members made the following comments:

- What work is being undertaken in relation to hard to reach children and young people who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET)?
- In relation to NEETs, there are those that are already in the system and those that are entering it. We should have two separate approaches to try and tackle these different groups.

- The situation with children and young people who are NEET is changing all the time and is such a broad spectrum. NEETs are a perfect example of when people fall out of the system because of a change of circumstances, and with the current COVID-19 pandemic, there is a mismatch in the marketplace for work.
- In relation to vulnerable children and young people, particularly care leavers, there is positive work being undertaken by many councils in supporting them back into work.
- With regards to Principle 5, Annex B, which refers to employers being incentivised to support Industry Placements, the final paragraph relating to local government is very positive. One of the things that we should be doing and championing for ourselves is the positive work that we're already doing and emphasising the fact that as Councils, we could be leading in this element of it.
- In relation to point 8 of the report, which refers to the LGA Chairman's correspondence with Ministers regarding support, maybe we should include the Minister of Social Care.
- With regards to post-16 establishments, post-16 education was handed to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) but there needs to be a clear role for local authorities in this. There are issues around transport for post-16 education, could officers liaise with transport colleagues to progress on this matter?

Bushra responded to the comments made by members:

- Following the Ministerial roundtable event last September, we have been in regular dialogue with the Department for Education (DfE) officials. A meeting is scheduled for next week to discuss the issues and challenges relating to young people and NEETs and how to better support them.
- Transport related issues and wider support for young people and those who are NEETs are discussed regularly with the DfE officials.
- With regards to T Levels, we are working closely with our workforce development team to ensure that Councils are aware of the suite of initiatives and providing opportunities for young people. This is particularly important, as part of the statutory responsibilities in terms of looked after children and more vulnerable groups.

Decision:

Members noted the report and agreed to provide comments/steer in relation to plans for progressing the policy.

Actions:

Officers to explore an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) in relation to youth employment and skills.

5 EU Exit Paper

It was agreed by the Chairman that agenda items 5 (EU Exit paper) and 6 (UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) paper) be discussed together. The Chairman invited Paul Green, Adviser, to introduce the papers.

Paul introduced both reports referred to above. The EU Exit Paper updated Board members on UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, and the work that the LGA has been undertaking to support councils in preparing for Britain's exit from the EU and the end of the transition period. The UKSPF paper updated Board members on the UKSPF and sought their steer on engagement with the Government in shaping the fund. He highlighted several key issues which were a result of the end of transition period and explained in detail the work being undertaken to address these issues.

Members made the following comments:

- We have established, through our Brexit Transition Board, a contact group with the EU to share experiences and understand what some of the issues will be as part of the Brexit work as the deal works through the transition.
- In terms of the UKSPF, I have expressed concern in the past in relation to the level at which decisions are made. The UKSPF paper is optimistic as it suggests that we will be making decisions as councils. An update in relation to local decision-making would be very helpful.
- In relation to the pilot schemes for the new fund in 2021/22, do you have any further information on that? £220 million doesn't seem like a lot of money for the whole country.
- When it comes to direct funding for local projects, that should be done through the local authorities and not through LEPs.
- Have we received any further information from government in relation to what the role of LEPs will be? Is it moving back more towards local government?

Paul responded to the comments made by members:

- The LGA line is that the fund should be driven by councils and combined authorities and this is one of the key points the LGA will continue to make as part of our wider lobbying work..
- In relation to longer-term monitoring of the impact of the end of the transition period, there is currently a staggered approach by UK government with regards to checking paperwork for import products. April and July is when we will have an increase in checking import products, that will impact on ports, we do have certain pinch-points where know where the pressures will be as we

approach the end of transition.

Decision:

Members noted the EU Exit paper.

6 UK Shared Prosperity Fund Paper

It was agreed by the Chairman that agenda items 5 (EU Exit paper) and 6 (UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) paper) be discussed together, the discussion for both items was noted in minute 14 above.

Decision:

Members noted the UKSPF paper.

Actions:

Officers to continue to lobby for local government to be driving by local government.

7 Health Devolution

The Chairman invited Eleanor Law, Policy Adviser, to introduce the update.

Eleanor introduced the report which provided Board members with an update on the joint meeting of the People and Places, City Regions, and Community Health and Wellbeing Board Lead Members, and the LGA's response to the NHS England and NHS Improvement consultation on Integrated Care Systems (ICS). She thanked Lead Members for their comments and feedback on the LGAs consultation response before Christmas. She confirmed that she would submit a further update report to a future meeting of the People and Places Board, should the NHS or the Department of Health provide further information re the NHS bill.

Members made the following comments:

- There is a risk of losing some of the collaboration work that currently exists. We need to emphasise the significance of partnership working and joint decision making with the NHS.
- The vaccination process in relation to COVID-19 is great for working in partnership with NHS. We do have a lot to offer at a local level that can help and support the NHS.
- My experience locally is that the NHS and local authorities have worked extremely well together in terms of the COVID-19 crisis response and it has opened many doors that were previously closed to us (e.g.: data sharing, ICS). Although there is a lack of transparency and accountability, it's becoming more difficult to engage with local NHS groups. Equal partnerships are very important and it's to the benefit of the NHS and local NHS professionals to engage with communities effectively to re-enforce

transparency and accountability.

- The role of the Health and Wellbeing Boards must be paramount, and we cannot allow, with ICS, that role to be diminished.
- In relation to Scrutiny, councils need to have more powers and reports must arrive in a timely manner to ensure that accountability is passed on and can be acted on.

Decision:

Members noted the report.

Actions:

Officers to continue to work with councils and NHS England/NHS Improvement to look in detail at options proposed and continue to update members on the outcome of the consultation.

Officers to ensure that 'Health Devolution' becomes a standing item on the agenda to address ongoing issues (to include information re the NHS bill once it is received from the NHS or the Department of Health).

8 Mid-Year Review

The Chairman invited Sonika Sidhu, Principal Policy Adviser, to introduce the update.

Sonika introduced the report which enabled Board members to review the current work programme. It outlined the key issues likely to influence the work areas of the People and Places Board in 2021 and provided members with an opportunity to flag up future areas of interest or any additional focus which they would like within the current work programme.

Members made the following comments:

- Whilst people migrating from cities and suburbs into rural areas to live and work is welcome, as it develops, it is going to put pressure on rural schools, rural services, and the finances of the local authority.
- In relation to Broadband, can we ensure that the debate continues regularly?
- Could you provide more information in relation to COVID-19 recovery where the LGA will have a reflection on the resilience of local government and the capacity to continue providing services in all areas of the country?

The Chairman and Sonika responded to the comments made by members:

- There is an ongoing piece of work which focuses on rural and coastal resilience and recovery, we could take migration into rural areas from cities and suburbs into account as part of that work.

This will be discussed at the next Lead Members meeting.

- As Chairman, I will ask Justin Leese to report back to the People and Places Board in 3 months' time in relation to Broadband and project progress.
- In relation to service delivery in COVID-19 recovery, the Chief Executive of LGA and SMT are already looking at this. We could provide an update to the next Lead Members meeting to ensure that we feed into that.

Decision:

Members noted the report.

Actions:

Officers to increase the focus on rural migration in the ongoing piece of work on rural and coastal resilience and recovery.

Officers to ensure that the ongoing piece of work on rural and coastal resilience and recovery is discussed at the next Lead Members meeting.

Chairman/Officers to ask Justin Leese to report back to the People and Places Board in 3 months' time in relation to Broadband and project progress.

Officers to ensure that feedback from the Chief Executive of LGA and SMT in relation to service delivery in COVID-19 recovery is discussed at the next Lead Members meeting.

9 Spending Review

The Chairman invited Sonika Sidhu, Principal Policy Adviser, to introduce the update.

Sonika briefly introduced the report which focused on the elements of the Review which are of particular interest to the People & Places Board – UKSPF, digital connectivity, freeports, levelling up and jobs and skills.

Members made the following comments:

- In relation to paragraph 12 within the report, local authorities are under a significant amount of pressure in responding to the COVID-19 crisis that they have not always got the opportunity to put in their best bids. Could we see if the message can be passed up the line to ensure that there is an awareness that local government is under massive resource pressure at the moment and that the bidding culture is unhelpful as it widens the gap.

Decision:

Members noted the report and considered the announcements made by the Chancellor and any specific impact on the key policy areas of the

Board.

Action:

Chairman/Officers to send a note from the People and Places Board to the Chairman of LGA in relation to local government resource pressure and bidding culture.

10 Equalities Advocate update

The Chairman introduced the report, as the Equalities Advocate for the People and Places Board. He emphasised the importance of equality and how accessibility affects individuals with differing needs. He added that an item relating to equality would be a standing item on the agenda going forward.

Members made the following comments:

- My experience locally, specifically in relation to the Black Lives Matter campaign, is that we updated our equality documents, engaged with our communities regarding the services that we provide. It would be interesting to know how other councils across the country engage with their communities so that we can share good practice and ensure that there is strong representation across all of the protected characteristics to ensure that voices are heard.

Decision:

Members noted the report and provided a steer around how they would like to see equalities issues addressed throughout the work of the People and Places Board.

Action:

Officers to carry out a survey for all Board Members in relation to accessibility.

11 Update Report

Decision:

Members noted the report.

12 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
	Cllr Simon Henig CBE	Durham County Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
	Cllr Bob Jennings	Epping Forest District Council
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 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 Doina Cornell	Stroud District Council
	Cllr Sarah Osborne	East Sussex County Council
	Cllr Stan Collins	Cumbria County Council
	Cllr Helen Grant	Richmondshire District Council
Apologies	Cllr Diane Marsh	Gravesham Borough Council
	Cllr Kyle Robinson	Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
In Attendance	Cllr Colin Davie	Lincolnshire County Council