

Minutes of last Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board meeting

Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board

Tuesday, 24 January 2023

18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#)

Item	Decisions and actions
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1	Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest
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The Chairman welcomed members to the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Darren Rodwell.

Cllr Anthony Okereke was in attendance as a substitute.

No declarations of interest were made.

2	Adapting to climate change, local government and the third National Adaptation Programme
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The Chairman introduced Robert Mason, Deputy Director from Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), who gave a presentation on adapting to climate change and the third National Adaptation Programme.

Members made the following comments:

- It should be made clear that adaptation is a long-term financial investment
- Councils lacked the long-term financing and flexibility to be able to take action
- It was queried if migration of people had been considered as part of the programme
- It was essential for infrastructure to adapt to the impacts of climate change with health risks such as overheating in buildings during

warm days.

- There was a skills deficit for the work needed to adapt to climate change
- There were discussions on whether it should be a statutory requirement for local authorities to adapt to climate change, with concerns that local authorities lack the resources to be able to act. It was suggested that they should only be required to do so if they are given the necessary support.

Robert Mason thanked members for their comments, emphasising that local and central government need to be partners on this. Due to their location, climate risks, and therefore their needs, varied between councils.

The Chairman thanked Robert Mason for his attendance

Decision:

Members **noted** the report and update.

3 Workforce capacity in local government

The Chairman invited Heather Wills, Principal Adviser (Improvement), to present the report which summarised the LGA's policy and improvement activity to address workforce capacity challenges in local government and sought the Board's feedback on priorities for future activity.

Members made the following comments:

- Further responsibilities to respond to the needs of migrants arriving in local areas and to address issues with building regulations and housing standards causing increased pressures on staff. New duties should be accompanied by associated resources and powers
- Long term solutions such as apprenticeships should be a priority
- An overall workforce strategy may be beneficial to the local government workforce
- International recruitment should be considered to help address workforce concerns, but there are difficulties associated with this
- Much of the workforce had been leaving local government for the private sector
- Investing in improving the workforce should be framed being

necessary to enable local government to play its role in government's levelling up agenda, economic development and climate change

- Local government had been appealing to staff for its stability and good pensions, other benefits should be highlighted such as work life balance

Heather Wills responded with the following comments:

- International recruitment had been used in some service areas but presents long-term challenges and the LGA supports councils to "grow their own".
- It was also acknowledged that workforce issues needed to be urgently addressed
- With many various services within local government, there would be work across government departments
- An updated version of the report incorporating feedback from policy Boards would go to Resources Board and then Executive Advisory Board.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

4 Housing Standards

The Chairman invited Jo Allchurch, Senior Adviser, to present the report which summarized the LGA's policy and improvement activity in relation to housing standards broadly and how the LGA delivers those priorities.

Since the writing of the report, a workshop on housing standards at the LGA conference in July had been confirmed. It was anticipated that guidance will be published on out of area placements later in the week.

Members made the following comments:

- Members were concerned at the social housing rent cap which had hindered councils' ability to build housing stock particularly with the rise in inflation
- It was highlighted that councils' positions relating to housing varied depending on the stock and types of buildings, and therefore it was suggested that resources and demand of councils should be considered with an evidence based approach
- The issue of Section 21 notices in private sector housing had

meant councils are required to house people. Members stressed the urgency of this issue and supported the mapping of enforcement activity

- There were queries relating to the social housing decarbonisation fund and accreditations for installers of installation.

Jo Allchurch responded acknowledging the cumulative impact of government interventions and encouraged members to provide examples from their councils to help form the evidence based decisions.

Action:

Jo Allchurch to follow up queries relating to decarbonisation and accreditations with Members.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

5 Building Safety Update

The Chairman invited Marshall Scott, Graduate Trainee (Adviser), to give an update on the LGA's building safety work which included the monitoring of the progress on the Fire Safety Act and Building Safety Act, remediation, and improvement work.

Members discussed the report.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

6 EEHT Updates / Other board business

The Chairman invited members to comment on the report which outline updates within the Board's remit.

Members made the following comments:

Following queries on having a political tier of the Net Zero Forum, it was reported that there was work on this with a meeting potentially starting in February. Advisers would follow up a query relating to funding of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS).

Decisions:

Members **noted** the update.

7 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 November 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr David Renard	Swindon Borough Council
Vice-Chairman		
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Pippa Heylings Cllr Loic Rich	South Cambridgeshire District Council Cornwall Council
Members	Cllr Kelham Cooke Cllr Mark Crane Cllr Jonathan Edwards Cllr Paul Marshall Cllr Carl Les Cllr Linda Taylor Cllr Martin Gannon Mayor Philip Glanville Mayor Paul Dennett Cllr Claire Holland Cllr Philip Bialyk Cllr Emily Darlington Cllr Anthony Okereke Cllr Vikki Slade Cllr Diana Moore	Ash- South Kesteven District Council Selby District Council Mid Sussex District Council West Sussex County Council North Yorkshire County Council Cornwall Council Gateshead Council Hackney London Borough Council Salford City Council Lambeth London Borough Council Exeter City Council Milton Keynes Council Royal Borough of Greenwich Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council Exeter City Council
Apologies	Cllr Darren Rodwell	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council
In Attendance	Cllr Tom Renhard Cllr Ed Gemmell Cllr Phil Jordan Cllr Paul Hilliard Robert Mason	Bristol City Council Buckinghamshire County Council Isle of Wight Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
LGA Officers	Jo Allchurch Calum Davidson Joe Difford Eamon Lally Charles Loft Kamal Panchal	



Emilia Peters
Nick Porter
Marshall Scott
Jacqueline Smale
Amelia Sutton
Heather Wills