

People & Places Board – report from Cllr David Hodge (Chairman)

Party conferences

1. Members of the People and Places Board spoke at and contributed to a range of fringe events and roundtables across the party conference season, ensuring that a consistent and persuasive message was communicated to each of the political parties as they form their manifestoes on the importance of non-metropolitan communities to our country's future.
2. I attended five events at the Conservative conference themed around growth. These included a British Chambers of Commerce roundtable on how to make the UK more competitive on the global stage and boosting UK exports and an RSA roundtable on fostering microbusinesses and regenerating communities. Alongside the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, he spoke on the panel at an Enterprise Forum event, entitled *Property, Growth & Communities – stimulating economic growth and creating better communities*. I also participated in a RICS roundtable on the theme *Open for business: unlocking potential for construction led growth*.
3. The Vice-Chair, Cllr Neil Clark, spoke on the panel at Woodland Trust fringe event entitled '*Towards a Charter for trees, woods and people*'. He also contributed to a roundtable hosted by Reform which discussed the future of public service spending and public service reform. Cllrs Andrew Bowles, Clark and Hodge all attended the joint British Property Federation and LGA roundtable dinner to discuss *Investing in our future: how can the next government deliver growth across the UK*.
4. At the Liberal Democrat conference, the Deputy Chair Cllr Heather Kidd represented the Board at variety of events, including speaking on the panel at events held by the Woodland Trust and the British Parking Association. In addition, she was a panel member at a Federation of Master Builders and Campaign for Rural England fringe entitled *Housing the nation: Greenfield or brownfield* and contributed to a roundtable held jointly by the LGA and L&Q which considered sustainable communities.
5. Cllr Philip Atkins as Independent Deputy Chair sat on a panel at a fringe event held by Living Streets entitled, *Walking our way to economic recovery - how saving our health and high streets is as easy as walking to school*.

LGA/RSN Rural Conference

6. The LGA and Rural Services Network held a joint conference on 9 September on the theme of 'sustainability out of austerity'. Cllr Clarke co-chaired the event at which Dan Rogerson, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for water, forestry, rural affairs and resource management at Defra, gave a keynote speech.

Highway maintenance

7. Alongside the Assistant Chief Executive of Blackpool Council and the Chief Executive of the National Joint Utilities Group, I participated as a panel member in a

session focused on this theme as part of the LGA's Transport Conference entitled 'Gridlock 2040: How councils can save our roads' on 7 October.

8. In the September edition of First magazine I also outlined key funding issues facing my own authority regarding road maintenance, and advocated a long term approach to planning and identifying savings. In particular, I highlighted the importance of councils taking a co-ordinating role with utility companies on work taking place to minimise disruption and unnecessary road digging in local areas. The article can be found here: http://www.local.gov.uk/first-features/-/journal_content/56/10180/6549750/NEWS

East of England LGA event on devolution and growth

9. On 18 September, Jane Ramsay, Chair of Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and member of the Non-Metropolitan Commission, spoke at the East of England LGA's 'Fiscal Freedom and Devolved Powers for Local Growth' event. She spoke about the Commission's work to an audience of leading local councillors.

Induction day for new members

10. I attended the new councillors' briefing day on 4 September at Local Government House to discuss the work of the People and Places Board. In my session, I emphasised the Board's relationship with the City Regions Board and the importance of identifying opportunities for collaboration with other boards on issues of mutual concern.

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