

18 March 2015

Transport Update

Purpose

For information and discussion.

Summary

This paper provides an update on key transport-related developments in relation to the Board's work programme, specifically:

- Highways Agency/ Infrastructure Bill
- Highways Maintenance
- Parking

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the recent updates regarding the LGA's transport work.

Action

Officers to take actions as directed by the Board.

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Transport Update

1. This paper provides an update on key transport-related developments in relation to the Board's work programme, specifically:
 - 1.1 Highways Agency/ Infrastructure Bill
 - 1.2 Highways Maintenance
 - 1.3 Parking

Highways Agency/ Infrastructure Bill

2. On 12th February the Infrastructure Bill became an Act following Royal Assent. Importantly for councils the Act, following extensive LGA lobbying, now includes the requirement for the successor government-owned company to the Highways Agency, Highways England, to produce route strategies on which to base future investment plans. Further statutory guidance and the license terms for the new company will set out how the new company will have to consult and work with councils.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/infrastructure-act-will-get-britain-building>.
3. At a previous board meeting members were particularly concerned at the lack of strategic local authority input and constructive challenge in the work of the new company. Continued pressure from the LGA and other stakeholders has resulted in the addition, at a late stage, of a new requirement on Highways England to create a Stakeholder Advisory Panel.
4. The LGA also convened a high level meeting on 9th March between senior local transport officials and their Highways Agency counterparts to discuss the practicalities of making route strategies work and seek improvements to collaboration on local growth. As a result of this meeting LGA officials will ensure:
 - 4.1 Local government input into Highways England's strategic economic growth plan.
 - 4.2 Clarity of remit and potential membership of the Stakeholder Advisory Panel
 - 4.3 Further clarity of Highways England's £100 million Growth and Housing Fund and that this resource is dovetailed with local ambition.

Highways Maintenance

5. Following formal consultation, the Department for Transport announced individual allocations of funding for highways maintenance in January. LGA lobbying ensured that:
 - 5.1 There is a greater level of funding certainty than in previous years with 80% (£4.8 billion) allocated on a needs based formula basis.
 - 5.2 At 10% of total funding (£580 million), the amount subject to competitive bidding is smaller than the original 25% of total funding proposed.

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Parking

6. The Deregulation Bill passed its Third Reading in the House of Lords on 4 March 2015 and Royal Assent of the Bill is expected shortly. The Government has also now published the draft secondary legislation which will come into force once the Deregulation Bill has received Royal Assent, enabling the ban on CCTV for issuing automated fines except in those no-parking areas around schools, bus stops, bus lanes and red routes to come into force from April. These exemptions have been secured as a direct result of LGA lobbying with support from the British Parking Association, Living Streets and disabled groups. We have called for further exemption for clearways and pedestrian crossings on safety grounds and to facilitate bus punctuality. We have also argued that the exemption around schools needs to be widened. We have raised and will continue to raise concerns over the rushed implementation of this measure and the failure to conduct regulatory and equalities impact assessments.
7. Members may have read in the national media that the Government is also laying a statutory instrument granting '10 minute parking grace periods' which would apply to paid for or free parking spaces both on-street and off-street (in council owned car parks and similar). In addition, the Government announced:
 - 7.1 guidance for councils reminding them they are banned from "using parking to generate profit"
 - 7.2 a right for residents and businesses to demand - by a petition - that a council "reviews parking in their area"
 - 7.3 new powers for parking adjudicators so they can "hold councils to account"
 - 7.4 protection to stop drivers being fined after parking at out-of-order meters
8. Officers are looking at the implications of these measures; however initial impressions are that they will not involve significant changes to current requirements.
9. We will continue to argue for central government to shift its focus from micromanagement of parking and for perceived shortcomings in parking policy to be dealt with by convening a working group of stakeholders to consider useful reforms, such as adapting the law on the use of modern technology and tidying up the rules on loading bays.