

## **EEHT Work Programme Update**

### **Purpose of Report**

For information and discussion.

### **Summary**

This paper provides an update for EEHT Board members on developments related to the Board's work programme, including Task and Finish Groups.

### **Recommendation**

That the Board note the updates on the Work Programme.

### **Action**

Officers to take actions as directed by the Board.

**Contact officer:**

Caroline Green / Kamal Panchal

**Position:**

Senior Advisers

**Phone no:**

020 7664 3359 / 020 7644 3174

**E-mail:**

[Caroline.green@local.gov.uk](mailto:Caroline.green@local.gov.uk) / [Kamal.Panchal@local.gov.uk](mailto:Kamal.Panchal@local.gov.uk)

## **EEHT Work Programme Update**

1. The purpose of this paper is to update EEHT Board members on developments related to the Board's work programme, including Task and Finish Groups:

### **Economy:**

#### **Apprenticeships**

2. The Apprenticeships Task and Finish group have helped inform and develop an LGAs apprenticeship project with a range of councils and the think tank IPPR, including a valuable workshop with a range of employers, provider groups, councils and government on 9 March.
3. The final report sets out an offer for helping the new government achieve its ambition to create 3 million apprenticeships over the course of the parliament, building on councils' unique relationship with local businesses, schools and colleges. The report was trailed in the media on Sunday 24 May ahead of the Queens Speech, with the [final report published soon afterward](#).
4. The research highlights concerns that apprentices are more likely to be existing employees rather than new starters, that they are more likely to be over 25 than school leavers, and that they are more likely to be associated with low skills and low pay.
5. Based on the learning and activity of councils, the report recommends reform that focuses on giving all employers a platform to exercise genuine local leadership, on embedding all opportunities into a coherent local education landscape so that students are aware of them, and on equipping youngsters with the skills and experience to thrive in them.
6. It then makes the case for better enabling councils to build on their local partnerships of schools, colleges, and young people, to bind them together with local employers, to focus everyone's attention on around the joint ambition to create and fill quality apprenticeships that transform lives and boost growth.
7. To be achieved by enabling new models such as apprenticeship hubs and devolving the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers to all local areas, and returning the duty and levers for providing impartial advice and guidance to council-led local partnerships.
8. The LGA will take forward these recommendations with government and other partners as it seeks to boost the number of apprenticeships.

#### **Energy task and finish group**

9. The Energy task and finish group approved proposals for a project to be developed jointly by the LGA policy and productivity teams. The two themes of the project are the potential for financial savings through better management of energy in council properties, and for raising revenue through renewable energy projects.

10. Verco, an external company with experience in energy management, have been appointed to develop the research and present the results to councils in a short publication (approximately 20 pages).
11. The project will be reporting back to the task and finish group as the research takes shape. The first draft of the report is expected in July, with a view to publish in the Autumn.

### **Climate Local**

12. Further funding for the programme was secured from the EA/Defra to continue the full time secondee arrangements into 2015/16. Currently, 102 councils are signed up to the programme, with a wider network of 440 members. Following the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual conference which was successfully held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015, priorities for the programme going forward will include further awareness raising of the initiative, including promoting the various support tools the programme provides and working with climate change partners in promoting the business case for council action in embedding climate resilience into core activities. Identifying the future delivery model of Climate Local post 2015/16, will also form a key work area for the programme for this financial year.

### **Transport:**

#### **Parking**

13. The ban on CCTV enforcement came into force on 1 April. LGA lobbying (working closely with the British Parking Association) secured four exemptions: bus lanes, bus stops, school entrance markings and red routes.
14. Initial feedback from councils is that, thanks to these exemptions, the changes have had limited detrimental impact. Officers will continue to monitor this and to consider opportunities to secure the other exemptions members have called for.
15. The Government made a number of changes to parking regulations in March, including transferring responsibility for off-street parking to DCLG, introducing a community right to challenge parking policies and a mandatory 10 minute grace period at the end of paid-for and time-limited-free parking.
16. Most councils already operated a voluntary grace period and the rest of the changes appear insignificant. LGA lobbying persuaded the government not to apply the grace period to yellow lines, as the potential impact on traffic management would have been chaotic and prohibitively costly.
17. DCLG also issued a discussion document covering off-street parking and cashless payment. The deadline for responding is 27 May; the draft response will be circulated to lead members and the response submitted before the Board meets.

#### **Highways England**

18. Members were informed at their last meeting that continued pressure from the LGA and other stakeholders had resulted in the new requirement in the licence under

which Highways England operates to create a Stakeholder Advisory Panel. The license states that: "The Licence holder [Highways England] must establish a stakeholder advisory panel to provide advice to the Licence holder's Board on issues directly affecting local authorities and communities, and ensure that:

- a. The membership of the panel includes representation from a credible range of local government and other stakeholders, including environmental and safety groups, as appropriate;
  - b. The Licence holder seeks advice from the panel on a regular basis."
19. It is important that the Panel is able to provide feedback at a strategic level on a broad range of issues operating at the interface between the local and national network. Members previously highlighted issues such as litter, approach to planning, community engagement and growth as possible issues for further exploration by the Panel. Other emerging issues may include how the industry is able to respond to the nationwide increase in infrastructure investment in a way that contains costs and avoids crowding out the needs of smaller local authorities. LGA officials have therefore sought to influence the terms of reference at an early stage in order to ensure that the panel reflects a balanced and constructive input from local government both at a professional and elected member level.

### **Active Travel**

20. A survey of highways authorities on council good practice and barriers relating to the promotion of active travel was undertaken over April and May by the Active Travel Task and Finish Group. The survey was completed by 57 councils, a response rate of 38%. The final full results will be made available from the LGA website, although a more detailed summary is found in the annex of this report. Headline findings include:
- 20.1 The overall picture shows that councils are taking the promotion of cycling and walking seriously; driven by a wide range of factors, with the most significant being to improve public health, followed by enhanced travel choices, reduction of traffic congestion and economic/ regeneration reasons.
  - 20.2 Most responding councils are currently undertaking activities/ initiatives to promote cycling and walking, ranging from promoting cycling and/or walking through schools, implementing a cycle investment programme, providing secure cycle parking and/or changing facilities and cycle proofing new transport infrastructure.
  - 20.3 Capacity for future spending varied from place to place but there is expected to be an impact in some places from capital reductions and transfer of LSTF funding to LEPs. Overall there were more respondents who expected an increase (28%) in spending in 15/16 for cycling compared to those who expect a decrease (20%).
  - 20.4 Councils fund activities that promote cycling from a range of sources: council core funding, via the LEP, highways maintenance, Local Sustainability Transport Fund (LSTF), public health, and cycle city ambition grants; over half were not aware of EU funding opportunities.
  - 20.5 LEPs appear to be favourable to, a moderate or small extent to the promotion of cycling in their submitted strategic economic plans; however this was not followed through in the final local growth deals in two-fifths of places.
  - 20.6 In terms of changes to national policy, respondents called for clarity on long term national strategies as being valuable to provide certainty of commitment. There

was also a call for streamlining of funding, and less reliance on competitive bidding processes to give certainty of future funding levels.

21. The findings from the report will help inform the LGA's submission for the next spending review and supports councils' calls for a more certain and long-term funding settlement for our roads and transport infrastructure investment. They also support the LGA's call for further devolution, demonstrating the unique role that councils play in joining up policy areas and funding opportunities, which cannot be undertaken by central government. The survey also highlights areas for improvement, such as the lack of awareness of EU funding opportunities, which LGA officers will follow up with local authority networks.
22. LGA officials have also inputted to the work of the Active Travel Consortium (led by Living Streets and Sustrans) on behalf of DfT in shaping the Government's future approach to supporting cycling and walking. Through the new Infrastructure Act the Government is already committed to producing an Active Travel Strategy and how they intend to fund that strategy over the next 5 years. It will be important that the LGA engages with the development of this strategy in order to ensure that it is done in a way that supports local action and maximises value-for-money and the LGA's active travel survey will be helpful in this regard.

#### **Buses/ Community Transport**

23. The Task and Finish group established by the Board has begun research into how councils have addressed the pressure on bus funding in the past five years and how they see bus policy developing over the next five years. Early indications suggest that the Total Transport approach currently being piloted may prove effective although there is concern that the Government's focus on devolution may not extend outside cities. Councils have found a variety of innovative ways to protect service outcomes from the impact of cuts, but initial indications are that further pressures on council supported bus provision cannot be mitigated in this way.
24. It is intended that the Board will be given a final report at the next meeting.

## Annex 1

### Active Travel survey – detailed summary

1. The survey was completed by 57 councils, a response rate of 38%. The final full results will be made available from the LGA website. A detailed summary of findings follows.
2. The overall picture shows that councils are taking the promotion of cycling and walking seriously; driven by a wide range of factors:
  - 2.1 Three quarters of respondents have cycling and/or walking plans (75%) and of these nearly half (47%) have been refreshed within the last 2 years.
  - 2.2 When asked about the key drivers for investment in cycling and walking 98% considered improvement in public health, to a great or moderate extent, followed by enhanced travel choices (93%) and then reduction of traffic congestion (87%) and economic/ regeneration reasons (77%).
  - 2.3 Respondents said they were currently undertaking a wide range of activities: Three quarters (75%) were currently promoting cycling and/or walking through schools, 65% were currently implementing a cycle investment programme, 63% were currently providing secure cycle parking and/or changing facilities and 60% were cycle proofing new transport infrastructure. Other notable 'initiatives' included walking investment programme (46%) and employing a cycling/ walking officer (42%).
3. Future spending levels are expected to vary from place to place, in some places, future spending is expected to reduce because of capital reductions and transfers of LSTF funding to LEPs.
  - 3.1 A balance of respondents (28%) expected an increase in spending in 15/16 for cycling compared to 20% who expect a decrease with 32% expecting it to be broadly the same.
  - 3.2 Where there is to be a reduction, 55% of respondents said this was due to transfer of LSTF funding to the LEP.
  - 3.3 Councils fund activities that promote cycling from a range of sources: councils core funding (35%), via the LEP (31%), highways maintenance (25%), LSTF (25%), public health (21%) and cycle city ambition grants (21%).
  - 3.4 Over half (51%) were not aware of EU funding opportunities.
  - 3.5 LEPs are an important source of funding for transport projects. A third of respondents (33%) felt they were able to influence their LEP to a moderate extent, a quarter (26%) to a small extent. Of the 30 respondents who had proposed measures, 90 per cent (27 authorities) said that their measures did feature in the final submission of their LEP's growth plan, although only 60% were agreed by the Government in the final growth deal.
4. Councils were also asked about barriers that prevent them doing more to promote cycling and walking.
  - 4.1 Of those that felt there were barriers, lack of capital (61%) and revenue funding (65%) were considered barriers to a great extent as was uncertainty of future funding (58%).

- 4.2 Cycle-proofing existing main carriageways remains difficult with 86% stating there are barriers. Of these 65% felt insufficient funding to be a barrier to a great extent, followed by space conflicts with moving traffic (57%) and space conflicts with bus stops and/or parking (47%).
  
5. Authorities were asked, other than increased funding, what changes if any, to national policy on local transport would make it easier for their council to invest more in cycling and/or walking. There were a number of suggestions from over 40 authorities.
  - 5.1 The approach most cited was for clarity on long term national strategies to provide valuable certainty of commitment;
  - 5.2 Other suggestions included streamlining funding and less reliance on competitive bidding processes to give certainty of future funding levels.