

Note of last People & Places Board meeting

Title:	People & Places Board
Date:	Monday 19 October 2015
Venue:	Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#) to this note.

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	Welcomes and Declarations of Interest The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Andrew Bowles. Cllr Mike Jones declared that he was currently working as a consultant for a company involved in the broadband sector, and therefore would not vote on the Broadband and Digital Divide item.	
2	Membership and Terms of Reference for 2015-16 The updated Membership and Terms of Reference were presented to the Board for information. It was suggested that the Terms of Reference should make broader reference to the Board's metropolitan borough in membership, as well as its non-metropolitan members. Decision Members noted the Membership and Terms of Reference of the Board. Action Terms of Reference to be amended to broadly reference the metropolitan borough member.	
3	People and Places Board Work Programme 2015/16 Rebecca Cox, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced the report which set out proposals on the Board's work priorities for the coming year. It also provided more detail on the commission from the Leadership Board on the corporate priorities for the year, including Devolution and the Future Shape of Local Government. It was highlighted that work on rural transport would be undertaken later in the year in conjunction with the EEHT Board, which would build on the LGA's recent 'Missing the Bus' publication.	

Board members raised the following points in the discussion that followed to inform the Work Programme:

- It was important for the Board to continue to liaise with other LGA Boards, including with the EEHT Board's Housing Commission,, to feed in a non-metropolitan viewpoint where necessary on various policy themes.
- The need to see a clearer reflection of public sector reform as a Board priority in the work programme, as it is the overarching aim of devolution.
- LGA officers should look to liaise with the County Councils' Network and their work on governance in a two tier setting.
- Members were keen to work with officers to inform and guide the LGA's support offer in relation to helping areas implement devolution deals, post spending review.
- Members highlighted the importance of working closely with the City Regions Board to progress issues such as devolution at a strategic level.

Decision

The Board **noted** the report and **agreed** that officers should amend the work programme based on their discussion.

4 English Devolution

Rebecca Cox introduced the report which set out how the LGA Executive and Leadership Board had asked the People and Places Board to lead the LGA's work on devolution and the future shape of local government. This paper provided an update on developments including the 4 September devolution submissions; the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill; and the LGA support offer.

Board members raised the following points in the discussion that followed:

- There was a wide ranging discussion on the potential tension between building on the commonality between areas' devolution bids, whilst also stressing that there will be no 'one size fits all' solution.
- In re-designing services attention will need to be paid to the fact that geographical areas are unlikely to perfectly align with functional economic geographies and service delivery and market areas.

- The Board's work on devolution should encompass how to build an engaging narrative on devolution to better engage all councillors and share knowledge. Members discussed the business rates localisation announcement in relation to the emerging direction of travel for the devolution agenda.

Decision

The Board **noted** the report and instructed officers to amend the work programme as necessary in partnership with the Chair and Lead Members.

5 Broadband and the Digital Divide

Daniel Shamplin-Hall, Policy Adviser, introduced the report which set out proposals for the Board's work programme on broadband and the digital divide over 2015/16.

In the discussion that followed Board members raised the following points:

- Concerns were raised about whether the timescales provided by Government for Phases 1 and 2 of the Superfast Broadband Programme would be delivered on time.
- The importance of the social and economic impact of broadband on regions was raised, especially in the context of Britain's position in the wider world.
- There were concerns that the Connection Voucher broadband scheme had not been focussed on rural communities.
- The Board discussed the idea of creating a 'speed app' which would allow councillors to log the speed of their broadband up and down the country with the possibility of informing a wider media campaign early next year.
- The work programme should look to explore how the BT Clawback can best be used to widen the provision of superfast broadband to the final 5%. Members also asked officers to explore the possibility of lobbying to secure superfast broadband and mobile / 5G+ infrastructure as a compulsory planning consideration.

Decision

The Board **noted** the report and instructed officers to proceed in line with what was discussed.

6 Skills and Employment: An Update

Jasbir Jhas, Senior Adviser, introduced the paper which sought members' views on LGA current and future potential employment and skills activities. Members made the following points:

- The LGA proposed employment programme for adults with multiple needs should incorporate many of the components of the successful Troubled Families programme. Unemployed people with mental health and learning difficulties should also be eligible for the programme.
- Commenting on the draft Statement of Intent, members highlighted that functional economic areas were not discrete areas confined to one council.
- Members discussed the possibility of combining job centres with town halls.
- There were concerns that Government moves to give Further Education providers a unified adult skills unit through a block grant which will include adult and community learning could result in local authority adult education provision being reduced.
- Compulsory learning for young people up to the age of 18 together with reductions in the Bursary Fund, designed to provide financial support for young people, are causing financial pressures on rural councils which are having to meet the shortfall. This needs to be taken up with Government officials.

Decisions

The Board **noted** the report and instructed officers to proceed in line with what was discussed.

7 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2015 were **agreed**.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Gillian Brown	Arun District Council
	Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
	Cllr John Pollard	Cornwall Council
Members	Cllr Sarah Osborne	Lewes District Council
	Cllr Vince Maple	Medway Council
	Cllr Jennifer Mein	Lancashire County Council
	Cllr Philip Atkins	Staffordshire County Council
	Cllr Paul Carter CBE	Kent County Council
	Cllr Paul Diviani	East Devon District Council
	Cllr Kenneth Meeson	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Stan Collins	South Lakeland District Council
Cllr Derek Bastiman	Scarborough Borough Council	

14 January 2016

Cllr Roger Blaney
Cllr Chris Hayward
Cllr Mike Jones
Cllr John Osman
Cllr Caitlin Bisknell
Cllr Amanda Martin
Cllr Clive Woodbridge
Cllr Chris Townsend

Newark & Sherwood District Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Cheshire West and Chester Council
Somerset County Council
Derbyshire County Council
Council of the Isles of Scilly
Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Mole Valley District Council

Apologies

Cllr Andrew Bowles

Swale Borough Council