



Association of Directors of
Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

Sustainable Growth Board 13 January 2021 Meeting Notes

Item 1 - Debbie Ward, Assistant Director at Homes England update on the HE strategy and ambitions

- Homes England considering how they engage and work to develop relationships with local government.
- HE looking to shift away from programme driven to a partnering role for pipelines of housing delivery.
- HE – looking into how much guidance and good practice it can gather and share.
- HE – Setting up a Capacity Centre of excellence. Looking at getting more capacity out to LA's to assist skills gap in housing delivery.
- Strategic Housing Infrastructure Fund – HE working with partners to consider a more flexible tool than previous HIF. Work is progressing and the case is being well made. However, no long-term financial commitment in the Spending Review yet.
- New groups are being established to consider 'design'.
- Looking to make tools and support more accessible.
- HE wants to be more responsive to the needs of the sector.

Q&A

Q: MP – how is HE engaging in Levelling Up?

A: HE is using data to see how it can make an impact. No policy exists at present and levelling up currently means different things to different people. HE considering how housing can play a part. Very much about analytics at present. A policy paper may follow – watch this space.

Q: RH – How will HE be structured across England? And How do LEPs get together with HE to forward the conversation?

A: Structure will be more thematic rather than regional for better specialism. In relation to LEPs Growth Board linkage is better understood at present. Town Boards are a challenge to add value. Trying to bring evidence behind what HE is doing and incorporate flexibility. HIF demonstrated difficulties and frustrations.

Q; LH – Scale, what is the minimum size project? An honest conversation up form may be difficult but worthwhile. And what is the position on sale of Government land via HE?

A: HE don't want to let LA's down but need to be mindful of capacity. A self-service platform and tools will be made available for smaller schemes. With prioritisation of larger schemes and pipeline across wider geography.

On disposals not everything is in HE's portfolio at present. Update next time.

Q: MB – in relation to Net Zero and climate change policy what are HE expectations on their own schemes?

A: Viability still remains Green Book, which won't go to carbon neutral; HE working on.

Item 2 - consultation on a proposal for a new permitted development right

Christina Kaiser – LGA

- Consultation forms part of Project Speed
- Part 1 considers Supporting Housing Delivery. It proposes new PD rights will hopefully increase T/C footfall. General concern that the idea of creating more housing in Town Centres may not be right idea and doesn't sit well with other government objectives e.g. creating beautiful places.
- Conversion under PD rights of offices, retail or commercial premises may not deliver quality homes.
- Potential loss of affordable housing.
- Suggestion that PD rights need to meet future homes standard.
- No mention of infrastructure in the consultation i.e. no S106 funding if no application.
- Discussion around an ecosystem approach where accelerating housing growth needs to be balanced in a planned and coherent sense otherwise may create pressures elsewhere with unintended consequences.
- Part 2 considers Supporting Public Infrastructure and rights for expansion to give greater flexibility without going through planning.
- Where needed Planning Applications are proposed to be fast tracked.
- Part 3 considers the consolidation of PD rights and includes provision relating to betting shops and pay day loan uses.
- Easy to be negative about the consultation – need to play back the inconsistency with other policy areas in responses.