

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOARD MEETING

02 December 2013

Minutes

Present:

- Sara Weller, Lead Non Executive Board Member (Chair)
- Stephen Hay, Non Executive Board Member
- Nick Markham, Non Executive Board Member

- Nick Boles MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
- Brandon Lewis MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
- Baroness Stowell, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (for part)
- Kris Hopkins MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
- Stephen Williams MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State

- Sir Bob Kerslake, Permanent Secretary
- Helen Edwards, Director-General
- Peter Schofield, Director-General
- Andrew Campbell, Director-General
- Louise Casey, Director-General
- David Rossington, Director of Finance
- David Hill, Director of Strategy and Private Office

- Ruth Stanier (Item 1)

Apologies:

- The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP – Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Secretariat:

- Lucy Yates
- Julie Nelson

Introduction and matters arising

1. Lead Non-Executive Director Sara Weller welcomed attendees to the meeting..
2. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Item 1: Planning

3. Director-General for Neighbourhoods Peter Schofield introduced the Director of Planning Ruth Stanier to the Board. Ruth set out the purpose of the Planning item and took the Board through the presentation.
4. Ruth summarised the planning reforms since 2010 and assessed their impact to date. Feedback from businesses and developers indicated that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the presumption in favour of sustainable development had brought real change to the way the planning system operates and decisions are taken. Plan-making had accelerated, with more housing sites firmly allocated in Local Plans. Neighbourhood Planning had also made positive progress and local communities now play a more active role in deciding where development should go.
5. Ruth then highlighted the areas identified where further progress was needed and the proposals for how to address the challenges. The Growth and Infrastructure Act was tackling councils where decision-making is slow; however developers still had concerns about the 'end-to-end' process of obtaining planning permission, from inception to starting on site. As such, the focus of the proposed forward work programme was on speeding up each stage of the process, to further accelerate plan-making and to reduce burdens on smaller developers.
6. The Board considered and discussed the assessment.
7. Peter Schofield summed up the discussion. The Board had concluded that the incremental changes to the planning system were right but consideration should be given to more fundamental changes, such as the structure of the market, Improvements to the communications narrative and third party endorsement could help messaging for those who want a house, as well as those who already own a property.

Action: Sir Bob Kerslake to provide the Board with further information on annual house building rates.

Item 2: Performance

8. Sara Weller briefly outlined the work the Executive Team and the Non-Executive Directors had done on key performance indicators (KPIs) in considering the overview of the department.
9. Director-General for Finance and Corporate Services Andrew Campbell reviewed the performance of the department and updated the Board on the key risks, which included the delivery of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Three new risks had been identified:
 - Energy performance implementation and transposition
 - Adult social care
 - Transactional shared services and outsourcing by April 2015

10. The Board discussed the assessment set out in the paper.

AOB and concluding remarks

11. The Board discussed topics for future meetings which included integration and local growth.

12. The Chair thanked attendees for their contribution to the meeting. The meeting concluded at 15.00