

HMEP 3rd Board Meeting: Wednesday 26th January, 14:00, Room 3/24a, Great Minster House

Present: Mostaque Ahmed, DfT (Chair)
Matthew Lugg, Leicestershire CC (Chair WSG1)
Jason Russell, Surrey CC (Chair WSG2)
Julian Abel, DfT (Chair WSG3)
Aikta-Reena Solanki, Audit Commission (*part-meeting only)
Lloyd Miles, DfT (Secretariat)

Apologies: Steve Kent (Chair WSG4)

Copies to: To all present plus Andy Bailey, Simon Lydiard and Tim Reardon (DfT), Mike Bordiss (Chair HELG) and Paul Hardy (EXP consultancy).

Actions & Notes

1. Audit Commission update on highways maintenance study*
 - 1.1. The Audit Commission's (AC) original premise for the study was that highway maintenance had not been looked at in a while and there was no other work on the issue, though this has changed since the development of HMEP initiative.
 - 1.2. Their study had revealed that around 2% of local authority spend was on highway maintenance, and while HMEP felt that this might be a bit low it would largely depend on how you calculated the figure.
 - 1.3. Four main areas are being looked at in the study: asset management, data, procurement and collaboration. A basic premise was how maintenance could be undertaken in an environment with less resource, and it will look at issues such as how savings could be made wisely, and the consequences of deferral and a longer-term approach.
 - 1.4. The AC had undertaken 10 detailed studies, and also issued two surveys on benchmarking and collaboration. The response to the surveys had been disappointing, at 28% and 34%, but they had revealed considerable variation between authorities. The study would not investigate the reasons for these differences, which would be for the sector to consider and understand.
 - 1.5. The AC had completed their evidence gathering, though they might have to re-visit specific areas and collect further evidence for their case studies. They were currently in the analysis and drafting stage, and were focusing on the outcomes and not just the financial issues. Their original intention was to publish the report in March, but with a large number of reports now due out then it could slip to the middle of May.

- 1.6. ARS confirmed that AC would share drafts with relevant organisations including DfT/HMEP, and that access to their evidence should be possible for HMEP (**Action 3.6: LM and ARS to liaise**).
- 1.7. AC are having difficulty engaging with the LGA in their review (**Action 3.7: JA to pass LGA contact details to ARS**).
2. Progress updates
 - 2.1. A meeting with Andrew Smith had been held on 19th January and the note would be circulated (**See action 3.1**).
 - 2.2. DfT advised that they were progressing the procurement of six projects centrally – Skills development, Benchmark tools, Conference provision, Web portal, Economic & social model and Validation. Once suitably progressed they would circulate the relevant papers (**See action 3.2**).
 - 2.3. It was decided that Phil Samms would initially support Work Stream 3 on the development of the web portal, but as this was time limited he would support Work Stream 1 once this work was complete.
 - 2.4. *Project Support:* ML would advise MA when a letter of confirmation is needed to confirm HMEPs covering of project management costs for a minimum of 12 months (**See action 3.9**).
 - 2.5. *Procurement:* LM & JA to advise on a methodology for procurement requirements covered by WSG1, 2 and 3 (**See action 3.10**).
 - 2.6. HA involvement was discussed, and whether they should be invited to attend the Board meetings. DfT were meeting with HA soon and were aiming to clarify their role (**Action 3.4 – JA to report on discussions**).
 - 2.7. The position on HELG involvement would also need to be resolved, as this relationship was a crucial one (**Action 3.5 – JA currently progressing**).
 - 2.8. JA highlighted that positive discussions had taken place with representatives of TAG and TfL but had yet to be converted into provision of tangible support for HMEP (**Action 2.3 – JA to continue to seek involvement**).
 - 2.9. JR stated that LoTAG involvement in HMEP could provide value (**Action 3.8 – JR to advise JA of main LoTAG contact**).
 - 2.10. The briefs, matrixes and cast lists were being developed for each work group. It was agreed that these should be considered at the next Board meeting, but due to the large number and complexity involved, and the limited time available, this would need to be carefully structured and managed (**See action 2.15**).
3. Post 2013 structure
 - 3.1. The post 2013 paper had been circulated and had received comments, those this were only minor adjustments. DfT were now investigating how to take the process forward in the most appropriate manner.

4. Conference Speaking opportunities
 - 4.1 A draft key event diary for HMEP was circulated. All were asked to consider, update and amend as necessary. Future versions would be circulated monthly (**See action 1.7**).
5. Communications Strategy
 - 5.1 A communications meeting had been held on Monday 17th January and a note circulated. Amendments to the Strategy Document were discussed and a final version would be circulated (**See action 2.5**).
6. Infrastructure Cost Review [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/cost_review_main211210.pdf]
 - 6.1 This was seen as a good opportunity for HMEP, with many common themes and areas. It could also be used to build a link with Cabinet Office and raise their awareness of HMEP (**Action 3.3: Comments to JA by 4th February and Action 3.11: MA to meet with Cabinet Office**).
7. AOB
 - 7.1 It was stressed that HMEP still needed to promulgate its high level message. HMEP cannot reduce nor avoid the cuts, nor can it make up the difference to previous funding levels but it will ease the fall in public expenditure and lessen its impact.
 - 7.2 It was also felt that possible synergies with other local authority services needs to be emphasised, as there would be clear crossover of HMEP benefits to other authority activities.
8. Date of next meetings
 - 8.1 Next meetings were confirmed as below, but could everyone advise of their availability for the suggested provisional dates. Due to the difficulties in co-ordinating diaries, some attendance may need to be via teleconference in future or through deputies. It's also suggested that after March we move to meetings at around 6 – 8 week intervals, (**Action: all**).
 - February - confirmed: Thursday 24th, 14:00, GMH
 - March - confirmed: Tuesday 22nd, 11:00, GMH
 - May - provisional: Monday 9th or Tuesday 10th May after 2pm
 - July - provisional: Tuesday 19th
 - September – tbc.

HMEP
28th March 2011