

## **Environment & Housing Programme Board – report from Cllr Gary Porter**

### **Environment & Housing Programme Board away day**

1. On 2 February, Cllr Clyde Loakes co-hosted a meeting with representatives from the LG Group Environment & Housing Programme Board and the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities in Stockport Town Hall. Cllrs Mike Haines and David Smith also attended on behalf of the Board. The event was well-attended by Members and officers from across the country. The Greater Manchester Environment Commission shared good practice about what Manchester councils are doing to make energy and climate part of the wider economic strategy that is being developed through their Local Enterprise Partnership, and what is being learnt as one of the Local Carbon Framework Pilots. There were productive discussions with Members from around the country about the Group's work, talking to Government about policy, and supporting the sector with know-how and development programmes.

### **Meetings with regional representatives**

2. As part of the Group's commitment to strengthening further the involvement of all interested elected Members in the development of its activities, the Board has decided to get out into the regions to inform the wider membership on the issues we are currently working on and more importantly to seek views on what we should be working on in the future. Board members have been attending regional meetings over the last month (and will continue to throughout the next year) – so far I have attended the South East England Councils meeting on 18 February and Cllr David Smith attended the East Midlands Councils meeting on the same date.

### **Cllr Haines meeting with the Nappy Alliance**

3. Cllr Mike Haines met with representatives of the Nappy Alliance on the 26 January to discuss Defra's review of waste policy, the Decentralisation and Localism Bill and how these will impact on waste prevention with particular reference to re-usable nappies. It was agreed that both sides would continue to keep the other informed of significant policy developments in this area with the possibility of sharing best practise as and when appropriate.

## **National campaign to reducing litter**

4. Councillor Clyde Loakes attended a stakeholder meeting in February to help shape Defra and Keep Britain Tidy's national work focused on litter reduction. Councils in England spent around £860 million last year on clearing up litter. At a time when councils are having to provide vital services with much less money, this more than ever seems an unnecessary expense. A national campaign – "Love Where You Live" – is planned to help change attitudes to and behaviour on littering and it is hoped councils will play a key part. Councillor Loakes emphasised a number of points to help make the campaign as effective as possible such as ensuring that the campaign is relevant to all places including those with high levels of enviro-crime, and forging the right links with broader initiatives such as "Community Payback" and "Eco-schools". The public campaign is planned to go live in the summer.

## **Meeting with Lord Henley**

5. Following Cllr Mike Haines' meeting with Lord Henley on 26 January to discuss adaptation to climate change, the waste review, littering from vehicles and Sustainable Drainage, Cllr Haines met the Minister again the following week when he visited Dawlish Warren to look at the need to adapt national infrastructure to future climate impacts.
6. The Minister followed up these meetings with a letter. He stressed the key role of local government in embedding adaptation across service delivery and influencing the development of the Government's National Adaptation Programme. The Minister also stressed the need to build a strong relationship between central and local government and to continue the close dialogue with the LG Group.

## **Housing Finance Reform conference- seizing the moment - 17 February 2011**

7. On 17 February over 60 Members and professionals came together at the LGA one-day conference, *Housing finance reform: seizing the moment*. I gave a speech to delegates on the case for change and the LGA's campaigning work, informed by member councils, that has been so important in getting us to where we are today. Cllr Porter stressed the need to continue lobbying hard on the Localism Bill to remove some significant government proposals that run counter to the principles of self-financing. The imposition of a borrowing cap, the power to reopen the settlement at a later date, and the continued pooling of 75% of Right to Buy receipts were flagged as key issues that the LGA would be challenging. Delegates were in clear agreement that these issues needed to be addressed.

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