

Environment & Housing Programme Board – report from Cllr David Parsons CBE (Chairman)

Planning Summer School (Elected Members School)

1. I gave the opening address at the Annual Planning Summer School in Swansea University on Saturday 3 September, which focused on 'planning with communities.' I discussed the important role of councillors in planning, the reforms in the Localism Bill and the opportunities this brings for councils and communities to shape their areas. I also stressed the importance of getting a local plan in place as a way of enabling councils to safeguard their areas against inappropriate development, developing a good understanding of the needs of the local community as they relate to planning and a way of engaging local people in decisions that affect them.

Draft National Planning Policy Framework published

2. The Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 25 July 2011. As well as responding to the formal consultation (deadline 17 October), we will be submitting written evidence to the DCLG and Environmental Audit select committees on the NPPF in September. Please see our [position statement](#) on the proposals put forward in July. In addition to this we will be launching a new document "Localism and the NPPF: some implications for local government" with the Planning Advisory Service and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives at our national conference on "Understanding the NPPF" on 10 October 2011.

Flood Risk Management

3. In August, I wrote to the Minister for Flooding, Richard Benyon, to express the concerns of member authorities at the delay in publication of the consultation on the Implementation of the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) provision and also the National Standards for SuDS. Government has proposed to implement the SuDS provisions in the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 from April 2012 however currently there is no clear timetable for commencement to enable local authorities to plan effectively for the implementation at a local level. The Government has confirmed that the consultation will not be launched until the Autumn 2011. The knock on effect is that the preferred implementation date of April 2012 is unlikely.

4. The LG Group will continue to ensure the view of local government is fully represented and work with Defra to ensure the consultation addresses the areas of concern, particularly around the avoidance of new burdens, proposed new implementation dates, and long-term funding.

Understanding and Responding to Planning Reform event

5. Mayor Dorothy Thornhill CBE spoke at the Planning Advisory Service's (PAS) 'Understanding and Responding to Planning Reform' event on 8 September. Mayor Thornhill provided an elected Member's perspective on the Localism Bill, the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and the impact of the planning agenda on councils' work, local plans and place.

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