

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

Party Conferences

1. Environment and Housing Programme Board councillors were once again very active at all three political party conferences this year, with environment and housing matters featuring strongly on the agenda for fringe events. Members of the Environment and Housing Board participated in roundtable discussions on delivering low carbon investment through community partnerships, public fringes on the new planning system, and events on funding and delivering flood defences. All these events proved very popular with conference delegates and Government Ministers alike, and I debated alongside DCLG Minister Grant Shapps MP whether the localism agenda is successfully delivering Britain's housing needs.

Annual Inland Flood Risk Management Group

2. Cllr Mike Haines chaired the annual meeting of the Inland Flood Risk Management Group and National Partners Group on 28 September. This event attracted over 70 delegates and a range of senior central and local government speakers, including a mix of officers and councillors. The keynote speaker was Lord Chris Smith, Chairman of the Environment Agency.
3. Discussion topics ranged from planning and flood risk management, to sustainable drainage and partnership working. The audience were very engaged on all issues.

All Party Parliamentary Water Group

4. Cllr Eddy Poll attended a meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Water Group on 13 September on behalf of the Environment and Housing Board, to talk about the increasing connections between local government and the water sector. Cllr Poll delivered a short speech to the APPG, touching on issues and LGA concerns around the new responsibilities for local authorities under the Flood & Water Management Act, the transfer of private sewers, flooding insurance, sewage capacity, sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS), and planning.

Board meeting

5. At our last meeting of the Environment & Housing Programme Board on 14 September, Richard Bennett, previous Chair of the LGA Gypsy and Traveller Task Group, came to the Board to discuss the LG Group Gypsy and Traveller Support Programme. Members also discussed the forthcoming LG Group housing support offer, our Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Energy and Climate Change and the work programme for the forthcoming year.

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