

Environment and Housing Board – report from Cllr Mike Jones (Chair)

Housing & Planning

1. We have responded to the new national online planning practice guidance resource which has been open for public testing and comment. Our response was supportive of the progress that had been made to consolidate the existing guidance into a more focused online resource which took on board much of our earlier feedback. We stressed that Government should ensure there is a clear and simple mechanism for councils and others to highlight any issues or unintended consequences of the new guidance and that the impact of the guidance should be evaluated after 12 months to assess its effectiveness in meeting the objectives of the review.
2. The LGA launched a guide for elected members on “Good practice principles to support the self-financed HRA”. The guide sets out important principles and core questions to consider when managing your housing stock and accounting to tenants for the investment and management decisions the authority makes over the long term. The guide, developed in partnership with CIH and CIPFA is designed to support elected members by sharing good practice and lessons learned from the first year of self-financing. The guide can be found on the LGA [website](#).
3. We have also published a case study guide on housing supply and growth. The case studies highlight how councils are taking action to unlock growth and get housing developments moving. The guide includes sections on meeting housing need in areas of high demand, challenging housing markets and rural areas. The guide is available on the LGA [website](#).
4. The Government have responded to the consultation which took place earlier this year on changes to the Community Infrastructure Levy regulations. Key changes include the limitation on S106 pooling has been moved back by one year to April 2015, payment in kind has been introduced, the vacancy test has been altered, people building or extending their own homes are exempted from CIL. We had argued for longer transition arrangements and that changes should be based on evidence and avoid excessive administration cost, delay and complexity.
5. DCLG have made an announcement on designation of local planning authorities for performance on major planning applications including that the designation of county matter authorities will be deferred for 6 months until April 2014. Further information can be found on the CLG website. In response to the announcement, the LGA highlighted that overall performance is strong with 88% of planning applications approved and that sector led improvement was the most effective means of driving improvement.

Waste

6. I have written to Lord de Mauley in response to his recent correspondence on the issue of separate collection of waste. The letter stressed the importance of clear guidance on this issue that reflects the requirement of the Waste Framework Directive.
7. The LGA launched its Reuse Commission on 31 October. The Reuse Commission was one of the key recommendations of the Wealth from Waste report this summer. The Commission, chaired by Cllr Clyde Loakes has had its first meeting discussing demand for reused products including tax breaks for reuse organisations and the development

of a reuse standard to provide consumers with increased confidence. The second meeting in late November will concentrate on supply of products and the opportunities for councils to divert more material for reuse. The Commission will report its findings in January. As part of the Commission we have issued a call for examples and case studies of council efforts to increase the amount of material reused. Responses to be send to dan.mccartney@local.gov.uk by 29 November.

8. I gave evidence on the recast of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) directive to the Associate Parliamentary Sustainable Resource Group (APSRG). This highlighted the important role local authorities play to help the UK meet its WEEE targets and that it was positive that this role had been acknowledged by the government by enabling councils to manage WEEE streams themselves and ensure local authorities have their WEEE collected with no additional costs. I also stressed the importance of local authority involvement in setting compliance fees and receiving that fee and the opportunity that had been missed by the Government's recent proposals to incentivise reuse.
9. I also met with Caroline Spelman MP to discuss the LGA's Wealth from Waste report and the Associate Parliamentary Sustainable Resource Group inquiry into waste export. The importance of establishing a level playing field on the compliance regimes was highlighted and was an area that the inquiry was looking at in some detail. I also raised the importance of providing capital funding to invest in infrastructure to support ongoing advances in increasing the quality of recyclate.

Climate Local

10. The number of Climate Local signatories has risen to 80, with the Kent Partnership being the first to publish their first year achievements. Kent's successes include working with 166 SMEs to achieve annual savings of over £2,000 per business, an energy switching scheme which helped 2,500 residents save £255,000 on their energy bills, and investment in new sea defences to protect 1,750 homes and businesses from coastal flooding.

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