

Update on other Board Business

Summary

- (a) Cllr Gary Porter's reports to the LGA Executive for October.
- (b) Members' Feedback

Action

Members to note the report.

Members are invited to feedback the outcomes of recent Outside Body and other meetings.

Environment Board – report from Councillor Gary Porter (Chairman)

Greening Communities (Environment)

Waste

- Members of the LGA Environment Board along with other local authority representatives will be meeting with Ministers Hilary Benn and John Denham on 13th October in a round table meeting on waste issues.

Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC)

- The Carbon Reduction Commitment ('CRC') is a carbon trading scheme which will oblige commercial and public sector senior managers to focus on reducing their organisation's energy consumption. The LGA anticipate that the CRC will have significant financial and administrative implications for LGA member authorities. The scheme will officially commence in April 2010, but there are key actions that will be necessary throughout the remainder of 2009. Additional guidance on preparing for scheme, specifically for local authorities lead members, can be found on the LGA website: www.lga.gov.uk/crc

Sustainable Communities (housing and planning)

Tenant Services Authority (TSA)

- The TSA is currently reviewing all of the responses to its discussion paper on its proposed regulatory framework; the LGA's response is available here: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelid=3967353>
- Early indications are that we can likely feel encouraged that the new regulatory framework will take on board LGA feedback, as well as support the principles of the Local Performance Framework, subject to the provisions of the statutory consultation paper to be released in November. The TSA have indicated that the LGA will have sight of that paper in advance of the launch of the formal consultation.
- The issue of appropriate links to the Comprehensive Area Assessments is expected to be picked up at one of the next meetings between Housing Portfolio Holders and TSA Board members, probably with the Audit Commission in attendance.

Planning

- The LGA convened a meeting of planning officers to advise on the response to the draft regulations for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The LGA is working with the major bodies representing developers and the Planning Officers Society to press for key changes to the regulations. Our major concern is that the implementation of CIL has not been thought through, and we are proposing that CLG take a project management approach by piloting CIL in a few authorities who are ready to be early adopters, in order to inform a broader roll-out.

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Housing Finance

- A letter has been sent to Rt Hon John Healey MP, copied to Sir Michael Pitt, expressing the concerns of local government that councils will not be properly resourced to discharge their responsibilities under the Planning Act 2008. We have requested a meeting to discuss this issue.

Knowledge, Networks and Communication

- During the Conservative Party Conference, I will be speaking at the Housing Futures Network's Fringe event, and also meeting with Dame Yve Buckland from the Consumer Council for Water.

European and International Work

- As part of the LGA strategy for engaging with new UK MEPs, LGA Board reps of the E&I Strategy Group will meet UK MEPs on Wednesday 14 October in Brussels. Cllr David Potts will be attending on behalf of the Environment Board and will be having 1-2-1 meetings with a number of key MEPs on the European Parliament's Environment Committee. Meetings will be policy focused. The aim is to provide a general induction for MEPs on the impact of EU policy on councils, and to enable us to lobby MEPs with our key messages on policy/legislation coming up in European Parliament committees and to discuss ways of working together.

Sustainability

- As one of the four underpinning themes sustainability is central to CAA. The recently launched Signposting Sustainability through CAA resource will:
 - show councils and their LSP partners how they can take issues such as environmental sustainability into account in their current and future work;
 - demonstrate the value of doing this through improving performance in relation to sustainability and the 11 sub-themes in the CAA area assessment.

Produced by IDeA, Audit Commission and the Improvement Network, the resource is available at www.improvementnetwork.gov.uk/sustainable

Flooding

- The Flood Risk and Water Management Network (FloWNET) on-line community of practice (CoP) was launched in late September. Facilitated by the IDeA, LGA and the Yorkshire and Humberside Learning Alliance, the FloWNET aims to engage those in and around local government in the issues, developments and practice relating to flood risk and water management and to help them to successfully discharge their new responsibilities. The resource will provide practical self-help to councils through sharing of ideas, good and innovative practice and challenges.

Contact Officer: Clive Harris tel: 020 7664 3207 email: clive.harris@lga.gov.uk

National Planning Forum

At the meeting on 13th October I took over as Chair for the next year. There were several presentations, and these can be viewed at www.natplanforum.org.uk They included a presentation from Duncan McCallum from English Heritage on the PPS15 consultation which ends at the end of October. Professor Janice Morphet from IDOX consultants outlined the draft report on the Culture Change action plan, with the final report due at the end of October.

Mike Hayes, gave a presentation on 'Fit for Purpose Spatial Planning' which had been produced with a working group from NPF. The final version will be sent to political parties shortly, in order to inform their considerations prior to the forthcoming general election. On that subject it was noted that Bob Neill MP has indicated that he would be able to attend the next Forum on 15th December.

There were short updates on Mediation pilots (in place of appeals) and initial work on planning & building control working more closely.

Cllr Mike Haines