

LGA Group Business Plan 2010-11

Summary

1. This paper seeks a Member steer for the next phase of business planning on environment and housing for the next financial year, on the basis of the draft Group business plan which is to be discussed at LGA Executive on 14 January.

Recommendations

Programme Director to lead further officer work on detailed planning for 2010-11 and report back to Members

Action

- Members to offer views on any points the Board Chair might make at Executive on 14 January
- Members to offer steer on next phase of planning by officers
- Officers to develop detailed plans

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LGA Group Business Plan 2010-11

Background

1. One of the main practical elements in the Getting Closer programme, through which the organisations in the LGA Group are working more closely together and for the benefit of the sector, is through a single Group business plan. Such a plan was agreed for the first time for the current financial year. It was organised under 11 themes, including environment and housing, all of them covering the spectrum of Group activity – ‘from advocacy to improvement’. The Chief Executive’s monthly report to the Executive is now set out under these theme headings.
2. The intention is to strengthen this approach further for 2010-11, in particular:
 - work will continue to be planned and managed through the 11 themes. But the presentation of the Group Business Plan to the sector and publicly will be organised under 5 priorities (economy, reputation, innovation and value for money, democracy, and good customer service to our members), and be shorter and clearer;
 - bearing in mind the pressures on the Group’s subscription and topslice funding, an ever keener degree of prioritisation is to be applied to the work we undertake.

The story so far

3. The Board’s discussion at its September 2009 meeting on the overview for the year ahead informed material discussed at an event for senior Members on 19 November, which Cllrs Porter, Haines and Bateman attended.
4. The material circulated for the event suggested work on housing and environment as follows:

Economy

- *Arguing for locally driven planning and funding arrangements for infrastructure (shared activity with Economy theme)*
- *New innovative funding models for infrastructure delivery (shared activity with Economy theme)*
- *Planning Advisory Service and LACORS support for councils on planning and private sector housing (subject to continued specific funding by CLG)*

Reputation

- *Climate change – helping councils reduce carbon in their operations and community and protect against the consequences of a changing climate*

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- *As part of activity on emergency planning, ensure effective handling of flood emergencies*

Innovation and Value for Money

- *Housing finance reform*
- *Waste funding*
- *Funding for carbon reduction*
- *Support for councils in delivery of housing and infrastructure projects*

5. The main piece of feedback from that event relevant to the Board's areas of work is that Members generally felt that climate change needed to be given a higher profile in the published plan. The draft plan for discussion at the Executive on 14 January responds to this by giving climate change a high profile as part of the Economy priority.

Next steps

6. The Executive will be discussing the draft Group Plan at its meeting on 14 January, and the Board Chair will be able to offer views.
7. Subject to that discussion, and the steers emerging from the Board meeting, officers will start on a process of detailed work planning. This will be managed in parallel with budget discussions in the Group organisations.
8. Officer thinking on what the very high level proposals being considered by the Executive might mean more specifically are set out below. We would welcome Members' views on the what and the how, bearing in mind only that resources are unlikely to allow us to add significantly to what we do – so anything additional we might take on would have to be balanced by dropping something else.

Economy

- *Support for networks, leadership development, and access to/application of research and technology on climate mitigation, adaptation, flood risk management, environmental risk and waste*
- *Secure a national policy framework for domestic energy saving which enables councils to lead cost-effective local action*
- *Ensure councils have support in delivering effectively within new policy and funding framework for energy efficiency*
- *Arguing for reorientation of planning and investment decisions which influence physical development to be locally driven and based on place, not driven by national government and fragmented across separate national investment programmes (NB link to Total Place)*

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- *Develop support for strategic leaders in councils about how to plan and deliver physical development within whichever national framework there is for spatial planning*
- *New innovative funding models for infrastructure delivery (shared activity with Economy theme)*
- *Ensure decision-making framework for national infrastructure projects, and policy framework for infrastructure types, enables councils to get the best deal for the local environment and economy*
- *Planning Advisory Service and LACORS support for councils on planning and private sector housing (subject to continued specific funding by CLG)*

Reputation

- *Continue (but probably at a reduced level following passage of the current Bill) advocacy for the powers and resources councils need for flood risk management*
- *IDeA support for councils on responding to climate risk, flooding especially*
- *Via officer networks, maintain capacity to rebut damaging media stories on waste and put out positive ones*
- *As part of activity on emergency planning, ensure effective handling of flood emergencies*
- *Local voice heard in national policy-making on environmental hazard and ensure top decision-makers understand risk correctly*
- *Keep in touch at political and policy level with housing fire safety issues and provide sector with targeted advice to ensure residents are protected and councils' reputation not undermined*

Innovation and Value for Money

- *Lobby for policy and resources framework which enables councils to deliver waste collection and disposal affordably and without exposure to EU fines, including more integration of household and SME waste collection*
- *Ensure CRC and carbon budgeting actually support carbon and financial savings*
- *Support councils in learning how to manage carbon budgeting and trading effectively*
- *Present incoming government with proposals for rationalising quangocracy in national support for environmental improvement into a more cost-effective sector-led model*
- *Continued advocacy on changes to housing finance and investment regimes to allow council landlords to operate on a level playing field with social landlords*
- *Develop support for councils on how to exploit housing assets to deliver new build and improvement through innovative funding and delivery structures*
- *Support for councils in delivery of housing and infrastructure projects*
- *National support for councils to develop the effectiveness of their strategic housing function*
- *Advocacy and support for councils on better delivery of housing and care for older people (joint with adult care theme)*

Financial Implications

9. The business planning process is intended to ensure that we focus our constrained resources on the issues of most significance to member councils.

Implications for Wales

10. We will discuss our proposals with WLGA and seek to identify areas of common interest where we could work together.

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