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Environment Board

Item 9

17 March 2010

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## Update on other Board Business

### Summary

- Cllr Gary Porter's reports to the LGA Executive for January and February (**attached**)
- Members' Feedback (**attached**)

### Recommendations

Members to note the reports.

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

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## **LGA Executive Report from Councillor Gary Porter (Chairman)**

January 2010

### **Greening Communities (Environment)**

#### ***Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC)***

- On 26<sup>th</sup> November, John Denham announced the next steps that CLG will be taking to look at the viability and scope of Local Carbon Budgets. The LGA successfully lobbied CLG and DECC to set up a task group to steer the discussions and ensure that councils are involved in setting the framework and scope of this initiative. The LGA will be on this group, alongside local authorities.
- On 17<sup>th</sup> November the LGA hosted a Smith Square debate on climate change entitled “Copenhagen: can we turn global talks into action on the ground”. The event was a success with an international speaker contributing via a video link-up. The LGA also launched a new report “*the climate challenge: local solutions through global learning*”, which set out how local government across the world is taking steps on climate change.
- On 2<sup>nd</sup> December, Government announced its response to the Smart Metering consultation. The LGA’s hard work on ensuring all householders were entitled to an in-house energy display paid off as these will have to be provided with a smart meter during the roll out. The response also acknowledged the importance of working with local authorities, and the LGA will continue to work with DECC to ensure councils know when and where meters are going to be replaced.

### **Sustainable Communities (housing and planning)**

#### ***Tenant Services Authority (TSA)***

- The TSA launched the statutory consultation on a new regulatory framework for social housing in England on 12 November. The consultation document can be found here:  
[http://www.tenantservicesauthority.org/upload/pdf/Statutory\\_consultation.pdf](http://www.tenantservicesauthority.org/upload/pdf/Statutory_consultation.pdf)
- LGA officers are meeting with TSA officials to ensure that the regulatory framework carries through the TSA’s stated commitment to co-regulation and is fully compliant with the Local Performance Framework. The LGA response to the consultation will be published in late January, following discussion with advisers.

#### ***Planning***

- Our lobbying of CLG to set out a plan for implementing the Community Infrastructure Levy and allowing for an appropriate transition period, has met with success. LGA officers have been asked to give advice to a project management team that CLG have set up to develop options for testing CIL before sector-wide rollout. The Pre Budget Report also indicated that there would be a transition period for scaling back Section 106, which was one of our key asks in lobbying on CIL. The detailed arrangements for CIL are expected to be confirmed in Spring 2010.

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- I met with Bob Neill MP, Shadow Minister for Local Government and Planning, on December 15 to discuss how planning policy can be reformed to support increased localism and incentivise house-building.
- Margaret Eaton, Cllr Tony Newman and I met **John Healey** on 2 December to discuss a number of housing issues.

## ***Housing***

- The Environment Board held a successful meeting with **Sir Bob Kerslake**, Chief Executive of the **Homes and Communities Agency** on the 5th November. Prior to the meeting, I wrote to local authority leaders seeking their views on the HCA and the responses were used to inform the discussion on the day. The HCA replied to issues raised by the Board, the response can be found at <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelid=5073078>
- On 9 December the Community Wellbeing and Environment Boards held a joint meeting to discuss housing and older people's issues which identified possible future work priorities for the LGA Group in this policy area. A joint position paper is being prepared.

## **European and International Work**

- Officer 1-2-1 meetings were held with two new conservative MEPs (Marina Yannakoudakis and Julie Girling) on the European Parliament's Environment Committee. The purpose of the meetings was to explain the impact EU environmental policy has at the local level and to explore key issues coming up on the EU agenda (particularly the biowaste and WEEE directives). Both MEPs are former councillors and were very receptive to our views. A political level follow up meeting was held between Julie Girling MEP and Cllr Kay Twitchen (a UK member of the Committee of the Regions).

## **Flooding**

- An initial LGA briefing on the Bill is available on the LGA website, <http://www.lga.gov.uk> . More detailed briefings will be produced to accompany each stage of the Bill as it progresses through Parliament.

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## **LGA Executive Report from Councillor Gary Porter (Chairman)**

February 2010

### **Greening Communities (Environment)**

- Council leaders with new nuclear power stations proposed in their areas met at Local Government House on 22 January. The discussion, chaired by Councillor Mike Haines, focussed on how councils could be adequately resourced to discharge their responsibilities under the new planning regime for national infrastructure projects, and the draft national policy statements that set the framework for decisions by the new Infrastructure Planning Commission. The meeting endorsed continued LGA lobbying for resources, identified ways in which the policy statements need to be improved to reflect local circumstance and suggested meeting again to share experience.
- Members of the LGA Environment Board recently met with representatives from the Department for Energy and Climate Change and UK Business Council for Sustainable Energy to discuss government energy policies and views from industry. To view a note of the meeting, see <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelId=7334391>
- Councillor Richard Kemp and Phillip Mind, Senior Policy Consultant are giving evidence at the Energy and Climate Change Select Committee on the national policy statements for energy infrastructure. They will be making the case for a stronger area/community based and integrated statements that take account of local development frameworks, cumulative impacts of projects and inter-dependencies between projects and types of infrastructure.
- The LGA is organising a free conference, with CLG, at the headquarters of Bircham Dyson Bell, on 26 March 2010 explaining the council role in the new planning regime for national infrastructure.
- More than 50 councils have now signed up to the Waste Collection Commitment launched by WRAP and the LGA last September, These councils are leading the way in improving residents' satisfaction with how their waste and recycling is collected and – ultimately – boosting recycling rates. More information can be found at [www.wrap.org.uk/local\\_authorities](http://www.wrap.org.uk/local_authorities)

### **Sustainable Communities (housing and planning)**

#### ***Housing***

- The Housing Minister, John Healey is expected to announce the proposals for the Housing Revenue Account subsidy reform offer that he is going to make to councils in February. We expect to the offer to contain information on the model that councils will use to work out their self-financing settlement figure.
- The LGA has responded to the annual HRA subsidy determination consultation which noted our concern about their has been no uplift to Management and Maintenance and Major Repairs Allowance and that councils

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should be financially compensated where they have been unduly penalised under the caps and limits rules. The full response can be found on the LGA's website at <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelId=7705694>

## **European and International Work**

- ICLEI, the lead local government negotiating arm, will continue lobbying in the year ahead. The LGA has agreed to sign a 'letter of intent' with ICLEI - supporting their 'Climate Roadmap' campaign that is lobbying for clear references to support local government in the final agreement. Further info: UN FCCC <http://unfccc.int/2860.php> and ICLEI Climate Roadmap - <http://tinyurl.com/ybl6n7l>
- A European Parliament report responding to the European Commission's White Paper "Adapting to Climate Change" has acknowledged LGA lobbying efforts to promote the strategic role that local authorities can play in tackling climate change. The LGA will continue to lobby MEPs and Commission officials to ensure that follow-up reports continue to recognise the important role councils play and to call for appropriate funding to be made available for this.

## **Flooding**

- The Flood and Water Management Bill Committee has now finished line-by-line scrutiny of the Flood and Water Management Bill. All of the LGA's five amendments were tabled and debated.

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## **Members' Feedback**

### **Lifetime Neighbourhoods – Vision into Reality**

Cllr Linda Thomas

On 22 February, Cllr Linda Thomas chaired the above LGA national conference which was attended by around 100 senior elected members, officers and key stakeholders.

The concept of lifetime neighbourhoods is central to the Government's strategy on ageing, Building a society for all ages, which was launched in July 2009. Lifetime neighbourhoods is also the second key component of the Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods Strategy, launched in 2008 to ensure that there is adequate appropriate housing available in future to relieve the forecasted unsustainable pressures of an ageing population on homes, health and social care services. Members were reminded of the importance in planning for the future by ensuring that older people have homes that are affordable, accessible and flexible for their future needs and that these homes are in safe, accessible and cohesive neighbourhoods.

For a report of the event, please see <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/8801111>

### **National Retail Planning Forum 4th March 2010 (am)**

Cllr Mike Haines

PPS4 & Guidance Roll out - NRPF has been commissioned to assist with CLG's roll-out program for PPS 4. Four regional workshops - hosted by government regional offices - were planned, three of which, London, Birmingham and Newcastle have been staged, with Bristol to come on the 8<sup>th</sup> March. All the workshops have been well attended with between 75 and 100 people in attendance, mostly – though not exclusively LA planning and regeneration staff. Some retailers have also been present. A good spread of representation from regional, county, city and district staff has been evident.

### **National Planning Forum 4th March (pm)**

Cllr Mike Haines

There were presentations (followed by discussion) by:

1. Dr Peter Williams, Chairman of The National Housing and Planning Advice Unit.

The NHPAU was established in response to the pressing issue of housing affordability highlighted by Kate Barker's Review of Housing Supply (2004). PPS3 requires the NHPAU to provide advice to Regional and Local Planning Bodies about the impact of their housing provision proposals on affordability in the region. The Housing Green Paper (2007) states that the NHPAU should provide independent advice to Government and the regions which forms the basis of the supply ranges to be tested in the regional spatial strategies.

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The NHPU has recently produced reports on:

- Housing affordability indicators
- Housing supply and planning controls
- Evaluating requirements for market and affordable housing.

2. Leonora Rozee OBE, Chair of the Project Steering Group on Mediation in Planning

The interim findings of this group were outlined. It is a joint NPF/PINS group, and the LGA is represented by Caroline Green. The final report is due in June.

3) Tony Thompson, Programme Manager, Development Management, CLG.

CLG draft PPS on Development Management and consultation documents on Planning Conditions and Statutory and Non Statutory Consultees were published just before Christmas, and consultation ends on 19<sup>th</sup> March.

Other NPF business involved updates on;  
'Improving the Connection' the NPF report on Planning and Building Control.  
Culture Change & 'Fit for purpose spatial planning'  
Future improvement to the NPF website.

Further details may be found at [www.natplanforum.org.uk](http://www.natplanforum.org.uk) or at CLG or NHPAU.