

26th May 2010

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## **General Election 2010**

### **Summary**

At the Board meeting, members will have the opportunity to discuss the lobbying priorities and strategies for the Environment Board over the coming year.

This discussion will be supported by a presentation which will focus on the national big picture, the LGA's priorities, and opportunities for influencing the Government on key environmental work strands.

This note gives some background on the coalition agreement made by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Parties, as well as on the newly-appointed CLG, ECC and EFRA Secretaries of State and ministers.

Also included as an addendum is the complete coalition document. The Prime Minister has confirmed that more information on the agreements made in the forging of the coalition will be made public, and this may have been released by the time the Board meets.

### **Recommendations**

- For information, members to note report and use its contents to inform discussion at the meeting

### **Action**

- Officers to shape lobbying priorities and strategies in light of members' views.

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## General Election 2010

### The Coalition Government

1. The Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties announced that they were entering into a formal coalition agreement on 12<sup>th</sup> May. A seven page coalition document was released at a press conference held jointly by Nick Clegg and David Cameron. This “Liberal Conservative” Government has stated it will make “freedom, fairness and responsibility” its priorities.
2. The sole specific reference to local government within the document is as follows:

“The parties will promote the radical devolution of power and greater financial autonomy to local government and community groups. This will include a full review of local government finance.”

### LGA Response

3. The LGA Group has stated that we look forward to working with the new administration on dealing with what will be the most challenging period for generation. We have asked for confirmation of manifesto commitments to give increased freedom for councils to lead in local areas and deliver more efficient and effective services.
4. We have noted the urgent need to strip away burdens and regulations that steer much-needed funds away from local services and into unnecessary bureaucratic machinery. We have reiterated councils’ readiness to take on increased powers with the attendant responsibility to deliver more with less.

### Environment Theme

5. In the coalition agreement the parties agree to implement a full programme of measures to fulfil joint ambitions for a low carbon and eco-friendly economy, including:
  - The establishment of a smart grid and the roll-out of smart meters.
  - The full establishment of feed-in tariff systems in electricity.
  - Retention of energy performance certificates while scrapping HIPs.
  - The creation of a green energy bank.
  - The establishment of a high-speed rail network.
  - The cancellation of the third runway at Heathrow.
  - The refusal of additional runways at Gatwick and Stansted.
  - Increase the target for energy from renewable sources, subject to the advice of the Climate Change Committee.

## Post Election

6. In his visit to DECC on May 14<sup>th</sup> the Prime Minister stated that he wants this to be “the greenest government ever”. He, along with the new Secretary of State Chris Huhne, committed to lowering carbon emissions across government departments by 10% in the next twelve months as part of the “10:10” campaign.
7. Huhne flagged up three priorities at the meeting on senior staff and politicians:
  - To make decisions "put off for too long" to fundamentally change how we supply and use energy in Britain
  - To make it far easier for people to make their homes more energy efficient to reduce wasted energy and cut their bills;
  - To use every influence we have internationally to get a global deal to tackle climate change.

## Key Players in the New Government

### Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

**Caroline Spelman MP (Con) – Secretary of State for EFRA**  
MP for Meriden



Caroline was the Shadow CLG Secretary prior to the 2010 General Election and consequently has a good relationship with the LGA. She has previously held the post of Shadow EFRA Secretary and Chairman of the Conservative Party. Before being elected to Parliament in 1997 Caroline worked for the National Farmers' Union and the Centre for European Agricultural Studies, and she co-owns a food and biotechnology company. She was appointed Shadow International Development Secretary in 2001 and Shadow Local Government Secretary in 2004, before being promoted to Chairman of the Party in 2007.

**James Paice MP (Con) – Minister of State**  
MP for Cambridgeshire South East



Jim has significant experience in the farming world. He has worked on a farm, studied farming and been a director of a management development company specialising in farming. In his youth he was active in the Young Farmers movement. Jim was elected to Parliament in 1986 and held roles in the Departments on Environment, Employment and Education. In Opposition he was spokesperson for agriculture and rural affairs from 2005 until the General Election.

**Richard Benyon (Con) – Parliamentary Undersecretary of State**  
MP for Newbury



Richard was elected to Newbury District Council in 1991 and became leader of the Conservative Group in 1994 before losing his seat in 1995. He contested the Parliamentary seat of Newbury twice before gaining it on the third try in 2005. He was appointed as an Opposition Whip in 2007 and in 2009 was appointed Shadow EFRA Minister.

**Lord Henley (Con) - Parliamentary Undersecretary of State**



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Oliver is one of the few newly-appointed undersecretaries to have previous ministerial experience. He is a hereditary Peer, elevated to the House of Lords in 1977 upon the death of his father. He served as a whip, and Undersecretary of State at the Department of Social Security under Margaret Thatcher, and was promoted to Minister of State at the Department for Employment in 1995 under John Major.

## **Energy and Climate Change**

**Chris Huhne MP (Lib Dem) – Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change**  
MP for Eastleigh



Chris is one of the most recognisable faces in the Liberal Democrat Party, having run for leadership in 2006 and held the role of Environment Spokesman from 2006-2007 and Home Affairs Spokesman from 2007 until the General Election. Before entering politics Chris was an economist and later a journalist on The Guardian. In 1999 he was elected to European Parliament, where he represented South East England until 2005 when he was elected to the House of Commons.

**Charles Hendry MP (Con) - Minister of State**  
MP for Wealdon



Charles has a background in business and acted as special advisor in the Department of Social Security in the 1980s. He was elected to Parliament in 1992, lost his seat in 1997, and was re-elected in 2001. Charles was Shadow Minister for Climate Change from 2008 until the time of the General Election.

**Gregory Barker MP (Con) - Minister of State**  
MP for Bexhill and Battle



Greg was a researcher at the think tank Centre of Policy Studies before becoming an equity analyst in 1988 and the Director of a securities firm in 1990 and an advertising firm from 1998. He was elected to Parliament in 2001 and, as Shadow Environment Secretary, accompanied David Cameron to the Arctic Circle in 2006 to look at the effects of climate change.

**Communities and Local Government**

**Eric Pickles MP (Con) – Secretary of State for CLG**  
MP for Brentwood and Ongar



Eric was appointed Secretary of State for CLG after having been Chairman of the Conservative Party and taken a public role in the Party's national General Election campaign. He began his political career in 1979 when he was elected to Bradford Council, in 1979, and was leader of the Conservatives, and the council, from 1988 until 1990, a controversial period of restructuring and cuts which resulted in an expose, *The Pickles Papers*, being published. The LGA Chairman, Cllr. Margaret Eaton, served on Bradford Council with Eric from when she was elected in 1986. Eric was elected to Parliament in 1992 and has since acted as Shadow Minister for London, Shadow Transport Minister and Shadow CLG Secretary from 2007 – 2009. Eric spoke with Cllr. Margaret Eaton immediately after being appointed as Secretary of State, and had a productive meeting with her on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May to discuss his priorities.

**Greg Clark MP (Con) – Minister of State for De-Centralisation**  
MP for Tunbridge Wells



Greg gained a PhD in economics before becoming a special advisor at the Department of Trade and Industry in 1996 and the Director of Policy for Conservative Party in 2001. He was elected to Parliament in 2005 and promoted to Shadow Charities Minister in 2006. In 2008 he was promoted to Shadow Energy and Climate Change Secretary.

**Grant Shapps MP (Con) – Minister of State for Housing**  
MP for Welwyn Hatfield



Grant founded a successful print company at the age of 22 and first stood for Parliament in 1997, eventually winning a seat in 2005. He was appointed Vice President of the Party in charge of campaigning following Cameron's election as leader in 2005, and became Shadow Housing Minister in 2007, attending Shadow Cabinet meetings. He has consistently spoken out against centrally-created housing targets and has pushed the idea of Local Housing Trusts and "the right to move".

**Bob Neill MP (Con) – Parliamentary Undersecretary of State (Con)**  
MP for Bromley and Chislehurst



Bob has a strong background in local politics, having been a councillor in Havering and sat on the London Assembly from 2000 – 2008 where he was leader of the Conservative Group from 200-2002 and again from 2004 until he was elected to

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Parliament in 2006. He was appointed Shadow Minister for London in 2007 and Shadow Planning Minister in 2009. He is currently Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party, with responsibility for Local Government.

**Andrew Stunnell MP (Lib Dem) - Parliamentary Undersecretary of State**  
MP for Hazel Grove



Andrew is an architect by trade and acted as the Political Secretary at the Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors from 1989-1996 before being elected to Parliament in 1997. He has previously been the Liberal Democrat Local Government spokesperson.

**Baroness Hanham - Parliamentary Undersecretary of State (Con)**



Joan was the leader of Kensington and Chelsea Council from 1989 until 2000. She was made a Life Peer in 2000 when she also attempted to get the Conservative nomination for Mayor of London.

## **Financial Implications**

8. The potential financial implications for member councils from the implementation of our priority policies are significant. Work to be undertaken by the LGA will be channelled through existing officer resources.

## **Implications for Wales**

9. The priority areas to be considered are devolved issues in Wales.

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