

**Local Government Association**

## environment board

agenda

**Monday 5 July 2010**

**2.00pm**

Shaftesbury Suite,  
Bournemouth Highcliff Marriot Hotel  
St Michaels Road, West Cliff  
Bournemouth  
BH2 5DU

To: Members of LGA environment board

cc: Named officers for briefing purposes

[www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk)





**Local Government Association**

## **LGA Environment Board**

5 July 2010

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### **Notification**

There will be a meeting of the **Environment Board** at **2.00pm** on **Monday 5 July** at the following location:

**Shaftesbury Suite,  
Bournemouth Highcliff Marriot Hotel  
St Michaels Road, West Cliff  
Bournemouth,  
BH2 5DU**

**Phone: 44 1202 557702**

<http://www.marriott.co.uk/hotels/travel/bohbm-bournemouth-highcliff-marriott-hotel/>

*Travel information is printed on the back page – the venue is approximately 20 minutes from Bournemouth station.*

- Please note the **Lead Members' pre-meet will be at 12.30pm in Yeovil Room**
- **Political Group meetings will be at 1pm in Blandford Rooms 1, 2 and 3.**

Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

### **Attendance Sheet**

Please ensure that you sign the attendance register, which will be available in the meeting room. It is the only record of your presence at the meeting.

### **Apologies**

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting, so that a substitute can be arranged and catering numbers adjusted, if necessary.

<b>Labour:</b>	Aicha Less: 020 7664 3263 email: <a href="mailto:aicha.less@lga.gov.uk">aicha.less@lga.gov.uk</a>
<b>Conservative:</b>	Angela Page: 020 7664 3264 email: <a href="mailto:angela.page@lga.gov.uk">angela.page@lga.gov.uk</a>
<b>Liberal Democrat:</b>	Evelyn Mark: 020 7664 3235 email: <a href="mailto:libdem@lga.gov.uk">libdem@lga.gov.uk</a>
<b>Independent:</b>	Group Office: 020 7664 3224 email: <a href="mailto:independent.group@lga.gov.uk">independent.group@lga.gov.uk</a>

**Contact: Fatima de Abreu** Tel: 020 7664 3136, email: [Fatima.deabreu@lga.gov.uk](mailto:Fatima.deabreu@lga.gov.uk).

**Carers' Allowance:** As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of up to £5.73 per hour is available to cover the cost of dependants (ie. Children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.



## LGA Environment Board

Date: 11.08.09

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### Environment Board - Membership 2009/2010

Councillor	Authority
<b>Conservative (6)</b>	
Gary Porter <b>[Chairman]</b>	South Holland DC
Peter Britcliffe	Hyndburn BC
Andrew Gravells	Gloucestershire CC & Gloucester City
David Potts	South Tyneside MBC
Clare Whelan	Lambeth LB
Jason Stacey	Ealing LB
<b>Substitutes:</b>	
Moira Gibson	Surrey Heath BC
Neil Clarke	Rushcliffe BC
<b>Labour (4)</b>	
Linda Thomas <b>[Vice-Chair]</b>	Bolton MBC
Derek Bateman	Cheshire West & Chester Council
Tony Newman	Croydon LB
Ed Turner	Oxford City
<b>Substitute</b>	
Nick Small	Liverpool City
Richard Williams	Southampton
<b>Liberal Democrat (3)</b>	
Dorothy Thornhill <b>[Deputy Chair]</b>	Watford BC
Berni Turner	Liverpool City
Paula Baker	Basingstoke & Deane BC
<b>Substitute</b>	
Roger Symonds	Bath and NE Somerset Council
<b>Independent (1)</b>	
Mike Haines <b>[Deputy Chair]</b>	Teignbridge DC
<b>Substitute</b>	
Andrew Cooper	Kirklees MBC

**14 member Board**



## LGA Environment Board

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### LGA Environment Board Attendance 2009 - 2010

	14/09/09	5/11/09	13/01/10	17/03/10	26/05/10	5/07/10
<b>Conservative Group</b>						
Gary Porter	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
Peter Britcliffe	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	
Andrew Gravells	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
David Potts	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
Clare Whelan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Jason Stacey	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
<b>Labour Group</b>						
Linda Thomas	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
Derek Bateman	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Tony Newman	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
Ed Turner	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
<b>Lib Dem Group</b>						
Dorothy Thornhill	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Berni Turner	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
Paula Baker	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
<b>Independent</b>						
Mike Haines	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
<b>Substitutes</b>	None	Richard Williams	None	Cllr Neil Clarke	Richard Williams	





# Agenda

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## LGA Environment Board

5 July 2010, 2pm

Shaftesbury Suite, Bournemouth Highcliff Marriot Hotel, St Michaels Road,  
West Cliff, Bournemouth, BH2 5DU

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### For Discussion

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| • <u>Annex A</u> - CLG / LGA Commission on the Council Role in new Housebuilding and Terms of Reference | 33 |
| • <u>Confidential Annex B</u> – Funding and planning for Infrastructure Executive Summary               |    |

### For Information/Noting

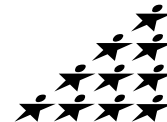
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| 6. Update on other Board business   | 35 |
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| • <u>Annex B</u> - <i>A clean bill of health</i> – summary re. new LACORS publication for Members | 43 |
| 7. Decisions and actions from previous meeting  | 45 |

**Please note:** *Directly following the Board meeting from 4 – 5pm:*

Joanna Averley and Sarah Allan (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)) will attend to discuss how Members involved in planning could be better informed and supported in setting local policies on design.

**Date of next meeting: 13 September 2010, Local Government House**





5<sup>th</sup> July 2010

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## **The Decentralisation and Localism Bill**

### **Summary**

At the Board meeting, members will have the opportunity to discuss the forthcoming Decentralisation and Localism Bill and the LGA Group's future lobbying work on this. The Bill is intended to: *devolve greater powers to councils and local communities, specifically to give communities much more control over housing and planning decisions.*

This note gives some background on the current status of the Bill, some of the key provisions that have already been announced, and the Group's view on the overall emphasis of the Bill and specific provisions on localism, planning and housing.

### **Recommendations**

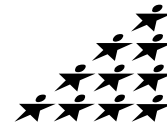
- Members to note report and use its contents to inform discussion at the meeting

### **Action**

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

Contact Officer: Greg Taylor  
Phone No: 0207 664 3034  
Email: greg.taylor@lga.gov.uk





## **The Decentralisation and Localism Bill**

### **Summary**

1. The Government announced, in the Queen's Speech on 25<sup>th</sup> May, that they will be introducing a Decentralisation and Localism Bill. The Bill, which will be introduced after the summer recess: *"will devolve greater powers to councils and local communities, specifically to give communities much more control over housing and planning decisions."* The Government will be consulting on several areas of the Bill before a draft is finalised. This process will be taking place over summer.

### **Localism**

2. The Bill will have several provisions taking forward the Government's decentralisation agenda. Some provisions that have already been announced are:
  - a power of general competence for councils;
  - greater financial autonomy for councils and community groups;
  - abolition of the Standards Board regime and CAA;
  - the power for residents to instigate local referendums on any local issue and the power to veto excessive council tax increases;
  - the creation of Local Enterprise Partnerships (replacing Regional Development Agencies) to promote economic development.

### **Planning**

3. The Bill will take forward the Government's radical reform of the planning system. Measures already announced are:
  - the abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategies and the Infrastructure Planning Commission; and
  - the return of decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils.
  - The Board will have a full discussion of this aspect of the Bill under Item 3.

### **Housing**

4. The Bill will look to ending top-down government by giving new powers to local councils, communities, and neighbourhoods. Already announced are:
  - the phasing out of the ring-fencing of grants to local government; and
  - a review of the Housing Revenue Account.

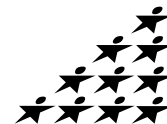


***Local Government Association***

## **LGA Group View**

5. We will be working with CLG officials on the drafting of the Bill to help ensure that we will be fully able to support it once it reaches Parliament. We have requested speedy clarification on some of the key reforms that have been suggested by the Government, particularly around planning and will be continuing to discuss this with ministers and officials. We believe it is important that the consolidated national framework be based on an understanding of the needs of and impact on local economies and strictly limited to national projects. It is important that an end to regional targets is accompanied by powers for councils to coordinate funding and strategically plan collectively at the sub-regional level.

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Email: [greg.taylor@lga.gov.uk](mailto:greg.taylor@lga.gov.uk)



5 July 2010

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## **Planning Reform**

### **Summary**

This report:

- Updates members on the coalition government's national policy priorities for the planning system;
- updates members on how the LGA group is supporting local authorities during the transition period;
- includes a short appendix listing suggested LGA Group policy positions;
- includes discussion points for members to consider a potential future role for the LGA Group within planning reform.

### **Recommendations**

Members are invited to:

- note report and use its contents to inform discussion at the meeting
- comment on each of the suggested LGA Group policy positions listed in Appendix 1.
- discuss and recommend a potential future role for the LGA Group within planning reform.

### **Action**

Officer's to action Member's recommendations.

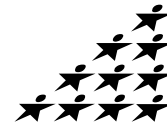
Contact Officer: Caroline Green / Russell Reefer

Phone No: 0207 664 3359 / 0207 664 3209

Email: [caroline.green@lga.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.green@lga.gov.uk) / [russell.reefer@lga.gov.uk](mailto:russell.reefer@lga.gov.uk)







## Planning Reform

### Background

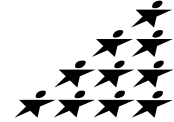
1. On 20 May 2010 the coalition government published “The Coalition: our programme for government” a statement of agreement across the whole range of national policy that included new priorities for planning and the planning system. The key reference to planning reform was as follows:

*“We will radically reform the planning system to give neighbourhoods far more ability to determine the shape of the places in which their inhabitants live, based on the principles set out in the Conservative Party publication Open Source Planning.”*

2. Specific measures on planning reform included:
  - Abolishing the Regional Spatial Strategies and the Infrastructure Planning Commission (but retaining a single national process for nationally important projects with decisions taken by Ministers).
  - Returning decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils, including considerable dilution in the powers of the Planning Inspectorate;
  - In “the longer term” giving “neighbourhoods far more ability to determine the shape of the places in which their inhabitants live”.
3. The government has followed up with a number of press releases and ministerial statements which provide additional details on how they plan to take their proposals forward.

### LGA Response

4. The LGA is broadly supportive of the devolutionary intent behind the government's announcement on planning reform. The removal of regional targets and a more locally responsive planning system are welcome developments.
5. Many of the proposals reflect the LGA's fundamental principles that people should have the power to shape the places in which they live; that councils are uniquely positioned as the accountable public body to plan for their communities, and that unlocking councils' potential to play a leadership role is critical to the delivery of housing and other development.
6. Strategic spatial planning at the right level remains crucially important to ensuring we get the housing and infrastructure we need. But strategic planning does not equal regional planning. It needs to take place at the level which makes sense in terms of the way labour markets, housing markets, journey patterns operate. In most of the country this is the sub-regional level.



## ***Local Government Association***

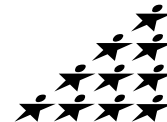
7. Within a devolved system, we need a clear framework to give councils the clarity they need to put genuinely local plans in place. Government will need to work closely with us as a sector if they are going to get to a system that works. The LGA Group is working with the planning profession and the development industry to engage with government on the detail of how the new approach will work.

### **Actions currently underway**

8. There is a risk that uncertainty during transition to the new system will provide ammunition to those opposed to the coalition government devolutionary approach, it is therefore important for the LGA group to promote the case for devolution and councils' ability to manage well in a devolved system. We are working with the Planning Officers Society (POS), Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and others within the sector to understand issues as they arise and provide advice to ensure that effective decision making can continue.
9. The intention is to help planners to keep planning going locally, and also demonstrate that local government is an influential and constructive partner that government should be engaging with.
10. Officers have issued a short set of frequently asked questions, which we plan to regularly update so that councils have the latest information as needed.

### **Suggested LGA Group policy positions**

11. It is important at this stage to gather member's comments on key aspects of proposed planning reform. Officers have compiled a short breakdown in Appendix 1 as follows:
  - Key coalition government policy positions;
  - Short description of the LGA group's proposed policy positions.
12. Members are invited to comment on each of these proposed policy positions.
13. Officers have also highlighted three areas we believe warrant focused discussion.



**Local Government Association**

## **Potential role of the LGA Group in supporting councils in their new planning role.**

14. Members are invited to discuss the potential role of the LGA Group in the following areas:

- Driving improvement and performance in planning
- Supporting councils in their strategic planning role by facilitating access to evidence and research previously held at the regional or national level.

## **Financial Implications**

15. The transition to a devolved regime is potentially the biggest devolutionary shift since the original Town and Country Planning Act in 1947 and will therefore require a strong level of sector led support.

16. We will need new ways of supporting elected members dealing with planning to ensure they have the skills and capacity to deliver this enhanced strategic planning role.

17. Both of these implications should be factored into discussions on the future of the LGA Group's performance and support activity.

## **Implications for Wales**

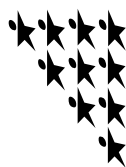
1. LGA will liaise with WLGA colleagues as appropriate on this issue.

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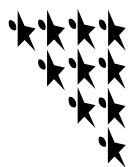




## Suggested priority issues

### 1. Regional and Local Planning

Current Government Position	Suggested LGA Group position:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies:</b> "Regional planning will be abolished, alongside Regional Spatial Strategies, the Regional Planning Bodies, and national and regional building targets". (Open Source Planning, page 5, Control Shift, page 28, Coalition Agreement, page 11)</li> <li>• <b>Local Development Framework / Neighbourhood Plans</b> "We will make a truly local plan, built out of a process of collaborative democracy, the centrepiece of the local planning system." (Open Source Planning, page 8)</li> <li>• "We will also put in place transitional arrangements to cover the implementation of our new planning system."</li> <li>• "We will radically reform the planning system to give neighbourhoods far more ability to determine the shape of the places in which their inhabitants live, based on the principles set out in the Conservative Party publication Open Source Planning". (Coalition Agreement, page 11)</li> <li>• <b>Introducing a stronger role for neighbourhoods in relation to applications:</b> "We will make a truly local plan, built out of a process of collaborative democracy, the centrepiece of the local planning system...by mandating that all local authorities use collaborative democratic methods in drawing up their local plans." (Open Source Planning, page 8)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We strongly support the government's commitment to devolving decision making to the local level. However, planning reform needs to swiftly set in place a framework in which local authorities have certainty to set their own local plans.</li> <li>• We need to press for the smooth transition of ownership of valuable regional spatial information and will need urgent clarity on what is material consideration.</li> <li>• Regards to neighbourhood plans, we welcome the focus on "local plans" and the principle of enhanced public engagement and ownership of development.</li> <li>• However the proposal are vague on exactly how neighbourhoods should be constituted. "Neighbourhoods" "neighbours" and "communities" are not easy to define, not always truly representative and there is no formal representative structure at that level. This is particularly important when it comes to negotiating and moderating competing visions of neighbouring communities into a single unified local plan.</li> <li>• It is also important to emphasise that that local government already undertakes a lot of consultation, and need to be clear what, over and above existing practice the new approach will require. Need to make sure there is a balance, that is determined locally between genuine engagement and a system that becomes very slow and resource intensive.</li> <li>• There also resource implication which will need addressing. We will need new ways of supporting elected members dealing with planning to ensure they have the skills and capacity to deliver this enhanced strategic planning role.</li> </ul>



**2. Major Infrastructure / Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC)**

Current Government Position	Suggested LGA Group position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Major Infrastructure / Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC):</b> "We will abolish the unelected Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) whilst retaining its expertise and fast track process within government." (Open Source planning, page 14)</li> <li>• "Major infrastructure projects will be decided by short and focused planning inquiries carried out by the new Major Infrastructure Unit and governed by the new national planning framework." (Coalition Agreement, page 11)</li> <li>• <b>National Planning Policy Framework:</b> "We will integrate into one document – a national planning framework – the principal features of all national planning policies. This simple and consolidated framework will set out not only what the government's economic and environmental priorities are, but how they relate to each other." (Open Source planning, page 15)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We accept the need for projects which are genuinely national in scale and impact to be determined nationally. However the LGA fought hard for, and won, important roles for councils in working with developers to shape schemes, and to be the voice for their communities in the consideration of national schemes. This needs to be carried through into the successor arrangements for IPC.</li> <li>• We support a single strong, simplified, national policy framework for planning - 2000 plus pages of national policy is certainly no way to do it.</li> <li>• Limiting the ability of inspectors to overturn local decision will improve local accountability.</li> </ul>

**3. Reforming the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

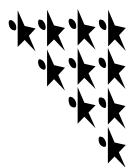
Current Government position:	Suggested LGA Group position:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "[We] will scrap CIL and non-site-specific planning obligations and instead introduce a single unified local tariff applicable to all residential and non-residential development (even a single dwelling), but at graded rates depending on the size of the development." (Open Source Planning, page 12)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The full details of the coalition government's proposed single unified local tariff are not yet known, but in practice this may well simply be a CIL levy under a different name.</li> <li>• The sector fundamentally supports the principle behind CIL and would encourage government not to reinvent the wheel with the introduction of a single unified tariff.</li> <li>• This is issue particularly urgent because part of the framework of incentives for development and housing supply and crucial to delivering infrastructure to support housing.</li> </ul>



**Other issues**

**4. *Presumption in favour of sustainable development***

<b>Current Government position</b>	<b>Suggested LGA position</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Conservative planning green paper mentions introducing “a presumption in favour of sustainable development”, so it would no longer be necessary to prove there is a need for a proposed development.</li><li>• Where a planning application is in line with the local plan, accompanied by a local tariff payment and, for larger schemes, is a result of appropriate consultation, the development would automatically receive planning permission. (Open Source Planning, page 11)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The pro-sustainable development bias is a good principle. How this presumption is implemented in practice will largely depend on how 'sustainable development' is defined, but different interpretations could lead to delay.</li></ul>



**5. Strengthening enforcement / Compulsory pre-application discussions**

Current Government Position	Suggested LGA Group Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Conservative planning green paper mentions giving local planning authorities “new enforcement powers to tackle planning applications that, having been granted, turn out to be substantially misleading.” (Open source Planning, page 11)</li> <li><b>Compulsory pre-application discussions</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving local authorities’ ability to enforce misuse of the local planning system is welcome; however it would be more effective to build in safeguards at the front end of the process to avoid the problems.</li> <li>Early discussions between developers and planning officers provide an opportunity to steer projects in the right form that will be attractive to the community and acceptable to the local planning authority.</li> <li>This is a common sense approach; however it will not be appropriate for all situations. LGA would prefer a based on local discretion</li> </ul>

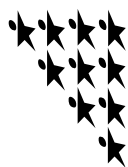
**6. Appeals reform**

Current Government Position	Suggested LGA group position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will reform the existing planning appeals system. Firstly, we will make the system symmetrical by allowing appeals against local planning decisions from local residents, as well as from developers. Furthermore, we will limit the grounds for appeal against a local planning permission to just two: that correct procedure was not followed in assessing the application, or that the decision reached is in contravention of the local plan. (Open Source Planning, page 7)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streamlining and limiting the scope of the current appeals could potentially reduce number of appeals and encourage greater levels of public participation at an earlier stage</li> <li>Similarly, limiting the ability of inspectors to overturn local decision will improve local accountability.</li> <li>However it remains important to press the Government to introduce a proper framework requiring developers to fund council costs.</li> </ul>

**7. Flexible Zoning / Use Classes Order**

Current Government Position:	Suggested LGA Group Position:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will amend the <b>Use Classes Order</b> so that people can freely (i.e. without planning permission) change the use of buildings within a range allowed by the local community in its local plan. We will retain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councils should be able to decide whether or not to waive this requirement.</li> </ul>





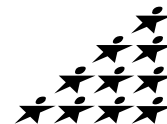
## Appendix A

<p>the current categorisation of uses...but allow councils to specify in their local plans the kinds of use they are content to permit for the buildings and land in each given part of their area. (Open Source Planning, page 6)</p>	
<p><b>8. Schools</b></p> <p><b>Current Government Position</b></p> <p>Land in education use would be given specific protection. Applications for new schools are considered to be a special case and would be determined nationally via the Secretary of State and short planning inquiries. (Open Source Planning, page 17)</p>	<p><b>Suggested LGA Group Position:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We should not support this proposal. The proposal for development of new schools to be excluded from the locally accountable planning regime is complicated and appears to be at odds with the fundamental principles of localism advanced by the coalition.</li> <li>• It could result in unsuitable buildings being developed as schools and have wider impacts on the local economy and community (for example, impact on congestion caused by the school run).</li> </ul>

## References

- Open Source Planning Green Paper, Policy Green Paper 14 (Feb, 2010), [http://www.conservatives.com/news/news\\_stories/2010/02/new\\_homes\\_and\\_jobs\\_through\\_open\\_source\\_planning.aspx](http://www.conservatives.com/news/news_stories/2010/02/new_homes_and_jobs_through_open_source_planning.aspx)
- Control Shift: Returning Power to Local Communities, Responsibility Agenda, Policy Green Paper No.9 (Feb, 2009), <http://www.conservatives.com/~media/Files/Green%20Papers/Localism-Policy-Paper.aspx?dl=true>
- The Coalition: our programme for government (Cabinet Office, May 2010) <http://programmeforgovernment.hmg.gov.uk/files/2010/05/coalition-programme.pdf>





5 July 2010

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## **Waste Review: LGA Policy Position**

### **Summary**

On 15<sup>th</sup> June the new Defra Secretary of State, Caroline Spelman MP, announced that the Government would undertake a full review of waste policy in England. The Government will also announce the findings of its spending review this year which will have an impact on the waste services that council's can provide.

The Environment Board is therefore asked to consider LGA Group Waste policy in light of this review of policy and Spending Review; as well as how the LGA Group can influence these two processes.

### **Recommendations**

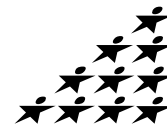
Members are asked to consider and agree the LGA Group's key issues for discussion with Government as listed below.

### **Action**

Members and officers to use the Group's new key issues in discussions with Government and other stakeholders.

Contact Officer: Clive Harris  
Phone No: 0207 664 3207  
Email: [clive.harris@lga.gov.uk](mailto:clive.harris@lga.gov.uk)





## **LGA Group Waste Policy Position**

### **Context**

1. Domestic waste policy in the England and Wales is heavily driven by Europe, with the existing policy system based on the 'waste hierarchy', a large number of targets, landfill tax, LATS and a clear division between arrangements for the collection and disposal of municipal and commercial and industrial (C&I) waste. There is a largely voluntaristic approach to the private sector and waste minimisation.
2. The Coalition document, *Together Approved*, contains the following paragraph on waste: "We will work towards a 'zero waste' economy, encourage councils to pay people to recycle, and work to reduce littering." There is also a specific reference to the role of waste with regards to energy and climate change: "We will introduce measures to promote a huge increase in energy from waste through anaerobic digestion."
3. Defra Secretary of State Caroline Spelman has announced that her department will undertake a review "*of all existing waste policies*". It was made clear that this review will require extensive input from the local government sector and it is therefore important that the Environment Board considers its key policy positions when engaging with Defra at both the Ministerial and officer level.
4. The Government will also announce the results of a Spending Review in the autumn and waste, along with every other area of local authority business, can expect to see significant reductions in funding.

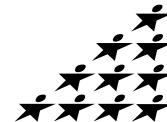
### **Key issues**

5. Below are the key issues that have been identified in discussions with local authority waste officers that we ask the Board to consider:
6. The LGA would like to see the Government acknowledge that councils face an unsustainable 'crunch' – either they pay the costs of increasing recycling and energy from waste or they pay increased landfill tax if they don't manage to increase recycling.
7. There are six inter-related problems which have to be tackled to ensure progress towards zero waste is maintained by local authorities:
  - If we do not increase investment in waste infrastructure, then targets to reduce use of landfill cannot be met
  - In consequence, the government of the day will face heavy European Union fines in 2020, of up to £180,000,000 a year



## **Local Government Association**

- We need more investment in infrastructure which provides for recycling and reuse of materials such as glass, metals, paper and different types of plastic; for processing of food and green waste; and for energy from waste facilities
  - Financial pressures on councils created by the landfill tax escalator, without arrangements to reinvest the proceeds into the waste sector, are currently a barrier to finding money for this capital investment
  - A zero waste approach increases the underlying costs of dealing with waste, and this is putting pressure on council budgets and on residents' council tax bills
  - The landfill tax is adding to the costs of waste disposal for businesses.
8. Municipal waste is only about 10% of all waste. Landfill tax is payable on waste collected from businesses as well as households. Currently, **commercial and industrial waste** is handled separately from municipal waste, and this service is paid for directly. In some places, the council provides this trade waste collection service, in others, the private sector. As landfill tax escalates, the charges to businesses increase; a particular burden for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Councils could be interested in extending their services, and providing more recycling facilities geared to businesses, if it did not expose them to higher landfill tax on residual waste. Better public investment in waste infrastructure would help SMEs, whether the infrastructure was public or private. This change in policy would be beneficial to local economies.
9. Although municipal waste only makes up 10% of the overall waste stream, it is important that **partnerships with the private sector** are developed to deal with this waste. At present, waste infrastructure is funded by councils either as part of its general capital programme, funded by prudential borrowing, where it is competing for resources with schools, roads, sports facilities, libraries and other public service buildings; or through Waste Private Finance Initiative credits: a PFI scheme provided by Defra. No further PFI credits are currently available. Other partnerships with the private sector are funded through higher council revenue spending. The current arrangements are not providing sufficient investment and new initiatives are needed.
10. When **landfill tax** was first introduced in 1996, the government committed to using its proceeds to invest back into the costs of dealing with waste. This no longer happens. The tax raised £420 million in its first year of operation. It is estimated to raise £1 billion in 2008-9. In the case of municipal waste, this is money taken directly from councils, challenging their scope to invest in new infrastructure. Whilst the LGA accepts that the Government will not be able to unravel this in the short-term, we ask that they commit to a review of landfill tax arrangements.
11. In order to meet landfill targets and move towards zero waste, local authorities need increased **investment in infrastructure**. We call for the Green Investment Bank (as announced in the budget on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June) to prioritise waste treatment and ensure that the prioritisation of capital spending in



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Spending Review gives proper weight to waste facilities. Complex waste infrastructure has long lead in times; PFI projects investigated by the National Audit Office took five to nine years to come into use. We need to act now to ensure the proceeds of landfill tax are invested in reducing landfill use in future.

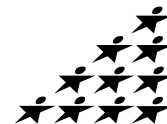
12. Currently there is a plethora of tools being used to try and influence councils on this issue: landfill tax, LATS, measurement via the National Indicator Set, Local Area Agreement targets. These do not necessarily create the right, most energy efficient incentives. Landfill tax at £72 a tonne will drive change. Time and resources do not need to be wasted on other policy instruments. We therefore ask the government to introduce **a clearer, simpler framework of incentives**.
13. At present, **energy from waste**, including combined heat and power schemes, provide the largest source of alternative energy generation. Our future energy security, and commitment to carbon reduction, needs more emphasis on realising the energy potential of waste. This is an industry of the future, and currently many contracts are going to firms from other European countries, despite Britain's tradition of engineering excellence. This is an opportunity to be seized. New approaches such as green bonds, a green investment bank, or access to resources of the European Investment Bank need to be considered.
14. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles, recently announced that he was writing to the Audit Commission, telling them to repeal guidance to local authorities on the frequency of bin collections. The LGA will continue to monitor this situation.
15. WRAP is the government-funded body responsible for providing **support and improvement** to local authorities on waste, plus Improvement and Efficiency South East (IESE), providing support on behalf of Defra. Local authorities need support, especially with regards to finding efficiency savings, but questions remain as to the future of the current support and improvement arrangements. The Group will need to develop a position on how support and improvement arrangements should be developed in the future.

### **Early indicators**

16. The LGA Chairman, Cllr Dame Margaret Eaton has met with the Secretary of State who was sympathetic to the LGA Group position on **schedule 2** waste and the consultation on **landfill bans** that was published by the previous government.

### **Financial Implications**

17. Whilst there are no financial implications for the LGA Group there are of course significant budgetary issues for member authorities. Waste services cost local authorities over £3.1bn in 2008-9 and are expected to increase to £4.2bn by



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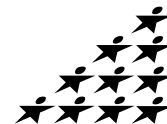
2013. Apart from education and social care, waste collection and disposal is the biggest area of council spending.

## **Implications for Wales**

18. Defra's review of waste policy applies to England only. The Spending Review does however apply to Wales and we will work with the WLGA to ensure consistent messages are developed.

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5 July 2010

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## **Housing**

### **Summary**

The new government's ambitious and localist policy agenda for housing and planning, combined with the reductions in spending announced in the Budget and before, are set to make housing one of the liveliest and most challenging areas of the Group's business over the coming year.

This report outlines proposed policy positions on key elements of the housing agenda and provides an update on LGA work on these issues.

### **Recommendations**

Members are invited to give views on issues and policy positions covered in the report, and in particular:

- Comment on the impact of proposed reform to Housing Benefit (paras 5 – 11)
- Comment on and approve outline report on planning and funding for infrastructure (paras 12- 17)
- Approve the policy position on reform of council housing finance set out at (paras 21-29)

### **Action**

Officers to take forward work programme in light of member's comment

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## **Implications of spending cuts and emergency budget 2010 on housing**

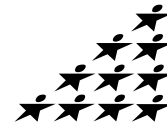
1. On 24 May, the government announced £6.2bn reductions to public spending in 2010/11. This included reduction to the Homes and Communities Agency's as follows budget as follows:

Programme	Amount
Housing Market Renewal (investment in areas of low housing demand in Midlands and North)	£50m
Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant	£30m
Kickstart (grants to private developers to move stalled schemes)	£50m
National Affordable Housing Programme (grants to housing associations for new homes)	£100m

2. Following these initial reductions, the Treasury also announced that the £610 m of planned and agreed funding for the HCA, through End Year Flexibility arrangements in summer 2009, could no longer be regarded as secure. The HCA subsequently announced that it would freeze all uncommitted expenditure and requested all those due to receive the funding to do likewise. This included the remaining unallocated Affordable Housing budget, the bulk of the Kickstart 2 schemes and a number of Local Authority New Build schemes where legal agreements have not been confirmed.
3. The Government's intention was that decisions over the £610 million would be resolved by the 22 June Budget. This was not however forthcoming and at the time of writing, no decisions have yet been announced.
4. In the budget on 22 June, the Chancellor announced reform of the Housing Benefit system (see below). He also confirmed that there would be no further reductions in capital funding above those announced by the previous government, which will see capital spending drop from £44 billion to £22 billion in 2014. The budget also included proposals for a Regional Growth Fund to provide capital finance for regional capital projects over the next two years. The fund will incorporate existing housing, transport, regeneration and other funding streams into on "pot" which is expected to be distributed in part through formula and in part through a bidding process.

### **Housing benefit reform**

5. The 2010 emergency budget also included the announcement of reforms aimed at saving £1.8bn in housing and council tax benefit costs. The proposals are summarised below.

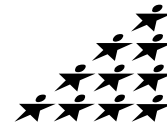


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6. The majority of the measures affect the private sector—local housing allowance (LHA). From April 2011 there will be new upper limits for the maximum LHA payments; the maximum payable will be £400 a week for a 4 bedroom property or larger. The removal of the £15 excess will also go ahead. From October 2011 rents will be set based on the lowest thirty percent of the market in each of the Broad Rental Market Areas, rather than on the median, that is the rent at the mid point. From April 2013 the Government propose to update LHA rates in line with the Consumer Price Index rather than market rents; this will require primary legislation.
7. Other measures requiring primary legislation also affect housing benefit customers in the social housing sector. This includes limiting housing benefit in the social rented sector if the size of the household is smaller than is appropriate to the property occupied. And Housing Benefit for those customers who are also claiming jobseekers' allowance will be reduced by 10% after 12 months on JSA.
8. In addition there will be a steeper rate of deductions in housing or council tax benefit to take account of non-dependants such as adult children, relatives or friends who live with benefit customers. This has not risen in line with rises in rents or council tax and the government now propose that it should rise in stages from April 2011 to April 2014 to reach the point where it would have been had it so risen.
9. Finally there are two measures where the government is planning to provide more money. In local housing allowance, the size criteria will take account of the need of disabled customers for overnight care. And the government will increase the sum allocated by Government for Discretionary Housing Payments, currently at £20m by £10 million in 2011 and by £40 million a year thereafter. The government stated that this is aimed at giving more flexibility to local authorities to help a greater number of new and existing customers who face a shortfall in rent because of changes to the Housing Benefit rules.
10. The Government also announced its intention to make changes to the way mortgage interest costs are paid for and has decided to apply the Bank of England published average mortgage rate as the standard interest rate from October. The Bank of England published average mortgage rate is currently 3.67%.

## **Planning and funding for infrastructure**

11. Tackling the deficit through reducing public spending is the top priority of the new government. The LGA group business plan identifies as a key lobbying priority the need to ensure that investment in infrastructure (including housing) continues to avoid deterioration of existing networks and increasing capacity to support economic recovery and growth.



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12. LGA officers and advisors are developing proposals for a different approach to planning and funding for infrastructure that will ensure necessary investment when there is less public money available. This will result in a report planned for publication in early summer. The draft executive summary is included as a confidential annex to this report. Members are asked for comment on and approve the outline report.
13. In summary, the work will make the case for:
  - continued investment in infrastructure (including housing)
  - planning and investment decisions to be locally driven
  - innovative new models for funding and delivery of infrastructure at the local level
14. In setting out the case for investment in infrastructure, the work will:
  - Examine current and predicted trends for investment in infrastructure and the roles of local and central government and the private sector.
  - Present evidence on why investment in infrastructure is crucial to supporting economic growth, delivering quality public services and meeting our environmental commitments.
15. The proposals will demonstrate how better alignment of planning and investment decisions will result in more efficient use of public sector funding. This will involve:
  - Moving away from the current centralised and fragmented approach to investment;
  - Devolving capital budgets, cutting out waste from administration of numerous funding streams and enabling efficient targeting of funding locally
  - Improving appraisal systems to provide better capture the costs and benefits of investment, enable better coordination and integration of investment at local level;
  - Giving councils powers to plan and co-ordinate infrastructure delivery at the sub-regional level;
  - Improving the planning system to make it more efficient and responsive to local needs and priorities;
  - Putting in place effective incentives for housing supply and development, including financial incentives trailed in “open source planning” and commitment to local development tariffs.
16. The report will argue that existing models of providing capital need to be supplemented with new mechanisms of raising investment locally. This will explore potential models and options for locally raised finance, borrowing against assets and future revenue streams and leveraging in private investment.



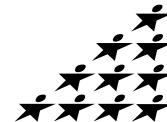
## **CLG / LGA Commission on Councils' role in new housing development**

17. In March, CLG and LGA appointed Lord Richard Best to lead a commission to look at councils' role in new housing development. The group was set up to examine scope for a stronger role for councils in facilitating and delivering new housing supply. The terms of reference and list of commission members are attached in annex B to this report. Cllr Dame Margaret Eaton, Lord Best and Grant Shapps are meeting to discuss the commission's work so far and how it can help inform to the new government's policy agenda on housing.
18. The commission has carried out an extensive programme of visits to councils across the country to look at councils role in housing delivery on the ground. So far the commission has visited Leeds, Wiltshire, Westminster, Croydon, Basingstoke & Deane, Cambridge, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Newham, Hackney and Greenwich. Further visits are planned to Birmingham, Nottingham, Derby, Leicester, Exeter and Bristol. In addition, the commission has held a series of discussion with key parties from the housing sector.
19. The commission is due to report jointly to CLG and the LGA in September.

## **Housing Finance Reform**

### **Background**

20. In March the Board received a report on our work to pursue self financing for local authority housing. Since this report Members will be aware that the then Housing Minister, the Rt. Hon John Healey MP launched a further Government consultation paper on HRA reform at the end of March. The paper entitled *Council housing: a real future - prospectus* sets out the Government's proposals for debt allocation and the devolved self financing model.
21. The consultation closes on the 6 July 2010 and councils have been encouraged to respond to this consultation.
22. Many councils have expressed a concern that this consultation would be lost as a result of the election. However, the new Housing Minister has committed to taking this consultation forward. Describing the current system of council house finance as a mess Mr Shapps said the Coalition Government would review the unfair Housing Revenue Account subsidy system.
23. Mr. Shapps has pledged to continue the consultation on self-financing system and has urged councils and other partners to respond to this so he could get a comprehensive assessment of the options currently on the table. Following thorough analysis of responses the Minister will then announce whether the current proposal will be taken forward in part or in full, or whether an alternative model will be considered.



## ***Local Government Association***

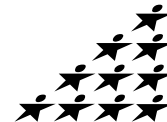
24. The LGA has been working to encourage member councils to respond to the consultation. During May the LGA working with the Chartered Institute of Housing held a series of regional seminars with over 80 authorities attending. Feedback from these seminars has been positive and most attendees have indicated that they are interesting in accepting the proposals in the current consultation. Though obviously, there are issues and improvements that they would like to make.
25. The LGA's response to the consultation has been circulated separately to this report but Members are asked to note that the response highlights the issues that we have consistently campaigned for in our lobbying for self financing. Most notably, we are saying:
  - a. that we welcome self financing as a means for councils to properly fund and plan their housing services;
  - b. that self financing will allow councils to produce new housing for their communities;
  - c. that the Decent Homes backlog should be properly financed;
  - d. that allowances should reflect those identified in the research undertaken for the review;
  - e. that aids and adaptations money should be identified and made available to councils;
  - f. that we believe that the Prudential Code is sufficiently rigorous and we do not need additional caps on borrowing;
  - g. that we want to work with Government to look at the viability of removing housing debt from the PSBR.

### **Issues for Members**

26. Members are asked to comment on and agree the LGA response to the consultation.

### **Tenant Services Authority**

27. Grant Shapps MP, the Housing Minister has announced that the Tenant Services Authority (TSA), as part of the Coalition Government's economy and efficiency drive, will be disbanded.
28. The TSA is the regulator for tenants and was set up to provide tenants with a body that could call landlords to account where services were considered to be below acceptable standards.
29. It is the Minister's intention that the functions of the TSA will be split between the Homes and Communities Agency (taking on financial regulation) and the Housing Ombudsman (taking on tenant standards issues).



***Local Government Association***

30. The proposals to disband the TSA are likely to form part of the Decentralisation and Localism Bill that will be presented to Parliament in the autumn.
31. We propose that we develop proposals for Members' approval about how some of the space occupied by TSA's service standards could be filled by locally and tenant-led processes of scrutiny and challenge.

### **Financial Implications**

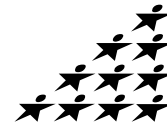
32. There are no financial implications at this stage.

### **Implications for Wales**

33. There are no direct implications for Wales from this report. However, Wales is undertaking a review of the HRA in Wales.

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## **CLG / LGA Commission on the Council Role in New Housebuilding**

### **Purpose**

To examine the scope for further development of the council role and capacity to facilitate and deliver new housing supply to meet local housing needs to sustain economic growth in the context of changing market conditions.

### **Context**

Local authorities have a key role to play in facilitating and bringing about economic recovery and sustainable growth in their areas, in particular through their housing roles. The landscape in delivering housing is changing rapidly: we need to consider different methods of finance, delivery and partnership to meet the challenge of today's economic conditions; the HCA as a new delivery body is developing a new approach to place-making involving a single conversation with local authorities to influence and help shape its interventions in local areas; financing for council housing could be radically reformed on a self financing basis; and with local authorities themselves having a strategic responsibility and increasingly looking to bring their own resources to bear in providing housing themselves and with other parties.

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **In the context of sustaining economic growth and changing market conditions:**

- Examine the extent to which councils have the tools to enable and facilitate delivery of new house building (directly or through others) within their current powers and responsibilities. As part of this, identify barriers to delivery and explore the incentives for delivery.
- Assess councils' appetite for and achievements in leading on, delivering, or working in partnership to bring about new housing of all tenures and how this could develop in future.
- Consider ways of using local authority assets and land to deliver house building in partnership with the private sector, housing associations and local people themselves

- Examine capacity within councils to lead on development and advise how councils' knowledge and skills for delivering and facilitating development can be strengthened further.

### **Working method**

Commission – jointly appointed and supported by CLG and LGA Group, with support from HCA, and will be composed of relevant independent experts and Chaired by Lord Richard Best. It will be able to commission analytical work as its members determine. CLG to provide secretariat and resources to support its work.

### **Timing**

Report to CLG/LGA by Summer 2010.

## **Members**

### **Chair**

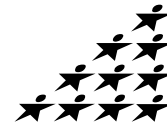
Lord Richard Best	President, Local Government Association
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### **Members**

Gillian Beasley	Chief Executive, Peterborough City Council
Steve Douglas	Director, douglaswood and former Chief Executive, Housing Corporation
Jamie Kerr	Director of Regeneration and Education, John Laing Projects and Developments
Mike Owen	Special Housing Adviser, Cornwall Council
Nick Raynsford MP	
Joanne Roney OBE	Chief Executive, Wakefield Council
Barry Rowland	Chief Executive, Newcastle City Council
Tony Travers	Director, LSE London
Steve Wilcox	Centre for Housing Policy, University of York

### **Ex-officio**

CLG  
LGA  
HCA



5 July 2010

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## **Update on other Board Business**

### **Summary**

- Cllr Gary Porter's reports to the LGA Executive for June (**attached**)
- Report from the Inland Flood Risk Management Group (**Annex A**)
- Members' Feedback
- Any other Business
  - *A clean bill of health* - LACORS publication for Members (**Annex B**)

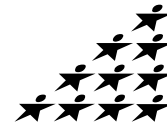
### **Recommendations**

Members to note the reports.

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

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## **Environment Board - report from Cllr Gary Porter (Chairman) June 2010**

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### **Incoming Government**

The key priorities of the Government, deficit reduction, centralisation and being "the greenest Government ever" will all have a major impact on environment and housing issues. Already we are seeing:

- reductions in central government spending, with £230m reduction in HCA capital investment in the current financial year, with a further £610m understood to be at risk;
- some initial announcements on planning, notably the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies;
- an undertaking in the Coalition Document to "review the unfair Housing Revenue Account";
- incoming DECC Ministers want to make rapid progress on the Green Deal. Meetings are booked or being sought with all the relevant Ministers.

### **Lord Best Commission on Councils' role in Housing Development**

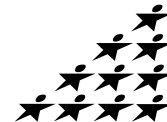
In April, the LGA and CLG jointly asked Lord Richard Best, to chair a commission looking at the potential for a stronger role for councils in supporting new housing development. Other members of the commission are drawn from across the housing and local government sector. The commission aims to:

- Examine the extent to which councils have the tools to enable and facilitate delivery of house building (directly or through others) within their current powers and responsibilities. As part of this, identify barriers to delivery and explore the incentives for delivery.
- Assess what councils are achieving in leading on, delivering, or working in partnership to bring about new housing of all tenures and how this could develop in future.
- Consider ways of using local authority assets and land to deliver house building in partnership with the private sector, housing associations and local people themselves.
- Advise how councils' knowledge and skills for delivering and facilitating development can be strengthened further.

The commission team aims to report to CLG and LGA with recommendations in September 2010.

### **Flood Risk Management**

To support a new lead role for authorities in managing local flood risk, and to gather opinions from around the country in line with Getting Closer, the LGA has set up a new Inland Flood Risk Management Group, linked to the LGA Environment Board and chaired by Cllr Mike Haines. Information will be available on the Community of Practice on Flood Risk: <http://www.communities.idea.gov.uk/c/2050378/home.do>



## ***Local Local Government Association***

### **LGA Group response to Consultation on PPS: Planning for a low carbon future in a changing climate**

The LGA Group has submitted a response to the government's consultation on a new draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS) supplement to PPS1 entitled 'Planning for a Low Carbon Future in a Changing Climate'. This consultation document brings together and updates the previous Planning and Climate Change supplement to PPS1 with the 2004 PPS22 on Renewable Energy into a new draft PPS which will become a consolidated supplement to PPS1. In summary we welcome the focus upon renewable energy sharing opportunities for local authorities and the increased prominence of adaptation policy. However, we have also highlighted a number of inconsistencies within the draft policy and have offered solutions we deem to be fairer to both local authorities and prospective developers. The LGA group has also underscored its commitment to work with government to develop a collaborative approach to planning policy and delivery.

**Local Carbon Frameworks:** An event was held on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> May in Birmingham with the nine local carbon framework research pilots. The event demonstrated the extent to which councils across the country are already addressing climate change and enabling their residents to reduce their emissions and fuel bills. The councils also set out how they could improve their work on climate change, if they were given greater freedoms and flexibilities, better access to data, and more support on determining the most cost effective actions. We are awaiting confirmation from Government on the continuation of their support to enable the research pilot councils to continue developing a realistic and workable framework that other councils can use to account for, fund and deliver local carbon reduction programmes. We will be having a session on local carbon frameworks at the LGA Annual Conference in July.

We have submitted our response to the Government consultation on **allowing local authorities to sell electricity**. Currently, councils are unable to take full advantage of the new feed-in tariff scheme for renewables, because they cannot claim the export tariff element, only the use-tariff. This is because the Local Government Act 1976 prohibits councils from selling electricity when generated without the generation of heat – from, for example, wind turbines and solar panels. This only applies to councils, so businesses, housing associations and other public bodies can be paid for the energy they export to the grid, but not councils. This is completely unacceptable, so the LGA is strongly recommending that the situation is addressed as soon as possible.

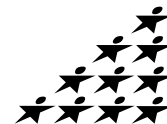
### **Environment Board Meeting held 26 May**

The LGA's Environment Board discussed the LGA Group's offer from local government to the new Coalition. A note of the meeting is at:

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelId=11275504>

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## **Report from Inland Flood Risk Management Group**

### **Background**

1. The LGA's new Inland Flood Risk Management Group met on 24 May for the first time since the Board confirmed the Terms of Reference in March.
2. The Group is chaired by Cllr Mike Haines and will comprise:
  - 4 Board members (Cllr Haines; Cllr Bateman; Cllr Turner; Cllr Gravells)
  - 2 members from each of the English regions and Wales.
  - Chair of LGA Coastal Issues SIG (Cllr Roger Thomas)
3. Most of the regional representatives have now been appointed. The Group will be supported by an Officer Network, currently being set up. Information about the Group, agendas and minutes will be posted on the Community of Practice on Flood Risk: <http://www.communities.idea.gov.uk/c/2050378/home.do>

### **4. Issues and Concerns**

At the May meeting, the Group raised the following local authority concerns:

- Need for all areas to offer a consistent level of service on flood risk and a consistent approach (e.g. on flood wardens)
- LAs need a timetable for commencement of Floods Act to support progress
- Flood risk management may slip down the political agenda given current financial situation and where there has been no recent flooding
- Financial situation is now very difficult - concern about future budget cuts
- High expectations on LAs - how to prioritise funding?
- How to help areas that don't qualify for flood defence schemes
- Smaller schemes can deliver significant impacts for modest investment
- Lack of capacity, very few engineers and training courses
- Scrapping of Regional Spatial Strategies may undermine recent progress

## 5. **Lobbying priorities**

- Ensure better guidance for LAs from Defra
- Promote good partnerships with EA /Defra as well as between LAs / regions
- Secure better dialogue with water companies at CEX level
- Ensure better dissemination of good practice and learning from recent studies on e.g. soil compaction and farming practices /land use
- Ensure Defra are including professional bodies in addressing capacity issues
- How to implement Pitt/Act when authorities lack expert staff?
- Secure guidance on where LAs need to prioritise resources and effort
- Support joint working with EA, consultancies, Water Cos, across regions
- Clarify liability of members in delivering local flood risk management

## 6. **Work programme for the year ahead**

- Officer Network to develop work on:
  - A framework for developing the local strategy
  - Promoting a consistent level of service
  - Collaboration and joint working to address capacity issues
  - Clarifying the liability of members
- LGA policy staff to:
  - invite water industry to next Group meeting (18 October 10.30-12.30)

Contact Officer: Vanessa Goodchild-Bradley  
Tel: 020 7664 3291  
Email: [vanessa.goodchildbradley@lga.gov.uk](mailto:vanessa.goodchildbradley@lga.gov.uk)



## **LGA Inland Flood Risk Management Group members**

### **LGA Environment Board**

Chair: Cllr Mike Haines, Teignbridge DC  
Cllr Derek Bateman, Cheshire West and Chester  
Cllr Bernie Turner, Liverpool CC  
Cllr Andrew Gravells, Gloucestershire CC

### **LGA Coastal Issues Special Interest Group**

Cllr Roger Thomas, East Sussex CC

### **East Midlands:**

Cllr Doreen Stephenson, Leader, East Lindsey District Council  
Cllr Eddy Poll, Lincolnshire County Council

### **East of England:**

Cllr Tricia Turner, Central Bedfordshire  
Cllr Tracey Chapman, Essex County Council

### **North East:**

Cllr Terry Laing, Stockton BC  
Cllr Martin Gannon, Gateshead MBC

### **Wales:**

Cllr Keith Evans, Leader, Ceredigion Council  
Awaiting confirmation of 2<sup>nd</sup> representative

### **Yorkshire and Humber:**

Cllr Arthur Barker, Hambleton DC  
Awaiting confirmation of 2<sup>nd</sup> representative (end June)

### **West Midlands:**

Cllr Phillip Grove, Malvern Hills DC  
Cllr Anna Mackison, Wychavon DC

### **South East:**

Cllr Peter Gardiner, Lewes DC  
Cllr Geoffrey Woodger, Runnymede BC

### **South West:**

Cllr Peter Bowden, Devon CC  
Cllr Gordon Hook, Devon CC

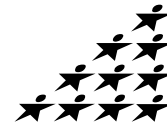
**North West:** Awaiting confirmation of members (June/July)

**London:** Awaiting confirmation of members (June/July)

### **Officers:**

Richard Wills, Lincolnshire will chair an Officer Network of around 20 advisers. An annual event will be open to all officers and members.





## **A clean bill of health: how councils' environmental protection work improves health**

Pollution is a significant factor in ill health – it reduces life expectancy and it perpetuates health inequalities. Councils and their partners play a crucial role in reducing pollution, but further progress is needed to protect communities. A new publication for councillors from LACORS, “A clean bill of health”, builds on these points. Evidence shows, for example, that air pollution can shorten a person’s life by about 10 years, which is as hazardous as being severely obese or smoking for a lifetime. Research also shows that around 35,000 people in the UK died prematurely in 2005 as a result of exposure to air pollution – comparable to the annual number of deaths obesity contributes to. Chemicals and other pollutants in industrial land can also seriously harm adults, children and unborn babies.

The publication makes the point that tackling pollution should be considered alongside other important local health issues such as reducing smoking, healthy eating and exercise. It summarises, for councillors and other local decision makers, the health effects of pollution and what councils and their partners can do to improve the health of their communities. It also gives examples of councils that have put pollution reduction to improve health into practice and what else can be done. The document is available here:

<http://www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors/ViewDocument.aspx?docID=23824&docType=C>





5 July 2010

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## **Decisions and actions from previous Meeting, 26 May 2010**

### **Present**

<b>Chair:</b>	Cllr Gary Porter (South Holland DC)
<b>Vice-Chair:</b>	Cllr Linda Thomas (Bolton MBC)
<b>Deputy Chairs:</b>	Mayor Dorothy Thornhill (Liberal Democrat, Watford BC); Cllr Mike Haines (Independent, Teignbridge DC)
<b>Conservative:</b>	Cllr Andrew Gravells (Gloucestershire CC and Gloucester City); Cllr David Potts (South Tyneside MBC); Cllr Clare Whelan (Lambeth LBC); Cllr Jason Stacey (Ealing LBC)
<b>Labour:</b>	Cllr Derek Bateman (Cheshire West and Chester Council); Cllr Tony Newman (Croydon LBC); Cllr Ed Turner (Oxford City Council)
<b>Lib Democrat:</b>	Cllr Paula Baker (Basingstoke and Deane BC)
<b>Substitute:</b>	Cllr Richard Williams (Labour, Southampton)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Cllr Peter Britcliffe (Hyndburn BC); Cllr Berni Turner (Liverpool City Council)
<b>LGA Group Officers:</b>	Martin Wheatley; Jennifer Watson; Caroline Green; Greg Taylor; Corin Thomson; Clive Harris; Fatima de Abreu (LGA)
<b>Observer:</b>	Cllr Lorna Campbell (Lambeth LBC)

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Members supported Cllr Porter's congratulations for Ian Mearns, previous Member of the Board, on his election as Member of Parliament for Gateshead.

#### **Action:**

- Officers to draft letter of congratulations to Ian Mearns MP for the Chairman's signature.

**Greg Taylor**

### **2. General Election 2010 – Key Issues for the first 6 months of a new Government**

Introducing the discussion, Martin Wheatley drew particular attention, among the Ministerial appointments of greatest interest to the Board, to the reconfiguration of Ministerial roles in CLG in which Grant Shapps is leading on housing, and Greg Clark on planning, alongside his wider brief on decentralisation.

A number of key announcements had happened since the election or are in train, including the formal coalition agreement, the £6.2billion savings package announced on 24 May, and an emergency Budget on 22 June. LGA had made an offer to the incoming Government emphasising the scope for achieving necessary reductions in public spending by increasing local discretion about how public money is spent locally.



## ***Local Government Association***

The Board agreed that, among the issues of most interest to the Board, the top priorities were housing finance, planning and waste. In discussion, the following points were made:

### Housing

- An immediate and urgent need to push for self-financing and ensure councils' capacity and capability to do this;
- The need to keep an eye on the scale and impact of likely reductions in HCA's capital programme;
- The importance of understanding regional impacts of HRA reform and other shifts in funding;
- Important to maintain focus on the private rented sector.

### Planning

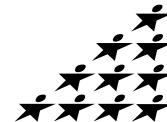
- While the council sector was likely to be broadly welcoming of the Government's devolutionary approach, the same was not true of business and other stakeholders, and it would be important to promote the case for devolution and councils' ability to manage well in a devolved system;
- Some Members were concerned that the Government's approach could risk losing the benefits they saw in current regional plans and processes ;
- If the abolition of the Infrastructure Planning Commission resulted in delay or discontinuation of major projects, there could be significant local adverse impacts. However, the Chair of the IPC had written round widely explaining that the likely position was for a single national, streamlined, process for big projects to continue, supported by a Major Development Unit, on the basis of whose work Ministers would take decisions;
- It remained important to press the Government to introduce a proper framework for developer funding for councils' role in major developments;
- Concern was expressed at the possibility of removing the need for planning permission for change of use classes. It was suggested that the LGA's position should be that councils should be able to decide whether or not to waive this requirement;
- The proposed weakening of the ability of inspectors both to alter local plans and overturn individual development control decisions was significant.

### Waste

- The coalition agreement puts a strong emphasis on anaerobic digestion but it is extremely costly, and if this aspiration is to be achieved the cost issues will need to be overcome;
- Need to maintain a strong focus on waste reduction.

Members requested a note on what is happening to Regional Development Agencies.

The Board noted the considerable performance and improvement challenges which the financial situation and changing policy would create.



### **Decision**

- The Board **noted** the report.

### **Actions**

- Officers to reflect members' comments in taking forward lobbying priorities for the Board and to provide updates as they are available. **LGA Officers**
- Officers to circulate geographical map of regional impacts of changes in housing finance. **Clive Harris**

## **3. EU Commission work programme 2010/11**

Jennifer Watson (LGA) updated members on the European Commission's work programme for 2010 and potential impacts on local government.

Members were pleased that the European Commission would not be pushing for separate legislation on biowaste. In addition, they welcomed calls for a more holistic approach to the management of municipal and non-municipal wastes.

Regarding the EU work programme, members said there was an opportunity to present suggestions in relation to forthcoming proposals to ensure that any future legislative steps are appropriate to councils' needs. They felt that some issues remained around communicating EU initiatives in terms of identifying the relevance and outlining subsequent opportunities for councils.

Ms Watson agreed to provide members with updates and more detailed reports at future meetings.

### **Decision:**

- Members noted the report and **agreed** the actions proposed.

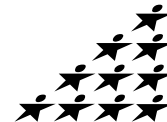
## **4. Environment Programme Board 2010-11**

Corin Thomson (LGA) briefed Members on changes occurring to the LGA Group as part of the *Getting Closer* programme. Key changes for the Environment Board in particular would be a change of name to the Environment and Housing Programme Board and membership from September 2010 would include a representative from LACORs.

She detailed other changes within the group and asked Members to comment on the proposed Environment Programme Plan and to advice on how the LGA Group can better engage with its members. The Board were informed that the new political governance structure will take effect in September, subject to agreement by the General Assembly at their meeting in July

The Board considered the proposals and made the following points:

- They were concerned at the length of time it has taken the Association to get to grips with what they see as a simple matter of building or purchasing, and then maintaining, accurate lists of Members in relevant leadership positions, an essential basic tool for more effective



## **Local Government Association**

communication;

- They agreed that work was needed on how to ensure outward focus be attained and agreed to put forward suggestions for ways of doing this;
- A more strategic approach is needed to membership of outside bodies and external speaking events.

The Board agreed to the proposed format for reducing official Board meetings from six to four a year, and felt that this would provide an opportunity for better engagement in relevant locations at other times, for which LGA Group Officer support would be available.

### **Decision:**

- Members noted the report.

### **Actions:**

- Officers to identify key events / conferences for LGA Group representation and suggest a strategy for consideration at September's meeting

**LGA Officers**

- Officers to collate suggestions on better working from members and provide a report for the July meeting

**Clive Harris**

## **5. Update on other Board Business**

Members noted the Chairman's reports to the LGA Executive for March to May.

Cllr Porter reminded members of the LGA Group Member Induction Day on Friday 3 September. He encouraged them to attend if possible since the governance changes make it as important for longstanding and new Members.

### **Decision:**

- The Board **noted** the report.

## **6. Decisions and actions from previous meeting**

Cllr Tony Newman had given apologies for the previous meeting and asked that these be recorded.

### **Decision:**

- The Board **agreed** the note of the last meeting.

**Date of next meeting: Monday 5 July 2010 at 2pm, Bournemouth Marriot Highcliff Hotel, Bournemouth (to coincide with the LGA Group Conference)**



## Travel Information

**Bournemouth Highcliff Marriot Hotel**  
**St Michaels Road, West Cliff**  
**Bournemouth,**  
**BH2 5DU**  
**Phone: 44 1202 557702**

For Maps of the local area, see

<http://www.marriott.co.uk/hotels/travel/bohbm-bournemouth-highcliff-marriott-hotel/>

### Parking at the Hotel:

- On-site parking, fee: 10 GBP daily
- Off-site parking, fee: 1 GBP hourly
- Limited parking. Subject to availability

### Area Airports:

#### Bournemouth - BOH

- Phone: 44 1202 364000
- Hotel direction: 11.4 km S
- Driving Directions: M3, M27, A31, A338 to Bournemouth. Follow signs to BIC.
- Estimated taxi fare: 10.00 GBP (one way)

#### Southampton Airport - SOU

- Phone: 44 2380 87004000009
- Hotel direction: 56.3 km SW
- Driving Directions: M3, M27, A31, A338 to Bournemouth. Follow signs to BIC

#### Bristol - BRS

- Phone: 44 8713 344444
- Hotel direction: 196.3 km NW
- Driving Directions: A38, A357, A350 to Bournemouth. Follow signs to BIC

## Other Transportation

### Bus Station

- [Bournemouth Station](#)  (1.6 km E)

### Train Station

- [Bournemouth](#)  (1.6 km NE)