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Update on other Board Business

Purpose of report

Members to note the following:

- Cllr Gary Porter's reports to the LGA Executive for July 2010 (**attached**)
- Members' Feedback
- Any other Business

Recommendations

Members to note the reports.

Action

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

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**Environment & Housing
Programme Board**

13 September 2010

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Cllr Gary Porter's reports to the LGA Executive for July 2010

Lord Best Commission on Councils' role in Housing Development

Cllr Margaret Eaton met with Lord Richard Best and Housing Minister, Grant Shapps on 30th June to discuss the work of the CLG/LGA commission on councils' role in house building. The Minister expressed his support for the commission's work and agreed that it has a useful role to play in helping the Government to develop effective policies to support the delivery of new housing. Lord Best is also participating in a session at LGA annual conference which I am chairing to discuss council's role in delivering new homes.

Flood Risk Management

To support the lead role 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, which met on 24 May. This is linked to the LGA Environment Board and chaired by Cllr Mike Haines. The Group will feed expertise and views into the Board and has member representation from all the English regions, Wales and the Board. The Group aims to support communication, learning and progress in all authorities in taking on new responsibilities and is backed up by an officer network. Information on the Group (and the Joint Panel) is available on the Community of Practice on Flood Risk: <http://www.communities.idea.gov.uk/c/2050378/home.do>

Joint Meeting between representatives of the LGA Environment Board and the Environment Agency Sustainable Communities Board Group

On 28th June, Board Members, LGA Officers and I met with the EA to discuss ways of strengthening partnership working and delivery on strategic environment priorities. Discussion included identifying ways in which the EA can help local councils in delivery of key functions around flood risk management and other issues. The group agreed the importance of continued dialogue and that another EA / LGA meeting should be held in 12 months time.

Environment Board Meeting held 5 July 2010

The LGA's Environment Board met in Bournemouth in advance of the LGA Conference and discussed issues around Planning Reform, Housing and the Decentralisation and Localism Bill. After the meeting, Members received a presentation from Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE).

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Members' feedback

Planning Reform Meeting

Planning Portfolio holders for the LGA Environment Board, met on 28th July to discuss forward strategy for LG Group to work with central government, stakeholders and councils to deliver a decentralised planning system. We plan to have a developed strategy in place for autumn 2010.

EU Update

Revision of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (WEEE)

The LGA has been working closely with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and the UK government as the report progresses through the EU institutions. Members of the European Parliament Environment Committee voted on the draft report in July endorsing the LGA position for a full application of the producer pays principle to cover the costs of providing a doorstep collection of household WEEE.

The European Parliament has currently scheduled a plenary for October and we are working with both MEPs and the UK government to further promote our position. It is however expected that the European Parliament and the Council – Member States – will not reach agreement on the negotiations and so discussions will continue into a second reading in 2011.

A detailed update will be brought to a future meeting of the Environment Board after the European Parliament plenary.

Proposals on the Management of Bio waste in the EU

The European Commission – the EU's Executive – announced in May that Member States should continue to use existing legislation such as the Landfill Directive to make progress on reducing bio waste, commonly known as kitchen and garden waste. The Commission nevertheless said it would be looking into the possibility of setting targets for bio waste prevention at a later stage. The LGA's position is against separate legislation and we do not support binding targets for separate bio waste collection.

The European Parliament voted in July to support separate legislation with binding targets but as stated above, this position is not supported by the European Commission. We are continuing to work at the EU and UK levels to promote our message that binding targets could undermine local investment and that councils are best placed to make decisions on the most appropriate solution depending on local circumstances.

Industrial Emissions / IPPC Directive

Local authorities play a vital role in regulating industrial premises and processes in England and Wales under environmental permitting legislation. Members of the

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European Parliament voted in July to approve an agreement reached by European Parliament and Member State negotiators in June which will see stricter limits on emissions levels for large combustion plants. The LG Group worked with MEPs in the run-up to the vote to ensure that local government's role in regulating smaller plants was also recognised and was successful in securing a commitment within the new Directive for the Commission to review the need to control emissions from these smaller operations across Europe. This allows for an informed decision to be made about what controls are proportionate to prevent and control emissions.

Air Pollution

LG Group urges government to do more to tackle air pollution

Councillor Gary Porter and Councillor David Sparks have written to Department for Transport and Defra ministers to seek further commitment to, and action on, tackling air pollution caused by transport emissions. Current pollution levels are not only a health risk but are also likely to cost the country hundreds of millions of pounds in fines for breaching European limits. (Letters attached at **Annexes A and B**)

The LG Group has made a commitment on behalf of local government to play its full part in reducing air pollution, but is seeking definitive action from Government to help councils to adequately tackle pollution. This includes the Government changing the method used to assess transport projects to take better account of pollution, better supporting cleaner fuel options such as biomethane already used by some councils in their vehicle fleets and putting greater effort into changing the behaviour of the public including increasing the use of public transport, and cycling and walking.