

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: Environment & Housing Programme Board
Date and time: Wednesday 16 March 2011, 11.00am
Venue: Rathbone Rooms 1&2, Local Government House

Attendance

Cllr:

Position	Councillor	Council
Chairman	Gary Porter	South Holland DC
Vice chair	Clyde Loakes	Waltham Forest LB
Deputy chair	Dorothy Thornhill	Watford BC
Deputy chair	Mike Haines	Teignbridge DC
Members	Peter Britcliffe	Hyndburn BC
	Andrew Gravells	Gloucestershire CC/ Gloucester City
	Jason Stacey	Ealing LB
	Clare Whelan	Lambeth LB
	David Smith	Lichfield DC
	Derek Bateman	Cheshire West & Chester
	Tony Newman	Croydon LB
	Ed Turner	Oxford City
	Berni Turner	Liverpool City
	Paula Baker	Basingstoke & Deane BC
Substitutes	Tim Moore	Liverpool City
In attendance	Martin Wheatley	LGA
	Clive Harris	LGA
	Rob Whiteman	LGID
	Clarissa Corbisiero	LGA
	Sarah Monaghan	LGA

1 Planning reform

Trudi Elliott (Royal Town Planning Institute) Tony Burton (Civic Voice) and Liz Peace (British Property Federation) attended the meeting to set out their views on the opportunities and challenges that the large number of changes, proposals and initiatives to planning policy present both within the Localism Bill and outside it will present.

Trudi Elliott said that the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) welcomed the thrust of the Bill, but would be lobbying for the duty to cooperate to include a much firmer requirement to work together. The RTPI welcome the National Planning Policy Framework and would like to see reference to it on the face of the Localism Bill.

Tony Burton said that Civic Voice also welcomed the reforms which could lead to a real transfer of power to local people. However, it would be important to ensure communities gain access to the funds they require.

Liz Peace said that the British Property Federation supported the strong 'pro growth' message in the Localism Bill. The BPF accept that a rise in planning fees to cover costs is appropriate although would not support local authorities being able to do this in a wholly unregulated fashion.

In discussion, Members considered the role of elected councillors in delivering these reforms and agreed that it was necessary that CLG's specific funding for planning and the LG Group's member development programmes should focus on ensuring that appropriate support was available to enable all Members to deal with these radical changes and the ensuing cultural shift they will have in their communities. Where possible, training could be given in collaboration with the RTPI and best practice should be shared.

The Chair thanked the speakers for attending the meeting.

Decision

Members noted the discussion.

- Officers to take forward Members' comments in their influencing work and continue to maintain a productive dialogue with the other organisations represented.

Martin
Wheatley/
Clarissa
Corbisiero

2 **The LG Group and the Department of Energy and Climate Change's agreement on climate change and the Stockport event**

Martin Wheatley updated the board on the LG Group's climate change offer and the LG Group and DECC's agreement on climate change, which was officially signed by both Cllr Richard Kemp and the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change on 9 March.

Cllr Clyde Loakes said that the Board open event in Stockport, co-hosted with the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities on 2 February looked at the low carbon economy, in particular how AGMA was using its Local Enterprise Partnership to drive this agenda. Cllr Loakes stressed that whilst this event was a great success, further work should be done to ensure wider member involvement in the next similar event.

Members expressed their thanks to all Members and officers involved in taking forward the climate change agenda and developing the Memorandum of Understanding with DECC.

Decision

*Members **noted** the new agreement between the LG Group and DECC on climate change.*

3 **Waste Review Progress Report**

Clive Harris introduced this report which updates Members on the progress of Defra's waste review following the LG Group's response to it, and the key recommendations expected in the final report when it is published in May. Clive informed members that their comments would be used as a steer for the meeting arranged between Baroness Eaton and Caroline Spelman, Secretary of State for Environment, at the end of March.

Members made a number of detailed comments which were noted by officers:

- Members stressed the importance of collection frequency continuing to be decided locally and noted that more should be done at both the national and local level to combat food waste. Members agreed that behaviour change was crucial in this to ensure food waste was moved up the hierarchy and that there was a role for central and local government and civil society in achieving this.
- Members agreed that more emphasis should be placed on tackling the problem of generating waste at source as well as dealing with the end product.

Decision

Members **noted** the contents of the report.

Action

- Officers to feed Members' comments into the meeting between Caroline Spelman and Baroness Eaton.

Clive Harris

4 Environment & Housing Programme Board Improvement and Development Review Panel – Final Report

Cllr Clyde Loakes introduced this item which provides a summary and list of recommendations which Members of the Review Panel put together in light of discussions around the Group's current improvement offer in relation to council priorities and the national policy landscape, and how the Environment & Housing Programme Board will need to work in relation to the improvement and development priorities of the sector in future.

In discussion Members commented that further work would be necessary to discern what information should be presented to the Board when dealing with performance of individual councils to ensure that the situation is represented accurately.

Decision

Members **noted** the report.

Action

- Officers to take forward the recommendations set out in the report, and do further work in light of Members'

Martin Wheatley

comments.

5 Compare Renewables Resource

Helen Pineo gave a presentation to Members on the new online resource and publication developed for councillors and senior officers on renewable energy. The resource is designed to help councils and community groups understand which low and zero carbon energy opportunities might be right for their area.

Decision

Members noted the launch of this resource.

6 Getting Closer – changes to the LG Group

Martin Wheatley updated Members on changes to the LG Group over the next two months and their likely implications for the work of the LG Group boards, panels and commissions.

The Chair on behalf of the board thanked the staff for their continuing hard work over the last few months in the face of these difficulties.

Decision

Members noted the report.

Action

- Officers to circulate final staffing structures when available.

Officers

7 Local Government Group and Environment Agency working together to tackle waste crime

Cllr Clyde Loakes updated Members on the meeting of 11 January which he co-chaired with the Environment Agency on behalf of the LG Group which focused on tackling waste crime, and identifying opportunities to support each others' activities with duplicating efforts.

Decision

Members noted the report.

- Officers to take forward work in this area and provide progress reports to members.

8 Update on other Board Business

Decision

Members **noted** the report of the Inland Flood Risk Management Group and the Chairs' Reports.

9 Note of previous meeting

Decision

Members **agreed** the note of the last meeting.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 25 May: open event with the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (details tbc)

Monday 27 June 2011: meeting in Crowne Plaza, Birmingham , to coincide with the LG Group Annual Conference