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Update on other Board Business

Purpose of report

Members to note the following:

- Note of LGA Housing Seminar – 9 June 2011
- Update on National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Update on Local Standards Framework (LSF)
- Update on Draft Planning Policy Statement for Traveller Sites
- May and June Chair's Reports to Councillors Forum
- Meetings with Regional Associations
- Dates for 2011/12
- Members' Feedback
- Any other Business

Recommendation

Members to note the reports.

Action

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

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Note of LGA Housing Seminar – 9 June 2011-06-17

1. Cllr Gary Porter chaired a members housing seminar on 9 June. The seminar included a presentation and discussion with the housing Minister, Grant Shapps MP and political perspectives from Cllr Tony Newman, Cllr Chris Naylor and Cllr Mike Haines.
2. The Minister set out the key areas of the government's reform agenda, including:
 - 2.1 Reform of the planning system to shift control over development to local people and radically simplify the system.
 - 2.2 Social housing and tenancy reform to give more flexibility over tenure and housing allocation.
 - 2.3 Reform of council housing finance system to unlock more resources for social housing.
3. Issues discussed included:
 - 3.1 Giving councils a level playing field with housing associations in accessing funding for building social housing.
 - 3.2 Questions about long-term sustainability of the Affordable Rent model.
 - 3.3 Positive impact of past regeneration projects in turning around deprived urban areas.
 - 3.4 Importance of sustainability, social and environmental considerations in delivering housing – it's not just about the numbers.
4. Members then took part in detailed workshop discussions on four themes: housing finance, housing growth, housing regeneration and renewal, social housing reform.

Update on National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5. In late 2010, the Planning Minister Greg Clark MP announced a review of planning policy, designed to consolidate policy statements, circulars and guidance documents into a single concise National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
6. As part of this process, four experts from planning, local government, house-building and the environment sectors (including Cllr Gary Porter) were invited by the Minister to provide a practitioners' perspective on how national planning policy could be simplified.
7. The Practitioners Advisory Group (PAG) submitted its draft framework to the Minister for Decentralisation and Planning, together with a set of recommendations on the 20th May.
8. DCLG will not be publishing an official draft NPPF for consultation until end July, likely close to the parliamentary Summer Recess (19th July). The Minister has

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welcomed the PAG draft framework as positive continuation and is inviting reactions to the draft to inform CLG's consultation draft.

9. LG Group is consulting membership and stakeholders to feed into our own response. As part of this, officers have convened a breakout discussion amongst Environment and Housing planning portfolio holders on 27 June 2011 to discuss both the PAG's proposals and what the final NPPF should consist of. A short paper covering our early thoughts on the draft NPPF will be circulated beforehand. In advance of this the full draft NPPF can be downloaded from www.nppfpractitionersadvisorygroup.org

Update on Local Standards Framework (LSF)

10. LG Group alongside Planning Officers Society (POS) is working with House Builders Federation (HBF), Home Communities Agency (HCA) and DCLG to establish a time-limited steering group to drive LSF work forward. One strand of this will look at how best to ensure the viability and deliverability of local housing plans, and the other to review local standards. LG Group has agreed additional contextual points to guide the individual workstreams of this group.
 - 10.1 Local plans and specific planning conditions should be always be underpinned by a robust evidence base.
 - 10.2 We do not expect to see the final NPPF dictate that this robust evidence base can only be based on the methodology agreed by this steering group.
 - 10.3 The value of this steering body is that we have the right combination of sector and professional bodies collaborating to make sense of viability and standards, however we understand and accept that other ways of doing this might emerge.
 - 10.4 LG Group in particular cannot compel its membership to take one approach over another, and will always defer to the independent examination process to rule whether or not a local plan and the conditions therein are sound and viable. We can however showcase the outputs of this group if they demonstrate that they can save developers and LPAs time and effort in the long-term.
11. The terms of reference, timescales and outputs for this group are to be determined, and will be circulated once finalised.

Update on Draft Planning Policy Statement for Traveller Sites

12. On 13 April 2011, the Government published for consultation a draft new planning policy statement for traveller sites. The consultation ends on 6 July. Full details available here: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/travellers>

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13. This consultation follows a commitment made by the Secretary of State on 29 August 2010, to withdraw the existing traveller planning circulars (Circular 01/2006: Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites and Circular 04/2007: Planning for Travelling Showpeople) and replace them with a new, short, light-touch, single Planning Policy Statement for traveller sites.
14. The withdrawal and replacement of the circulars forms part of a broader set of policy announcements to provide a fair deal for traveller communities and settled communities and to reform the planning system by streamlining lengthy, cumbersome inaccessible and complex policy and guidance and decentralising the planning system to strengthen the role of elected councils and communities.
15. On 17 June 2011, Cllr Ed Turner chaired a meeting of CLG officials and LG Group Planning Portfolio Holders to explore some of key issues for local authorities stemming from the consultation. A full note of this meeting will be circulated to members shortly. LG Group officers will also use the outputs of this discussion to inform the LG Group response to this consultation, which will also be circulated to members for comment.

Report to May Councillors' Forum

Environment & Housing Programme Board – report from Cllr Gary Porter

Waste

On 31 March, Board Members Clare Whelan and Mike Haines accompanied Margaret Eaton to a meeting with Caroline Spelman and Bob Neill to discuss the Government's waste review. Among other things, they discussed how to promote excellence in local collection while maintaining local choice over methods, business waste, the need to minimise food and packaging waste, the range of approaches needed to ensure residents understand and work with local collection approaches, and tackling serious and organised waste crime. Ministers expressed their gratitude for political and professional input from the sector to the review process. There was press coverage on 10 April about alleged unlawful charging for collection, and speculating about what the review would conclude about sanctions against householders. [Cllr Clyde Loakes wrote round about this](#) at the time and Rob Whiteman will be meeting Defra's Permanent Secretary next week to discuss our concerns about this episode.

Meeting with Lord Henley regarding vehicle seizure powers

Cllr Clyde Loakes, vice chair of the LG Group's Environment and Housing Board met with Lord Henley, Parliamentary Under-Secretary at Defra in March to press for the implementation of vehicle seizure powers, created under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. Alongside the Environment Agency, the LG Group highlighted the need for stronger powers to assist with investigating serious, persistent fly-tippers and called on the Government to commit to this as part of the forthcoming Waste Policy Review.

Air quality meeting with Ministers

Mayor Dorothy Thornhill, Deputy Chair of the Environment and Housing Board and Cllr Peter Box, Chair of the Economy and Transport Board met with Ministers Lord Henley (Defra) and Norman Baker (DfT) to discuss air quality. It was agreed at the meeting that a more coordinated, strategic approach across local and central government is needed to tackle the problem. Officials will now be working together more formally to coordinate evidence in order to create a better shared understanding of the problem and potential measures at local and national level.

This work will inform a further political meeting later in the year.

Changing the way we do housing

Environment & Housing Programme Board members recently chaired a seminar series exploring the nature of the recent housing reforms. The seminars were well attended and ran in five areas up and down the country alongside an online conference on the LG Group community of practice *Local Housing Knowledge*.

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The events which looked at issues such as meeting housing supply, reinvesting in existing homes and supporting vulnerable people through the housing agenda prompted a lively debate. Delegates discussed ways in which councils could be more creative about how they attract resources and achieve the greatest value for the local area; the importance of linking housing outcomes with the work with the new Health and Wellbeing boards and the crucial role of strong local leadership to bring partners together to work to local priorities to achieve local ambitions. A report on the events will shortly be made available on the LGA website and you can view the online discussion by logging in to Local Housing Knowledge at <http://www.communities.idea.gov.uk/welcome.do> .

Board Meeting

Trudi Elliott (Royal Town Planning Institute) Tony Burton (Civic Voice) and Liz Peace (British Property Federation) attended the last board meeting on 16 March to discuss with Members 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. There was much discussion with the Board about 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.

Report to June Councillors' Forum

Environment & Housing Programme Board – report from Cllr Gary Porter

National Planning Policy Framework: discussion with the Practitioners Advisory Group

As part of the government's review of planning policy, designed to consolidate policy statements, circulars and guidance documents into a single concise National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), I formed part of an advisory group to provide a practitioners perspective on what the NPPF should contain. The group submitted a proposed draft NPPF to Greg Clark on the 20 May, and Cllr Mike Haines and I attended a roundtable on 8 June to discuss its contents. The proposed NPPF can be downloaded from www.nppfpractitionersadvisorygroup.org

Meeting with North East Councils

Cllr Clyde Loakes, Cllr Peter Britcliffe and I attended a meeting of North East Councils' Leaders on 20 May to discuss the work of the Environment & Housing Programme Board and listen to members' comments and concerns about key issues which the Board is working on. We all agreed that this was an extremely useful meeting and Members from the Board will continue to get out into the regions to inform the wider membership on the issues we are currently working on and more importantly to seek views on what we should be working on in the future.

CIWM Conference 2011

Cllr Clyde Loakes and Cllr Mike Haines spoke in two sessions of the Chartered Institute of Waste Management's Annual Conference on 14 and 15 June. Cllr Haines discussed the implications of the Localism Bill, the Planning Review and the demise of the formal regional planning framework, and explored how local authorities can respond positively to the new planning landscape. Cllr Loakes spoke alongside Caroline Spelman on the Waste Review; in particular highlighting its implications for local authorities and what actions will be required to deliver the Government's objectives.

Planning for growth: closer working between planning and economic development

Lead Members of the Environment & Housing Programme Board co-chaired a one day conference on closer working between planning and economic development on 24 May. This conference was extremely successful and various key speakers explored the latest policy developments at national level and what they mean for local areas, heard from councils who are building strong and effective Local Enterprise Partnerships to ensure they are well placed to attract investment and

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facilitate sustainable development, provided those working in planning and economic development with practical advice and the opportunity to share experience with public and private sector practitioners, and discussed the crucial role of elected members in facilitating engagement locally and working collaboratively across boundaries.

Board to Board meeting with the National Housing Federation

Cllrs Andrew Gravells, Mike Haines, Tony Newman and Mayor Dorothy Thornhill met with Board members from the National Housing Federation on 25 May to discuss areas of common interest and ways of working together. This includes the joint work on the Localism Bill relating to the new duty to produce a tenancy strategy on local authorities. This was followed up by a letter I sent to Grant Shapps MP, which suggested that rather than forcing councils to create a tenancy strategy, the Localism Bill places councils under a duty to work with registered providers to consider appropriate responses to tenancy issues locally and make these options transparent to local people in any manner it considers locally appropriate.

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Meetings with regional associations

Below is list of regional meetings which Board members have attended over the last meeting cycle to inform the wider membership on the issues the Board is currently working on and discuss what we should be working on in the future. These meetings have been extremely useful for both members attending and we have received good feedback from the regional associations, and it is proposed that Board members visit more regional meetings in 2011-12.

South East England Councils Executive

18 February 2011 Gary Porter – 10am

East Midlands Councils

18 February 2011, 10.00am – David Smith

North East Councils

20 May 2011 – Cllr Gary Porter, Cllr Peter Britcliffe and Cllr Clyde Loakes

West Midlands Councils (Birmingham – location tbc)

Confirmed: 12 July 2011, 10.30am –Andrew Gravells (tbc)

LG Group Environment & Housing Programme Board

Meeting Dates 2011-12

| DAY (2011) | DATE | TIME | ROOM / VENUE |
|-------------------|--|-------------|---------------------|
| Wednesday | 14 September 2011 | 11.00 | |
| Wednesday | 16 November 2011 | 11.00 | |
| DAY (2012) | | | |
| Wednesday | 11 January 2012 | awayday | |
| Wednesday | 14 March 2012 | 11.00 | |
| Wednesday | 23 May 2012 | awayday | |
| Monday | 25 June 2012 (to coincide with LGA Conference – the day before) | 11.00 | |
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