

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: Environment & Housing Programme Board
Date and time: 11am, Wednesday 14 September 2011
Venue: Local Government House, Smith Square, London

Attendance

Cllr:

Position	Councillor	Council
Chairman	David Parsons CBE	Leicestershire CC
Vice chair	Clyde Loakes	Waltham Forest LB
Deputy chair	Keith House	Eastleigh BC
Deputy chair	Andrew Cooper	Kirklees MBC
Members	Clare Whelan	Lambeth LB
	Mike Jones	Cheshire West and Chester Council
	Frances Roden	Stroud DC
	Eddy Poll	Lincolnshire CC
	Tony Newman	Croydon LB
	Ed Turner	Oxford City
	Tim Moore	Liverpool City
	Tracey Simpson-Laing	City of York
	Simon Galton	Leicestershire CC
Substitutes	Peter Hardy	South Bucks DC
	Angela Lawrence	Vale of White Horse DC
Apologies	Terry Stacy JP MBE	Islington LB
	Andrew Gravells	Gloucestershire CC/Gloucester City
In attendance	Richard Bennett	n/a
	Sandie Dunne	LG Group
	Abigail Burrige	LG Group
	Clarissa Corbisiero	LG Group
	Russell Reefer	LG Group
	Sarah Monaghan	LG Group

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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Members held a minute's silence in memory of Cllr Derek Bateman, a longstanding member of the Environment Board who sadly passed away in August 2011.

1 Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed all Members to the Board, and in particular new Members.

2 Environment and Housing Programme Board: Programme Plan for 2011-12

Sandie Dunne introduced this item and outlined the Board Programme Plan priorities developed in line with the LG Group Business Plan for 2011/12 and identified the Programme Plan outcomes for approval by the Board.

In discussion, Members made a number of detailed comments which were noted by officers, including:

- The LG Group should ensure that support is focussed on enabling councils to deal with the significant reforms to the Housing Revenue Account and the additional work this would bring with it.
- The programme plan should more clearly flag up the work which the Group is doing on the Green Investment Bank and should also reflect the LG Group's strong line on ensuring that councils have appropriate enforcement powers in place to tackle 'anti-social' waste crime.
- The programme plan should link issues with electric vehicles, particularly in rural areas, with the electricity infrastructure and grid upgrades workstream.
- Members also asked that the plan includes the issue of stolen scrap metal– which in some cases is being sold to scrap metal merchants, and is causing a problem for some councils who regulate scrap metal merchants.

Decision

Members **agreed** the Programme Plan outcomes and the workstreams underpinning each outcome.

Action

- Incorporate Members' comments into the Programme Plan.

Sandie Dunne

3 Update on the LG Group Gypsy & Traveller Support Programme

Richard Bennett, former Chair of the LGA Gypsy and Traveller Task Group introduced the current plans for the LG Group Gypsy and Traveller Support Programme and outlined the history of the previous programme delivered by Local Government Improvement and Development and the Homes and Communities Agency.

In discussion, Members thanked Richard and the other councillors who have been involved in the training scheme for their work over the last few years. Members also raised the current situation at Dale Farm as a national situation and as an example of why training for councillors is extremely important. Members also emphasised the importance of identifying 'need' versus 'demand' in local authority site identification and implementation.

Decision

Members **endorsed** the actions being taken to develop the LG Group Gypsy and Traveller Support Programme.

Action

- Ensure that there is regular feed back to the Board on the progress of this programme by setting up quarterly meetings with planning portfolio holders.

**Russell Reefer/
Sarah
Monaghan**

4 LG Inform

Juliet Whitworth, Research and Information Manager, LG Group, gave a presentation to the Board on LG Inform – a free and open online service created by the LG Group which allows anyone in the sector to access, compare and analyse data and present their findings.

Juliet gave a live demonstration of how to use the service to compare data, and explained that at this stage the information is only available to local authorities and fire and rescue authorities,

but could be available more publically in future.

In discussion, Members highlighted the difficulties in comparing data between authorities and suggested that if the information should be made more publically available there should be a charge for non-members of the LGA.

Decision

Members noted the presentation.

Action

- Explore whether other databases relevant to environment and housing areas (such as flycatcher) could be incorporated into the LG Inform dataset.

**Juliet
Whitworth**

5 LG Group housing support offer

Clarissa Corbisiero, Senior Adviser, introduced this report which builds on the discussion at the last Board meeting on developing a programme of support for local authorities to help them deliver an enhanced leadership role on the housing agenda.

In discussion, Members made a number of detailed comments which were noted by officers, including:

- A publication on the LG Group housing offer should be circulated to member authorities as soon as possible.
- Board to Board meetings between housing portfolio holders and the National Housing Federation should be continued during this Board cycle.
- Members endorsed the recommendation that the support offer should consider improving existing homes, reducing fuel poverty and improving the supply of affordable homes.
- Lobbying and support work around the reform of the Housing Revenue Account falls within the remit of the Environment and Housing Programme Board, but further work should be done with the finance team to ensure that this work is comprehensively covered.
- Members raised concerns with HMOs, the private rented sector and squatting, and recommended that in light of the recent media events, the LGA should ensure these

issues fit within the Board's programme plan.

Decision

Members noted the update and draft guidance.

Action

- Draft a letter to Grant Shapps MP on behalf of the Board Chairman to reinforce LG Group messages about improving social housing and suggest that local government should have a place on the roundtable on the Minister is convening on this issue. **Clarissa Corbisiero**
- Prepare a report on changes to housing policy more generally to the next Board meeting. **Clarissa Corbisiero**

6 Memorandum of Understanding on Climate Change and the Green Deal

Abigail Burridge introduced this report and updated the Board on the progress of the Memorandum of Understanding on Climate Change, including the plans to refresh the Nottingham Declaration and the Green Deal. Abigail outlined the key issues since the Board had last been updated on these issues including:

- DECC has cut all of its funding for supporting councils and the public sector on tackling climate change;
- The Government has decided not to repeal the Home Energy Conservative Act;
- DECC is asking social housing providers to 'pledge' their properties to the Green Deal, but will not provide funding (in the form of an affordable warmth target under the Energy Company Obligation) to help them to do this.

Members expressed their continued commitment to the MoU but were concerned at the significant reduction in DECC's funding and support to the local government sector since it had been signed. Members also recommended that immediate action should be taken to discuss concerns regarding the social housing pledge with Government. Members made a number of further additional comments:

- The affordable warmth element of ECO funding should be available to the social housing sector, particularly as

providers are being asked to 'pledge' their properties (which would entail 25 year payment plans for their residents), as social housing is one of the sectors which would most benefit from the long-term economic and environmental impacts of the Green Deal.

- The word 'Nottingham' should be dropped from the Nottingham Declaration to make the phrase seem more universal for the whole sector.
- Although Members endorsed the concept of the Green Deal, there may be scope for establishing a relationship directly between local government and energy companies, as this could provide better value for money for residents.

Decision

Members:

1. **agreed** that there should be two local government representatives on the Declaration Board
2. **agreed** to write to the SoS on the MoU
3. **agreed** to write to the Minister on the ECO and social housing
4. **agreed** to defer an agreed position on the Social Housing Pledge until lead members had met with the Minister to discuss the issues.
5. **agreed** to write to the remaining 10% of councils who have not yet signed up to the Declaration.

Actions

- Request an additional place for local government on the Declaration Board.
- Draft a letter from the Chairman to the Secretary of State on the Memorandum of Understanding.
- Draft a joint letter from the Chairman of the Board and the National Housing Federation to the Energy Minister setting out the importance of ECO funding to the social housing sector.
- Seek a meeting between lead members of the Board and the Secretary of State at DECC.
- Prepare a report on the progress in these areas for the next meeting.
- Write to remaining 10% of councils who have not yet signed up to the Declaration.

**Abigail
Burrige**

7 Membership and Terms of Reference 2011-12

Decision

Members **noted** the Membership and Terms of Reference for 2011-12.

8 Appointments to Outside Bodies and Portfolio Holders

Decision

Members **formally appointed** to outside bodies and portfolio holders as outlined in Appendix A

Actions

- Write to Members and Outside Bodies to confirm appointments.

**Sarah
Monaghan**

9 Update on other Board Business

Decision

Members **noted** the reports.

10 Note of last meeting

Cllr Clyde Loakes raised the accuracy of Item 2 'Waste Review' which should be reflected to incorporate his comments.

Decision

Members **noted** the minute of the last meeting.

Appendix A

Organisation	Background	Representatives
National Planning Forum	<p>The National Planning Forum (NPF) is the principal cross-sectoral voice on planning issues and aims to be recognised as a key agent for change in delivering a better planning service.</p> <p>Members are expected to attend four Forum events each year, each held at Local Government House.</p> <p>One member will also be appointed as the Vice Chair of Forum (representing the Local Government sector) and will be expected to additionally attend 5 Executive meetings in London.</p>	<p>Conservative: Eddy Poll</p> <p>Lib Dem: Keith House (Vice Chair (Local Government))</p> <p>Labour: Ed Turner</p> <p>Independent: Andrew Cooper</p>
HCA Rural Advisory Board	<p>The Board's aim is to advise Government on and seek ways to improve delivery of affordable rural housing, promoting joint working between key stakeholders through the provision of a forum for sharing good practice and encouraging innovation.</p> <p>3 meetings are held in London each year for 2-3 hours.</p>	Mike Jones
Local Housing Delivery and Standards Group*	<p>This group has been established to consider both the viability of local plans and the related issue of local standards. It will be chaired by the Homes and Communities Agency, which provides the secretariat, and the group brings together many sectors with an interest in the area.</p> <p>There are currently 3 meetings scheduled between September and December 2011.</p>	Ed Turner
Nottingham	This newly formed Board will oversee the	Tim Moore/

Declaration Board*	<p>implementation of the new Nottingham Declaration.</p> <p>The first meeting will take place on 1 November, where it will decide how many further times it will meet.</p>	Andrew Cooper
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Appointments to LG Group bodies

LG Group body	Background	Representatives
Urban Commission Steering Committee	The Urban Commission provides a forum LGA for member authorities whose areas are wholly or partly urban. The Urban Commission will act in a way that complements the principals of the LGA as a whole.	Andrew Gravells
Inland Flood Risk Management Group	<p>The group acts as a sounding group for the Environment and Housing Programme Board, and the four Members lead on flood risk management in their shaping of LG Group policy positions and improvement activities in relation to the lead role on managing inland flood risk, and the development of expertise, learning and progress in all local authorities.</p> <p>This group meets 3 times a year in Local Government House.</p>	<p>Conservative: Eddy Poll</p> <p>Labour: Tim Moore</p> <p>Lib Dem: Simon Galton</p> <p>Independent (and Chair): Andrew Cooper</p>

Environment & Housing Programme Board portfolio holders 2011 – 12

Portfolio	Conservative	Labour	Lib Democrat	Independent
Housing	Frances Roden	Tony Newman	Terry Stacy	Andrew Cooper
Planning	Eddy Poll	Ed Turner	Simon Galton	Andrew Cooper
Waste and Material Resources	Clare Whelan	Clyde Loakes	Angela Lawrence	Andrew Cooper

Local 
Government
Group

Green and Green Issues	Andrew Gravells	Tim Moore	Keith House	Andrew Cooper

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