

**Environment and Housing Programme Board – report from Cllr  
David Parsons CBE (Chairman)**

**Purpose of report**

For information.

**Summary**

An update on the key engagements and activities undertaken by members of the board on behalf of the LGA in the last month.

**Recommendation**

Members are asked to note the attached report.

**Action**

As directed by members of the Board.

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### **Waste, Recycling and Localism conference, 02 February 2012**

1. In early February Cllr Clyde Loakes chaired the LGA's waste, recycling and localism event. The conference was a great success, was well attended and scored one of the highest satisfaction ratings of any LGA event. Delegates heard a series of distinctive visions of **the future for waste services**, with speakers from public, private and third sectors contributing to a lively debate. Lord Taylor of Holbeach, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Defra provided the government's perspective with his keynote address. Documentation is available at <http://www.local.gov.uk/past-events-presentations>.

### **The LGA and DECC – Meeting with Greg Barker MP**

2. Lead members of the Environment and Housing programme board met Gregory Barker, the Minister of State with responsibility for the Green Deal and FITs: two issues where the Environment and Housing board has a keen interest. The meeting was a beneficial **step to establishing a better and closer** working relationship with the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC). Lead members set out local government's support for the Green Deal, and our opinions on its future development; communicated members' concern about the conduct of the Feed-in Tariffs (FITs) consultation; and updated the Minister on the LGA's progress on the Memorandum of Understanding.

### **Metal Theft - Meeting with Lord Henley**

3. On 09 February I joined Cllr Mehboob Khan and Cllr Richard Stay from the Safer and Stronger Communities Board in meeting with the Lord Henley, Minister of State for Crime Prevention and Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction. We welcomed the measures the government is introducing **to tackle metal theft**, but took the opportunity to press the case for further change: stressing the need for **a comprehensive package of changes** around the regulation of scrap metal dealers, as well as discussing how councils could introduce tougher local measures in the interim. The LGA has also produced **a toolkit for councils** working with scrap metal dealers based on good practice from the Forest of Dean District Council and Gloucestershire Police.

### **LGA Planning for Growth Conference – 27.02.12**

4. Cllr Simon Galton and I chaired this event which featured contributions from researchers, developers, DCLG, the HCA, local authorities and LEAs. I also launched the LGA's 'Delivering Housing Growth: A series of essays' publication which features contributions from Grant Shapps MP, Royal Institute of British Architects, Lord Taylor, British Property Federation and local authorities.

### **Open letter to Defra and the insurance industry regarding flood insurance**

5. On 27 February, Cllr Andrew Cooper (Chair of the LGA's Inland Flood Risk Management Group) and Cllr Clare Whelan (Environment and Housing board), jointly sent two letters to Defra and the Association of British insurers (ABI), which urged both parties to support risk-based policies based on a shared understanding of risk for flooding from all sources.
6. The letters also urged both parties to ensure that any new model of flood insurance takes into account and provides incentives for householders to implement flood resistance or resilience measures, with the aim of property specific cover, and that in future insurance payouts be able to fund refurbishment of homes/businesses to reduce future flood risk, rather than restoration to "pre-flood" conditions. We also highlighted the need for clear transition arrangements between the end of the Statement of Principles on 30 June 2013 and any new model for flood insurance cover.

### **Association of North East Councils – Planning Event**

7. Attending a session entitled "The Government's Planning Reforms and their Implications" on 07 February, Cllr Eddy Poll gave a well received presentation to the Association of North East Councils. Cllr Poll set out the LGA's perspectives on changes to the planning system and the role for local members in engagement, mediation, leading and managing expectations, as local plans develop in response to the NPPF and as community planning becomes widespread.

### **Meeting with Greg Clark MP – National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

8. I met with Greg Clark, Minister of State for Decentralisation and Cities on 27 February to put forward the LGA's views on the draft NPPF. In particular I stressed the need for appropriate transition arrangements and highlighted the work the LGA (through the Planning Advisory Service) had been undertaking with authorities to support plan preparation.

### **Responding to proposed changes to local authority enforcement powers for household waste collection**

9. Cllr Clyde Loakes, on behalf of the Board, has written to Lord Taylor of the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in response to the consultation letter that went to council chief executives proposing interim changes to the powers and penalties available to councils covering how householders present their waste for collection. His letter seeks to highlight the public expectation that councils will, and have sufficient powers to, act where bins are put on the street without regard for the collection timetable, causing a local nuisance and affecting the local environment.