

## **Housing Support offer 2012/13**

For discussion and direction.

### **Summary**

This paper sets out a broad programme for the next phase of the housing support programme for direction and decision from the Programme Board.

### **Recommendations**

1. That the Housing Support offer continues to focus on elected members.
2. That members consider and agree the support programme outlined at **Annex B**

### **Action**

As determined by the Programme Board.

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## **Housing support offer 2012/13**

### **Background**

1. The Environment and Housing Board oversaw a programme of housing support aimed at councillors over 2011/12. The programme included a number of briefings, practice notes, pod casts, guides, master classes, conferences and publications. A number of the support tools were delivered in partnership with the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).
2. This paper scopes out options for the next phase of the support programme over 2012/13. The proposals build on feedback from support on offer over the last 12 months alongside Member and officer advice and requests. Officers are also undertaking a series of telephone interviews with elected members on support required to inform the detail of the support on offer from the LGA.

### **Feedback and scope of the 2011/12 programme.**

3. The 2011/12 programme was focused on elected members and sought to deliver the following outcomes.
  - 3.1. Elected Members and senior officers have a good understanding of the housing reform agenda and what it means for the choices they make locally.
  - 3.2. Local Authorities share good practice and learn from each others experiences in an accessible way.
  - 3.3. Local Authorities experiencing specific performance issues are able to access bespoke support and advice.
  - 3.4. Local Authorities benchmark and assess their performance to drive improvement.
4. A summary of the support provided is attached at Annex A. The support included a mix of events, masterclasses, publications, practice notes, pod casts and briefings on a range of housing reform issues. Feedback included
  - 4.1. 93% of those attending the housing masterclasses were satisfied with the content and format of the sessions.
  - 4.2. Issues raised for consideration as part of a future support programme included affordable housing in rural areas, new build, HMOs, empty homes, the strategic housing role and health and housing.

## **2012/13 support programme**

5. **It is proposed that the LGA retain its focus on elected members.** The LGA will continue to support its officer networks (CLG/LGA strategic housing network, private sector housing and housing finance) which have both a support and advocacy role.
6. It is proposed that the LGA focus on the following outcomes when designing and delivering its housing support programme:
  - 6.1. **Elected members understand the housing reforms** and are better equipped to consider their implications and the options available to them.
  - 6.2. **Elected members are supported to further develop key skills** to support them in their work to:
  - 6.3. Leverage appropriate housing growth (both new build and investing in existing properties)
  - 6.4. Work in partnership across boundaries and with other landlords (including neighbouring councils, the private rented sector and Housing Associations).
  - 6.5. Facilitate, lead and mediate in their discussions with residents and tenants on housing issues.
  - 6.6. **Councils have access to examples of innovative practice** and are provided with tools to benchmark and assess their performance to drive improvement.
  - 6.7. **Councils are provided with tools to support them to understand and meet local housing needs**, mitigate risks and exploit opportunities.
7. The table at **Annex B** outlines a proposed support programme for 2012/13.
8. **Members are asked to agree the support programme and in particular provide views on the following issues:**
  - 8.1. Does the proposed support programme focus on the priority areas for local authorities?
  - 8.2. In particular are the issues identified for detailed work through the housing and planning masterclasses, practice notes and action learning sets the right ones?

## **Financial Implications**

9. The support programme outlined at **Annex B** can be delivered within existing budgets and officers will seek to work in partnership where appropriate to secure greater value for money and avoid duplication.