

End of Year progress report

Purpose of report

For noting and action as set out below.

Summary

This report offers an overview of the issues and work affecting the Board over the last year. It sets out key achievements in relation to the priorities set for the Environment and Housing Board in September 2011, and in the context of policy developments and member requests throughout the year. The paper also looks forward to next year's programme of meetings.

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

- a. Note the achievements against the Board's priorities in 2011/2012; and,
- b. Note the programme of meetings for 2012/13.
- c. Agree the list of Outside bodies to which the board will nominate representatives.
- d. provide direction about future feedback arrangements for Environment and Housing Board representatives on outside bodies/LGA structures.

Action

Officers to action as directed by members.

Contact officer: Sandie Dunne
Position: Head of Programmes
Phone no: 020 7664 3070
E-mail: sandie.dunne@local.gov.uk

End of Year Board Report

Background

1. The LGA's Internal Audit review of Corporate Governance has recommended that all Boards and Panels carry out an end of year review of achievements against the 2011/12 business plan priorities. .
2. This paper summarises key achievements, areas outstanding and the forward programme of meetings for the Board's consideration.

Our focus in 2011-12

3. The four key outcomes for the Environment and Housing board, as identified in the 2011-12 Business Plan were as follows:
 - 3.1. Campaigning for greater local decision making in planning and housing through the Localism Bill, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and elsewhere.
 - 3.2. Ensuring a strategic role with adequate resources for councils to act on local energy security, carbon reduction and the low carbon economy
 - 3.3. Councils are supported in and better prepared for climate adaptation, including their new roles in flood risk management
 - 3.4. Powers and flexibility for councils to make local decisions on waste

Achievements against the work plan's strategic objectives

4. The Board has been fully engaged in seeking to influence the Government's reform agenda and support councils to exploit opportunities and mitigate risks. Key achievements against the Board's workplan include.
 - 4.1. Securing changes to the Localism Act to ensure the role of elected members was recognised in neighbourhood planning and providing councils with greater flexibility and powers. The Board also lobbied through the passage of the Act for changes to remove the borrowing cap related to self financing. This work will continue and is a key focus of the Housing the Nation campaign.
 - 4.2. The NPPF has now been finalised and the LGA has secured a transitional period of 1-year to allow councils time to prepare for implementation of the new planning system. The LGA also secured concessions relating to the balance of the three pillars of sustainability, the role of local plans and viability.

- 4.3. Following a long standing campaign the LGA supported stock owning councils to transition to a new self financing system. The Board also lobbied hard to influence government policy around the reinvigorated right to buy. The board secured the principle of 100% retention of Right to Buy receipts (subject to conditions), and will continue to lobby the government to review the discount cap.
 - 4.4. The LGA has also provided a housing support offer for elected members and the Planning Advisory Service has provided the sector with direct support on plan making, CIL, neighbourhood planning and a host of other issues. This includes the delivery of six subsidised planning peer challenges.
 - 4.5. The LGA was also vigorous in setting out to DECC the impact of their proposed changes to FITs, and has lobbied successfully for concessions to local government's view in the development of the Green Deal. We have used this experience to help spur closer co-operation between DECC and local government.
 - 4.6. The LGA has also developed and recently launched the Climate Local resource for local councils; signed a joint statement of intent with Defra on climate change; and lobbied the government regarding flood insurance. A support offer for councils who applied for the DCLG £250 million Weekly Collection Support Scheme.
 - 4.7. Board members and parliamentarians have also been supported through media and select committee appearances – for example as part of a high-profile campaign seeking to reform the use-class system.
5. A full table showing the LGA's achievement and impact against the 2011/12 business plan is attached as **Appendix A**.

Wider activity by the board and team

6. There have also been a number of initiatives over the last year to strengthen engagement and communication with member councillors, councils, partner organisations and other stakeholders, through scheduled working groups, relationship-building meetings, officer networks and political meetings. For example; The Environment and Housing team have also recently established regular meetings between Greg Barker MP, DECC and the Board Lead members, on a quarterly basis.
7. The profile of the Board and influence of the Board has remained high and Board members have represented the LGA at over 80 external events since September 2011.
8. Lead members of the board have contributed to a number of select committees across the board's remit, including the EFRA Select committee, the Energy and

Climate Change Committee and the Communities and Local Government inquiry into the Financing of New Housing Supply.

9. The LGA has produced a programme of conferences at Local Government House, to keep elected members up-to-date on legislative changes and their impacts, as well as supporting the Leadership Academy for councillors and a series of Housing and Planning Masterclasses around the country. We have also maintained a presence at all major party conferences

Outside Bodies

10. The Local Government Association currently benefits from a wide network of member representatives on outside bodies across a wide range of the LGA member structures.
11. All Boards are required to agree a refreshed list of outside bodies/LGA structures that the LGA will appoint to for the 2012/13 meeting cycle. Appointments to these bodies/LGA structures will then be formally approved by each Board in September and submitted to the October Executive meeting for approval.
12. Environment and Housing board members are currently contributors to the following outside bodies and arms-length groups:
 - 12.1. LHDSG - The Local Housing Delivery Steering Group
 - 12.2. National Planning Retail Forum
 - 12.3. National Planning Forum
 - 12.4. Climate Local Steering group
 - 12.5. HCA Rural Advisory Board
 - 12.6. Canal & River Trust Council
 - 12.7. Inland Flood Risk Management Group
 - 12.8. Urban Commission Steering Committee
13. A full list of outside bodies, their full function and the Environment and Housing board members who represent upon them, is attached as **Appendix B**.
14. As stated in the LGA Political Conventions, each individual Board has the discretion to decide what approach it takes for selecting representatives, and to ensure that appointments are made in accordance with the LGA's political proportionality, with political group offices have oversight of this process. Members are therefore requested to consider the attached list and to agree whether or not to continue the LGA's representation on these groups.

Financial Considerations

15. All work set out in the board's programme plan has been delivered within existing budget and resource constraints.

16. Additional funding has been secured for the Housing the Nation Campaign, from the LGA's corporate budget.

2012 /13 Board Cycle

17. The following programme of Board meetings is proposed for next year:

- 17.1. Tuesday 18 September 2012 - 11am, Local Government House,
- 17.2. Wednesday 21 November 2012 - 11am, Local Government House
- 17.3. Wednesday 23 January 2013 - 11am, Local Government House
- 17.4. Wednesday 20 March 2013 - 11am, Local Government House
- 17.5. Tuesday 14th May 2013 - 11am, Local Government House
- 17.6. Monday 01 July 2013 - 11am, Local Government House

18. Members are asked to note the forward programme of board meeting dates.