

## Note of decisions taken and actions required

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**Title:** Environment and Housing Board  
**Date and time:** 11.00, Wednesday 23 January 2013  
**Venue:** Westminster Suite

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**Attendance:**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Council</b>
Chairman	Mike Jones	Cheshire West and Cheshire UA
Vice chair	Clyde Loakes	Waltham Forest LB
Deputy chairs	Andrew Cooper	Kirklees MBC
	Keith House	Eastleigh BC
Members	Frances Roden	Stroud DC
	Eddy Poll	Lincolnshire CC
	Eric Allen	Sutton LB
	Jim Harker	Northamptonshire CC
	Geoffrey Theobald OBE	Brighton & Hove City Council
	Brian Williams	Shropshire Council
	Rock Feilding-Mellen (substitute)	Kensington & Chelsea RB
	Tony Newman	Croydon LB
	Ed Turner	Oxford City Council
	Tim Moore	Liverpool City Council
	Gwen Hassall	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
	Barbara Cannon	Allerdale BC
	Simon Galton	Leicestershire CC
	Tony Trent (substitute)	Borough of Poole
Apologies	Clare Whelan	Lambeth LB
	Terry Stacy JP MBE	Islington LB
In attendance	Cllr Chris Pillai	Calderdale MBC
	Paul Raynes	LGA
	Caroline Green	LGA
	Clarissa Corbisiero	LGA
	Kamal Panchal	LGA
	Dan McCartney	LGA
	Jo Allchurch	LGA
	Tom Coales	LGA
	Lee Bruce	LGA
	Liam Paul	LGA

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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1. **The Local Waste Review**

Cllr Clyde Loakes gave an introduction to the Waste Review, as Chair of the Challenge group. He reiterated that the review’s purpose was to allow local government to lead the national debate on the future shape and funding of waste policy and services.

Members discussed recent Ministerial announcements regarding the £250 million weekly collection fund and highlighted that councils need to be able to adopt collection systems that reflect local need and that a forced reversion to weekly collections could entail higher revenue costs, a large capital outlay for affected councils and also impact on rates of diversion from landfill.

Members then received a short confidential update on the proceedings of the Waste Judicial Review.

**Decisions**

**Actions**

Weekly Waste Collection & Local Waste Review

Members of the Board:

- **agreed** the milestones and next steps for the Local Government Waste Review outlined in the paper;
- **requested** that officers undertake research and survey work to update evidence on collection systems to inform discussions on weekly collection systems with Defra and DCLG and to write to Minister on the issue.

Dan McCartney  
Piali DasGupta

Dan McCartney  
Piali DasGupta

Waste Judicial Review

Members of the Board:

- **requested** that officers provide an email update on the Court proceedings following the hearing on 26<sup>th</sup> February; and
- **agreed** that in the event that the case be referred to the European Court of Justice, a discussion with the Corporate Leadership team would be required.

Dan McCartney

Dan McCartney

2. **Growth and Infrastructure Bill – LGA activity update**

Members noted the LGA’s policy positions and lobbying work on the growth and infrastructure Bill. In discussion, the following points were made:

- *Drivers of Government Policy* – Members recognised the need increase housing supply and generate growth, but reiterated the view that the legislation would not have this effect. Members highlighted the LGA’s figures regarding approved and unimplemented planning permissions as proof that the planning system was not a barrier to growth.
- *Poor planning performance (Clause 1)* – Members reiterated their opposition to a designation regime and highlighted that the emphasis should be on encouraging developer engagement in the process of pre-application discussions, support for improvement and negotiation of appropriate timescales rather than transferring decision making to the Planning Inspectorate.

- *Permitted Development* - Members were concerned about the potential economic impact changes of use from commercial to residential under the revised Permitted Development (PD) regulations. Officers highlighted that LGA's response to government's consultation on the issue emphasised councils' concerns of this kind and made the case for local discretion.
- *Extending the Major Infrastructure Planning Regime to include commercial and business projects* - Members also expressed concern regarding clause 24's potential impact on the ability of councils to drive regeneration (and the consequent growth and employment) in their local areas.

## Decisions

The Members of the Board:

1. **endorsed** the proposed programme of parliamentary engagement in respect of the Growth and Infrastructure Bill in the House of Lords.
2. **requested** that officers research evidence on national housing need figures to inform LGA positions.

## Actions

**Clarissa Corbisiero / Emily Greenwood**

### 3. Autumn Statement

Members noted the update and that the LGA was in on-going discussions with the Department for Business and Skills (BIS) and DCLG regarding the announcement of a single funding pot for local areas, and a further announcement on the scheme was expected in the summer.

Officers also confirmed that the additional £120 million funding for the construction of Flood defences announced would be allocated to projects judged under the existing partnership funding criteria, rather than any new arrangements.

Members discussed the impact on housing of the Government's welfare reforms including the exemptions proposed by DWP to the announcements to uprate Universal Credit elements by 1%.

Officers highlighted that Welfare Reform was one of the LGA's key priority areas as part of the LGA's 'New Model for Local Government' work and that the LGA's Finance Panel is leading the work on behalf of the LGA Executive. It was agreed that a paper on Welfare reform would be discussed at the Environment and Housing Board meeting in March.

## Decisions

Members of the Board:

- 1) **agreed** that officers should keep the Board updated on work being led by the Economy and Transport Board on devolution of growth funding and the single capital pot.
- 2) **agreed** that the LGA should work with the HCA to discuss land release and arrange a meeting between Board Lead Members and the HCA;
- 3) **agreed** that the LGA will respond to the forthcoming Government consultation on Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA);

## Actions

Liam Paul / Clarissa Corbisiero

Clarissa Corbisiero

Clarissa Corbisiero

4) **requested** that the next Board receive a paper setting out the LGA's proposed work on Welfare Reform.

Rose Doran

#### 4. **Shale Gas Operations in the UK – 'Fracking'**

The Board discussed key issues for councils arising from government's announcement of the resumption of extraction of shale gas by means of hydraulic fracturing (fracking).

In discussion Members made the following points:

- Councils need to be well-informed on the technological processes involved and the environmental implications and should learn from experience overseas where fracking is more established.
- The Government should be clear regarding councils' planning role in respect of applications (particularly regarding whether underground or overground activity should constitute the planning application boundary).

#### **Decisions**

#### **Action**

Members of the Board:

- 1) **agreed** that the Board write to Ed Davey to seek clarity on planning issues relating to fracking; and
- 2) **requested** a briefing paper for member councils which will update members on areas of government policy where clarity is needed.

Jo Allchurch

Jo Allchurch

#### 5. **Environment and Housing update paper**

Members noted the LGA's policy positions and lobbying work on the items contained within the update paper. In particular Members commented upon the Government's announcement that a proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will in future be delegated to Parish and Town councils.

Members also **requested** further details on the Housing events and practice notes.

Eleanor Gasse

#### **Decisions**

Members of the Board **noted** the updates within the report.

#### 6. **Any other business**

Members were updated on the LGA's plans to meet with National Housing Federation, as per the Board's request. The Chief Executive and Chairman of the NHF will attend the 13 May meeting of the Environment and Housing Board, and will meet Cllr Mike Jones in late April.

#### 8. **Decisions and actions from previous meeting**

Members **noted** and **approved** the notes of the last meeting