

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: Environment and Housing Board

Date and time: 11.00, Monday 09 September

Venue: Smith Square Rooms 3&4

Attendance:

Position	Councillor	Council
Chairman	Mike Jones	Cheshire West and Cheshire
Vice chair	Clyde Loakes	Waltham Forest LB
Deputy chairs	Keith House	Eastleigh BC
	Andrew Cooper	Kirklees MBC
Members	Philippa Roe	City of Westminster
	Clare Whelan OBE	LB Lambeth
	Brian Williams	Shropshire
	Jim Harker	Northamptonshire CC
	Geoffrey Theobald	Brighton and Hove
	Tony Newman	LB Croydon
	Ed Turner	Oxford CC
	Tim Moore	Liverpool City Council
	Barbara Cannon	Allerdale BC
	Gwen Hassall	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
	Brenda Arthur	Norwich City Council
	Terry Stacy	LB Islington
	John Northcott	Mole Valley DC
Apologies	Deborah Croney	North Dorset DC
In attendance	Cllr Maureen Cummings	Wakefield MBC
	Cllr Phil Jones	LB Camden
	Paul Raynes	LGA
	Caroline Green	LGA
	Clarissa Corbisiero	LGA
	Liam Paul	LGA

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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1. **Environment and Housing Board work programme 2013 – 14**

Officers introduced the paper outlining the projects in the areas approved by Members at the July meeting, to be delivered over the course of the year within the team’s resources. Members then discussed the work programme, making the following points:

Influencing the debate – Members agreed that the Board should seek to lead the debate in the areas identified and tailor and promote messages to influence manifestos.

Fracking – The proposed project on Fracking was considered under a separate item on the agenda.

Housing (Private Rental sector) – Members agreed the proposals for developing a fit for purpose legal and regulatory framework for the Private Rental Sector and highlighted the importance of ensuring that it does not place off-putting and onerous burdens on prospective landlords.

Housing (Increasing supply) – Members agreed that work in this area should look beyond investment in affordable housing to encourage investment and a diversity of supply across tenure types.

Impact of Universal Credit – Members noted the continued uncertainty regarding the implementation timetable for universal credit, which had implications for councils’ resource and financial planning as the reforms create new burdens for councils.

Waste – The work on packaging should recognise that well-designed packaging has a role to play in reducing food waste, as well as focusing on reduction of packaging in the round.

Decision

Action

Members of the Board:

- i. **agreed** the proposed work programme, subject to the comments above and to separate consideration of the work regarding fracking.
- ii. **requested** that the Board receive future papers relating to LGA work on Welfare Reform as and when they go to the Finance Panel, to allow EH Board Members to contribute their comments.

Caroline Green

**Rose Doran /
Frances Marshall**

2. **Community benefits for fracking**

The Chairman introduced this item by noting that the report does not express a view on whether or not fracking should go ahead as this is a decision that should be taken locally through the planning system. The LGA position is focused on maximising the benefit to local communities where they do agree to host fracking schemes.

In discussion, members raised a number of issues in relation to the proposed position paper:

The LGA's position should not take a view on whether fracking is appropriate locally. Members stressed that the wording of the document should reflect this neutral position throughout. The paper should also make it clear that some communities do not agree that fracking is the right option for their areas and that is a valid local decision.

Subject to the above point, there was broad agreement that the LGA has a legitimate role to play to support councils who have, or potentially could host fracking sites or supporting infrastructure in their area.

Members felt that the Government's strong support for fracking means that a clear LGA approach to community benefits is urgently needed to ensure that a fair share of the benefit is retained locally where schemes do go ahead.

However, the LGA position should not be prescriptive about the precise model that local community benefit schemes should take. It should be for councils to decide the best model for their area. The position should be clear that councils can be trusted to make these decisions.

It was noted that there is no fixed definition of a community. Furthermore fracking could potentially affect more than one community, across administrative boundaries, with varying degrees of positive or negative impact.

Some Members also felt there is a need for technical and environmental guidance from Government on certain issues such as water contamination, waste water disposal, methane leakage from wells, and the level of risk of seismic activity to support local decision making. It should be made clear to the public what role local government plays in deciding planning and licensing decisions – explaining which decisions are made locally and which nationally.

Decisions

Actions

Members of the Board:

- i. **agreed** that officers should revise the report following Members' comments and circulate the revised report to lead members for further consideration.
- ii. **agreed** that a further discussion on fracking should take place at the 13 November meeting of the Environment and Housing Board.

**Jo Allchurch /
Caroline Green**

**Jo Allchurch /
Caroline Green**

3. Reuse Commission

Members noted the report and agreed the membership of the proposed commission.

Decisions

Actions

Members of the Board:

- i. **agreed** the proposed form and function of the Reuse Commission, noting the project's timescales.

Dan McCartney

- ii. **agreed** that Cllr Clyde Loakes will be the Labour group representative and Cllr Clare Whelan will be the conservative group representative. Representatives for the other two groups will be confirmed.
- iii. **agreed** that Board Members on the Reuse Commission will discuss and agree the composition of the Commission, and invite such organisations as appropriate.

**Reuse Commission
/ Dan McCartney**

4. **Outside bodies and portfolio holders**

Members noted reports on the Board's appointments to Outside Bodies and its use of portfolio holders.

Caroline Green provided an update on the National Planning Forum (NPF), explaining that Lead Members were reviewing LGA involvement with the NPF.

Decisions

Actions

Members of the Board:

- i. Agreed that the Board would appoint portfolio holders as set out at **Appendix A** and appoint to Outside Bodies as attached at **Appendix B**;
- ii. Noted that the LGA's involvement and financial contribution to the National Planning Forum is under review (under the direction of the Board Lead Members) and an update will be provided at the next meeting of the Board; and
- iii. Agreed that that the LGA membership on the PAS Board to four places (allowing all four LGA Political groups to be represented) and officers to discuss with DCLG.

Liam Paul

Caroline Green

Caroline Green

5. **Environment and Housing Board Update**

Members noted the LGA's policy positions and lobbying work on the items contained within the update paper.

The Chair then provided a verbal update on his 02 September meeting with the Minister for Planning, Nick Boles MP, noting that it was a constructive meeting.

Discussion included the LGA's ideas for improving housing supply; best practice for working with developers; the Government's changes to the change of use scheme; and streamlining the process for statutory consultees.

Members urged the LGA to engage with both large developers and those representing smaller builders on housing issues.

Cllr Cooper detailed the meeting of Board members with Greg Barker MP on 04 September, explaining that Members had reiterated the LGA's concerns with the bureaucracy of the Green Deal and had also highlighted the LGA's call for local government to be given access to the ECO Brokerage.

Decisions**Action**

Members of the Board:

- i. **requested** that Officers to circulate the paper received by the LGA Executive on the New Homes Bonus.
- ii. **noted** the written update and verbal updates on LGA meetings with Nick Boles MP and Greg Barker MP.

**Liam Paul /
Clarissa Corbisiero**

6. Any other business

There was no other business.

7. Board Terms of Reference**Decisions****Action**

Members noted the Board's membership and approved its Terms of Reference.

None

8. Decisions and actions from previous meeting

Members **noted** and **approved** the notes of the last meeting, subject to correction of location to: Staff House Room 8, Staff House Conference Centre, University of Manchester, M1 3BB.

Liam Paul