

## **Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board – report from Cllr Peter Box CBE (Chair)**

### **Influencing EU “Circular Economy” waste proposals and meeting EU recycling targets**

1. In April, Cllr Mike Jones led a delegation to Brussels to influence the next set of EU legislation on waste and recycling. This is focused on creating a “circular economy” that makes best use of waste and resources and is a high priority for English local authorities as key delivery agents for municipal waste collection, reuse, recycling and disposal services. Cllr Jones met with MEPs, UK government representatives, the Commission official leading the work on the proposals and the CBI team in Brussels to discuss the LGA’s proposals which seek to stimulate jobs and growth in the waste and recycling industry, encourage a more rounded approach to EU policy that addresses all waste produced across the economy, a greater focus on waste prevention and avoiding the disposal of waste to landfill.
2. Cllr Jones also met Dan Rogerson MP, then DEFRA Minister with responsibility for waste, on 19 March to discuss our proposals for the Circular Economy package and proposals that would help the UK meet the existing EU recycling target. Despite delivering a 400 per cent increase in recycling rates since the turn of the century the UK is not yet on track to meet the 50 per cent EU target by 2020. We have developed a number of practical suggestions that could be implemented in relatively short order in 2015 to deliver a significant improvement in recycling rates by 2020. Following the election, we are seeking a meeting with new DEFRA Ministers to present these proposals.

### **Ministerial meeting: Accommodation Support for Offenders**

3. On 18 March, Cllr Mike Jones attended a meeting with Andrew Selous MP, then Minister for Prisons and Probation and housing stakeholders to discuss accommodation support for offenders. The discussion focused on what is needed to ensure that offenders’ wider support needs, including accommodation are addressed while in contact with prisons and offender managers, to give them the best chance of sustaining independent living, and avoiding re-offending. It was recognised that partnership working is essential to achieving this and the LGA agreed to promote to councils evidence of good practice that currently exists in supporting homeless offenders into accommodation.

**Publication of LGA research on replacing homes sold through Right to Buy.**

4. On 4 April we published "Keeping Pace – replacing right to buy sales" a research report jointly with the Chartered Institute of Housing and the National Federation of ALMOs. The report found that 73 per cent of councils responding to the survey said that under the current system they will only be able to replace half or fewer of homes they have sold. The report concludes that a more flexible approach to the Right-to-buy receipts is needed and makes recommendations to government aimed at ensuring that homes sold can be replaced on a one-for-one basis at a local level.

**Letters to new ministers**

5. I have written to a number of new ministers to request meetings following the Government's recent reshuffle. This includes: Minister of State for Energy and Climate Change, Andrea Leadsom MP; Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth; Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, Andrew Jones MP; Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, Robert Goodwill MP; and Minister for Small Business, Industry and Enterprise, Rt. Hon Anna Soubry MP. A letter to a minister at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is pending subject to the confirmation of ministerial responsibilities.
6. LGA Chair Cllr David Sparks has also written to the Minister of State for Housing and Planning, Brandon Lewis MP, and the Minister for Local Government, Marcus Jones MP.

**Members Standing Down**

7. Cllrs Ann Steward and Roger Symonds stood down as councillors at the recent local elections, and therefore will no longer be on the EEHT Board. I wrote to both members to thank them on behalf of the members and officers of the Board for their hard work and commitment, particularly as Cllr Steward was the Chair of the Task and Finish Group on Apprenticeships and Cllr Symonds was the Chair of the Task and Finish Group on Active Travel.

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