

Chair's Report

Tackling rogue landlords and improving the quality of the private rented sector

1. DCLG issued a discussion paper in July on "Tackling rogue landlords and improving the private rental sector". In the LGA's response we called for the introduction of sentencing guidelines for magistrates on housing act offences, and a wider range of penalties. We also asked for clarity on the proposals for a blacklist of persistently offending landlords and agents and how it will be funded. LGA recommendations were highlighted in a press release, attracting national media attention.

http://www.local.gov.uk/web/quest/briefings-and-responses/-/journal_content/56/10180/7461929/ARTICLE

Influencing EU proposals for a circular waste and recycling economy

2. The EU invited public feedback on the barriers to creating a circular economy for waste services. In the LGA response and position paper submitted in August 2015 we called for the EU to take a fresh look at the balance of responsibilities across the lifecycle of waste.
3. Regulations and responsibilities are currently heavily weighted towards local authorities and their role in collecting and disposing of waste materials. Developing a circular economy is an opportunity to create a better balance by designing out waste, and adopting the "polluter pays" principle so that those who create waste make a contribution to the cost of dealing with it.

http://www.local.gov.uk/web/quest/waste-management/-/journal_content/56/10180/7449429/ARTICLE

Affordable housing exemptions on small developments and vacant buildings

4. We published research commissioned by the Board on the impact of affordable housing exemptions on small developments and vacant buildings in July 2015, receiving wide media coverage. Headline findings showed that almost 80% of respondent councils said the policy would result in a decrease in new affordable homes in their areas, with two-thirds saying the change was having a negative impact on existing planning applications. We called for the exemptions to be replaced with a more flexible system that would allow councils to reflect local market conditions and agree contributions with developers at an early stage. Shortly after our research was published the High Court ruled the government's policy as unlawful following a case brought forward by West Berkshire and Reading Councils. DCLG are now appealing the decision.

http://www.local.gov.uk/media-releases/-/journal_content/56/10180/7397262/NEWS

Consultation on improving the compulsory purchase processes

5. We submitted a response to the DCLG/HM Treasury consultation on improving compulsory purchase processes. In a response we called for a more fundamental consolidation of compulsory purchase legislation, stronger compulsory purchase powers where planning permissions have expired and development has not commenced and powers for councils to direct the use of publicly owned land. We also called for a default position that all decisions on confirmation of a compulsory purchase order are delegated to the acquiring authority.

Sunday trading

6. Lead members signed-off the LGA's response to the Government's recent consultation on Sunday Trading hours. In summary, the LGA welcomed the new powers, believing the Government is right in recognising the role of councils in driving local growth and being better placed in shaping decisions that affect the well-being of local people and businesses. However, we urged the Government to make the power to extend Sunday trading hours available to all areas and do so in a way that avoids central prescription and bureaucracy, additional costs and gives local places the freedom to make their own choices. The LGA response is appended to this report. Please see attached appendix titled Consultation on devolving Sunday Trading Rules.

Parking reform: tackling unfair practices

7. The LGA responded to a DCLG discussion paper on the management and regulation of parking on private land, and land owned by public bodies, and cash payment facilities for municipal parking. We expect the department to announce the outcome of the consultation this autumn. Please see attached appendix titled Parking reform: tackling unfair prices.

Written evidence to the CLG committee on the future of housing associations and the right to buy

8. The Government must carefully consider the cumulative impact of different housing proposals on the joint ability to build new homes and support home ownership while reducing welfare spending, and on councils' capacity to deliver their duties to house the homeless. We recommended that the extension of the Right to Buy to housing association tenants and the sale of high value council properties should be treated as two separate initiatives, and that an alternative source of funding could be found from the sale of surplus public land.
9. In addition the LGA:
 - 9.1. Provided a short submission to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) select committee calling on the committee to consider flooding as one of its priorities.

1 October 2015

- 9.2. We submitted questions to the CLG committee on the government's planning and productivity plan. We suggested questions for committee members to put to the Housing and Planning Minister. Our questions covered the delivery of starter homes and plans to streamline compulsory purchase orders.
- 9.3. We submitted a short submission to the Energy and Climate Change Committee calling on the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) to look at energy efficiency and fuel poverty as one its main priorities. We said that action by councils to tackle fuel poverty needs to be backed up by co-ordinated central policy and backed up by funding. We repeated LGA recommendations for councils to have a stronger role in the roll-out of energy efficiency measure in their local areas.