

Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of the Urban Commission bulletin. The aim of this bulletin is to keep you informed about the work of the LGA's Urban Commission, which represents 283 urban local authorities, and to alert you to recent urban policy developments, publications and events.

Spreading the benefits of town and city centre renewal

The 25 July meeting of the Urban Commission on received the final report of consultants URBED into spreading the benefits of town and city centre renewal. A summary of the report's findings can be downloaded from the LGA website: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/Publication.asp?|Section=0&id= SXDA72-A78319B9>. Copies of the full report have been sent to all LGA member authorities.

The report recommendations include:

- smarter local finance to give councils the incentives and resources to nurture their town centres;
- greater devolution of transport budgets to the regional and local level;
- making town and local centres the main focus for the 'cleaner, safer, greener' agenda;
- recognition by councils of the importance of their urban centres in their community strategies and local development frameworks;
- collaboration by councils to define the distinctive roles of the different urban centres in their sub-region; and
- learning from our European neighbours about how to create successful town and city centres.

The report's recommendations were discussed at the workshops at the July meeting. The Urban Commission Steering Committee will consider how to take forward the report's recommendations at its meeting on 21 November.

LGA/ODPM Neighbourhood renewal conference - 1 November 2005

A one day LGA/ODPM conference *making it work: the role of councillors in neighbourhood renewal* will take place at Local Government House on 1 November. It will be chaired by the Chair of the Urban Commission Cllr Stephen Houghton. The conference will provide elected members with a unique opportunity to meet other councillors involved in neighbourhood renewal and share good practice.

Speakers include Minister for Local Government Phil Woolas MP and Joe Montgomery, Head of the ODPM Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. The workshops will provide an opportunity for members to discuss the importance of community leadership; the use of floor targets to improve outcomes; and the skills, knowledge and ways of working needed for successful neighbourhood renewal. Further details and a booking form are available on the LGA website: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/Event.asp?|section=46&id= SXC911-A7831D35>

LGA conference on the power of football – 31 October 2005

There are many examples around the country of football clubs at all levels of the game forming strong links with their communities and taking a lead through exciting projects which are successfully achieving outcomes across a diverse range of policy areas. Local authorities are playing a key role in partnership with their local clubs to make this happen.

This LGA conference *the power of football: councils and football clubs – getting results on and off the pitch* will be held at Local Government House and will explore the ability of football to meet community needs across a range of policy areas. Speakers include the Sports Minister Richard Caborn and Sir Trevor Brooking the Director of Football at the FA. Further details and a booking form are available from the LGA website: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/Event.asp?|section=46&id= SXDDE7-A7831D24>

Local Enterprise Growth Initiative

The Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) was announced in the last budget and will provide £50m for 2006/7, rising to £150m per year by 2007-8 for schemes to encourage enterprise in deprived areas. Authorities in receipt of Neighbourhood renewal will be eligible to bid for funds and successful councils could receive £2 to £10 million per annum depending on resources required in different areas. The ODPM has published a 'Frequently asked questions about LEGI' guide on its website and this can be found at:

<http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp?did=1535>

There is also a 'LEGI next steps' publication: <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp?did=1534>

Local Authority Business Growth Incentives scheme

Final details of a scheme, which will give local authorities an incentive to maximise business creation, were announced on 21 July by the Government. The Local Authority Business Growth Incentives scheme (LABGI) provides an incentive for local authorities to promote economic growth by allowing them to retain a proportion of any increase in revenue, above a certain level.

The main features of the scheme are:

- Business growth will be measured in terms of the increase in a local authority's rateable value during a calendar year.
- In two-tier areas, LABGI revenues will be shared out according to each tier's contribution to modified Environmental Protection and Cultural Services Formula Spending Share (approximately two-thirds to the lower tier and one-third to the upper tier). In London, all rewards will remain with the Boroughs.
- Following the first year, the Government will review the scheme in the light of any recommendations made by the Lyons Inquiry and the scheme's success in meeting its objectives.

Further details about LABGI can be found on the ODPM website: <http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/labgi.htm>

Core City Summits

Minister of Communities and Local Government, David Milliband, has announced that he plans to hold summit meetings with each of the eight Core Cities. These will aim to provide an opportunity for central and local government and other local partners to discuss the opportunities and challenges which cities face. The ODPM is also looking at holding further summits in other major urban centres. Further details can be found at:

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_urbanpolicy/documents/page/odpm_urbanpol_040263.hcsp

Future Leadership Programme

The Future Leadership Programme is a new six month national programme to develop middle managers in local government through building leadership and management capacity. The programme is not just a typical management development programme; it aims to improve the performance and delivery of local government through concentrating on organisational development as well as increasing management capacity. Further details can be found at:

<http://www.futureleadership.gov.uk/ODPM/Homepage.htm>

Start with the park

CABE has published a good practice guide, *Start with the park*, aimed at those involved in the processes of sustainable growth and renewal in England. It is particularly relevant to the creation and care of green spaces in housing growth areas and housing market renewal areas. Copies can be downloaded from <http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/>

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