

Record of Executive Leader (Delegated Decision)

Monday, 3 November 2014

Portfolio	Executive Leader
Subject:	Attendance at Town and Country Planning Association Annual Conference 2014: Building the Future
Report of:	Director of Planning and Development
Strategy/Policy:	
Corporate Objectives:	

Purpose:

This report seeks approval for the Executive Member for Planning and Development to attend Town and Country Planning Association Annual Conference 2014, to be held on 25 November 2014 in Central London.

As we approach the 2015 general election, housing and planning for housing are increasingly high on the political agenda. The need to build more than 200,000 new homes a year to house our growing population is now widely acknowledged. The political will is there- but what are the practical obstacles? What do the public and private sectors need to do to ensure that enough new housing is built, in the right places? How can we ensure that the urgent need to build millions of new homes does not lead us to forget the vital importance of ensuring that they are of good quality?

Now that the reforms to the planning system have had time to take effect, it is timely to ask whether the new system is delivering well-designed, sustainable places that will remain attractive for many generations. With a new emphasis on the importance of the local plan, are local authorities now empowered to deliver high-quality new developments to meet the needs of their populations? Or, is the emphasis on economic viability, the weakness of the duty to co-operate, and the lack of larger-than-local strategic planning undermining their ability to create high-quality places with decent housing?

Options Considered:

As recommendation.

Decision:

That approval is given for the Executive Member for Planning and Development to attend the Town and Country Planning Association annual Conference 2014, to be held on 25 November 2014, in Central London.

Reason:

This conference will provide a unique opportunity to hear the Government and the Opposition's ideas for housing and planning in the run-up to the election. With high-profile

keynote speeches, it will be framed around two thematic debates, providing an opportunity for direct and powerful discussion:

- The first debate, 'How can we build 200,000 good homes a year by 2020?', will consider the practical obstacles that must be overcome in order to meet this widely held aspiration. What do government, local councils, developers, housing associations and others need to do in order to deliver this quantity of housing, to a good standard?
- The second debate, 'What should the priorities be for planning post – 2015?', will consider what a new government should do if it really wants to deliver the high-quality homes and places we need. Is the National Planning Policy Framework working? Does it need minor changes? Is there a need – and an appetite – for major reform?

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Both debates will provide practical insights into what should be done if a new government is going to succeed in housing the nation.

Confirmed as a true record:

Councillor S D T Woodward
Executive Leader
Monday, 3 November 2014