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Ask For: **Charles Hungwe**
Direct Dial: **(01843) 577186**
Email: **charles.hungwe@thanet.gov.uk**

CABINET

17 JUNE 2010

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held at **7.00 pm on Thursday, 17 June 2010** in the Council Chamber, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Membership:

Councillor Bayford (Chairman); Councillors: Latchford, Moores, Wells and Wise

S U P P L E M E N T A R Y A G E N D A

Item
No

Subject

3a **MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve the summary of recommendations and decisions of the extraordinary meeting of Cabinet held on 20 May 2010, copy attached.

4. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSE: "THE COALITION: OUR PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT"** (Pages 7 - 36)

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 3a

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2010 at 2.00 pm in Council Chamber, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Robert W Bayford (Chairman); Councillors Wise, Wells, Moores and Latchford

In Attendance: Councillors D Green, Ms Green, C Hart, J D Kirby and R Nicholson

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Donna Reed, Director for Business Transformation & Customer Services.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. POTENTIAL ASSET DISPOSALS FOR 2010/11

The report by Brian White, Director for Regeneration highlighted a number of potential sites for disposals for 2010/11. The Officer speaking on the item, Justin Thomson, Asset Manager, said that these sites were going to be disposed of in accordance with the Council's asset disposal policy.

The Chairman then invited members of the public, Members speaking under 24.1 and Members of Cabinet to speak on the different sites for disposal.

4. SPEAKERS AND SITES

Site 1 – Land Adjacent to 39 Nelson Place, Broadstairs

The Officer recommendation to Cabinet at its meeting to be held later this year would be;

“That the site be agreed as surplus and progressed through the adopted disposal frameworks, for public consultation”.

Mr Spooner addressed Cabinet with the following comments;

- The conservation area needs to be protected
- The proposed building would obscure the conservation area
- There are problems that come with new residential developments

Site 2 – Land and Buildings to the South of Hartsdown Sports Centre, Hartsdown Road (excluding Leisure Centre)

The Officer recommendation to Cabinet at its meeting to be held later this year would be;

“That Cabinet support the disposal of the asset as being surplus, allowing it to be progressed through the disposal framework, to public consultation”.

Mr Edward Foster, the solicitor for Mr Sheerin and Mr Hunt addressed Cabinet with the following comments;

- There are existing rights of way for both his clients and Thanet District Council would have to compulsorily purchase them

- They have rights to the parking facility
- The parking facility serves about 200 cars daily
- Mr Sheerin has a successful nursery school, that has won an Ofsted's Award
- The nursery has 287 children and employs 47 teachers
- The nursery school has applied for a forestry school status
- There are substantial costs for the Council to the rights (about £1M)
- Employees might be made redundant as the businesses would have to be relocated
- Substantial capital have been invested
- The nursery was providing a community service.

Mr Eliff addressed Cabinet with the following comments;

- The Site serves as a scouting area for children who are Scouts
- This helps keep children off the streets and saves Council money
- The Site is a safe place for children to engage in outdoor activities
- Scouting helps children develop into responsible adults.

Mr Bullen addressed Cabinet with the following comments;

- He became a Scout at the age of six
- He is now a young leader
- Currently there are over 200 children
- The activity has boosted his confidence
- The Site is used for camping, district events, youth parties, campfire activities and training and is easily accessible to children
- It would be sad to take this away from the children

Site 3 Front Strip of Land to Palm Bay Recreation Ground, Palm Bay, Margate

The Officer recommendation to Cabinet at its meeting to be held later this year would be;

"Following the receipt of a significant number of objections to development proposals for this site, it has been decided not to proceed with a disposal at this time. Cabinet is asked to note the withdrawal of this site from the 2010-2011 disposal programme."

As a result of the Officer recommendation there was no discussion regarding the site.

Site 4 Former Lodge, St John's Cemetery, Manston Road, Margate

The Officer recommendation to Cabinet at its meeting to be held later this year would be;

"That Cabinet supports a disposal through the Asset Management Strategy".

There were no members of the public to speak on the item.

Site 5 Former Promenade Toilets, Land Adjacent to Seaview Terrace, Margate

The Officer recommendation to Cabinet at its meeting to be held later this year would be;

"That Cabinet supports a disposal, so that it can proceed through the disposal process".

There were no members of the public to speak on the item.

Site 6 Land opposite the Tudor House, King Street

The Officer recommendation to Cabinet at its meeting to be held later this year would be;

“That Cabinet support disposal via the approved process”.

There were no members of the public to speak on the item.

Site 7 Staffordshire Street Car Park, Ramsgate (public parking retained)

The Officer recommendation to Cabinet at its meeting to be held later this year would be;

“That Cabinet support the asset as being available for redevelopment and allow it to be progressed through the disposal framework”.

Mr Read, representing the Ramsgate Society, addressed Cabinet with the following comments;

- Council did consult the public regarding disposals but they should listen to the feedback they get from the public
- Housing development is inappropriate
- Commercial development on Site 7 with retention of parking would be commendable as it would counter-balance Westwood Cross.

Site 8 Land on Western Undercliff, West of Tunnel Access, including Chine Access from Royal Esplanade, Ramsgate

The Officer recommendation to Cabinet at its meeting to be held later this year would be;

“That Cabinet support a disposal via the agreed strategy”.

Mr Holden addressed Cabinet with the following comments;

- Asset disposal is costing Council money
- The Site is within the protected area
- The site is in or adjacent to no less than five conservation designated areas
- The Society will continue to call for the preservation of the site
- The Ramsgate Society has drafted some proposals for the conservation of the site.

Mrs Randall representing the Conservation and Environmental Association addressed Cabinet with the following comments;

- The Association has a membership of 300
- Loss of this feature will be a loss to our attraction as a tourist destination
- The value of the site is in its undisturbed wild land which is a value to wildlife such as the migrating butterflies.

Speaking Under 24.1, Councillor John Kirby addressed Cabinet with the following comments;

- The Chine and the Undercliff are well used
- It would be a bad decision to dispose of the site
- The site is well used by fisherman
- The Chine is still in reasonable condition and the area is popular for its natural attributes.

Speaking Under 24.1, Councillor David Green addressed Cabinet with the following comments;

- Ramsgate Town Council stands ready to help with the maintenance of this site

Speaking Under 24.1, Councillor Elizabeth Green addressed Cabinet with the following comments;

- Very concerned about the disposal
- The Council has neglected the site and should take corrective action and not dispose of the site
- Residents are willing to work with the Council to restore the site
- Both cliffs need rehabilitation
- There is a need to protect the natural look of the local coastline.

Site 9 Car Park (Site of former swimming pool), Marina Road, Eastern Undercliff

The Officer recommendation to Cabinet at its meeting to be held later this year would be;

“That Cabinet supports disposal of the site via the approved Asset Management Strategy”.

Speaking Under 24.1, Councillor David Green addressed Cabinet with the following comments;

- Council should come up with a comprehensive plan for the Ramsgate coastal area before the disposal process is undertaken
- There should be a Masterplan for the Ramsgate seaport and harbour.

Site 10 Open Space Land adjoining 33 and 35 Beech Grove, Cliffsend

The Officer recommendation to Cabinet at its meeting to be held later this year would be;

“That Cabinet support a disposal via the agreed strategy”.

There were no members of the public to speak on the item.

Site 11 Former Railway Line Land behind 2 – 48 Highfield Road, Ramsgate

The Officer recommendation to Cabinet at its meeting to be held later this year would be;

“That Cabinet support a disposal via the agreed disposal process”.

Mr Southworth addressed Cabinet with the following comments;

- The site is a valuable asset for the community as it is used as a play ground
- Bring back into use proper parking space on Highfield Road

Speaking Under 24.1, Councillor David Green addressed Cabinet with the following comments;

- Ramsgate Town Council would be able to help with the maintenance of the site if it not disposed of

Speaking Under 24.1, Councillor Elizabeth Green addressed Cabinet with the following comments;

- Residents are against the disposal
- There have been several complaints about parking, particularly during weekends when football matches are held there
- Emergency services can easily access the area
- The site should be used as a recreation area
- The site is used by dog walkers

- It appears as if Council is already preparing a road leading up to the proposed development site to which Councillor Latchford said that there was no decision yet on the matter.

Cabinet **Agreed** to the following recommendation:

That Members receive representations and petitions raised by Members of the Public and consider these views further at the decision making meeting later in the year.

And

That Cabinet provides any feedback on matters raised at this meeting in the report to Cabinet later this year.

5. CONCLUSION

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for their contribution to the consultative meeting and advised that the matter would be presented to Cabinet at a later date this year for decision.

The Chairman then announced that there would be a ten minute recess before Cabinet convened for its ordinary meeting.

Meeting concluded : 2.49 pm

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COALITION GOVERNMENT POLICY PROPOSALS AND EARLY DECISIONS

To: **Cabinet – 17 June 2010**

Main Portfolio Area: **Leader**

By: **Chief Executive**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: **All**

Summary: This report provides commentary on the financial and operational impacts of the new Government's programme as set out in the Coalition Agreement published shortly after the General Election, in as much as they apply to local government and this Council.

For Decision

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Following the general Election and the forming of a new Government by a Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition, new policies have been announced.

The Coalition published a document setting out headline policies on 20th May 2010. I have extracted the announcements relevant to local government and in particular this Council and these appear as an annex to the report. The Corporate Management team have undertaken a quick assessment of the impact of the proposals which appears in the narrative at Annex A.

2.0 The Current Situation

- 2.1 Members of the Cabinet are requested to review and note the impact of the policies.
- 2.2 EMERGENCY BUDGET - On 24th May 2010 the Chancellor announced details of an emergency budget introducing £6.2bn of public expenditure reductions. Of this local government is expected to fund £1.165bn of savings. An announcement by the Communities and Local Government Department on the detail was expected on 2nd June but has been delayed and not yet released at the time of writing this report.
- 2.3 QUEEN'S SPEECH – The Queen's speech on 25th May 2010 set out details of the forthcoming legislative programme. I have enclosed the full LGA on the day briefing which sets out the main implications for local government at Annex B.
- 2.4 NEXT STEPS – The Cabinet is asked to consider the current position and the implications for the Council. As there is to be a national emergency budget announcement on 22nd June, it is recommended that a full, more detailed report be provided to the next Council meeting for all members to consider.

3.0 Options

- 3.1 Set out the various possible options (if any) [Note: on reports to Cabinet and individual Cabinet Members also give reasons why the option(s) not recommended should be rejected.]

4.0 Corporate Implications

4.1 Financial

4.1.1 As set out in Annex A.

4.2 Legal

4.2.1 As above

4.3 Corporate

4.3.1 The proposals will have a significant impact on the 2011–15 Corporate Plan period.

4.4 Equity and Equalities

4.4.1 None at this stage.

5.0 Recommendation

5.1 Cabinet are asked to note this interim report and agree that a fuller report be presented to Council in July.

6.0 Decision Making Process

This report does not make a key decision.

Contact Officer:	Richard Samuel, Chief Executive
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Annex List

Annex A	Corporate Management Team Response to Coalition Government Document
Annex B	LGA: On the Day Briefing Queen's Speech Document

Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access copy
Coalition Agreement	H.M GOV – May 2010
Press notice. HM Treasury PN 04/10	H.M Treasury

Corporate Consultation Undertaken

The Coalition: programme for government

Coalition Proposal	Practical Implication	Cost +ve or -ve	Other Comments
We will cut red tape by introducing a 'one-in, one-out' rule whereby no new regulation is brought in without other regulation being cut by a greater amount.	Sensible given economic climate	Neutral although not all regulations have the same resource impact.	
We will end the culture of 'tick-box' regulation, and instead target inspections on high-risk organisations through co-regulation and improving professional standards.	Current inspection is no longer proportionate to risk.	-ve	There is the potential for this council along with others to lobby government to ensure that there is a reduction in the costs of regulation. i.e. fees to the Audit Commission as a result of these changes.
We will give the public the opportunity to challenge the worst regulations	Will give the opponents of local regulations (i.e. Dog bans on beaches) the opportunity to challenge the council. Is likely to be time consuming to respond to such challenges and will require further public consultations to assess support. E-Petitions could have the same effect and they are legislative from June 2010.	-ve due to time to process objections.	Worst regulations are not defined in any detail
We will find a practical way to make small business rate relief automatic.	Simplification welcomed.	+ve if system simpler.	
We will seek to ensure a level playing field between small and large retailers by enabling councils to take competition issues into account when drawing up their local plans to shape the direction and type of new retail developments.	Welcomed as could assist High Street shopping areas	Neutral	
We will review employment and workplace laws, for employers and employees, to ensure they maximise flexibility for both parties while protecting fairness and	Impact of change uncertain but it provides ability to make changes to contracts of employment easier then this will aid initiatives to make	Reduced costs - may allow to save on additional employment costs, but figure not quantifiable at this stage.	Likely to take some time to implement.

providing the competitive environment required for enterprise to thrive.	working patterns more flexible to meet demand (annualised hours, definition of unsocial hours etc.		
We will end the ban on social tenants starting businesses in their own homes	This should be no problem except where the business will interfere with the “quiet enjoyment” of neighbours, e.g. if the business is a car repair business or similar.	+ve cost as it is assumed higher levels of HB will be paid where currently it is reduced.	May lead to some additional workload in benefit administration.
We will promote small business procurement, in particular by introducing an aspiration that 25% of government contracts should be awarded to small and medium-sized businesses and by publishing government tenders in full online and free of charge.	Unless this makes changes to the impact of European procurement law and the Remedies Directive then this is very likely to have little real impact on procurement practices. These are now catching even small areas of work that would fall within the scope of small businesses.	Neutral Short term +ve.	Difficult to achieve within current EU/UK law.
We will support the creation of Local Enterprise Partnerships – joint local authority-business bodies brought forward by local authorities themselves to promote local economic development – to replace Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). These may take the form of the existing RDAs in areas where they are popular.	The Council would potentially have greater influence on economic development spending than it currently does. Welcome presence of business in Partnerships and more local influence.	Neutral	The commitment is silent on what would happen to the investment resources distributed by RDAs and the future ownership of their assets. East Kent Context does exhibit shared economic development objectives.
We will take steps to improve the competitiveness of the UK tourism industry, recognising the important part it plays in our national economy.	This is far too unspecific to make any predictions about the impact. Welcome the words but is it going to lead to more help and investment?	Unquantifiable	Could be of considerable local benefit.
We will extend the scope of the Freedom of Information Act to provide greater transparency.	The system is already being abused by individuals and by businesses seeking commercial information. In some operational areas like contaminated land and pollution, FOI	-ve as may increase current costs which are already excessive.	TDC should lobby for a reduction in the cost threshold above which requestors may be charged.

	now constitutes a significant part of the sections workload.		
We will promote the radical devolution of power and greater financial autonomy to local government and community groups. This will include a review of local government finance.	This may have a significant impact on service delivery at a local level even for front line services. The way these powers are devolved and the basis of the relationship between local government and community groups may drive this impact, but this is not yet spelled out in any detail. These comments related to several other initiatives below.	-ve increased costs – unless this allows the devolution by councils of responsibilities without costs (i.e. voluntary activity). Size of cost increase cannot be estimated at present.	Councils face different circumstances. Greater freedoms on finance allow priorities to be dealt with without standard bureaucracy costs.
We will further regulate CCTV.	Will require a review of our guidance and operating procedures for CCTV to comply with any new guidance. A review was already scheduled of our guidelines. May be a requirement to produce annual reports and open up our operation to scrutiny by lay inspectors. See comment further on in relation to RIPA powers.	Neutral Additional requirements are likely to be contained within existing budgets.	There is very little detail available on what form this might take however it is likely to restrict the use of CCTV to support enforcement activities e.g. to direct parking attendants to illegally parked vehicles etc. There may also be limits or restrictions on the expansion of camera networks.
We will rapidly abolish Regional Spatial Strategies and return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils, including giving councils new powers to stop 'garden grabbing'.	There is a corporate plan commitment to prevent the over development of existing residential areas but the delivery of this objective has been constrained by planning policy.	Neutral	The local control over housing numbers is very welcome. The requirement to provide 7,500 new homes in Thanet was not deliverable and probably not desirable. There are nearly 3,000 empty homes in the District indicating an over supply of housing relative to demand. This situation underpins the failures in the housing market in Cliftonville. But time consuming and potentially expensive.
In the longer term, we will radically reform the planning system to give neighbourhoods far more ability to determine the shape of the places in which	This could have a detrimental effect on the provision of new housing especially affordable housing in the district. Much new development will	-ve as likely to increase workload.	Participation costs time and money.

<p>their inhabitants live, based on the principles set out in the Conservative Party publication <i>Open Source Planning</i>.</p>	<p>be opposed by local communities and therefore there will need to be strong political leadership to push through potentially controversial new housing schemes. Good for local democracy.</p>		
<p>We will abolish the unelected Infrastructure Planning Commission and replace it with an efficient and democratically accountable system that provides a fast-track process for major infrastructure projects.</p>	<p>We are not likely to have any development appropriate to the Commission.</p>	Neutral	
<p>We will publish and present to Parliament a simple and consolidated national planning framework covering all forms of development and setting out national economic, environmental and social priorities.</p>	<p>Uncertain how this will work given lack of detail. Simpler would be welcome.</p>	Neutral	<p>National framework will not work in all neighbourhoods. More consultation/participation cost.</p>
<p>We will maintain the Green Belt, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and other environmental protections, and create a new designation – similar to SSSIs – to protect green areas of particular importance to local communities.</p>	<p>The extension of a SSSI like designation for extra areas may increase the management and maintenance responsibilities of local authorities if the land is in our ownership.</p>	-ve Increased costs - cannot be quantified at this stage.	<p>Is this an extension of the village green concept that protest groups will be able to object to land being developed.</p>
<p>We will abolish the Government Office for London and consider the case for abolishing the remaining Government Offices.</p>	<p>Not relevant to Thanet.</p>	Neutral	<p>Impinges on Planning policy. Until new law is made.</p>
<p>We will provide more protection against aggressive bailiffs and unreasonable charging orders, ensure that courts have the power to insist that repossession is always a last resort, and ban orders for sale on unsecured debts of less than £25,000.</p>	<p>Welcomed. Will help prevent vulnerable and marginal home owners from becoming homeless and requiring support and assistance from the council. This may have an impact on</p>	<p>-ve as may result in harder to collect debts. Reduced income recovery – cannot be quantified at this stage.</p>	

	the recovery of costs from non-payment of parking fines.		
We will explore a range of measures to bring empty homes into use.	Dealing with empty properties especially long term empties is a staff intensive activity. Our housing resources will be more focussed on the increased regulation of private sector landlords.	Neutral unless new burdens are imposed.	There are nearly 3,000 empty homes in Thanet and currently bring back into use through our intervention around 100 per year.
We will promote shared ownership schemes and help social tenants and others to own or part-own their home.	<p>The promotion of shared ownership schemes will be useful in Cliftonville and will help address the significant affordability gap that exists in Thanet.</p> <p>There have been various produces to encourage tenants to take up part ownership of their homes but the take up has been poor.</p>	<p>-ve if the responsibility is passed to local government.</p> <p>Neutral if given to RSLs.</p>	<p>Affordability of home ownership is as big an issue in Thanet as it is in West Kent, because of the relationship between average wages and house prices</p> <p>The nature of social housing tenants has changed significantly in recent years. They are much less likely to be working and more likely to be dependent on benefits than they were in the hey-day of the RTB.</p> <p>Welcome.</p>
We will promote 'Home on the Farm' schemes that encourage farmers to convert existing buildings into affordable housing.	Limited impact on TDC given that compared to most Kent authorities we are substantially an urban authority.	Neutral	Implications for green belt, but not an issue in Thanet.
We will create new trusts that will make it simpler for communities to provide homes for local people.	<p>Has the potential to change the relationship with existing RSL partners. In effect seems to be creating new locally based housing associations. Creates the possibility of the Council setting up its own</p> <p>Community Housing Trust. May be a model that can be used in Cliftonville.</p>	Neutral	

<p>We will phase out the ring-fencing of grants to local government and review the unfair Housing Revenue Account.</p>	<p>The indications are that the government will continue with the HRA reforms proposed by the previous government. The settlement looks favourable for Thanet.</p>	<p>+ve to Thanet under Government's current plans.</p>	<p>Separate paper to cabinet on HRA 17th June.</p>
<p>We will freeze Council Tax in England for at least one year, and seek to freeze it for a further year, in partnership with local authorities.</p>	<p>The Council has planned a 2.5% increases over the next 3 years.</p>	<p>-ve unless RSG is raised.</p>	<p>The Government is silent on RSG assistance in 2012/13.</p>
<p>We will create directly elected mayors in the 12 largest English cities, subject to confirmatory referendums and full scrutiny by elected councillors.</p>	<p>Not applicable to Thanet.</p>		
<p>We will give councils a general power of competence.</p>	<p>Welcomed</p> <p>This will provide a legal power that enable councils to act as they see fit in the best interests of their communities.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Draft Local Government (Power of General Competence Bill).</p> <p>This Bill has been published by the LGA and forwarded for consideration by the Communities and Local Government Select Committee. This Bill would establish a 'power of first resort' for local government which would be wider than the well being power, create greater certainty for councils and encourage innovation. The bill can be downloaded from the LGA website http://www.lga.gov.uk/ga/core/page.do?pagelid=9763866</p> <p>The draft Bill would create power for a council to do</p> <p>anything it considers likely to benefit its area and people who live there. The LGA have stated that it would be wider than the well being power, create greater certainty for councils and encourage innovation.</p> <p>The draft Bill also includes a power for a local authority to do anything in relation to, or for, the benefit of any person or area situation outside its area if it considers that it is likely to benefit its area and people who live there.</p>

			This was included in the Policy Update report on 11 May 2010.
We will ban the use of powers in the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) by councils, unless they are signed off by a magistrate and required for stopping serious crime.	<p>Our ability to use covert cameras to gather evidence to combat graffiti, fly tipping and anti social behaviour will be restricted or curtailed.</p> <p>This also relates in part to greater regulation of CCTV. This is likely to reduce the use of surveillance for fly-tipping, reduce chances of prosecution for environmental crime, and lead to increased fly-tipping clean up costs.</p> <p>Impedes licensing and some planning enforcement because costs of gathering evidence is increased.</p>	-ve as other methods of evidence may have to be deployed.	Where we have used the CCTV cameras under RIPA, this has been done at the behest of the police and presumably will still be permissible albeit we will need to seek the authority of a magistrate first.
<p>Page 5</p> <p>We will allow councils to return to the committee system, should they wish to.</p>	Would mean a potential increase in democratic costs as more meetings would occur.	- ve as the Council will need additional staff.	
We will abolish the Standards Board regime.		-ve as will return costs to councils.	
We will impose tougher rules to stop unfair competition by local authority newspapers.	Thanet Matters does not compete against local media.	Neutral	
We will stop the restructuring of councils in Norfolk, Suffolk and Devon, and stop plans to force the regionalisation of the fire service.	Not relevant to Thanet		
We will introduce new powers to help communities save local facilities and services threatened with closure, and give communities the right to bid to take over local state-run services.	This may have implications for the council looking to close or re-organise services.	-ve if under used facilities have to be retained.	Depends what is included in the definition of local services. Could residents use these powers to prevent the closure of museums, community halls, district offices, leisure and recreational facilities.

			Good news provided the Council does not have to fund the transfer, and subsidise the service.
<p>We will implement the Sustainable Communities Act, so that citizens know how taxpayers' money is spent in their area and have a greater say over how it is spent.</p>	<p>The Council is already committed to greater transparency</p> <p>Proposals under this Act are intended to be driven by the community and the Council. TDC would be expected to establish or recognise one or more panels of representatives of local persons and consult these panels and try to reach an agreement about which proposals (if any) it wants to put forward. It is important to note that authorities are not required to submit proposals.</p> <p>The preparation of placing a potential bid could be very labour intensive and looking at the first tranche very few bids were successful.</p> <p>No additional funding is provided for pursuing bids to submit to the Secretary of State – so if TDC wished to pursue a bid it would need to find the resources to do so.</p> <p>TDC will need to ensure it has mechanisms to produce the information for Local Spending Reports requirements.</p>	Neutral	<p>More detail needed</p> <p>The principal aim of the Act is to promote the sustainability of local communities by encouraging the improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the authority's area, including a participation in civic and political activity. It provides a channel for local people to ask central government to work in cooperation with the LGA, which represents the interests of local authorities in making it happen.</p> <p>The Sustainable Communities Act 2007 also places a requirement on the Secretary of State to make arrangements for the production of Local Spending Reports. 'The aim of Local Spending Reports is to support local authorities, their partners and local people in promoting the sustainability of local communities by providing more information about the funding that is spent in their area.' Currently only top tier council's information has been published.</p> <p>It is important to note that both the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats both pledged to implement this Act but given there are more pressing matters we wait to see how much emphasis will be put on this in the first year of the new Government. Whilst it may not go away, it is an unlikely priority.</p>
<p>We will cut local government inspection and abolish the Comprehensive Area Assessment.</p>	<p>Already announced.</p> <p>CAA was burdensome on officer time.</p>	+ve as will reduce audit fees.	<p>Audit Commission confirmed all work in relation to CAA and UoR has stopped with immediate effect 28 May 2010. However, Data Quality checks will still be enforced.</p> <p>It is important to note they say Local Government (LG) Inspection – does mean other LG inspections will also cease – we will have to wait and see.</p>

<p>We will require continuous improvements to the energy efficiency of new housing.</p>	<p>This is welcomed but will add to build costs both in the affordable sector and in market housing.</p>	<p>-ve if this applies as it will to new social housing.</p>	<p>It may make development in Thanet more marginal and discourage builders/developers from investing in the area. Developers will want to off set these additional costs against potential section 106 liabilities, thereby reducing income to support infra structure, community facilities and affordable housing.</p>
<p>We will provide incentives for local authorities to deliver sustainable development, including for new homes and businesses.</p>	<p>Welcomed</p>	<p>+ve as will increase costs.</p>	
<p>We will review the effectiveness of the raising of the stamp duty threshold for first-time buyers.</p>	<p>May help more local residents become home owners and may help stimulate demand from home owners in Cliftonville.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Access to the housing market remains a significant issue in Thanet. The relationship between lower quartile house prices and average earnings means that Thanet is one of the most difficult areas in Kent for first time buyers Only Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells are worse.</p>
<p>We will give councillors the power to vote on large salary packages for unelected council officials.</p>	<p>The Council already has this power</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>We will introduce honesty in food labelling so that consumers can be confident about where their food comes from and its environmental impact.</p>	<p>Welcomed</p>	<p>Neutral if placed with KCC, -ve if TDC.</p>	<p>It is presumed that the regulatory function in this respect will fall on Trading Standards and not the food safety teams of District Councils.</p>
<p>We will amend the health and safety laws that stand in the way of common sense policing.</p>	<p>The council has a statutory duty in regulating and investigating breaches of Health and safety legislation, (alongside the H&S Executive). We would need to review our practices in the light of any new guidance but the implication is less regulation.</p>	<p>+ve if leads to reduction in inspection requirements.</p>	

<p>We will review alcohol taxation and pricing to ensure it tackles binge drinking without unfairly penalising responsible drinkers, pubs and important local industries.</p>	<p>To be welcomed, good social and health objectives. Alcohol abuse contributes to many areas where Thanet has abnormally high crime levels, e.g. violence in the night time economy, domestic violence criminal damage.</p>	<p>Neutral, provided fees reflect new duties.</p>	<p>Also plays a significant part in the poor health of Thanet residents – compared to the county average.</p> <p>Target at ‘Happy Hours’ etc.</p>
<p>We will overhaul the Licensing Act to give local authorities and the police much stronger powers to remove licences from, or refuse to grant licences to, any premises that are causing problems.</p>	<p>As above.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>We will allow councils and the police to shut down permanently any shop or bar found to be persistently selling alcohol to children</p>	<p>As above.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>We will double the maximum fine for under-age alcohol sales to £20,000</p>	<p>As above.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>We will permit local councils to charge more for late-night licences to pay for additional policing. We will promote better recording of hate crimes against disabled, homosexual and transgender people, which are frequently not centrally recorded.</p>	<p>To be welcomed. A significant amount of resources associated with the community safety partnership are used to reduce problems caused by the night time economy.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>We will examine the case for moving to a ‘gross profits tax’ system for the National Lottery and reform the National Lottery so that more money goes into sport, the arts and heritage.</p>	<p>To be welcomed – could open up more funding opportunities.</p>	<p>+ve to TDC if additional resources available.</p>	
<p>We will use cash in dormant betting accounts to improve local sports facilities and support sports clubs.</p>	<p>To be welcomed – could open up more funding opportunities.</p>	<p>As above.</p>	

We will cut red tape to encourage the performance of more live music.	<p>Live music events in pubs and similar establishments already generate a large number of complaints to the council. Any changes will increase the number of complaints.</p> <p>This may help with the delivery of events either directly or the ones we fund.</p>	-ve as may lead to more demands for out of hours noise services.	Implications for Licensing.
We recognise that deficit reduction, and continuing to ensure economic recovery, is the most urgent issue facing Britain.	Generally accepted.	-ve as likely to lead to a reduction in local government funding.	
We will significantly accelerate the reduction of the structural deficit over the course of a Parliament, with the main burden of deficit reduction borne by reduced spending rather than increased taxes.	As above	As above.	
We will introduce arrangements that will protect those on low incomes from the effect of public sector pay constraint and other spending constraints.	Although we are not a poor payer in relation to manual staff this may have a disproportionate affect due to the number of manual staff we employ (especially in Waste and Cleansing services.	Uncertain as the reversed reduced NI position may offset increases in lower paid staff's pay.	
We will protect jobs by stopping the proposed jobs tax.	Welcomed	See above	
We will set out a plan for deficit reduction in an emergency budget. We have created an independent Office for Budget Responsibility to make new forecasts of growth and borrowing for this emergency budget.	Not relevant to the Council.	Neutral	Emergency budget date set for 22 June 2010

<p>We will make modest cuts of £6 billion to non-front-line services within the financial year 2010/11, subject to advice from the Treasury and the Bank of England on their feasibility and advisability. A proportion of these savings can be used to support jobs.</p>	<p>This may depend on the definition of non-frontline services.</p>	<p>-ve The Council has already pre-anticipated having to make savings and will have to make choices about how these are delivered in relation to our own local view about our service priorities.</p>	<p>Details will be provided when available.</p>
<p>We will hold a full Spending Review reporting this autumn, following a fully consultative process involving all tiers of government and the private sector.</p>	<p>The Council will need to be prepared to advance its case for change with other Kent local authorities.</p>	<p>Unquantifiable</p>	
<p>We will reduce spending on the Child Trust Fund and tax credits for higher earners.</p>	<p>Not relevant to the Council</p>	<p>Unquantifiable</p>	
<p>We will create strong financial discipline at all levels of government and place an obligation on public servants to manage taxpayers' money wisely.</p>	<p>Already exists in current law</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>We will reduce the number and cost of quangos.</p>	<p>Need more detail. A number of Quangos we deal with and have built up relationships with may be at threat.</p> <p>This is already impacting on Sport England and Arts Council so unless they will be paying Councils directly rather than going through these bodies then councils will lose money.</p>	<p>Unquantifiable overall.</p> <p>Sport England – TDC already lost £12k through immediate funding changes.</p> <p>Overall estimate is loss of £20,000 per annum.</p>	<p>We have invested significant time into ensuring that quangos like the HCA and SEEDA understand the issues faced by Thanet to ensure that they continued to fund projects and schemes in the district.</p> <p>Risk that new funding routes may be less sympathetic to the needs of Thanet.</p>
<p>We will cancel the third runway at Heathrow.</p>	<p>May lead to indirect opportunities for air traffic at KIA.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Lack of capacity at other airports in the south east and constraints on the expansion of existing airports may stimulate growth in the use of Manston as an alternative. Activity at KIA will increase.</p>

<p>We will refuse permission for additional runways at Gatwick and Stansted.</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Lack of capacity at other airports in the south east and constrains on the expansion of existing airports may stimulate growth in the use of Manston as an alternative. Activity at KIA will increase</p>
<p>We will deliver an offshore electricity grid in order to support the development of a new generation of offshore wind power.</p>	<p>Welcomed Potential benefits for Ramsgate Port.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Affects us at Pegwell, link to Richborough.</p>
<p>We will encourage community-owned renewable energy schemes where local people benefit from the power produced. We will also allow communities that host renewable energy projects to keep the additional business rates they generate.</p>	<p>Welcomed</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Onshore turbines inhibit airport operations (radar interference).</p>
<p>We will launch a national tree planting campaign.</p>	<p>Very uncertain unless this involves extra funding for new trees.</p>	<p>Unquantifiable</p>	<p>Emphasis on tree protection will follow.</p>
<p>We will work towards full compliance with European Air Quality standards.</p>	<p>May give more clout to the council's air quality action plans, e.g. forcing other agencies, especially highways to take actions to reduce pollution in our designated management areas (Birchington and St Lawrence).</p> <p>This will have an impact in relation to choices of vehicles in waste service when we come to replace these in 2013.</p>	<p>Unquantifiable</p>	<p>The councils approach in monitoring air quality and declaring Air quality management zones is built around the existing European Standard. The weakness is in the ability to compel remedial actions from other agencies.</p> <p>Unless fees to business cover full costs.</p>
<p>We will take forward the findings of the Pitt Review to improve our flood defences, and prevent unnecessary building in areas of high flood risk.</p>	<p>Not relevant generally for river risk in Thanet but may affect some coastal areas</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Excellent news. Thanet has under invested sea defences.</p>

<p>We will work towards a 'zero waste' economy, encourage councils to pay people to recycle, and work to reduce littering.</p>	<p>The pay to recycle idea has contrary implications. The aim is to offset payments against reduced costs of diverting waste away from landfill and other more expensive methods of processing (Allington). Most of the savings would accrue to KCC, and would need a mechanism to feed this back if districts are the ones making the recycling payments to residents. The costs of administering such schemes and dealing with the "scams" that would spring up would need to be dealt with.</p> <p>The comment about littering is welcome but there is no certainty about additional support to do this.</p>	<p>-ve Recycling – would need to be operated in a way in which diversion savings outweighed recycling payments. Presume reduced costs overall but cannot be quantified at this stage and would need agreements with KCC.</p> <p>Unless additional cleaning resources are provided that action on littering may lead to additional costs but cannot be quantified at this stage.</p>	
<p>Pe We will take forward the Marine and Coastal Access Act and ensure that its conservation measures are implemented effectively.</p>	<p>Welcomed. This is likely to be neutral unless it places some very unusual requirements on us that exceed our current arrangements under the Thanet Coast Project</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>We will ensure that food procured by government departments, and eventually the whole public sector, meets British standards of production wherever this can be achieved without increasing overall cost.</p>	<p>May have implications as local authorities are the regulating authority.</p>	<p>-ve if additional staffing is required.</p>	
<p>We will create a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the planning system.</p>	<p>Welcomed</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Implies 'testing' of applications. A complex area.</p>
<p>We will promote equal pay and take a range of measures to end discrimination in the workplace.</p>	<p>We have mainly done this for manual staff within works service under the Modernisation Project.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	

We will extend the right to request flexible working to all employees, consulting with business on how best to do so.	Already in TDC Terms & Conditions.	Neutral	
We will undertake a fair pay review in the public sector to implement our proposed '20 times' pay multiple.	No employee is affected in TDC	Neutral	
We will take Sure Start back to its original purpose of early intervention, increase its focus on the neediest families, and better involve organisations with a track record of supporting families. We will investigate ways of ensuring that providers are paid in part by the results they achieve.	Potential implications for the role of Children's centres in the Margate Task Force. The focus on neediest families is welcomed and addresses the charge levelled at the Sure Start programme that the benefits went to better off households.	Neutral	Implications are more for KCC and their role in commissioning children centre services. The biggest risk is to Millmead, which is commissioned differently from other similar centres in Kent. All other services are run in house by KCC.
We will investigate a new approach to helping families with multiple problems	Welcomed Potentially will assist in dealing with high cost households in the Margate task force. May strengthen interventions in dysfunctional households associated with high levels of worklessness and anti social behaviour. See comments below at B.	Neutral	
We will publish serious case reviews, with identifying details removed	We occasionally contribute to serious case reviews. We are required to produce an action plan as a result of our participation in the process and this might be seem to implicate the council as having a contributory role in the death or injury to the child. Thus potential reputation risk to the council.	Neutral	We have been involved in just one serious case review during the last year.

<p>We will review the criminal records and vetting and barring regime and scale it back to common sense levels.</p>	<p>Welcomed</p>	<p>+ve will potentially reduce the Council's costs.</p>	<p>This may reduce costs of CRB checking of staff.</p>
<p>We will require public bodies to publish online the job titles of every member of staff and the salaries and expenses of senior officials paid more than the lowest salary permissible in Pay Band 1 of the Senior Civil Service pay scale, and organograms that include all positions in those bodies.</p>	<p>We are already going beyond this requirement (depending on what level Pay band one kicks in at).</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>We will introduce new protections for whistleblowers in the public sector.</p>	<p>Welcomed but unclear what these are.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>We will require all councils to publish meeting minutes and local service performance data.</p>	<p>Already done by TDC</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>We will require all councils to publish items of spending above £500, and to publish contracts and tender documents in full.</p>	<p>This seems onerous and will generate a high level of follow up enquires from FOI. Surely this is far too low a threshold and will be very onerous.</p>	<p>-ve Increased cost – assumed that to this is almost a full time job for a Council of our size, estimate £20,000 per annum.</p>	
<p>We will ensure that all data published by public bodies is published in an open and standardised format, so that it can be used easily and with minimal cost by third parties.</p>	<p>We are already working towards this objective.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	

<p>We will end all existing welfare to work programmes and create a single welfare to work programme to help all unemployed people get back into work.</p>	<p>Curtailment of Thanet works and other initiatives.</p> <p>This is likely to have very uncertain consequences in our more deprived areas. If it encourages people into work then it will be beneficial in social and environmental terms leading to reduced management and maintenance costs. However, the change is likely to be over a generation if any.</p>	<p>Unquantifiable</p>	<p>Future Jobs Fund Round 2 has been cancelled.</p>
<p>We will realign contracts with welfare to work service providers to reflect more closely the results they achieve in getting people back into work.</p>	<p>Welcomed.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>We will ensure that receipt of benefits for those able to work is conditional on their willingness to work.</p>	<p>See above.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Again difficult for Thanet – links to housing, and Environmental services</p>
<p>We will re-assess all current claimants of Incapacity Benefit for their readiness to work. Those assessed as fully capable for work will be moved onto Jobseeker's Allowance</p>	<p>See above.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>We will develop local Work Clubs – places where unemployed people can gather to exchange skills, find opportunities, make contacts and provide mutual support.</p>	<p>See above.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>We will need probably TDC support</p>
<p>We will investigate how to simplify the benefit system in order to improve incentives to work.</p>	<p>Welcomed.</p>	<p>+ve may lead to reduced expenditure.</p>	

<p>We will explore alternative forms of secure, treatment-based accommodation for mentally ill and drugs offenders.</p>	<p>Welcomed</p>	<p>-ve if the LA has to provide the accommodation.</p>	
<p>We will ensure that there is a stronger voice for patients locally through directly elected individuals on the boards of their local primary care trust (PCT). The remainder of the PCT's board will be appointed by the relevant local authority or authorities, and the Chief Executive and principal officers will be appointed by the Secretary of State on the advice of the new independent NHS board. This will ensure the right balance between locally accountable individuals and technical expertise.</p>	<p>Unclear how elections will be conducted and how this squares with a greater localism agenda.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>The local PCT will act as a champion for patients and commission those residual services that are best undertaken at a wider level, rather than directly by GPs. It will also take responsibility for improving public health for people in their area, working closely with the local authority and other local organisations.</p>	<p>This may lead to additional funding being provided to health promotion activities and specifically to support the type of sports programmes TDC manages or promotes. Funding coming in may help replace current budgets in sports development service.</p>	<p>+ve Reduced costs – cannot be quantified at this stage.</p>	
<p>If a local authority has concerns about a significant proposed closure of local services, for example an A&E department, it will have the right to challenge health organisations, and refer the case to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel. The Panel would then provide advice to the Secretary of State for Health.</p>	<p>Welcomed but which tier of local government does it relate to.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>We will renegotiate the GP contract and incentivise ways of improving access to primary care in disadvantaged areas.</p>	<p>Welcomed</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	

<p>We will help elderly people live at home for longer through solutions such as home adaptations and community support programmes.</p>	<p>Could have implications for TDC – would need further details of proposed programmes before further comment.</p>	<p>-ve unless additional resources provided.</p>	
<p>We will phase out the default retirement age and hold a review to set the date at which the state pension age starts to rise to 66, although it will not be sooner than 2016 for men and 2020 for women. We will end the rules requiring compulsory annuitisation at 75.</p>	<p>Will have potential impacts for employers including TDC.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>We will reduce electoral fraud by speeding up the implementation of individual voter registration.</p>	<p>Unclear how this will work</p>	<p>Potentially –ve if additional cost.</p>	
<p>We will fund 200 all-postal primaries over this Parliament, targeted at seats which have not changed hands for many years. These funds will be allocated to all political parties with seats in Parliament that they take up, in proportion to their share of the total vote in the last general election.</p>	<p>Could apply to North Thanet Constituency</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>We will introduce a new ‘public reading stage’ for bills to give the public an opportunity to comment on proposed legislation online, and a dedicated ‘public reading day’ within a bill’s committee stage where those comments will be debated by the committee scrutinising the bill.</p>	<p>Welcomed</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>We will publish details of every UK project that receives over £25,000 of EU funds.</p>	<p>Welcomed</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	
<p>We will give residents the power to instigate local referendums on any local issue</p>	<p>Does the government really mean “any” local issue?</p>	<p>-ve Increased cost – extremely difficult to estimate.</p>	

We will stop plans to impose supplementary business rates on firms if a majority of the firms affected do not give their consent.	Attention is required to the raising and distribution of business rates.	Neutral	
We will give residents the power to veto excessive council tax increases.	Unclear how a veto could operate democratically.	-ve if it leads to rebilling could be incurred.	
We will give local communities greater control over public health budgets with payment by the outcomes they achieve in improving the health of local residents.	Welcomed	Neutral	
We will investigate ways of improving access to preventative healthcare for those in disadvantaged areas to help tackle health inequalities.	Welcomed Potential implications for the organisation and use of resources in the Margate Task Force. See comment C above.	Neutral	Could be crucial route to funding in parts of Thanet.
We will fund a significant premium for disadvantaged pupils from outside the schools budget by reductions in spending elsewhere.	Welcomed as could lead to additional resources in Thanet.	Neutral	
We will support the creation and expansion of mutuals, co-operatives, charities and social enterprises, and enable these groups to have much greater involvement in the running of public services.	Welcomed in principle	Neutral	Relevant to Thanet, but will need Council support.
We will give public sector workers a new right to form employee-owned co-operatives and bid to take over the services they deliver. This will empower millions of public sector workers to become their own boss and help them to deliver better services.	Assumed this will mean under management contract arrangements	-ve unless set up cost met by central government.	Need to consider the implications for commissioning and monitoring of such services e.g. cost of service plus cost of monitoring – contract management.

<p>We will train a new generation of community organisers and support the creation of neighbourhood groups across the UK, especially in the most deprived areas.</p>	<p>Welcomed. Seems to be in line with many aspects of the SSCF programme. Would support the ongoing development of the Cliftonville N'hood Plan.</p> <p>See comment A above.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Participation costs money</p>
<p>We will support sustainable travel initiatives, including the promotion of cycling and walking and will encourage joint working between bus operators and local authorities.</p>	<p>Welcomed</p>	<p>-ve unless supported by additional resources.</p>	<p>Whilst transport comes down to KCC it is unclear was tier of LA this means. More detail required before comments can be given in relation to implications to TDC.</p>
<p>We will stop central government funding for new fixed speed cameras and switch to more effective ways of making our roads safer, including authorising 'drugalyser' technology.</p>		<p>-ve as may reduce current funding.</p>	
<p>We will tackle rogue private sector wheel clampers.</p>	<p>May have implications for District councils if they are appointed as the enforcement and regulatory authority. May be a requirement for clampers to be licenced by the local authority, increasing work load of licensing section.</p>	<p>-ve if powers passed to District Councils.</p>	

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LGA On the day briefing - Queen's Speech 25th May 2010

Introduction

This briefing covers only the legislation outlined today in the Queen's Speech. Other measures not requiring legislation (for example, banning the use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act by councils unless they are signed off by a magistrate) may still be put into place and the LGA Group will be lobbying on these separately. The coalition Government's full proposals are outlined in an LGA briefing [here](#)

Framed within the priorities of "freedom, fairness and responsibility", the Government today outlined its legislative priorities for the new session of Parliament in the Queen's Speech. The Government's main priorities remain to reduce the deficit and restore economic growth.

22 Bills will be introduced in this first session of the new coalition Government which will run until the next Queen's Speech in November 2011. The LGA Group will be focusing its lobbying work on those Bills which are priorities for member councils.

LGA key messages

We strongly welcome the Government's intention to devolve power and autonomy to councils and to local people. Ultimately this means giving freedoms and flexibilities to decide things locally.

Local government is ready to work with the new coalition government to reduce spending and reform the state. Councils are ready to strike a deal with central government which will see local government take full responsibility for delivering more with less.

The LGA can offer:

- Specific measures to make efficiency savings and cut waste quickly without affecting the front line
- Radical decentralisation for a more effective and affordable state
- Comprehensive support to councils to ensure success

The LGA Group will be working with Ministers, government departments and members of both Houses to ensure that the best interests of councils are represented as the legislation passes through Parliament.

Key bills for local government

The following Bills will be introduced after summer recess

Decentralisation and Localism Bill

Will devolve greater powers to councils and local communities, specifically to give communities much more control over housing and planning decisions.

Specific measures on **Localism** include:

- Give councils a power of general competence.

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For further information please contact Kirsty Ivanoski-Nichol, Public Affairs and Campaigns Manager
kirsty.ivanoski-nichol@lga.gov.uk or 020 7664 3120

- Give local government and community groups greater financial autonomy.
- Abolish the Standards Board regime and abolish Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).
- Give residents the power to instigate local referendums on any local issue and the power to veto excessive council tax increases.
- Require public bodies to publish online job titles of every member of staff and salaries and expenses of senior officials.
- Give councillors the power to vote on large salary packages for unelected council officials.
- Create Local Enterprise Partnerships (replacing Regional Development Agencies) to promote economic development.

LGA Group view:

- We agree that a general power of competence is crucial to support councils and have published a draft Bill setting out how this could be enacted [here](#). Greater financial autonomy will allow councils to respond to local priorities.
- We welcome the commitment to cut local government inspection – including CAA. Excessive inspection has outlived its purpose and costs too much money.
- Councils already have a duty to respond to petitions and will continue to seek to find innovative mechanisms to engage with their communities.
- The LGA Group has recommended that councils should be able to establish remuneration committees, to include members from outside the council, which can oversee and scrutinise pay packages.

Specific measures on **Planning** include:

- Abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategies and the Infrastructure Planning Commission.
- Return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils.

LGA Group view:

- We look forward to further discussions on the detail of how this will work in practice.
- The LGA has long been arguing for a simpler and more joined up approach to planning decisions and big infrastructure projects that are genuinely national in their impact.
- We believe it is important that the consolidated national framework be based on an understanding of the needs of and impact on local economies and strictly limited to national projects.
- It is important that any end to regional targets be accompanied by powers for councils to coordinate funding and strategically plan collectively at the sub-regional level.

Specific measures on **Housing**:

- Phase out the ring-fencing of grants to local government and review the unfair Housing Revenue Account.

LGA Group view:

- The LGA agrees that the Housing Revenue Account is unfair and has long been campaigning for a reform of council housing finance.
- There is a strong consensus within local government that reform must now move forward speedily.

Education and Children's Bill

Will allow different groups, including parents, to start and run state schools, and establish the "pupil premium" which would see more money being spent on children from a disadvantaged background.

Specific measures include:

- New providers can enter the state school system in response to parental demand.
- To reform Ofsted and other accountability frameworks to ensure that head teachers are held properly accountable for the core educational goals of attainment and closing the gap between rich and poor.
- Introduction of the pupil premium.

LGA Group view:

- The LGA supports the expansion of more providers in the market to enable the expansion of education and training choices available to local parents and learners.
- We believe that local authorities offer a better way of managing this expansion than a central government department or a non departmental public body.
- Councils can provide the mechanism for ensuring that schools admission and exclusion policies are fair, and fairly operated, and deliver a place for all local children and young people, including those with special educational needs.
- Councils are uniquely placed to provide this local commissioning role allowing for the provision of individual education services to be delivered in connection with other local public services provided by councils, especially child protection.
- LGA agrees with the introduction of a 'pupil premium'.
- It is unclear as yet how head teachers alone can be 'held properly accountable' for attainment and 'closing the gap between rich and poor'. We would expect other local partners, including the local authority, to assist schools in ensuring this can happen, as not all support work is commissioned by or occurs wholly within the school context, for example health and social care issues.

Other Bills affecting local government

The following Bills will be introduced immediately

Academies Bill

The Bill will allow more schools to become academies, as well as giving more say to teachers to decide what should be in the curriculum.

LGA Group view:

- Local authorities have been pro-active in helping to ensure a greater diversity in school choices for local parents over a number of years, including in many instances co-sponsoring Academies. The LGA agrees that there should be an expansion of education and training choices available to local parents and learners.
- The process for creating more Academies appears to be more centralised with local authorities no longer needing to be consulted and any change being agreed only by the Secretary of State. We look forward to further discussion on the detail of how local accountability could be maintained, in line with the Government's expressed commitment to decentralisation.

Local Government (Revocation of Structural Change) Bill

This will stop the planned creation of single-tier councils serving Exeter and Norwich.

The following Bills will be introduced before summer recess

The Freedom Bill

This will include the scrapping of universal DNA databases and the placing of restrictions on internet records, while the use of CCTV cameras will be reviewed.

LGA Group view:

- The regulations around council use of CCTV are not always clear. We would be pleased to see further clarity provided on the use of CCTV.
- Any new arrangements must recognise that in some cases surveillance is a vital tool to help councils tackle crimes which impact on local communities – for example, illegal money lending, sales of alcohol and cigarettes to children and anti-social behavior.
- We hope that the Government will address concerns previously raised about giving councils the same rights of audience in civil courts as they have in magistrates' courts.

National Insurance Contributions Bill

Will stop the planned rise in National Insurance Contributions (NIC) for employers. The rise in NICs for employees will still go ahead.

The following Bills will be introduced after summer recess

Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill

Will seek to make police forces more accountable and crack down on anti-social behaviour and alcohol-related violence.

Specific measures include:

- Introduce measures to make the police more accountable through oversight by a directly elected individual.
- Overhaul Licensing Act to give local authorities stronger powers.
- Allow councils to shut down any shop or bar found to be persistently selling alcohol to children.
- Ban the sale of alcohol below cost price.
- Permit local councils to charge more for late-night licenses.

LGA Group view:

- With any reform of the police structure it is vital that local partnerships are not fractured, especially during a time when we need local services to come together to pool resources and deliver efficient and effective frontline services. We will be discussing with our members how best to respond to these proposals.
- We welcome measures to increase powers for councils to remove licenses from problem premises, and to shut down shops known to be selling alcohol to children.
- The LGA Group has been calling for councils to have the power to charge more for late night licenses on the "polluter pays" principle and welcomes this measure.
- Councils would welcome the power to set locally the floor price for the sale of alcohol in conjunction with the police and local partners.

- However we would like assurances that any additional revenue from increased licence costs would not be ring fenced for providing extra policing. Late night licences also affect other services, such as street cleaning, and it is important that these can also be funded through licensing revenues.

Welfare Reform Bill

To simplify the benefits system in order to improve work incentives, including establishing a single welfare-to-work regime and increasing sanctions on those who refuse.

LGA Group view:

- Councils should be given a bigger role in commissioning solutions to unemployment so that services can be supported by and/or integrated with other public services, thereby better helping people into work. This is consistent with the new Work Programme. Councils can help manage some of the risks, including how to get best value for money from the payment levels for job outcomes and making sure other public services work well with private providers.
- Local government has a strong track record on helping the long-term unemployed back to work. Our major Hidden Talents project last year demonstrated how better and more cost-effective outcomes for young people can be achieved through better local working to tailor support for 16 to 25 year olds.

Energy Security and Green Economy Bill

Will seek to implement the "Green deal" which will improve energy efficiency in homes and businesses and promote low carbon energy production. Energy supplies will also be "secured".

LGA Group view:

- We believe that councils are in a position to take a strong leadership role on making homes energy efficient, and on ensuring as much required heat and energy as possible are generated locally and through renewable means.
- Councils should be allowed to take responsibility for achieving real change for their residents, with needless bureaucracy and interventions from central government and quangos cut.

Public Bodies Bill

Will seek to ensure greater accountability, transparency and efficiency in Government by reducing the number and costs of quangos. Will also provide Ministers with the powers to abolish, merge or transfer functions.

LGA Group view:

- Through our Who's in charge? Campaign, the LGA Group has consistently called for a reduction in the number of quangos and is pleased to see the Government addressing this.

Health Bill

Will seek to give health professionals and patients more say over NHS decision-making. Will cut health service quangos and some central targets and increase focus on "health inequalities"

LGA Group view:

- It will be important not to put at risk the real gains achieved from partnership working between local authorities and the NHS by introducing split mandates through directly elected individuals on Primary Care Trust (PCT)

Boards. We support a strengthening of local government working with PCTs to improve public health.

- We are pleased that there will be clarity on the role of Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Monitor. As far as CQC is concerned, we believe there should be a continuing focus on the experience of patients and service users of the interplay of health and care and support services.

Pensions and Savings Bill

Will restore the earnings link for the basic state pension – with a guarantee that pensions are raised by at least 2.5 per cent a year.

Other Bills

The following Bills will be introduced immediately

- **Identity Documents Bill** – *To scrap identity cards.*

The following Bills will be introduced before summer recess

- **Parliamentary Reform Bill** – *To introduce five-year fixed-term parliaments, reducing the number of MPs, and reform the House of Lords.*
- **Office of Budget Responsibility Bill** – *Sets up the independent OBR which will replace the Treasury as the official "forecaster" for growth and borrowing.*
- **Equitable Life Payments Scheme Bill** - *Offer compensation to those who lost out when Equitable Life came close to collapse.*

The following Bills will be introduced after summer recess

- **European Communities (Amendment) Referendum Lock Bill** – *To enshrine the commitment to hold a referendum if there are any more attempts by the EU to grab significant powers from Britain under the Lisbon Treaty or in any other way.*
 - **Scotland Bill** - *Implement the recommendations of the Calman Commission.*
 - **Armed Forces Bill** – *To rebuild the Military Covenant.*
 - **Financial Services Regulation Bill** – *To put regulation back in the hands of the Bank of England and crack down on bonuses.*
 - **Terrorist Asset Freezing Bill** - *Will expand the definition of an organisation classed as terrorist.*
 - **Postal Services Bill** – *To modernise the Royal Mail*
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Other expected legislation

- **Overseas development aid** – *To commit via a Parliamentary motion to spend 0.7 per cent of national income on development aid by 2013.*
- **Airport Economic Regulation Bill** – *To break-up BAA's monopoly*
- **Cap on non-EU economic migrants**
- **Draft Bill on Reform of Parliamentary Privilege**
- **Broadband Infrastructure** - *To support investment in new high-speed broadband internet connections.*
- **High speed railway network** – *To enable the already announced route between London and Birmingham to be constructed.*