

Date: 17th September 2013

Regeneration and Environment

Title:	Draft Consumer Rights Bill
Accountable Officer:	Kevin Adderley
Portfolio(s) Affected:	Environment
Category:	New Legislation
Synopsis:	This proposed bill would update consumer-protection laws so they cover digital purchases such as downloaded music and e-books.
Key Points:	Trading Standards will be granted new powers, such as being able to get a court to order a trader to pay compensation when consumer law is breached.
Implications:	This draft bill will have provide Trading Standards with new powers and responsibilities. The impact on the existing work of the Trading Standards service may need to be explored as the Draft Bill develops through the legislative process.

Title:	Mortgages / Help to Buy
Accountable Officer:	Kevin Adderley
Portfolio(s) Affected:	Neighbourhoods and Engagement
Category:	Government Announcement
Synopsis:	Announcement of two new schemes to boost the housing market.
Key Points:	£3.5 billion 'Help to Buy' Shared Equity Scheme, aimed at people looking to own a new build home. A 'Help to Buy Mortgage Guarantee' will also increase the availability of mortgages on new or existing properties for those with small deposits.
Implications:	The Local Authority may wish to further explore the impact of this announcement.

Title:	Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)
Accountable Officer:	Kevin Adderley
Portfolio(s) Affected:	Economy
Category:	Guidance
Synopsis:	The Government has now set out the guidance and a timetable for the production of Strategic Economic Plans, which will determine the allocation to local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) of the Single Local Growth Fund (now referred to as the Local Growth Fund, or LGF).
Key Points:	They can use this from April 2013 to build the capacity and capability they will need to develop their Investment Strategies. LEPs are considered to be key strategic drivers. They will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with local partners to decide which projects to support• Help to identify match funding

- Oversee arrangements for selecting projects or for using co-financing organisations to procure European Structure Funds (ESF) provision, in discussion with Managing Authorities
- Deliver the milestones and results agreed in their strategy, including making sure that enough money is spent each year to meet annual spend targets
- Involve local partners across the spectrum.

Further Information: The Local Government Information Unit have recently produced a 'State of LEPs' briefing:

<http://www.lgiu.org.uk/briefing/the-state-of-leps/>

Implications: Local authority commitment to the Strategic Economic Plans is a key component of their acceptability and hence the allocation of LGF to LEPs. It is expected that local authority members of LEPs will put economic development at the heart of all they do and work collaboratively across the LEP area.

This guidance will be of interest to Members and Officers with particular interests and responsibilities for economic development, planning, and regeneration.

Title: **Neighbourhood Planning Areas**

Accountable Officer: Kevin Adderley

Portfolio(s) Affected: Environment

Category: Guidance

Synopsis: Neighbourhood Planning Regulations were introduced as part of the Localism Act and took effect in April 2012. Their purpose is to give communities the power to set the priorities for local development.

Key Points: Neighbourhood planning can be taken forward by two types of body - town and parish councils or 'neighbourhood forums'. Neighbourhood forums are community groups that are designated to take forward neighbourhood planning in areas without parishes. It is the role of the local planning authority to agree who should be the neighbourhood forum for the neighbourhood area.

The Government attempted to keep the criteria for establishing neighbourhood forums as simple as possible to encourage new and existing residents' organisations, voluntary and community groups to put themselves forward.

Neighbourhood forums and parish councils can use new neighbourhood planning powers to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood. These are described legally as 'neighbourhood development plans'.

Further Information: The Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) has issued a briefing that compiles best practice examples from a number of Neighbourhood Planning Areas.

<http://www.lgiu.org.uk/briefing/policy-in-practice-neighbourhood-planning/>

Implications: The findings of this Review will be of interest to members and officers supporting and developing Neighbourhood Plans. In Wirral this is being progressed in four neighbourhoods: Devonshire Park Neighbourhood Forum; Hoylake Community Planning Forum; Central Liscard Area Residents Association and Greasby Community Association.