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New planning guide for councillors

Leading local democracy think tank the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) next week publishes 'Planning Simplified: A Guide for Councillors'.

The guide is aimed at all councillors and provides a concise and authoritative introduction to how the planning system works and the role of councillors within it, taking account of the most recent changes made by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It also examines how probity issues affect councillors in the planning field.

The guide, with a foreword from the Rt. Hon Keith Hill, the Minister for Planning, is to be launched at a Local Government Association (LGA) conference on councillors and planning that takes place in London on 11 January. Planning Simplified is also endorsed by the Town and Country Planning Association, Royal Town Planning Institute and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

Ines Newman, LGIU Head of Policy, said: "This LGIU guide provides all councillors, whether or not they sit on planning committees, with an accessible, concise and up to date account of the planning system. Planning is of key importance for councillors wanting to make a real difference to the lives of those who elect them across a range of issues, such as protecting green space, improving the design of buildings or increasing accessibility.

"'Planning Simplified: A Guide for Councillors' will equip councillors to deal with the inevitable lobbying that they all receive over planning applications, while maintaining the highest standards of probity."

ENDS

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Notes to Editors

1. The Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) is an authoritative and informed source of comment, advice and information on a range of local government and public policy issues. As Britain's foremost independent local democracy think tank, the LGIU campaigns to extend local authority best practice, freedoms and responsibilities and influence the debate on local government modernisation. The LGIU and its sister organisations The Education Network (TEN) and the Democratic Health Network (DHN) provide research, policy briefings, information, advice, training and lobbying services to local authority and trade union affiliates. Previous LGIU news releases and statements can be viewed at www.lgiu.gov.uk.

2. 'Planning Simplified: A Guide for Councillors' is on sale at £20 each (£10 to LGIU affiliates) from Central Books on 0845 458 9910, 0845 458 9912 (fax) or e-mail mo@centralbooks.com.

3. Journalists can obtain a free PDF version of 'Planning Simplified: A Guide for Councillors' on request from LGIU Press Officer Kevin Morton by e-mailing kevin.morton@lgiu.org.uk.

4. 'Planning Simplified: A Guide for Councillors' was written for the LGIU by Roy Darke, a qualified town planner and university teacher who has served as a councillor in Sheffield and Oxford. In Oxford he was chair of the Regional Development and Control Committee. He has written extensively on local government and planning issues and trains elected members around the country on town planning and probity issues.

5. Details of the LGA conference 'The influential councillor: supporting councillors in planning effectively for their communities' can be found at <http://www.lga.gov.uk/Event.asp?lsection=46&id=SXCE92-A7828F44>.