

# first

No.630 December 2018

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the magazine for local government

## Adult social care

"The current situation is unsustainable **and is failing people on a daily basis**"

The LGA's green paper consultation report

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Local Government Association

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**#OurDay 2018**  
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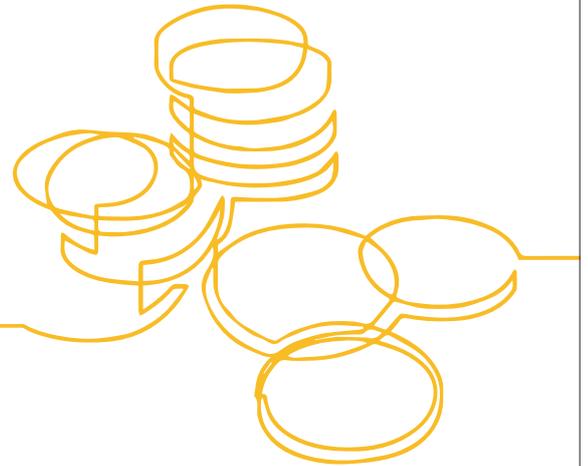


**Homelessness**  
A growing challenge for district councils

# Annual Local Government Finance Conference 2019

Moving the conversation on  
8 January 2019, London

As we approach the 2019 Spending Review, the implementation of greater Business Rates Retention and the Fair Funding Review in 2020, the challenges for local government finance are greater than ever. Our conference will address all these hot topics, as well as other issues that shape the broader local government finance agenda.



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# LGA Annual Licensing Conference

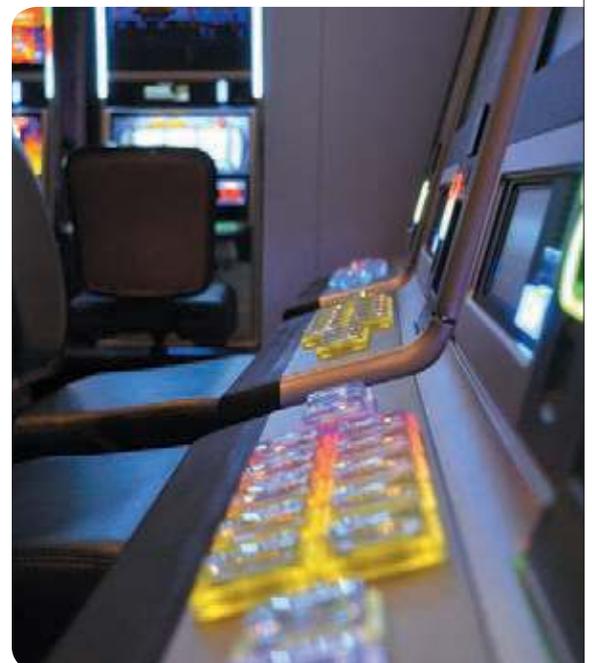
5 February 2019, London

The Local Government Association's Annual Licensing Conference provides an unrivalled opportunity to discuss all the key strategic and practical developments that can be expected to affect councils' licensing committees and teams over the year ahead.

The conference will examine the government's plans and expectations for licensing as well as exploring the challenges facing licensing authorities, highlighting innovative work being undertaken by councils and their partners and discussing how we can build on best practice.

Delegates will hear from a range of expert speakers drawn from all areas of licensing and take part in practical workshops covering issues including commercialisation, animal licensing and vulnerability in the night time economy.

To book your place visit [www.local.gov.uk/events](http://www.local.gov.uk/events)



## Care campaign



We received more than 540 responses to our green paper on adult social care, which we launched after further delays to the Government's own Green Paper.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this vital work, and who continues to support it. You can read our recommendations in response to the consultation in this edition of **first** (p10).

Elsewhere, we have our annual breakdown of the Chancellor's Budget (p16), which provided some welcome additional funding for social care, potholes and high streets.

We also have an update on the LGA's Bright Futures campaign for children's services (p13), and take a look at council cyber security (p15).

Our lead comment this month is from Mansfield's Mayor Kate Allsop, from the District Councils' Network, on the increasing challenge of homelessness (p25). We also hear from Bristol's Mayor Marvin Rees on how city and regional leaders can make a difference locally and internationally (p28).

Our interviewee this month is Braintree's Cllr Andrew Hensman, who is autistic. He talks of the challenges he faces but also the satisfaction of representing his residents, and argues that – with the right support – there is no limit to what people with autism can achieve (p22).

**Lord Porter** is Chairman of the LGA

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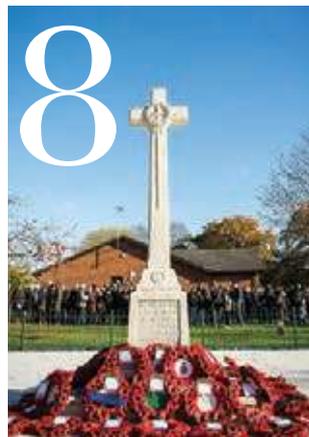
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*"This is my chance to make a difference and prove people with differences can do it. The ballot box doesn't discriminate"*



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## Additional care cash in Budget

Chancellor Philip Hammond announced extra funding for social care, potholes, transport and high streets in his latest Budget statement, alongside business rates changes and a new tax on plastic packaging.

There was an additional £650 million for adult and children's social care to tide it over to the Spending Review, as well as £420 million for potholes and road repairs, £240 million for transport in the six mayoral combined authorities, and £675 million to revitalise town centres.

LGA Chairman Lord Porter said the Budget showed the Government was beginning to listen to its call for desperately needed investment in local services, but fell short of what councils need in the long term.

"Councils were at the front of the queue when austerity started, so local services should be at the front of the queue if it is coming to an end," he said.

"The LGA's Budget submission highlighted the severe funding pressures facing councils in 2019/20. The Chancellor has acted to help tackle some of this immediate funding crisis with £650 million for social care, which provides

a financial boost for some of our local public services. While this funding will ease some of the immediate financial pressures facing councils and our local services, it is clear that this cannot be a one-off. It's a start, but the real test will come in the Spending Review next year."

He added: "Local government in England continues to face significant funding gaps, and rising demand for adult social care, children's services and homelessness support will continue to threaten other services our communities rely on, like running libraries, cleaning streets and maintaining parks.

"Councils also continue to face huge uncertainty about how they will pay for local services into the next decade and beyond.

"Investing in local government is good for the nation's prosperity, economic growth and the overall health and wellbeing of the nation. We now look forward to working with the Government to ensure the forthcoming Spending Review delivers a truly sustainable funding settlement for local government, and that its Adult Social Care Green Paper puts social care on a firmer, long-term financial footing for the people who depend on care and support."



## news in brief

### Apprenticeships up

The latest annual figures for public sector apprenticeships show a year-on-year increase, including in local government. Cllr Sir Richard Leese, Chair of the LGA's City Regions Board, said councils were finding it a challenge to make the most of the Apprenticeship Levy because new apprenticeship standards are taking too long to approve. "Councils would need to hire the equivalent of the entire fire service each year for four years to meet their public sector target. This is at a time when councils continue to face significant and ongoing funding pressures with [staff] headcounts falling. The Budget contained a number of important changes, but the Government needs to ensure they result in the overall apprenticeship reforms being coherent and making sense on the ground."



### first e-bulletin

The LGA has launched a new **first** e-bulletin, aimed at current readers of the magazine – which you should have received ahead of this edition. The bulletin includes links to **first** stories on our revamped and searchable website ([www.local.gov.uk/first](http://www.local.gov.uk/first)).

These developments are in response to our latest readership survey. This found that, while **first** remains the most popular way to find out about the work of the LGA, a significant minority of you were interested in receiving an online or e-version instead of – or as well as – the hard copy. We are also responding to concerns raised about the environmental and cost implications of the magazine, particularly in respect of its plastic wrapping.

If you have any queries about the content of the new **first** website or bulletin, or ideas or stories for **first**, please email the editor, Karen Thornton, at [karen.thornton@local.gov.uk](mailto:karen.thornton@local.gov.uk).

If you have any technical difficulties accessing the bulletin or the website, please email [webmaster@local.gov.uk](mailto:webmaster@local.gov.uk). If you want to update your contact details, change or stop your subscription to the magazine, please email [first@oscar-research.co.uk](mailto:first@oscar-research.co.uk).

# 'New money needed to fund social care'

**The Government needs to make the case for national tax and/or social insurance increases to help address the adult social care funding gap, according to responses to the LGA's green paper.**

Other recommendations include urgently injecting genuinely new national investment to help address the social care funding gap – expected to hit £3.56 billion by 2024/25 – and launching a national campaign to raise awareness of what adult social care and support is, and why it matters.

Polling by Britain Thinks, commissioned by the LGA as part of its green paper work, found that an increase in national insurance was the public's most preferred option for funding social care, with 56 per cent of people in favour, while only 18 per cent opposed the measure.

The LGA launched its green paper, 'The lives we want to lead', over the summer, after



a further delay to the Government's own Green Paper. It has received more than 540 submissions to the consultation from the general public, people who use services, councils and other interested organisations.

Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "Work to find a long-term funding solution for adult social care has been kicked into the long grass by successive governments for the past two decades and has brought these vital services to breaking point.

"The Government must use its upcoming Green Paper to make a serious case for national tax rises, including either increases to income tax and/or national insurance, to provide long-term sustainability for the vital social care services that are central to helping people to live fulfilling, independent lives.

"Now is the time for answers. And every day that is spent further defining the problem, and consulting on changes that only really tinker at the edges of the debate, is another day in which people's lives are not being lived to the full.

"The Government needs to be bold in the solutions it puts forward, but it is incumbent upon politicians of all colours to cooperate and be part of a wider movement for change in the national interest."



See **p10-11** for more on the LGA's social care green paper response and recommendations

## news in brief

### Preventing ill-health

Prevention will be at the heart of the NHS long-term plan, with more focus on primary and community care services and early support to prevent ill-health, the Government has announced. Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "Councils support the Government's prevention vision because preventative strategies help people live healthier lives for longer. But to maximise this vision and support the NHS even more effectively, government needs to ensure that councils' prevention work is adequately funded by reversing the £600 million reduction to public health grants and plugging the £3.5 billion funding gap facing adult social care by 2025."

### Place-based care

A refreshed vision for transforming health and care services has been published by the LGA and partners. 'Shifting the centre of gravity: making place-based, person-centred health and care a reality' was launched at the National Children and Adult Services Conference in November. Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "This report sends a clear message that, when it comes to how health and adult social care is delivered, more of the same is not an option. We are fully committed to working together to transform health, care and wellbeing services to improve people's health and care outcomes."

## Most 'unprepared' for care costs

The overwhelming majority of people have not made any plans for how they will pay for their own care in older age, national public polling commissioned by the LGA has revealed.

Given the findings, the LGA is calling on government to lead a national campaign to raise the profile and reputation of adult social care.

Unlike the NHS, which is free at the point of need, social care is means tested; what you contribute to the cost of your care depends on the care setting and your assets and savings.

Across the UK, 44 per cent of people in care homes pay the full cost of their care themselves, and more than a quarter (26 per cent) pay the full cost of their home care.

Yet the poll, by BritainThinks, found that only 15 per cent of adults say they are making plans for how they will pay for care they might

need in the future. Half of English adults say they have never thought about it.

Almost half of English adults (48 per cent) say they have little to no understanding of what the term 'social care' means, compared with just 13 per cent who say they do. More than two in five (44 per cent) think that social care is provided by the NHS and 28 per cent think that it is free at the point of access.

Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "This polling raises real concerns over how prepared people are for their own care needs, or the care of their loved ones.

"If we are to truly tackle adult social care, we must aspire to social care having a similar 'national treasure' status as the NHS, with similar levels of awareness and understanding about what social care is and why it matters."

### Workforce concerns

A report from the Cavendish Coalition has highlighted the impact of Brexit on the social care workforce and recruitment, reinforcing concerns raised by the LGA. Cllr Kevin Bentley, Chairman of the LGA's Brexit Taskforce, said: "Eight per cent of social care staff are non-UK EU nationals and this, therefore, represents one of the sectors most vulnerable to changes in migration rules. The recent report of the Migration Advisory Committee reinforces the need to improve pay and conditions for social care staff to attract the workforce that is needed. It is also important that the social care sector receives the same guarantees as the NHS on the future workforce, to ensure that quality care can be maintained."

## news in brief

### Domestic abuse

The Home Affairs Committee has recommended making councils legally responsible for providing refuge for victims of domestic abuse, supported by ring-fenced government funding. Cllr Simon Blackburn, Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, said: "Councils take tackling domestic abuse very seriously, which is why we support further measures to improve work with local partners to support more victims and stop this horrendous crime. This includes investing in more early intervention and schemes that help stop domestic abuse occurring in the first place. With local government facing a £7.8 billion funding gap by 2025, any legislative changes must be matched with adequate resources."

### Border issues

Some councils will play a significant role at the UK's borders as the country prepares for Brexit, according to a National Audit Office report. Cllr Kevin Bentley, Chairman of the LGA's Brexit Taskforce, said: "To enable effective planning and implementation, it's vital that councils are given extra resources, in the same way as the Border Force, Competition and Markets Authority, Food Standards Agency and others have been, and that all relevant councils are involved in the planning process. A no-deal Brexit could leave the UK without access to European-wide databases that provide much of the intelligence for assessing risks about goods entering the country. After years of cuts to regulatory services, councils would be unable to process additional checks without substantial extra resources to support this."

### Lack of transport

A report by Transport for New Homes has suggested the planning system is leaving new housing developments with inadequate walking, cycling and public transport connections to surrounding areas. Cllr Martin Tett, LGA Transport Spokesman, said that, too often, house builders are avoiding making contributions to local infrastructure, such as transport. He added: "Councils are determined to do more in planning for new places in ways that improve air quality and promote more sustainable forms of travel, but a lack of funding is a clear barrier to such investment."



## Car clocking on the increase

**The LGA is calling for mileage correction services and devices to be banned after a surge in 'clocking', which is putting motorists at a greater risk of buying dangerous used cars with false mileage.**

Latest industry figures show clocking – where the mileage is reduced to increase a vehicle's resale value – increased by 25 per cent between 2014 and 2016, and that it costs motorists an estimated £800 million a year in the UK.

One in 16 vehicles checked now has a mileage discrepancy, which means there could be 2.3 million clocked and potentially dangerous cars on the UK's roads.

Rogue car dealers and private sellers can use mileage correction devices – widely available online – to make vehicles look less travelled and inflate used car prices.

In one recent council prosecution, a van sold with 89,000 miles on the clock was actually found to have travelled more than 243,000 miles.

Clocking can hide serious mechanical problems on vehicles and lead to expensive

repair bills. The LGA is urging people to check a vehicle's history thoroughly before buying it, to avoid becoming a victim of fraud.

It is also calling for a proposed EU ban on companies providing mileage correction services – which was supposed to have been in place by May 2018 – to be implemented as soon as possible, and retained under UK law after Brexit.

A legal loophole means that, while knowingly selling a clocked car without disclosing it is fraud, it is not illegal to alter the odometer's mileage.

Cllr Simon Blackburn, Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, said: "The proposed EU ban on mileage correction services needs to be made part of UK law as soon as possible, otherwise thousands more cars will continue to be clocked, jeopardising the safety of cars and passengers on UK roads.

"The sale of cheap mileage correction software also needs to be banned, as this can only be fuelling the big rise in clocking and illegal profits."

## Clarity on EU citizens' voting rights

The Government has confirmed that it does not anticipate any changes to UK law covering candidacy and voting rights before the May 2019 local elections.

This means the voting rights of all EU citizens living in the UK and their ability to stand in local elections will remain unchanged in 2019 until any amendment to UK legislation is made. Candidates elected at or before the May 2019 local elections should be able to serve their term of office in full.

The move follows mounting pressure from the LGA, amid concerns about the potential disruption to selection processes and electoral registers if EU citizens were not able to stand or vote in next year's local elections on 2 May.

Cllr Kevin Bentley, Chairman of the

LGA's Brexit Taskforce, said: "The LGA has been putting pressure on government for certainty that those wishing to stand in next year's elections, and those wishing to vote at them, are able to do so.

"Without this confirmation, councils could have wasted huge amounts of money in the build-up to the election period, only to see candidates having to withdraw before voting day."

He added: "We continue to work with government to ensure the views of all of our member councils are heard at the top table and through the EU Exit Local Government Delivery Board."

The Cabinet Office has made a statement on the issue via a written parliamentary question.

# SEND support funding gap

**Vital support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is facing a potential funding gap this year of more than half a billion pounds, according to the results of interim research commissioned by the LGA.**

The findings, launched at the National Children and Adult Services Conference in Manchester in November, suggest the projected shortfall is £536 million for 2018/19 in England. This is more than double the gap these services faced the previous year as councils struggle to cope with rising demand for support.

The findings are based on a survey of 73 councils – half of local authorities with SEND duties.

The LGA is warning that this growing gap is putting at risk the ability of councils to meet their statutory duties, and that children with SEND could miss out on a mainstream education without urgent action by the Government to provide investment in December's local government finance

settlement. The underfunding of SEND is also adding to the severe pressures already facing schools.

Demand for SEND support is increasing for various reasons, including: population growth; the code of SEND practice rightly raising expectations of parents; more young people aged 16 and over having education, health and care plans; and core funding pressures on mainstream schools affecting their ability to support pupils with high needs.

Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, said: "We face a looming crisis in meeting the unprecedented rise in demand for support from children with special educational needs and disabilities.

"Parents rightly expect and aspire to see that their child has the best possible education and receives the best possible support.

"Councils have pulled out all the stops to try to do this, but are reaching the point where the money is simply not there to keep up with demand."



## '1,000 new child care cases a day'

Social workers are starting new cases for more than 1,000 children each day as council leaders warn services will be pushed to a tipping point without further new money.

The figures also show that the number of children supported through a child protection plan to keep them safe from harm increased by more than 2,700 during the past year – the biggest annual increase in four years.

The LGA said this underlines the huge demand pressures facing children's services departments and reinforces the desperate need for new long-term funding.

The figures show that 382,180 children in England were referred and assessed as in need of social services support in 2017/18, starting what is known as an 'episode of need'. This equates to 1,047 new cases every day of the year.

The most common reasons for a child being identified as needing support were abuse or neglect (53.2 per cent), family dysfunction (15.4 per cent), and a child's disability or illness (8.7 per cent).

Meanwhile, the number of looked after children continues to rise, with latest figures showing there were 75,420 looked after children in England, up four per cent on the year before.

Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, said: "These figures reinforce the need for new and long-term significant funding for children's services, which are fast approaching a tipping point and face a funding gap of £3 billion by 2025 just to keep services running at current levels.

"While the additional investment announced in the Budget was a small step in the right direction and helpful, this will do little to alleviate the immediate and future pressures on services for some of the most vulnerable children and families in the vast majority of council areas.

"It is vital that the Government tackles the funding crisis facing children's services in next year's Spending Review, and delivers a long-term sustainable funding solution that enables councils to protect children at immediate risk of harm while also supporting early intervention to prevent problems escalating in the first place."

## Nursery schools 'under threat'

Thousands of children with special needs could miss out on daily care and support unless the Government continues to provide extra funding for maintained nursery schools, a survey by the LGA has revealed.

Maintained nursery schools play a key role supporting more than 5,000 children with special needs, with qualified teachers designated as co-ordinators – something not required in other nursery provision.

The Government has provided £55 million each year in supplementary funding for maintained nurseries since a new funding formula was introduced in 2017. The additional funding was in recognition of the extra costs faced by maintained nursery schools, such as the need for more highly qualified staff. However, it is set to end after 2019/20.

More than three-fifths (61 per cent) of councils responding to the LGA survey fear maintained nursery schools in their area will close if this funding is not protected.

More than half (52 per cent) also said that the loss of funding would mean reduced support for children with special needs.

The LGA is calling on government to continue this funding for an extra year in 2020/21 before a long-term sustainable funding solution is found as part of the Spending Review.

Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, said: "Councils have grave concerns about the future of



maintained nursery schools if the current funding does not continue beyond 2020.

"This could have a detrimental impact on children with special educational needs, for whom maintained nurseries provide a lifeline of vital support."

## news in brief

### Junk food ads

The Advertising Standards Authority has upheld complaints about adverts for McDonald's McFlurry and Burger King's Whopper Jr products displayed within 100 metres of primary schools. Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "It is not right when we are trying to educate children around the importance of maintaining a healthy diet, that at the same time they are subjected to a bombardment of junk food advertising. We urgently need to take action to tackle child obesity, and giving councils powers to control marketing of food and drink high in fat, sugar and salt, which is one of the major causes of this epidemic, will help us to tackle the issue."

### Under-age gambling

A survey by the Gambling Commission has found that 89 per cent of pubs failed to prevent children playing 18-plus gaming machines. Cllr Simon Blackburn, Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, said: "These findings are worrying and highlight significant shortcomings in the pubs that were visited. The LGA has joined the Gambling Commission in calling on the industry to address the findings of this report and take urgent action to prevent young people from developing possible gambling problems as they grow older. Research has shown this creates huge costs for the NHS, councils and the criminal justice system." ● See p20.

### Innovative councils

Do you use creative ideas to tackle local issues? Has a recent project made a big difference to your residents? If so, we want to hear from you! You could be part of next year's Innovation Zone, a vibrant, creative space and programme at the LGA's annual conference in Bournemouth. Over three days, councils and partner organisations demonstrate and discuss how they are using innovation to address local issues by bringing their schemes to life in practical and lively sessions. Tell your story, share your lessons and help others multiply your success. To get involved and learn more, visit the conference website at [www.local.gov.uk/conference](http://www.local.gov.uk/conference) or email [innovation@local.gov.uk](mailto:innovation@local.gov.uk).

# FOBT stakes reduction brought forward

**A cut in the maximum stakes on fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs) will be brought forward by six months, following extensive lobbying and media work by the LGA.**

It was announced in the Budget that the lowering of maximum stakes from £100 to £2 would be introduced in October 2019, but the Government has now decided to implement the reduction in April next year.

Cllr Simon Blackburn, Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, said: "This announcement is great news, on something that has become an issue of growing national concern. A reduction in maximum stakes is something the LGA has long called for to help tackle the harm these machines can cause.

"Maximum stakes on FOBTs are significantly out of line with other high street gambling machines. Bringing the stake down to £2 will help reduce problem gambling and its devastating impacts on individuals and communities. It will help prevent vulnerable players from losing £100 in seconds in a single play, which many people cannot afford to lose.

"Research has shown that problem gambling, often linked to FOBTs, creates huge costs for the NHS, councils and the criminal justice system.

"It is right that government has listened to these concerns and we urge it to set in stone this revised date for the new £2 limit to rule out the chance of any new delay."

## New strategy for veterans

The Government has acknowledged that more information is needed about the number of veterans in local communities.

One of the key principles of its recently published 'Strategy for our veterans' is that former Armed Forces personnel are able to access, when necessary, support from the public and voluntary sectors that meets their needs.

LGA Chairman Lord Porter said: "Identifying veterans has always been a challenge for councils and we are pleased that the strategy recognises the need to collect more information about the number of veterans in our communities. This will help councils better plan their local services."

He added: "Additional funding announced in the Budget for the mental health of veterans will help to ensure that those in need of support can access timely, effective and integrated services. This funding needs to be made available to veterans through councils, which want to work with armed forces charities, health and other local partners to further strengthen mental health support for veterans and ensure it links to wider mental health activity."

But he raised concerns about Ministry of Defence funding for the Armed Forces Covenant, which is ending from March 2019.

"All councils have signed the voluntary Armed Forces Covenant and are committed to honouring their obligations to those who have served their country. The Government needs to continue this funding if councils are to maintain and build on the current level of support for veterans and other people in vulnerable circumstances," said Lord Porter.

The strategy was published shortly after Armistice Day on 11 November, when councils around the country marked the centenary of the end of the First World War with processions, poetry reading, beacon lightings and bell ringing.

Among those remembering those who have lost their lives in conflict were residents, members of Sandhurst Town Council and the Royal Military Academy, pictured (left) at the Sandhurst War Memorial.



'The strategy for our veterans', see [www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategy-for-our-veterans](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategy-for-our-veterans)

# letters

## No to second referendum

I strongly disagree with Cllr Shaheen of Hounslow Council, which is calling for a second referendum on Brexit (**first 629**).

We've already had a people's vote, in which more participated than in recent General Elections, and which gave a clear 52 to 48 per cent majority for pulling out of the EU.

Going to the electorate again would be an insult to the 17.4 million who wanted us to leave, and make many cynical about the whole voting process – as if they couldn't be trusted to give the decision wanted by the powers that be.

Rather, we should respect the voters' wishes, and unite to make Brexit work in the interests of the communities we represent.

**Cllr Tim Mickleburgh (Lab)**, North East Lincolnshire Council

## Housing borrowing cap

The Prime Minister's announcement of the full lifting of the housing revenue account borrowing cap (**first 629**) is much welcomed, as it has been local government policy for some time.

On the day of the announcement, I prepared a draft resolution for my council seeking to take immediate advantage of this new freedom, as there is no question that there is a recognised need for housing in our borough.

I have been advised, however, by our legal department that the new freedoms apply only to local authorities that have retained housing revenue accounts (HRAs). Sefton, like many others, gave up its HRA when our housing stock transfer took place in 2006.

We therefore need to seek urgent clarification from the Government as to the mechanism by which the new freedoms can be implemented and whether or not councils such as my own would need to open a new HRA account, in addition to further clarification of the arrangements made for debt transfer at the time.

**Cllr Sir Ron Watson CBE (Con)**, Sefton Council



## The Budget

It's good that some of our services will be invested in [following the Budget]. Sadly it will not be enough, as we are starting from a very low base.

Labour sold us down the Swanee and the Conservatives have dragged

## sound bites

### Bracknell Forest Council

"A huge thank you to Jonathon, driver of our glass recycling truck Kate Binslet, who stopped to help a resident change a tyre this morning. You turned a frown upside down! #OurDay @re3recycling"

[www.twitter.com/BracknellForest](http://www.twitter.com/BracknellForest)

### Hackney Council

"Our library service bookcrashed Mavis's 100th birthday celebrations today! 4 generations of family were there when the home visit team called with her regular supply of books & music, plus flowers and a card of course to mark the special day #OurDay."

[www.twitter.com/hackneycouncil](http://www.twitter.com/hackneycouncil)

### Barnsley Council

"Ofsted, in their report, said that in Barnsley, 'children are at the heart of strategic thinking, decision making, and operational practice, and the resolute focus on improving outcomes for children.'"

[www.twitter.com/BarnsleyCouncil](http://www.twitter.com/BarnsleyCouncil)

### Cllr Toby Savage (Con, South Gloucestershire)

"Great to join @BristolRoversCT this wkend for @Official\_BRFC #Remembrance Service & raising #Movember awareness amongst spectators with @sglosCouncil & @BNSSG\_CCG colleagues. Shame about the score!"

[www.twitter.com/SavageToby1](http://www.twitter.com/SavageToby1)

### Cllr Ann-Marie Barker (Lib Dem, Woking)

"Lots of support for a #PeoplesVote now it is clearer what leaving the EU looks like at #Woking Debates."

[www.twitter.com/CllrAnnMarieB](http://www.twitter.com/CllrAnnMarieB)

### Stockton Council

"We have over 500 children in our care, and support over 330 children to live with Foster Carers. Just another part of #OurDay. If you want to know more about Fostering, visit [www.stockton.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/fostering)."

[www.twitter.com/stocktoncouncil](http://www.twitter.com/stocktoncouncil)

their heels with fighting among themselves, and ignored the sole purpose of their roles – looking after the needs of our people in the UK.

It's going to take more than one Budget to get us back on our feet! The Chancellor is drip-feeding the economy but he may well rescind on his promises if there is 'no deal' on Brexit – which means we will continue with the fiasco until the next Budget in March 2019.

We have lost so many valuable skills with the dismantling of our industries and frontline services under the Labour and Conservative governments that the Chancellor should start investing heavily to bring us up to scratch.

Perhaps we should allow more of an 'Independent thinking' government as we need to take proper control of our country's needs?

**Cllr Robin Julian (Ind)**, Torridge District Council



**What do you think?** Please submit letters for publication by emailing [karen.thornton@local.gov.uk](mailto:karen.thornton@local.gov.uk). Letters may be edited and published online

# features

## Living the lives we want to lead

Doing nothing about the funding crisis facing adult social care is no longer an option, according to responses to the LGA's green paper consultation

**Y**ears of significant underfunding of councils, coupled with rising demand and costs for care and support, have combined to push adult social care services to breaking point.

The Government's decision in June to further delay its long-awaited Green Paper on the issue prompted the LGA to take action and publish its own green paper and public consultation (see **first** 627).

We received more than 540 submissions – from the public, service users, councils and dozens of other interested parties.

The responses make it clear beyond doubt: doing nothing is no longer an option.

What shines through is the level of passion for supporting and improving people's wellbeing, and the role social care and other linked services can, and should, play in enabling people to live the lives they want to.

Some 20 years of failed or aborted attempts at reforming social care funding by governments of all colours may have frustrated people, but it has quite evidently not dulled their enthusiasm for bringing about change.

This is not to say that the Government's task is suddenly an easy one. But there are two key lessons that it can take from the work we have done.

First, there is clear consensus on key elements of the debate – especially that the

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*“What shines through is the passion for supporting and improving people's wellbeing, and the role social care and other linked services can, and should, play in enabling people to live the lives they want to lead”*

current situation is unsustainable and is failing people on a daily basis, and that adult social care matters in its own right.

Second, there is an equally important element of willingness running through the debate – willingness to engage with the difficult questions and, most crucially, to accept the type of solutions that are needed to secure social care, but which may hitherto have been considered politically unpalatable or inexpedient.

Willingness is a powerful force in this

sense and one that the Government must, at the very least, explore further. As the sector and the public begin to coalesce around an understanding that fundamental solutions are needed – such as national tax rises or a comprehensive social insurance solution – they will simply not accept a roadmap for change that dodges the difficult questions, let alone the difficult decisions.

The recommendations we have made to government (see opposite) are aimed at achieving two broad objectives: stabilising and sustaining the current care system now; and moving towards a future system that we know could be better.

'Better' is not about doing more of what we are doing now, but moving toward the real purpose and intent of the Care Act 2014. While not perfect, the Act's principles are fundamentally sound: a genuine focus on people and their wellbeing being at the heart of care and support; a real commitment to



To view the full consultation response and the LGA's original social care green paper, please visit [www.futureofadultsocialcare.co.uk](http://www.futureofadultsocialcare.co.uk)



prevention and doing everything possible to keeping people fit and well at home; meeting all needs with quality services, delivered by a thriving provider market and skilled and motivated workforce; and effective partnership working – not just with the NHS, but with housing, and the voluntary and community sector, for instance.

This is about being better, not aspiring to be better, and we know councils can deliver.

There is no interest in government simply rearticulating the social care problem; we – and countless others – have done that. Now is the time for answers.

The current Government and its ministers have a unique opportunity to start this process, but politicians on all sides are just as responsible for bringing about the change we need.

The LGA works on such a basis of cross-party cooperation. Now, our national politicians must do the same.

## Recommendations to government

**OBJECTIVE ONE:** stabilise and sustain current provision in the short term (2018-19), and protect the known potential of councils.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Government must urgently inject genuinely new national investment to close the core social care funding gap that builds to £3.56 billion by 2024/25. This must include additional investment to that announced in the 2018 Budget to help address serious provider market stability concerns in 2019/20.
- The Government should prioritise investment in prevention, community and primary health services when it comes to the £20.5 billion additional expenditure for the NHS.
- The Government should implement a new ‘duty to cooperate’, requiring the NHS, and in particular sustainability and transformation partnerships, to engage with health and wellbeing boards as part of developing local plans to reshape and integrate health and care services that are genuinely locally agreed.
- Through its Mandate to NHS England, the Government should ensure the NHS takes decisions based on the needs of local communities as a whole and public spending as a whole.

**OBJECTIVE TWO:** find a long-term solution that harnesses the known potential of councils to create a better social care and support system.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Government should invest significant new funding to close the funding gap facing adult social care that builds to £3.56 billion by 2024/25; and ensure that all older and working age people who need care and support are able to access it.
- Where additional funding is invested in adult social care, this should be made available with as few conditions as possible so local areas have discretion to prioritise the most pressing local issues.
- The Government should reverse the cuts of £600 million to the public health budget between 2015 and 2020.
- As part of its 2019 Spending Review, the Government should consider wellbeing in the round, recognising the contribution that different council services, and those coordinated by other public sector and voluntary sector organisations that councils commission, make to wellbeing.
- The Government should convene a core working group from across the sector, with people with lived experience at its heart, to develop a national campaign that seeks to raise awareness of what adult social care and support is, why it matters in its own right and what it could, and should, be with the right funding and investment. This should be genuinely co-produced, with government acting as a convener.
- The campaign should be clear about the local dimension of social care and support. It should strike the right balance between embracing the value of this local dimension while also being clear about the national framework in which social care and support sits.
- The Government should only implement its care cost cap and asset protection floor proposals if they are part of a wider set of reforms that secure the long-term sustainability of adult social care and support as a whole.
- In consulting on the shape of, and sustainable funding for, social care through its Green Paper, the Government should make the case for increases in income tax and/or national insurance and/or a social care premium.
- Building on the campaign to raise awareness of social care and its value (see above), the Government should make the case for national tax rises or other sustainable, long-term solutions and consult on clear propositions which explain the various options for how sufficient funding for social care and support could be raised nationally. The Government must set out how such increases would relate to the wider social care and local government funding system. It should also be clear about how nationally raised increases for social care would relate to nationally raised increases for the NHS.

# #OurDay is your day

The LGA's annual tweetathon in support of local government reached millions of people around the world, with thousands of tweets highlighting the day-to-day work of council staff and elected members

More than 30,000 tweets were posted during the annual 24-hour local government celebration of those who work or volunteer in local public services.

Co-ordinated by the LGA, #OurDay is a social media marathon that gives the people who keep local services running the chance to share their stories of how they improve residents' quality of life.

This year's #OurDay was the seventh and saw record levels of engagement from people, authorities and other organisations, with 33,558 tweets posted by 10,083 contributors, enjoying a 'social reach' of 26 million people.

That meant that #OurDay, which took place on 20 November, trended at number one in the UK for most of the day and number four worldwide.

From midnight to midnight, councils, fire authorities, partner organisations, and, not least, thousands of councillors and council officers, collectively documented a day in the life of local government, the hundreds of services it provides and how people and places benefit.

Park wardens, care providers, road repairs, bin collections, library workshops, gritting lorries, food safety inspections, rescue dogs, wedding registrations, public health initiatives and many more council functions were featured.

In previous years, authorities were encouraged to sign up to an #OurDay Thunderclap – an app that collects tweets and publishes them at the same moment for maximum impact – but the platform no longer exists, so this year the



LGA encouraged participants to schedule a tweet for noon on 20 November. Nearly 500 councils, organisations and individuals took part, providing a significant spike in our social reach.

#OurDay began trending at number one in the UK early in the morning – a position it maintained throughout the day. As the hours went by and more people joined in, #OurDay trended number four worldwide – a testament to the engaging nature of local government and the esteem in which those who deliver services are held.

The aims of #OurDay include demonstrating the value local government provides to the public, even as councils work in an increasingly challenging financial environment; and highlighting new and innovative schemes, showing how the sector is using social media to benefit residents.

Cllr Peter Fleming, Chairman of the LGA's Improvement and Innovation Board, said: "The reputation of local government has never been more important as local authorities are increasingly having to deliver more with less.

"#OurDay once again offered an opportunity for councils to highlight and shout about the amazing work they do for the public and their communities. Local authorities provide a huge variety of services – many hidden – every day to support people and make lives better.

"I would like to say a huge thank you to the thousands of people who joined in and shared their work. Social media is the perfect platform to highlight the strong bond we have with our residents, as proven by the thousands of heart-warming stories and encouraging words shared throughout the day.

"#OurDay shows just why local government remains the most trusted part of the public sector."



Find out more at [www.local.gov.uk/our-day](http://www.local.gov.uk/our-day)

# A brighter future?

With record numbers of children entering the child protection system, the case for properly funding children's services has never been more compelling



**Councillor Anntoinette Bramble** is Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board and **Councillor Dick Madden** is Chair of the LGA Children's Social Care Task Group



access help until they reach crisis point. Councils had to spend £800 million more than they had budgeted for children's social care in the past year alone. This cannot carry on.

There are signs that the Government has started to

listen, with our campaigning contributing to the inclusion of new money in October's Budget. The announcement of £84 million over five years to expand children's social care programmes in 20 areas is a small step in the right direction, and the flexibility to use £410 million of additional funding for social care in 2019/20 on adult and children's services is a further acknowledgement of the pressures facing councils.

However, while any additional investment is good news, we are clear that this will do little to alleviate the immediate and future pressures on services for some of the most vulnerable children and families in the vast majority of council areas, and will continue to campaign for a long-term sustainable funding solution in next year's Spending Review.

It is also encouraging that our call for greater investment in a sector-led approach to improvement has been heeded, helping to secure an additional £20 million for a range of sector-led initiatives, including an enhanced LGA peer support offer.

While this is no replacement for the funding solution that councils need, it is positive that the Government has recognised the value of a collaborative approach, with councils learning from each other.

Despite being under increasing pressure, the recent improvement in Ofsted inspection results shows that children's services teams are still finding innovative ways to deliver the high-quality services that children and families rely on. But, as councils face the prospect of further funding reductions and a £3 billion funding gap for children's services by 2025, difficult decisions will have to be made that will have a real and lasting impact.

The Government cannot ignore the consistent warnings that children's services are at a tipping point. Much more needs to be done if we really want to make sure every child and young person can look forward to the bright future they deserve.

It is now a year since we launched Bright Futures, our vision for the future of children's social care.

Alongside a national campaign calling for the services that change children's lives to be properly funded, Bright Futures set out seven key areas for reform designed to support the sector and demonstrate how councils, our multi-agency partners and national government could work together to get the best for children and families.

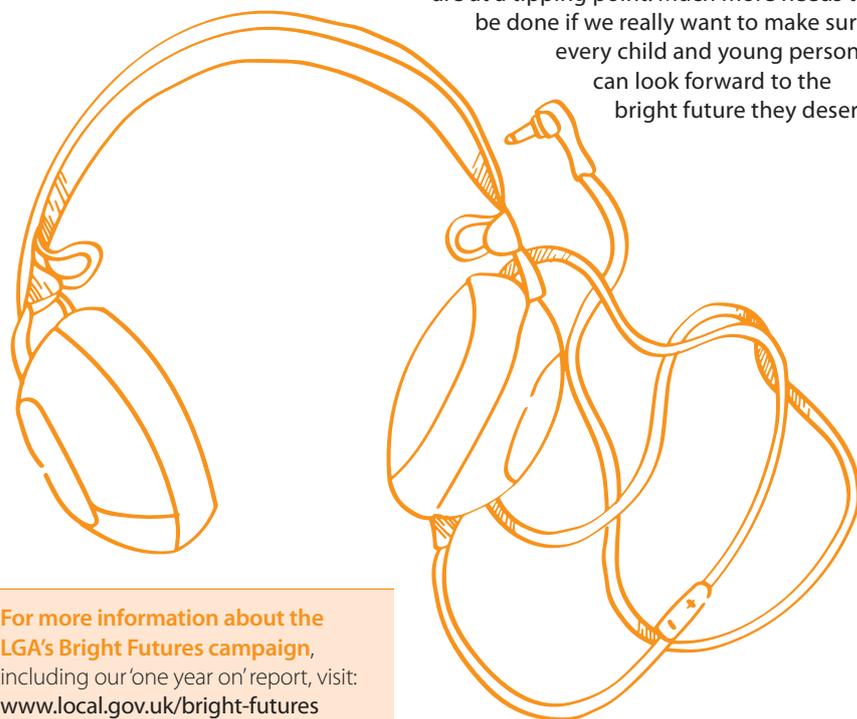
We want Bright Futures to be a real catalyst for meaningful change, not just another report left to gather dust on a shelf. With that in mind, and with a host of other organisations uniting behind our campaign,

*“The continued absence of sustainable funding for children's social care remains a grave concern”*

we have published an update report to highlight what we have achieved over the past year but also, importantly, to look at where there is still more work to do.

The continued absence of sustainable funding for children's social care remains a grave concern. With record numbers of children in the care system and councils now starting more than 500 child protection enquiries every day, we believe the case for action has never been more compelling.

Councils across the country are struggling to provide the support that children and families need with the resources available to them, leaving many unable to



For more information about the LGA's Bright Futures campaign, including our 'one year on' report, visit: [www.local.gov.uk/bright-futures](http://www.local.gov.uk/bright-futures)

## LGA Annual Culture and Tourism Conference

London, 5-6 March 2019

Many cultural services provided and supported by councils also provide a driving force for the UK's visitor economy. This can extend our influence beyond local boundaries and even internationally through world-class events, festivals and heritage celebrations.

This conference will celebrate how very diverse authorities have used different approaches to successfully regenerate their areas through culture and tourism. Delegates will learn more about areas' major positive results in terms of economic growth, cohesion, and public perception and how to make the most of their local assets.

To book your place visit: [www.local.gov.uk/events](http://www.local.gov.uk/events)



## LGA/ADPH Annual Public Health Conference and Exhibition

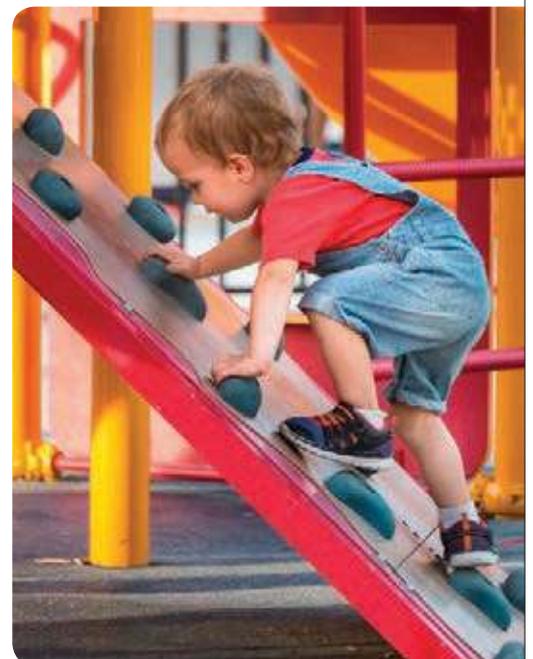
Supporting resilient communities: helping people to feel good and function well

London, 21 March 2019

Our annual flagship conference on public health will explore and build on the challenging, innovative work being undertaken by local authorities, their partners and communities as they continue to make progress on improving the nation's wellbeing and tackling health inequalities. This year's theme will focus on developing and supporting resilient, healthy communities.

Join us at our most popular health conference of the year to hear the very latest thinking on key policy and improvement agendas. Put your questions and comments to those involved in shaping them at the highest level and network with your peers to discuss the issues that matter to you locally.

To book your place visit [www.local.gov.uk/events](http://www.local.gov.uk/events)





## The LGA has secured government funding to help improve councils' resilience to cyber attacks

Earlier this year, the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) revealed it had dealt with 1,100 cyber attacks in the past two years – an average of more than 10 attacks a week.

Given NCSC tends to deal mainly with attacks of a certain magnitude – such as from foreign states – the true volume of attacks targeting UK organisations will be much higher.

The impact of cyber attacks can be great. The Department for Health has estimated that last year's 'WannaCry' attack, which affected NHS systems, cost the public purse £92 million – £19 million in lost output and £73 million to restore affected data and systems.

Copeland, Doncaster and Islington councils have each experienced a cyber attack and have set out the impact this had on their ability to deliver local services in case studies for the LGA. Copeland, for example, has estimated the cost of last year's attack on its IT systems to be £2 million.

It is not just the financial impact of a cyber attack that can be damaging. Across the NHS, thousands of patient appointments had to be cancelled during the WannaCry attack, and the impact on day-to-day running of services was significant.

For councils, a cyber attack can lead to key services being rendered out of action.

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*“A cyber attack can lead to key services being rendered out of action, knock public confidence in an organisation, and lead to reputational damage”*

Data or systems vital to normal operational running may be inaccessible or ultimately lost. Not only can this be extremely disruptive – and potentially put essential services, which may affect vulnerable residents, at risk – a cyber incident can also knock public confidence in an organisation, and lead to reputational damage.

While most organisations have responded to the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), considerations for cyber security go above and beyond this, and it is important not to be complacent.

As an organisation, are you taking steps to prevent hackers accessing and altering your website? Can you be sure your councillors and staff know not to open attachments they are not entirely sure are

safe? Do you have plans in place to recover if a cyber attack did occur? GDPR training will not help with these issues.

It is these kinds of considerations that the LGA is now helping councils address. We bid for £1.5 million from the Cabinet Office to fund work to improve councils' cyber resilience, with more funding anticipated in the next financial year. Cyber resilience means having the ability to prevent attacks as much as possible, but also to respond and recover in the likelihood that one does occur.

As a first step, we conducted a stocktake of councils' current cyber security arrangements over the summer, working with the sector to do this. Every council in England took part, and this has given us a clear evidence base to inform how we best direct the funding available.

As each council reviews its assessment from the stocktake, it will have the chance to bid for funding to tackle any issues identified. In the first phase, our cyber programme will focus on 'quick fixes' for councils most in need of support to quickly boost their cyber arrangements.

As the programme develops, we will be looking to consolidate and join up efforts where councils would jointly benefit from taking particular steps. This might mean organising training on a regional basis, or jointly commissioning a technical fix.



**You can view council case studies and find out more** about the LGA's cyber security work, including how to bid for resilience funding, at [www.local.gov.uk/cyber-security](http://www.local.gov.uk/cyber-security)



# Autumn Budget 2018

## The Chancellor's latest Budget shows the Government is listening to the LGA's call for desperately needed investment in our local public services

**O**ur Budget submission (see [first feature](#)) highlighted the need to urgently plug the funding gap facing councils in 2019/20. The Chancellor has acted to help tackle some of this immediate funding crisis, but more investment will be needed in the long term.

Philip Hammond announced an additional £650 million for social care to tide it over to the Spending Review, as well as an extra £420 million for potholes and road repairs, £240 million for transport in the six mayoral combined authorities, and £675 million to revitalise our high streets.

While funding and some of the measures announced will ease some of the immediate financial pressures facing our local services, it falls short of what we need in the long term. Local government in England continues to face significant funding gaps. Rising demand for adult social care, children's services and homelessness support will continue to threaten other services our communities rely on, including libraries, cleaning streets and maintaining parks and open spaces.

It is good news that the Government has accepted our long-standing call to scrap the housing borrowing cap immediately. We will support councils to build those good quality affordable new homes and infrastructure that everyone in our communities needs.

We are pleased that the Government has provided desperately needed funding to help revitalise our town centres, and it is important that councils, with their place-shaping roles, have full flexibility over how this funding is spent.

It is critical that the Chancellor takes the opportunity to tackle the long-term financial challenges facing local government in the 2019 Spending Review. This will allow councils to play a full part in the prosperity of the nation and, through preventative work, reduce the wider costs on public services.

Investing in local government is good for the nation's prosperity, economic growth and its overall health and wellbeing. The LGA is already working to influence the forthcoming Spending Review to help deliver the long-term and truly sustainable funding settlement that local government needs.

**i** In addition to announcements on housing, social care, high streets, transport and planning (see [right](#) for more details), the Budget also included proposals on many other issues affecting councils, ranging from business rates, skills and employment, land value uplift, and counter-terrorism to the NHS and public health, teachers' pensions, universal credit and housing benefit, preparations for Brexit and serious violence. For more details, please see the LGA's comprehensive Budget briefing at [www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses](http://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses)



### Children and education

- £84 million over five years for up to 20 local authorities, to help more children stay at home safely with their families.
- £400 million for schools in England to spend on equipment and facilities.

LGA view: *"The £84 million is a small step in the right direction, but councils in England face a £1.1 billion shortfall in the next year alone just to keep services running at current levels."*



### Social care

- An additional £240 million in 2018/19 and £240 million in 2019/20 for adult social care, as well as a further £410 million in 2019/20 for adults and children's social care.

LGA view: *"Although welcome, this funding will only address some of the short-term pressures facing adult social care. It does not address the full extent of all immediate pressures, let alone pave the way for a sustainable, long-term future."*



## Housing

- The housing borrowing cap has been abolished.
- An extra £500 million for the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF).
- £10 million capacity funding to support housing deals in authorities with high housing demand.

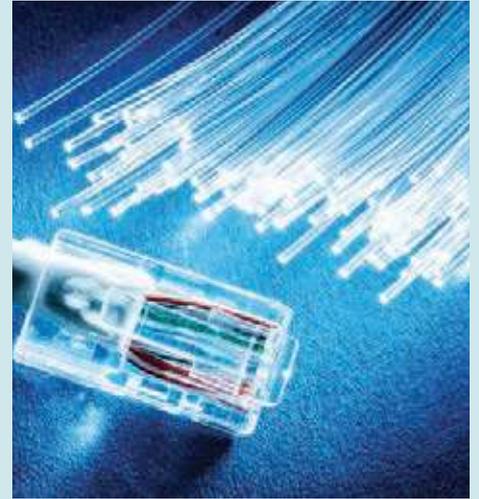
**LGA view:** *“Additional funding to the HIF will enable the delivery of new homes. It is crucial that this is allocated to projects quickly so that works can continue as soon as possible.”*



## Business rates

- Bills will be cut by one-third for retailers with a rateable value below £51,000.
- 100 per cent business rates relief for all public lavatories from 2020/21.
- Local authorities will be fully compensated for loss of income resulting from these changes.

**LGA view:** *“It is imperative that the Government finds a better way to deal with the impact of business rates appeals as we move towards greater local business rates retention.”*



## Digital infrastructure

- £200 million to pilot full fibre internet in rural areas.
- Consultation on requiring new homes to be connected to full fibre broadband

**LGA view:** *“The Government did not announce any investment to improve poor mobile coverage in rural areas. Councils are keen to work with mobile operators to improve connectivity and need government backing to pilot new solutions.”*



## Roads and transport (potholes)

- £420 million for local authorities for potholes, road and bridge repairs.
- An extra £240 million for transport investment in the six metro mayor areas.

**LGA view:** *“Only through long-term, consistent and fairer government investment in transport in all areas can councils embark on the desperately needed improvement of our local roads and transport networks.”*



## High streets

- A new Future High Streets Fund to invest £675 million in high streets and town centres.
- Consultation on planning measures to support high streets, including a more responsive ‘change of use’ regime.

**LGA view:** *“It is important that councils, with their place-shaping roles, have full flexibility over how this desperately needed funding is spent.”*



## Waste and recycling

- A tax on the production and import of plastic packaging from April 2022.
- £20 million to support Budget measures to tackle plastics and boost recycling.
- No levy on coffee cups, but a possible future tax on incineration of waste.

**LGA view:** *“It is the producers, manufacturers and retailers of packaging that should incur the costs of compliance with the objectives of a circular economy, not local authorities.”*



## The Budget debated

The LGA briefed parliamentarians ahead of discussions about the Budget, with key issues for local government raised by MPs and Peers from across the political spectrum

Each year, Parliament debates the Chancellor's Budget statement before it is voted on by MPs. As part of our Spending Review campaign to secure a long-term, sustainable funding settlement for local government, the LGA briefed MPs and Peers for these debates on key issues for councils.

MPs covered a wide range of issues, including some of our key campaigns, in three days of debate immediately following the 29 October Budget. These included investment in children's services, adult social care and roads funding.

Several members, including Conservative MP Victoria Prentis, welcomed measures to help councils build more homes, while Liberal Democrat Leader Sir Vince Cable MP echoed our call for more money to go towards helping older people remain in their homes. Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell MP quoted the LGA's analysis of the social care funding gap.

The Treasury Select Committee then took evidence from Chancellor Philip Hammond MP, questioning him about the budget deficit, high street funding, roads repairs, housing and homelessness.

Asked about the Spending Review, Mr Hammond said he hoped to be able to announce this alongside the 2019

Budget. He also expressed confidence in the ability of local authorities to spend additional funding on roads and high streets effectively.

In debates in the Lords, former LGA Chairman and LGA Vice-President Baroness Eaton praised the LGA's "timely" and "excellent" social care green paper (see p10), and urged the Government to build on the Budget by bringing forward a sustainable settlement for adult social care.

She referenced pressures on children's services and rising demand for services for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and welcomed new money (£420 million) for potholes and the lifting of the housing borrowing cap.

"We must not underestimate what a difference this [the borrowing cap] will make to many communities. Councils are now eager to get on with the job of helping to tackle the housing crisis," she added.

Lord Kerslake, LGA President, told Peers he was "very pleased to see the speedy lifting of the cap for local authority borrowing on housing", and welcomed additional funding

for transport infrastructure, adult and children's services.

But he warned: "We should be in no doubt again that, apart from lifting the cap, these measures are short-term and one-off."

"Austerity continues for local government, and we have still to resolve the long-term funding challenge for social care... I have talked to a lot of local authorities and pretty much all of them say that their position will become unsustainable over the next few years unless there is action on funding and social care.

"The LGA has called for the forthcoming Social Care Green Paper to be bold and ambitious – it is right about that. It should build on the excellent green paper produced by the LGA itself."

The LGA continues to brief parliamentarians and ministers as part of its wider work to secure a good financial settlement for local government in next year's Spending Review, and to promote its recommendations on adult social care ahead of the Government's long-awaited Green Paper on the issue.



For more information about the LGA's work in Parliament, please visit [www.local.gov.uk/parliament](http://www.local.gov.uk/parliament)

# Attracting graduate talent

The LGA's national graduate development programme is helping bring fresh thinking into local government



Councillor Gerry Clarkson (Con) is Leader of Ashford Borough Council

One might assume that, for many young people, local government may not be one of the most exciting places to gain work experience.

However, at Ashford Borough Council, the success of the national graduate development programme (ngdp) has turned this viewpoint on its head.

Innovation and leading the way is something we are proud of in Ashford. We are recognised as one of the most entrepreneurial councils in the UK, operating like a business and with a host of major developments changing the skyline of the borough.

However, this approach is not limited to investing in the commercial elements shaping our future. We have also been investing in young minds – and to great effect.

The ngdp programme has brought us graduate talent with fresh thinking, a wealth of technological knowledge and a 'can-do' approach to projects. We recruited Patrick Brown, our current ngdp graduate, in September 2016. Within four months he had researched how to improve our recycling rate, written a communications plan and cabinet paper, presented to cabinet and knowledgeably answered direct questions from our leader in public.

The project saw him engaging with central and local government, key stakeholders and delivery partners and teaching our staff about his findings and methodology along the way.



Yashiru (Yaz) Aboubaker (left) and Athanasios Lykartsis, Ashford Borough Council's latest graduate trainees

## The national graduate development programme

One of the keys to providing the strong public services that improve the lives of our residents is attracting and developing the right people to lead our council teams and organisations.

The LGA's national graduate development programme (ngdp) has provided a flow of consistently high-calibre trainees to more than 160 authorities through 20 previous cohorts. Highly regarded by both councils and graduates and ranked in *The Times* Top 100 Graduate Employers and *Guardian* UK 300, it promotes the benefits of a successful and rewarding career in local government.

We encourage councils to join early so that we can advertise locally to attract candidates that are interested in your council. Please visit [www.local.gov.uk/national-graduate-development-programme/ngdp-information-for-councils](http://www.local.gov.uk/national-graduate-development-programme/ngdp-information-for-councils) for more information, or email the ngdp team at [ngdp@local.gov.uk](mailto:ngdp@local.gov.uk)

The deadline for council registration is 30 March 2019.

He has built a considerable skills base across a range of service areas, working at all levels across the council, using his transferable skills to learn and to lead.

We have found that graduates are actually excited by the choice and flexibility of our placements, are positive about the study accompanying the programme, interested in the forward-thinking work of Ashford and the ability to make a difference through tailored placements.

However, don't just take our word for it. Patrick says: "One of the things I've been conscious about during my time here, is how I am able to translate everything I've done – and the experience I've gained – into an attractive CV for permanent employment beyond the two years of the scheme.

"This is an area where Ashford Borough Council has been amazing. It has discussed areas and skills I particularly wanted to develop and provided opportunities for me to do this in a manner that is mutually beneficial.

"I've had access to, and gained valuable insight from, senior-level officers and members, including the leader of the council, the chief executive and directors. It's been exciting to see (and be involved in) how Ashford is growing and changing."

In September 2018, we welcomed two new ngdp graduates (pictured above) and we are excited about the contribution they will make and how we can support their personal growth and development over the next two years.



# Tackling gambling-related harm

Councils are not responsible for providing treatment for harmful gambling – but local services can help prevent it, and support affected residents and families



Cllr Ian Hudspeth is Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board and Cllr Simon Blackburn (right) is Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board



at a population level. It is a complex problem with a large number of different but often interlinked factors – no single measure is likely to be effective on its own in addressing it.

Consequently, many organisations have a part to

play in addressing harmful gambling, not least the gambling industry itself. There are several ways in which councils can try to support those individuals and families who are experiencing harm from gambling without taking on responsibility for treatment. This is in addition to their statutory licensing responsibility to try to prevent local gambling premises causing harm through gambling.

For example, councils will be coming into contact with people impacted by problem gambling through a range of services, including housing and homelessness, financial inclusion, children's services and addiction services.

Councils should ensure that frontline staff are given training so they recognise potential cases: they can help local residents access support by directing them

to the national treatment network via the National Gambling Helpline.

Councils can also work with local partners and build links with support organisations to help develop specific local referral routes, and ensure these can be accessed from across the full range of local services.

As frontline awareness and identification of harmful gambling develops, councils should ensure they capture data about it, to help understand the extent of the problem, its impacts and associated costs.

Public health teams can play a role in ensuring that this data, and related data about at-risk groups, is collected and shared. They can also work with local partners and through health and wellbeing boards and clinical commissioning groups to develop a coherent approach to harmful gambling, including focused preventative work.

Having the support of elected members and the chief executive in changing our understanding of harmful gambling and its impacts is vital. It sends a clear signal that addressing problem gambling is a priority not just for public health and licensing but for the whole council and its wider stakeholders, thereby facilitating cooperation across departments and with local communities and partners.

With the support of the charity Gambleaware, we will shortly be sending a copy of our recent guidance on tackling gambling related harm to all councils in England.

From our work on two of the LGA's policy boards, we know that this is an issue of concern to councillor colleagues up and down the country. We hope you find the guidance useful in understanding how councils can strengthen their work in this area.

**T**here is increasing awareness about harmful gambling and its impact on families and local communities, as well as the individuals directly affected by it.

The prevalence of high stakes betting machines on high streets, the significant increase in gambling advertising since the introduction of the Gambling Act 2005, and the rise in online gambling, have all contributed to societal concern about gambling in the UK and the harm that can be associated with it.

The planned reduction of maximum stakes on fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs) to £2 next year is extremely welcome (see p8), with the LGA and others having long argued that the £100 stake was too high. But it is just one step among many more that need to be taken to prevent and address harmful gambling.

It is increasingly cited as a public health issue that requires a broad response; that is to say, traditional approaches that focus on single interventions do not tend to work



'Tackling gambling related harm: a whole council approach' can be downloaded free at [www.local.gov.uk/publications](http://www.local.gov.uk/publications)

# Commercialisation and the community



**Councillor Laura Evans (Con)** is an LGA Member Peer and Shadow Executive Member for Communities and Housing at Trafford Council

## Councillors need to consider carefully the risks of commercial investments – as well as the potential impacts of not investing

Every council has its own unique challenges, its own assets and opportunities. At a recent ‘Commercial skills for councillors’ masterclass, I shared two case studies from Trafford Council.

Lancashire County Cricket Club (LCCC) approached Trafford Council with an investment proposition. Its plan was for a four-star, 150-bedroom hotel, replacing the current one at Emirates Old Trafford.

This was a £12 million project, with the potential to create £1 million of employment a year, and to generate an extra £2.3 million income to the area.

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority had agreed to give a £5 million loan from its investment funds and the club had already secured £3 million through a bond. The plan hinged on further investment, of £4 million, from Trafford Council.

In taking the decision, we first considered the risk, any reasons not to invest and any potential impacts were we not to invest.

Members considered the proposal and

judged our appetite for risk and what level we were prepared to bear. We performed due diligence on the proposal, which involved robust challenge. Alongside the commercial assessment, members also considered the positive impacts to sporting excellence in the borough with the ongoing renovation of Emirates Old Trafford, with this development helping to secure and sustain this fantastic asset in the borough for years to come.

In no small way, this development helped Emirates Old Trafford secure a package of international fixtures through being selected as host venue for an Ashes Test in 2023 and the new eight-team T20 competition that starts in 2020.

As a result, more than one million visitors are expected to visit the ground over the course of 61 days of cricket in 2020 to 2024. The direct economic benefit to Manchester is estimated to be worth more than £83 million.

The council is charging a commercial margin on the investment, helping generate much-needed additional revenue to support frontline services.

Separately, Trafford Council identified unrealised potential in its Grade II listed town hall building. The canteen based there offered good-quality food, but was neither profitable nor dynamic.

The council decided that it was right to continue to offer food at the site and that the area had potential, but that it lacked direction and a strategy.

Situated with LCCC on one side and Manchester United FC on the other, the building was in a prime spot to attract match-day visitors. As a result, the council piloted ‘Pie and a pint’ – a venue for sporting visitors to socialise and get good quality, reasonably priced food and drink before attending the match.

The approach involved rebranding the canteen and a linked marketing campaign, using a mix of social media and flyers. It was so successful that the pilot was scaled up and has now become a regular fixture on match days.

‘Pie and a pint’ subsidises the canteen, ensuring it can continue to offer good-quality, reasonably priced food.

## Commercial support

Councils are increasingly developing a more commercial approach to their activities, to help generate income, protect valuable frontline services and ensure positive outcomes for local communities.

The LGA can help you and your council become more commercial and generate more income, with a wide range of guidance, case studies and support programmes on offer.

Please visit [www.local.gov.uk/commercialisation](http://www.local.gov.uk/commercialisation) to find out more.

You can also book your free place on our ‘Profit with a purpose - commercialisation’ conference on 15 January at [www.local.gov.uk/events](http://www.local.gov.uk/events)



# interview

## Thinking differently

More than one in 100 people in the UK are believed to have autism. But with the right support, there are no limits to what autistic people can achieve – according to a councillor with the condition



Cllr Andrew Hensman (left) on a visit to leprosy charity Lepra with Colchester MP Will Quince



Braithree East Community Group litter pick (Cllr Hensman is second from right)

Becoming a councillor can be overwhelming for anyone. For Andrew Hensman, it was further complicated by the fact that he is autistic.

"At first it was daunting but very quickly the council's Governance and Members' Team came around and said: 'OK, we have got this – I will call it a – problem. What do we want to do about it?' I was an unknown to them."

He says the team and fellow councillors at Braintree District Council have been very supportive, and take the time to explain things to him. "My colleagues who have been on the council for years – one or two I would call mother or father of the council – I go to them to run things by them. I say, 'this doesn't make sense', and they will say, 'we have seen that before' or 'this is what happened last time'. And I will say, 'what about doing it this way?' and they may say 'let's give it a go'."

Council Leader Cllr Graham Butland has been "extremely supportive", says Cllr Hensman. "Graham will take time out to say 'this has happened, you shouldn't do it this way, you should do it that way', or 'this is going to happen, and why'. He takes that little extra time to tell me personally."

Cllr Butland is clear that "people of all abilities and disabilities should have the opportunity to engage in public life".

"That's what we've tried to do with Andrew," he says. "It's been a learning process for us – we've had the courses but it's not quite the same as when you work closely with members."

One of the council's democratic services officers had experience of a family member with autism, which helped, and adjustments have included allowing Cllr Hensman to bring his assistant to certain events, says Cllr Butland.

"Andrew has played a full part – he is very keen to participate and he makes very thoughtful contributions. He is diligent, very conscientious, and really has represented his constituents very well. I very much hope he retains his seat next year. He's not my most high-maintenance councillor!"



*“This is my chance to make a difference and prove people with differences can do it”*

While council colleagues tell Cllr Hensman he is now “part of the furniture”, it has not been easy. His assistant, Karen Brown, says: “When Andrew was first elected, I think his colleagues found it quite daunting. It’s taken a long time to adjust to Andrew’s personality and his differences. People were frightened of him and what he was going to do.

“I call myself an interpreter; I help him interpret the world in terms he can understand. The practical side is understanding what people are saying... what they might be saying to your face and what they might actually be saying might be two different things and he doesn’t get that at all.”

Cllr Hensman says: “For me, it’s having the coping strategies – and specifically the boundaries – so I know what I can do and what I can’t do, and won’t go over it. I’m not scared of taking on any issue... but, if it’s something I’m not sure of, I have learned to ask.”

Cllr Hensman was asked to stand by a friend who was already on the council, and he plans to stand again in 2019. “I thought, ‘here is my chance to make a difference and prove people with differences can do it. The ballot box doesn’t discriminate,” he says.

As well as his work as a district councillor, Cllr Hensman is a carer, serves on the board of Carers UK, has worked with Essex County Council for many years on various autism work streams and was encouraged to set up the Essex branch of the National Autistic Society.

He isn’t afraid of getting involved, taking part in many voluntary roles within the community. It is only others’ perception of autism that restricts their acceptance of him, or

willingness to work with him, he says. With the right support, he has proved that anyone on the autism spectrum can achieve.

One of the things Cllr Hensman is proudest of, as a councillor, is helping a local resident who lost his single-person council tax discount because his sister, who needed 24-hour care, moved into his spare room.

Cllr Hensman considered that if the siblings’ roles were reversed, carer’s disregard would be applied. He put this to the relevant council service and it agreed.

“We turned it on its head; it’s thinking differently, thinking laterally, and that’s what I can bring to the table,” he says.

Cllr Hensman was also responsible for resolving a fault with the Braintree Town Hall clock. He recalls attending a Remembrance Day event at which the presiding military officer realised the clock was out of sync and went with his own watch to mark a minute’s silence at 11am. But the silence was ruined by the clock chiming in the middle, and he was upset for the families who were remembering relatives.

“I have a different brain, and I look at things differently. I will ask challenging questions. I will say ‘why can’t we do that?’

“I speak my mind... just because I belong to a party doesn’t mean I will follow that colour. Even if residents in my ward didn’t vote for me, I still have to represent them.”

Cllr Hensman is keen to get in touch with any other elected members with autism (email [cllr.ahensman@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.ahensman@braintree.gov.uk)).

“I really look forward to making other local authorities more autism-friendly: for their staff, colleagues and customers. Employers may then start to wake up to the talent they are missing out on,” he says.

Of his experience as a councillor, he adds: “It’s just been so diverse. It’s just a privilege to serve the community and make a difference.

“People go on about ‘the council this’ or ‘the council that’, but if you think you can do it better, you should stand.”

## What is autism?

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how people perceive the world and interact with others, according to the National Autistic Society. All autistic people share certain difficulties, but being autistic will affect them in different ways.

Autistic people have difficulties interpreting both verbal and non-verbal language such as gestures or tone of voice. Many have a very literal understanding of language, and think people always mean exactly what they say.

They often have difficulty ‘reading’ other people, recognising or understanding others’ feelings and intentions, and expressing their own emotions. This can make it hard for them to navigate the social world.

All people on the autism spectrum learn and develop. With the right sort of support, all can be helped to live a more fulfilling life of their own choosing. See [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

## Autism self-assessment 2018

Councils are being asked by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and the Department of Health and Social Care to undertake an autism self-assessment.

The self-assessment is important as it helps areas review how they are doing in relation to the Government’s Autism Strategy and map out their own priorities.

The deadline for submissions is 10 December, and the information submitted will be collated, analysed and published by Public Health England.

The LGA’s lead member for autism is Cllr Jackie Meldrum, who can be contacted at [jmeldrum@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:jmeldrum@lambeth.gov.uk). For guidance on the Adult Autism Strategy, please see [www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-autism-strategy-statutory-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-autism-strategy-statutory-guidance)

# LG Inform Plus

## The essential guide to your area

The LG Inform Plus service, developed together with local authorities for over a decade, is your essential tool for shaping and running local services. Designed to run in tandem with LG Inform, it gives subscribers the power to drill down to the finer detail.

The service provides instant access to data about your ward or your neighbourhood in addition to more detailed performance and contextual data. It includes direct support, online tools and a data feed to use in your corporate systems and external apps.

LG Inform Plus gives you the detailed information you need to make informed decisions and with its report writer, a much easier way to present this.

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And direct access via our data feed for your reports, apps and systems. **Take a closer look.**

# comment

## Homelessness: a district challenge



Mayor Kate Allsop (Ind, Mansfield) is Member Lead for Better Lives at the District Councils' Network

**Tackling the growing crisis of homelessness is a key priority for district councils who will often be all that stands between many residents sleeping on the streets or in emergency accommodation.**

Unsurprisingly, the challenge of homelessness is increasing. According to the charity Shelter, in 2017 more than 300,000 people were homeless, a rise of 13,000 on the previous 12 months. Furthermore, the National Audit Office has identified that the number of households accepted as unintentionally homeless and 'priority need' is increasing at an alarming rate, compared to other changes in demand on councils.

It is against this backdrop that the District Councils' Network (DCN) carried out a survey of its members to explore the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) on districts, six months after it came into effect in April 2018.

The early experience of the HRA in reducing homelessness has been broadly positive. Many districts report that the longer 56-day period (previously 28 days) in which a household is defined as 'threatened with homelessness' has allowed them to identify potential homelessness at an earlier stage and take preventative action as opposed to reactive resolution.

However, the survey found that more than half (51 per cent) of district councils have seen an increase in requests for homelessness advice and assistance, with increases of more than 100 per cent in some areas.

Only one in five districts say that government funding to support the implementation of new statutory duties under the Act is sufficient, while more than two-thirds (69 per cent) have seen an increase in the visible signs of homelessness in their areas.

*“More than half of district councils have seen an increase in requests for homelessness advice and assistance”*

Everyone deserves a safe and affordable home. District councils, as the housing and planning authorities at the forefront of preventing and relieving homelessness, can and want to do more to support their most vulnerable residents.

This is why, while supportive of the HRA, we are urging the Government to ensure that the rising costs of tackling homelessness are reflected in the fair funding formula that is due to be consulted on shortly through its review.

The ongoing costs for new HRA duties far outweigh the initial funding, which isn't enough on its own to address the lack of housing supply or the affordability issues affecting people in need.

Providing additional, sustainable funding beyond 2019/20 will allow districts to continue to support homeless people or those at risk of becoming homeless, and to deliver longer-term solutions. Such funding will also help address low-level issues that lead to homelessness, rather than being largely crisis-focused as it is now.

House building is key to helping reduce homelessness but, while scrapping the housing borrowing cap (see **first** 629) was well received by districts to help deliver more affordable homes, the DCN is also calling for greater financial flexibilities for non-stock-holding authorities to borrow to build more homes.

Streamlining the HRA administration process, which is more time-consuming than previous homelessness duties, would also let district councils help more people in need, as would strengthening multi-agency work to target the various factors that have either caused people to become homeless or are preventing them from being rehoused.

There are many reasons why people become homeless and districts are able and determined to help solve this national crisis. But a holistic approach is vital if we are to tackle the root causes of homelessness to ensure that initiatives will be successful in the long term.



For more information about the work of the District Councils' Network, please visit [www.districtcouncils.info](http://www.districtcouncils.info)

## group leaders' comments

### No end to austerity

*“The Budget once again offered little hope for real change for councils”*



Councillor Nick Forbes  
is Leader of the LGA's  
Labour Group

The Budget was an opportunity for the Government to take action and prove that it will take the looming funding crisis it has caused in local government seriously.

Rather than the same old sticking plasters, the Chancellor could have announced the injection of funding that councils so desperately need to keep vital services like adult and children's social care afloat.

However, despite earlier claims from the Prime Minister that 'austerity is over', the Budget once again offered little hope for real change for councils.

While the Budget promised an additional £650 million for adult and children's social care in 2019/20, the Government is still going ahead

with its planned £1.3 billion cut to the revenue support grant. So the Government is actually cutting £650 million – giving with one hand, but taking even more away with the other.

Even in the few announcements that did seem to be positive for local government, it was clear that Conservative-run councils would be getting a better deal than those run by Labour.

Many have welcomed the much-needed £420 million given to local authorities to tackle potholes and repair damaged roads and bridges – but once again, the Government has found a way to fiddle the formula so that it will disproportionately go to Conservative-led councils. With funding now doled out based only on the length of roads, rather than taking

into account width and condition, rural counties will receive much more money than urban areas.

The Government has failed to deliver the end to austerity it promised, and has stitched up the little funding it is giving to local government for its friends in Conservative councils.

So while the Chancellor's Budget is certainly not a 'giveaway' when it comes to funding councils properly, it definitely gives the game away about the emptiness of its claim to be ending austerity.

And it will make many in local government question whether the ongoing Fair Funding Review is likely to deliver either fairness or funding.

## chairman's comment

### Support for the vulnerable



Lord Porter  
is Chairman of the LGA

I want to thank you and your colleagues, our partners in the voluntary and care sector, and our residents, for the incredible response to the LGA's adult social care green paper.

We launched it on 31 July after the Government announced another delay to its own Green Paper, and we received more than 540 consultation responses.

We have now published our response to the consultation, setting out our recommendations for how government could sort out the funding crisis facing care services – most notably by an urgent injection of genuinely new national investment, to address the

social care funding gap of £3.56 billion by 2024/25.

While the additional cash for social care announced in the Budget (see p16) is helpful, we need a long-term solution to a problem that has been at least 20 years in the making.

We need a sustainable funding solution that stabilises the care market and lets us deliver the high-quality services that allow our older and disabled residents to live the lives they want to lead.

The amazing response we have had to our green paper shows that there is universal agreement that the current situation is unsustainable and is failing people on a daily basis, and we can't go on like this.

Meanwhile, we have been highlighting growing pressures on another group of vulnerable residents – this time, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The LGA is warning that children with SEND could miss out on a mainstream education because of a predicted £536 million shortfall for services in the current year, as councils struggle to cope with rising demand for support.

The Government urgently needs to invest in SEND in this month's local government finance settlement, as the underfunding of these services is adding to the severe pressures already facing schools.

*“There is universal agreement that the current situation is unsustainable, and we can't go on like this”*

## group leaders' comments



Councillor James Jamieson  
is Leader of the LGA's  
Conservative Group

### Positive measures in the Budget

*“We need to work with government to ensure councils are put on a sustainable footing for the long term”*

One of my main priorities when I became the LGA Conservative Group Leader was to work with the Government and colleagues to address the funding pressures that we all face.

I was, therefore, delighted that in the Budget the Chancellor made a number of positive announcements affecting local government, including: an additional £240 million for social care in 2018/19 and £240 million in 2019/20, on top of the £410 million in 2019/2020; £420 million in this financial year to tackle potholes; £400 million for schools funding; and an extra £500 million for the Housing Infrastructure Fund to unlock more homes.

I would like to thank the Chancellor and also our Secretary of State, James Brokenshire MP, and his ministerial team, for making the case for additional funding for local government in Cabinet discussions in the run-up to the Budget.

While this additional funding is welcome, local services are facing a £7.8 billion funding gap by 2025, with particular pressures in adult and children's social care. We now need to work with government on the Spending Review and fairer funding to ensure councils are put on a sustainable footing for the long term.

The Government will also publish its Social Care Green Paper soon, and we are in the midst of consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework, both of which raise key issues for the sector.



Councillor Howard Sykes MBE  
is Leader of the LGA's  
Liberal Democrat Group

### Children's services: the 'hidden crisis'

*“The Budget contained some welcome respite for local authorities, but children were not at its heart”*

Children need adults to advocate on their behalf.

Remember – they don't vote, and sadly often feature low on the list of MPs' postbag issues. Yet children have borne the brunt of austerity.

Recently, more than 120 organisations asked the Chancellor to put children at the heart of government spending. There is also a growing body of organisations voicing concern, like the National Audit Office, the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Children, illustrating the growing pressures facing our services.

The Budget contained some welcome respite for local authorities, but children were not at its heart. It also ignored one of the biggest financial risks to many council and school balances – the ballooning demand for special educational needs and disability (SEND) and high-needs funding.

All we got were coppers for a few “extras” in schools. That will do nothing for the many children who arrive at school hungry and far from ready to learn.

Without more cash, many councils will cut their few non-statutory services – which prevent children needing statutory social care and SEND services – to pay the spiralling cost of statutory services.

Children's services are now in a worse state than adult social care. It's a vicious cycle, and one that looks like continuing. We must continue to speak up for children's services, the 'hidden crisis in local government'.



Councillor Marianne Overton  
MBE is Leader of the LGA's  
Independent Group

### Making the case for better funding

*“We welcome the lifting of the housing borrowing cap, but continue to push for Right to Buy to be devolved”*

While our national parties are distracted by internal conflict, Independent Group members are working together to contribute evidence and innovative ideas derived from a host of regional events to the LGA, and national and European governments, with good success.

We made the case effectively for better funding, especially for adult and children's care. The recent Budget allocated £230 million, and some of the NHS's £20.5 billion birthday present was earmarked for children's mental health.

We worked hard on the LGA's green paper, offering options for the long-term funding of adult care. This lays the foundation for the Government to resolve the issue for good.

We work cross-party at the LGA to offer solutions on the impact of Brexit on local government and our efforts continue to ensure councils are prepared. Our vice-presidents have been greatly supportive, especially on funding, care, and housing matched with the required facilities and services.

We welcome the lifting of the borrowing cap on councils that wish to build houses, but continue to push for Right to Buy to be devolved to council choice. Knowing how damaging gambling addiction can be in our communities, we have also championed the reduction of stakes on fixed odds betting terminals, with success.

The LGA Independent Group's annual conference in November was exciting and vibrant, as always (see next month's **first**).

Best wishes for the festive season and we look forward to many future successful events in the new year.



For more information about the LGA's political groups,  
see [www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)

# Global mayors, local issues



Marvin Rees (Lab) is Mayor of Bristol

**Bristol recently hosted the Global Parliament of Mayors Annual Summit 2018 – the first time this international event has been held in the UK, and the organisation's largest and most ambitious to date.**

Around 120 mayors, city network leaders and representatives from international organisations, including United Nations (UN) agencies, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Economic Forum, all participated within the summit. Together we crafted a shared city declaration to feed in to forums such as the UN's Global Compact

for Migration, the World Health Assembly and the UN's agency for sustainable urban development, UN-Habitat.

The Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM) is built on the belief that national governments working alone are simply not equipped to deal with many of the challenges that we face. On many of the critical issues of our time, national governments are failing to deliver.

We argue that better global governance is needed to move the world forward. This means allowing the leaders of cities and networks of cities to sit alongside national leaders to shape matters of national and international policy.

More than half (55 per cent) of the world's population lives in cities and this is set to rise to 68 per cent by 2050. With the majority of the world now classed as urban, international frameworks cannot hope to tackle world challenges without discussing with city leaders.

*“National governments working alone are simply not equipped to deal with many of the challenges that we face”*

It is mayors, and the leaders of towns and cities, who are on the frontline of dealing with the issues of failed national policy. We are the ones who are responsible for delivery, whether that refers to public services, inclusive and sustainable economic development or building cohesive communities.

The summit has given cities a voice on an international level to be able to influence some of the issues that affect us. For example, as a result of the GPM, a city voice has been included in the Global Compact for Migration that will move towards its ratification in Marrakech in December. Before this, it had only been discussed by national governments and was not reflective of the experience of cities.

During the summit, we also brought together international networks such as C40, ICLEI, Eurocities and the Strong Cities Network for the first time. We asked for a commitment from these organisations to work more closely together. Rather than competing for mayors and city leaders, with all the restraints this puts on our diaries and resources, we challenged them to coordinate between themselves to strengthen their impact and effectiveness on a global stage.

We also held the first formal meeting of the UK's metro mayors and Core City leaders. During this meeting we committed to working more closely together in order to create a powerful non-Westminster political force that could begin to rebalance the country.

Both internationally and nationally, we are having discussions calling for more attention to be paid to the role of the city and regional leader. With all of these discussions taking place in Bristol, we want our city to take a lead role in creating this change.

It's time for cities to step up in international frameworks and take the lead. Clearer decision-making around the world is needed, and it is time national governments paid attention to the potential power that we, as city leaders, can offer.



**i** For more information about the Global Parliament of Mayors, please visit [www.globalparliamentofmayors.org](http://www.globalparliamentofmayors.org)



# Testing the Social Care Green Paper

**Social care remains one of the most challenging policy issues of our time.**

The issues the sector faces, and the pressures on local government are well known. Demand for services is rising from all age groups, including unpaid carers, while councils struggle to sustain care markets with diminished budgets.

When it arrives, the Government's Social Care Green Paper promises to offer a range of solutions to these complex issues. While it is unlikely to be a panacea, what it can do is offer a clear course of action to ensure social care has a sustainable future.

Over the past 12 months, the Healthwatch Network heard from more than 9,000 people and 5,000 unpaid carers from across the country, about their experiences of – and expectations for – social care.

The overarching theme we heard about was that people simply do not understand, or see any incentive to prepare for, the care they may need in later life.

Only one in 20 people report that they are 'fully prepared' for their future care needs. The likelihood of taking a 'wait and see' approach to care was more prevalent among older age groups.

When people do start to think about planning their social care, they simply don't know where to start.

This means that people often wait until they hit a crisis point. Important decisions about long-term care are often taken under extreme duress.

Often people are not aware that it is their council, and not their GP, who acts as the social care gatekeeper. NHS Digital found that 5,000 people approach their council for support every day, and that half are turned away.

Our research shows that the remainder wait an average of two months to get the support they need.

This is not a sustainable model, and it is one that the Green Paper must seek to remedy if it is to succeed.

Using our research, we developed five key tests that you can use to assess the extent to which the Green Paper will work for your constituents.

- 1. Is it understandable by the public and people who work in social care?** "I don't think there is one place or person that can sort all this out..."
- 2. Will it support people to plan and make decisions about their care?** "What are we meant to be planning for? I could get hit by a bus tomorrow..."
- 3. Does it facilitate a wide range of choice**



**Imelda Redmond CBE**  
is National Director of  
Healthwatch England

**in social care? Do we have plans for a stable and varied provider market?**

"Having social care in the home ranges depending on age, background, mental and physical capabilities. It's very difficult to have a one size fits all."

**4. Are the funding, charging and access thresholds fair, affordable and transparent?** "There was going to be a contribution cap wasn't there?"

**5. Will it support families and carers?** "How is the average carer supposed to find out about a carer's assessment?"

Local government has a key role to play in ensuring that this change is realised. However, it cannot be achieved without direction, adequate resourcing and meaningful public engagement.

Working with local Healthwatch, councils can take a lead role in achieving the broad reform the public need to see from social care. There is no quick fix, though we hope the Government's Green Paper is the first step.



**Healthwatch England is the independent national champion for people who use health and social care services**, see [www.healthwatch.co.uk](http://www.healthwatch.co.uk). For the LGA's social care green paper, please see p10 and [www.futureofadultsocialcare.co.uk](http://www.futureofadultsocialcare.co.uk)

# councillor

## Scrutinising diabetes: not just about the numbers

**We are all familiar with some of the frightening numbers around diabetes.**

More people than ever have diabetes and are at risk of type 2 diabetes. If nothing changes, warns Diabetes UK, more than five million people will have the condition in the UK by 2025; the costs to the NHS of treatment and care are rising.

So, how do elected members on overview and scrutiny committees get to grips with understanding a situation that in many areas is daunting in scale and complex? Recently, my committee did just that and I want to share with you what I learned.

First, I found that Brent is at the sharp end of the problem. Prevalence of diabetes is about 8.5 per cent (25,000 people with type 2 diabetes) compared with a national average of 5.82 per cent.

Public Health England estimates there are around 7,500 undiagnosed patients in

Brent. Part of the underlying reason for the high number is that many in the borough are in high-risk groups. So, the situation here is, frankly, very challenging.

When we discussed this at committee, I wanted to bring together everyone involved in treating, diagnosing and preventing diabetes. That included colleagues from the clinical commissioning group, the director of public health, GPs, and Brent's cabinet member for public health.

We had a discussion in which everyone could be frank about the scale of the problem, and allow the members to unpick how the parts of the 'system' work together around prevention and treatment.

The discussion was wide ranging, from food and exercise to Brent's prevention programmes such as Slash Sugar, which raises awareness of hidden sugar in food. Diabetes is clearly an area of collaboration between



**Councillor Ketan Sheth** is Brent Council's Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and an Ambassador for the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Diabetes

the local authority and the NHS, so there has to be input from both when discussing this complex topic.

I also wanted to widen the debate to hear from those directly affected by the condition. Some members may have personal experience of diabetes or have friends and family with the condition – many do not.

In Brent, we have 40 diabetes community champions from a wide range of backgrounds, who go out and about talking to people and giving out information; I invited two of them to the committee meeting.

It worked extremely well. Everyone is aware of the numbers, but as a member there's nothing like being able to take on board first-hand testimony alongside the data. It was absorbing to hear one of the champions describe her personal experience of being diagnosed with borderline type 2 diabetes and how she works to share her knowledge of the condition.

For this type of topic, you need to hear these examples of real experiences to help the members make sense of it all.

At scrutiny, members are often told about 'triangulation' or, to put it simply, comparing and weighing up different pieces of evidence as a whole, rather than separately. What I learned above all is that triangulation is more than just weighing different datasets, as important as they are. It is also about listening to people whose own experiences make our understanding of a condition like diabetes real and tangible.

*“We were able to have a discussion in which everyone could be frank about the scale of the problem”*



# elections

## Resignations and casual vacancies

Just two seats from a total of 22 recent vacancies changed hands, with the Conservatives defeated in both cases.

In Hertfordshire, the Three Rivers Rural division saw the Liberal Democrats transform a 3 per cent Conservative majority into a healthy 15-point margin of their own. The vacancy arose following the resignation of former council Deputy Leader, Chris Hayward. His successor is Phil Williams, who contested the seat at the previous May election.

The Conservatives' second defeat was inflicted by the Kirklees Labour Party. Denby Dale ward has a long history of electing candidates from the two main parties. Recently, the Conservatives won in both 2015 and 2018, with Labour victorious in 2016.

Unfortunately, Cllr Billy Jewitt – elected only last May with a slender majority – was forced to resign on health grounds, prompting the by-election. Again, the winning party selected the losing candidate at the previous election meaning that 21-year old Will Simpson becomes Denby Dale's new councillor.

Both defeats were in marginal wards. In two other tightly fought wards defended by the Conservatives, the party benefited from UKIP's absence.

In South Derbyshire's Linton ward, the party safely negotiated what might have been a tricky defence because UKIP, which polled 27 per cent of the vote in 2015, did not contest. Similarly, the Ashford Independents failed by just 20 votes to snatch victory in Kennington ward. Again, the withdrawal of UKIP, which polled 15 per cent of the vote in 2015, perhaps assisted the Conservative cause.



Professors **Colin Rallings** (right) and **Michael Thrasher** are Associate Members, Nuffield College, Oxford



A rather different story lies behind another seat. Suffolk's Bosmere division was captured by the Conservatives in 2017 after being in Liberal Democrat hands since the early 1990s. The victor then – Anne Whybrow – died in August with the party selecting Kay Oakes as her replacement. The Liberal Democrat hopeful was Steve Phillips. Both candidates are well known in the local area, but Oakes prevailed – by the slender margin of just 21 votes.

Nine of these 22 seats (41 per cent) became vacant following the death of the sitting councillor. Although these contests straddle October and November, this figure is above average for both months (39 and 32 per cent respectively, based on 2,000 by-elections held since May 2010). December and January have the highest average rates (48 and 62 per cent respectively).

In general, however, the biggest cause of casual vacancies remains councillor resignations – often because of health issues – which account for 59 per cent of these contests.



**Only a selection of the recent 22 by-election results are shown**

**here.** For the full results and more detailed statistics on each contest, including a breakdown by political party, please visit [www.local.gov.uk/first](http://www.local.gov.uk/first)

### local by-elections

#### Ashford, Kennington

CON HELD

3.4% over Ash Ind

Turnout 32.8%

#### Bassetlaw, East Retford West

LAB HELD

16.4% over Con

Turnout 23.8%

#### East Dorset, Ferndown Central

CON HELD

35.8% over Lib Dem

Turnout 21.4%

#### Harlow, Bush Fair

LAB HELD

6.9% over Con

Turnout 21.8%

#### Hertfordshire, Three Rivers Rural

LIB DEM GAIN FROM CON

15.4% over Con

Turnout 30%

#### Kirklees, Denby Dale

LAB GAIN FROM CON

3.7% over Con

Turnout 29.9%

#### Mendip, Wells St Thomas

LIB DEM HELD

8.3% over Con

Turnout 35.1%

#### Oxfordshire, Iffley Fields & St Marys

LAB HELD

3.1% over Green

Turnout 33.2%

#### South Derbyshire, Linton

CON HELD

29.8% over Lab

Turnout 22.5%

#### South Gloucestershire, Dodington

LIB DEM HELD

9.9% over Con

Turnout 24.5%

#### Suffolk, Bosmere

CON HELD

1.3% over Lib Dem

Turnout 32.7%

#### Sutton, Belmont

CON HELD

9.1% over Lib Dem

Turnout 36.1%

If all 300,000 new homes that the Government aspires to build each year have a gravel drive there will be a saving of 73,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year



## The times they are a changing...

Just a few years ago who would have predicted that plastic bags would be banned, that our coal power stations would be shut down and electric cars would be on the ascendant.

The fabric of new homes, which are now air-pressure tested, is reaching peak efficiency so we are now looking outside and sustainable urban drainage has been introduced. The remaining significant area is the incredibly CO<sub>2</sub> inefficient tarmac which generates 20 times the CO<sub>2</sub> of a gravel drive. Do we really want to park our CO<sub>2</sub> efficient electric cars on a CO<sub>2</sub> wasteful tarmac drive?



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