

# first

No.640 October 2019

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the magazine for local government

## The Spending Round

"This Spending Round was an opportunity to turn a page **and invest more in public services**"

Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

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**Autumn conferences**  
The party faithful gather in Brighton and Manchester



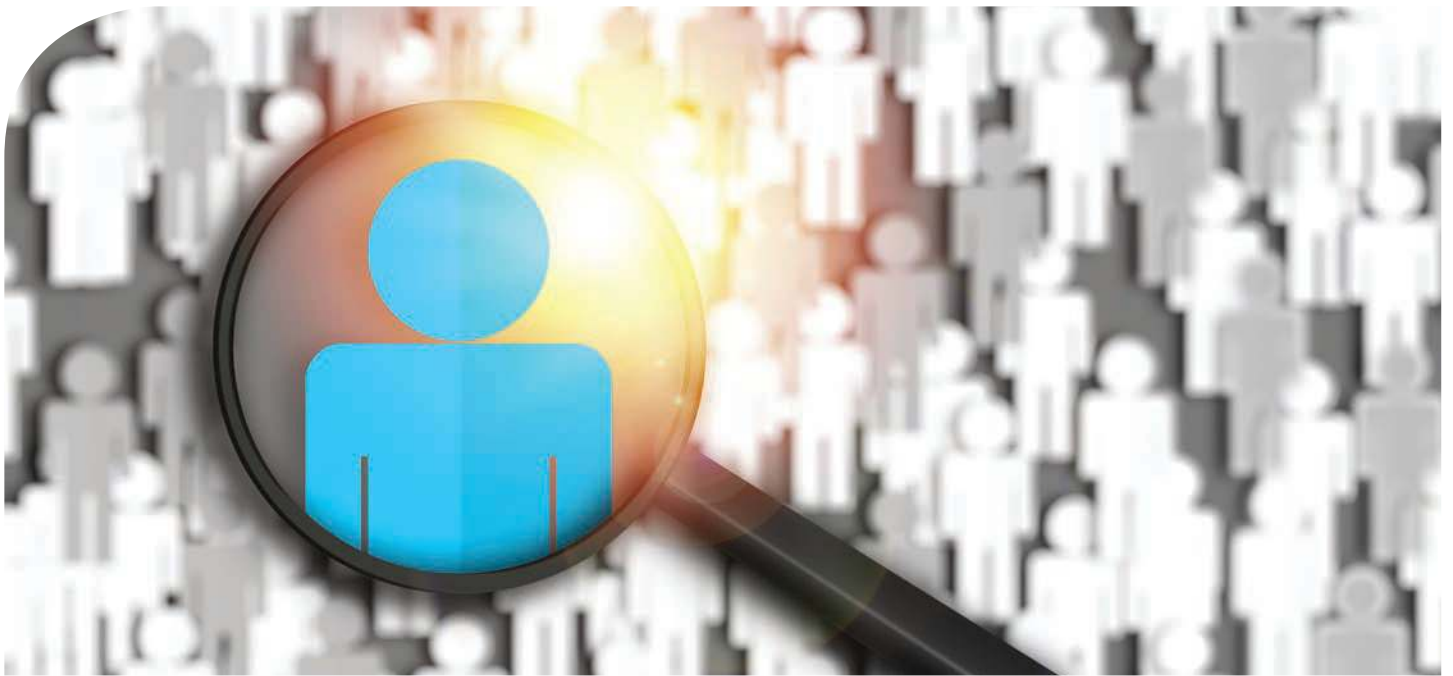
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Ideas for managing demand-led services



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*Large enough to cope,  
small enough to care*



## The Spending Round



I was pleased that our calls for certainty and stability were heard by the Government, with £3.5 billion of funding for councils set out in its recent Spending Round.

There was also

confirmation that 75 per cent business rates retention and the Fair Funding Review will be introduced in April 2021. You can find out more about these announcements in this edition of **first** (see p4, p10, p24).

Our interview this month is with our Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick MP, who discusses the Spending Round, social care, devolution and housing (p20).

Elsewhere in the magazine, we have previews of the Labour and Conservative party conferences (p12 and p13), and set out what we would like to see in the next Queen's Speech (p29).

We take a look at some of the key 'green' policy issues in respect of the environment, climate change and waste (p15); have some advice for councils on commercialisation (p18); and have published some guidance for councillors on modern slavery (p30).

You can also find out how our behavioural insights programme – part of our sector-led improvement offer – is helping Warrington Borough Council manage demand for additional support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (p19).

**Cllr James Jamieson** is LGA Chairman

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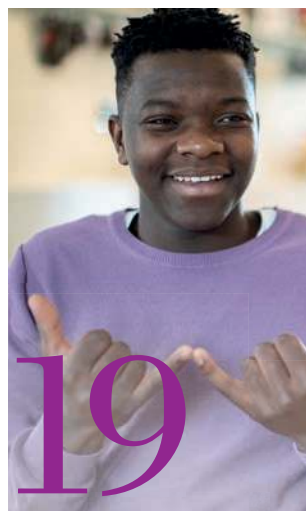
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# news

## £3.5bn boost for council services

**The Government has announced a funding package of more than £3.5 billion for local services in 2020/21, as part of a one-year Spending Round.**

The announcement included £1 billion for social care and £700 million for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). A review into the support provided for children with SEND has also been promised by the Department for Education (see right).

Key grants will continue, and councils will also be able to levy an adult social care precept for a further year, raising an additional £500 million to help people who need care and support.

Cllr James Jamieson, LGA Chairman, said: "We are delighted that the Spending Round has delivered a funding package of more than £3.5 billion for our vital local services next year.

"This is the biggest year-on-year real terms increase in spending power for local government in a decade and will allow councils to meet the rising cost and demand pressures they face in 2020/21.

"The LGA has worked hard to demonstrate

to the Government the financial pressures facing councils next year. We are pleased it has responded to our calls and acted by providing desperately needed new money next year, including £1 billion for social care and £700 million for children and young people with SEND.

"This will help councils as they strive to ensure older and disabled people can live the lives they want to lead, support our most vulnerable young people and continue to improve local areas."

The LGA is now looking ahead to a Queen's Speech in the autumn, and is promoting a radical legislative programme including an English Devolution Bill and Local Government Finance Bill as part of a new localism settlement. It continues to work for a long-term, sustainable funding settlement for local government and a wider role for councils.

Cllr Jamieson added: "With the freedom and funding to make local decisions, there is clear evidence that outcomes for the nation improve and the country gets better value for money."

● See pages 10, 24 and 29



## 'Make mainstream schools more inclusive'

Mainstream schools should be incentivised to take in more special needs children, say councils, as latest figures show a 27 per cent increase in pupils being placed in more expensive special schools since 2014.

This comes after the Government announced an extra £700 million for supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in the Spending Round, and launched a review of services.

The LGA said the review should include boosting provision of support for pupils with SEND in mainstream schools.

Mainstream schools say they are increasingly unable to meet the needs of children with SEND, due to a combination of funding constraints, accountability pressures and curriculum changes, according to a recent LGA report.

The survey, based on responses from 93 councils in England, also found more parents are losing confidence in the ability of the mainstream sector to cater for their child's needs.

Cllr Judith Blake, Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, said: "The extra £700 million for SEND announced in the Spending Round will help councils to meet the rising demand for support next year and we are pleased the Government has also launched a review of the system.

"Reform is needed and councils want to work with the Government, families and children with SEND on the forthcoming cross-government review to get a clear picture of why demand and cost pressures are continuing to rise and what can be done to make the system work more effectively for everyone."

The LGA's survey findings were supported by a new report from the National Audit Office, which found that the requirement for schools to fund the first £6,000 of support for SEND pupils "may incentivise schools to be less inclusive".

The Children's Commissioner Anne Longfield also included calls for more funding for SEND as part of the six pledges in her recent children's manifesto.





# Secondary school places crisis 'just one year away'

**Thousands of desperately needed new secondary school places have now been created by councils but parents and children still face the prospect of missing out on a place as early as next year, analysis by the LGA warns.**

In total, councils created 96,000 school places last year by working with their existing primary and secondary schools and, in some cases, commissioning places in academies and free schools.

Of that total, 37,000 new places were

created by councils in secondary schools. But with two-thirds of secondary schools now academies, the LGA said councils have no powers to open more secondary schools or direct academies to expand.

The LGA's latest analysis reveals that unless more secondary school places are created, 15 councils will face a secondary school place shortfall in 2020/21. By 2024/25, a total of 71 councils (48 per cent) face not being able to meet demand for 123,195 places.

To address this looming crisis, the LGA is calling for the Government to give councils back the power to open new maintained schools where that is the local preference; and hand back the responsibility for making decisions about opening new schools.

This is the only way to ensure councils can tackle the growing demand for places, meet their legal duty to ensure every child has a school place and cope with a surge in primary school pupils moving through the system.

An LGA spokesperson said: "Despite all odds, councils have been able to provide desperately needed places for parents looking to secure their child's place at secondary school in the past year.

"No family should face uncertainty over their child's school place. But our secondary school places crisis is now just one year away and, without action, this will be the reality for thousands of families."



## 'Devolve skills to help NEETs'

The number of young people not studying, working or training in the UK between April and June 2019 was up 28,000 compared with the previous three months, latest figures show.

The LGA said councils could get more young people into jobs, education and training and transform the lives of thousands more if they were given greater powers over the national skills and employment system.

Despite limited powers, councils have already shown that they can help young people make career choices that are right for them, support local business and boost the national economy.

For example, the number of young people aged 16-24 not in education, employment or training (NEETs) in Medway fell by 17.5 per cent from December 2018 to February 2019, compared with the same period in 2017/18. The council has a specialist team that provides one-to-one support for young people who are NEET, youth offenders or those with special educational needs.

Devolved powers and funding are necessary to get more young people and disadvantaged job seekers into education, employment or training. This means giving councils and local partners the power to deliver their own apprenticeship offer, local careers advice and guidance, as well as more support for schools to assist with post-16 pathways.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne, Chairman of the LGA's People and Places Board, said: "With more than 790,000 young people not in education, employment or training, it is vital that more young people have the opportunities to increase their skills and retrain, so we can drive up productivity and start to close local skills gaps.

"Behind every number is a young person failing to realise their full potential. By devolving careers advice and post-16 skills budgets and powers to local areas, councils can work with schools, colleges and employers to improve provision for young people so that they can get on in life."



## Funding for building safety checks

The Government has announced £4 million of 'new burdens' funding to help councils identify dangerous cladding and insulation on all high-rise residential buildings in their areas.

It has also detailed the funding available for the replacement of flammable aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding on private high-rise buildings. The LGA and others have campaigned to ensure leaseholders are not left with unaffordable bills and unsellable flats as a result of the cladding crisis, following the Grenfell Tower fire.

However, the Government has yet to provide similar funding for those with dangerous non-ACM cladding and the LGA continues to call for this.

The Government also announced a consultation on lowering the height at which sprinklers are required in new buildings – something the LGA has championed, together with the National Fire Chiefs Council.

Lord Porter, the LGA's building safety spokesman, said: "We are pleased the Government has listened to the LGA and fire professionals and plans to lower the height at which sprinklers are required in new buildings.

"Those living in older blocks deserve the same level of protection, and the Government also needs to commit to helping councils with the costs of retrofitting sprinklers in older tower blocks, as it has done in respect of remedial work for social housing blocks with flammable cladding."

He added: "Providing councils with £4 million to carry out the vital task of identifying tower blocks with other forms of dangerous cladding is positive. The Government also needs to make sure it fully protects leaseholders living in private buildings from the potentially crippling cost of removing dangerous cladding from their homes."

## news in brief

# Reigniting devolution

Devolution of more responsibilities and revenue-raising powers to local government has the potential to improve the financial sustainability of the sector and allow better and more integrated services for the public. This is according to a report on local government finance from the Commons' Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, which launched a new inquiry into progress on devolution in England in July. Cllr James Jamieson, LGA Chairman, said: "We are pleased the committee has backed our call for the devolution process to be reignited. When councils have the freedoms and funding to make local decisions, there is clear and significant evidence that outcomes improve and the country gets better value for money."

## #CouncilsCan Day

The LGA's #CouncilsCan social media initiative to highlight the positive impact of local services and the urgent need for the recent Spending Round to adequately fund under-pressure councils was a huge success. The live tweetathon on 2 September saw more than 3,446 #CouncilsCan tweets from 1,806 contributors, reaching more than 6.8 million people. #CouncilsCan trended in the UK throughout the morning, peaking at number six at about 9am. More than 130 councils and at least 125 stakeholders and partner organisations took part in the event to support the LGA's #CouncilsCan campaign, which has shown how councils are improving people's lives and local areas for the better.

## Housing benefit

The homeless charity Crisis is calling on the Government to invest in housing benefit to protect thousands of households from financial hardship and homelessness. Cllr Richard Watts, Chair of the LGA's Resources Board, said: "Ending homelessness remains a top priority for councils. We urge the Government to commit to restoring local housing allowance rates to at least the 30th percentile of rents when the freeze on allowances ends next year. Giving councils the powers and funding to increase the supply of rented housing and provide a safety net are vital components of any long-term government solution to our homelessness crisis."



# Calls to tackle rogue lorry drivers

**A spate of 'lorry mayhem' – with HGVs blocking streets, getting stuck in villages, and crashing into bridges and homes – has led to calls from councils for new powers for them to tackle rogue drivers.**

It comes as a new LGA survey found more than half of responding councils said this was one of the most important traffic issues in their communities. Currently, only police, and councils in London and Wales, have the powers to fine offenders.

Giving councils the power to enforce moving traffic offences – including heavy goods vehicles using rural roads not designed to take their weight, vehicles driving the wrong way down a one-way street or making a banned turn – would help them act on community concerns and improve road safety, tackle congestion and reduce pollution.

The LGA said lorry drivers should also be required to use dedicated HGV sat navs, which include bridge heights, narrow roads, and roads unsuitable for trucks, and which allow the driver

to input the lorry's dimensions so they are only guided along suitable roads.

An LGA spokesperson said: "With powers to enforce moving traffic violations also given to councils outside of London and Wales, they could act to prevent disruption by the minority of rogue lorry drivers that incorrectly use weight-restricted roads through our towns and villages and cause havoc and mayhem on our local roads."

Meanwhile, the Commons' Transport Select Committee has called for a blanket nationwide ban on parking on pavements to prevent vehicles obstructing footpaths and endangering pedestrians.

Cllr David Renard, LGA Transport spokesman, said: "We are pleased that the committee has joined the LGA in recommending an extension to the ban on pavement parking to all areas of England."

"We urge government to bring forward legislation to ban pavement parking, with councils able to create exemptions if they want to."

## Self-help saving councils £100m

More than £100 million has been saved by councils in the past year as a result of the LGA's sector-led improvement (SLI) offer.

SLI is an approach to improvement put in place by local authorities and the LGA after the abolition of the previous national performance framework.

Key features of the offer include strong political and managerial leadership, challenge from fellow councils, and the ability to benchmark performance against other councils through the use of comparable data.

The LGA's improvement offer has supported all councils over the past 12 months, and included delivering 140 peer challenges, training more than 800 councillors and recruiting more than 200 graduates. More than 95 per cent of leaders and chief executives say the support has had a positive impact on their authority.

Cllr Peter Fleming, Chairman of the LGA's Improvement and Innovation Board, said:

"Sector-led improvement continues to be an amazing local government success story that we should be proud of."

"There is huge opportunity for this successful approach to improvement to be enhanced over the next decade."

"Councils have embraced sector-led improvement and have shown willingness to work with the LGA and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to become more effective and efficient."

"We look forward to working closely with MHCLG to embed sector-led strengths, bringing fresh ideas and innovation, and to secure its funding for the future."

● See p18-19, and [www.local.gov.uk/sector-led-improvement](http://www.local.gov.uk/sector-led-improvement)

# Right to Buy 'undermining council house building'

**Councils are warning that their house building efforts risk being undermined without reform of the Right to Buy (RTB) scheme.**

It comes as last year councils built more homes than they have for a quarter of a century.

Latest figures show that councils in England directly built 2,560 homes in 2018/19 – the highest since 1992/3, when they built 2,580 homes.

Last year, the Government acted on the LGA's call to give councils the freedom to borrow to build new homes by lifting the housing borrowing cap, a key barrier to local authority house building.

The LGA is now calling on the Government to go further and reform the RTB scheme, which is restricting councils' ability to replace homes sold.

Currently, councils retain a third of RTB receipts, with the rest kept by the Treasury. They have only been able to replace about a fifth of homes sold, affecting their ability to provide housing for homeless and vulnerable families.

The LGA wants councils to be able to keep 100 per cent of Right to Buy receipts and set discounts locally.

An LGA spokesperson said: "Councils are trying to build the new homes with the right infrastructure that our communities desperately need. However, the number of new council homes being built is not able to keep pace with those sold under Right to Buy.

"Right to Buy continues to enable many families to achieve the dream of getting on the housing ladder and owning their own home, but it urgently needs reform.

"Current arrangements are restricting councils from being able to replace homes being sold under the scheme. This loss of social rented housing risks pushing more families into the private rented sector, driving up housing benefit spending and rents and exacerbating our homelessness crisis."

## Domestic Abuse Bill confirmed

The Prime Minister has confirmed that the Domestic Abuse Bill will be part of the Queen's Speech, as latest figures show domestic violence killings in the UK are at a five-year high.

Last year, 173 people died in domestic violence-related homicides in Britain, compared with 141 in 2017.

Cllr Simon Blackburn, Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, said: "As part of our #CouncilsCan campaign, we have been calling for greater action to reduce and eventually eliminate domestic abuse, and stressing the need for a Domestic Abuse Bill.

"Tackling domestic abuse is an issue that councils take very seriously, which is why we support further measures to improve work with local partners to help support more

victims and stop this horrendous crime.

"To prevent it happening in the first place, there should be a greater focus on prevention and early intervention measures to tackle the root causes and support more victims, including greater investment in perpetrator programmes to stop domestic abuse from happening in the first place.

"The ability of councils to fund services for victims is limited by significant pressures on their budgets, with local authorities increasingly being forced to prioritise spending for those at immediate risk of harm, rather than on vital earlier support services and prevention schemes that help stop domestic abuse.

"It is important that any legislative changes in the Bill are matched with adequate resources and funding."



## Anti-slavery support for councils

The UK's Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner has said she is keen to work more closely with councils, in a presentation of her plans to tackle modern slavery at a recent meeting of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board.

Dame Sara Thornton said that in 2018 there were just less than 7,000 referrals of suspected victims of modern slavery to the National Referral Mechanism – the UK's framework for referring and supporting victims – with referrals for the second quarter of 2019 set to rise by 20 per cent.

"The numbers are not plateauing at all," she said.

"Clearly, there is a role for local authority staff as first responders under the [Modern Slavery] Act to identify victims. The latest figures from 2018 show that, of all the victims, just less than 20 per cent were identified by local authorities, so there is a key role in ensuring frontline staff particularly are equipped and know what to look for."

Businesses with a turnover of more than £36 million have to publish a statement detailing the steps they have taken to ensure that modern slavery is not taking place within their supply chains, although Dame Sara said compliance levels for this varied.

Local authorities do not currently have to report on this, but Dame Sara said: "Lots of councils have written modern slavery statements, not because you have to, but because you want to, which is really good."

Referring to new LGA guidance on modern slavery, she added: "I'm up for working with you to say 'OK, we've got the guidance. What do we do next to really raise awareness so we can all raise our game?'"

Dame Sara's strategic plan, due out in October, will be based on four pillars: improving care and support for victims; supporting law enforcement and prosecutions; focusing on prevention; and getting value from research and innovation.

● See p30 for updated LGA guidance for councillors on tackling modern slavery





# New Directors

## Developing new and aspiring directors of adult social services



This programme is designed to meet the specific needs and shape the leadership techniques of new and aspiring Directors of Adult Social Services.



enhance your leadership capabilities



expand your political intelligence



increase your personal impact and influence across the sector



For more information please visit [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/new-directors](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/new-directors)



## The Health and Care Political Leadership Offer

Our **free** support offer, funded by Department of Health and Social Care, and part of the LGA's sector led improvement programme is aimed at:

- health and wellbeing board (HWB) chairs/co/vice chairs
- portfolio-holders/lead members with responsibility for adult social care
- anyone with any other leading political role in a health and care system.

### Leadership essentials

Warwick Conference Centre, Coventry  
These **free** two day residential sessions are an opportunity to reflect on the leadership challenges of these roles.

Feedback from our past delegates include:

"You come away with great ideas to grow and develop a Health and Wellbeing Board."

"Full of ideas and passion."

"A really effective way of learning."

"Gives confidence to lead."

### Session dates

If you are a HWB chair/co/vice chair or have a leading political role in a health and care system:

**15-16 Oct 2019 or 5-6 Nov 2019**

If you are an adult social care portfolio-holder or lead member:

**5-6 Nov 2019**

Reflecting responsibilities across health and social care, the November sessions will run simultaneously, linked by shared speakers, facilitators and a joint dinner to provide a wider networking opportunity.

Please contact [grace.collins@local.gov.uk](mailto:grace.collins@local.gov.uk) for more information.

For more information visit [www.local.gov.uk/hcplo](http://www.local.gov.uk/hcplo) Places are limited and early booking is recommended.



# letters



## Stigma of 'social' housing

Further to your articles celebrating 100 years of council housing (first 637 and 638), it's clear that the need to reinvent the housing sector – whether to rent or buy – is required now more than ever.

Over the years, council housing has been transformed into 'social' housing, but is this the correct word to use? The stigma that seems to be associated with 'social' housing and 'social' rents is unnecessary, demeaning and morally wrong.

Yes, we need more homes, and yes, we need councils to build them. But stop calling them 'social' housing – just call them homes for the hundreds of thousands of families waiting desperately to have somewhere decent to live, at a rent that will enable them to pay all the other costs associated with living a decent life in decent neighbourhoods.

We need to stop labelling people because of the type of housing in which they live, stop the continuing rise in the cost of somewhere to live, supply decent quality homes that are truly affordable for normal working people, and consider basing rents on the net earnings of the tenants – be that a single person or a family.

Unless action is taken now to stop the ever-increasing cost of somewhere to live, future governments will be paying billions of pounds more in housing and other benefits than is necessary.

**Cllr Ron Woodley (Ind)**, Deputy Leader, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

## Phone and ride

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen (first 639) seems to think that his pilot scheme for a demand-responsive bus service is something new.

I would respectfully remind him that North East Lincolnshire Council's Phone 'n' Ride – also an on-demand service where you can pre-book a seat – has existed for many years. Indeed, I've a leaflet dating back to 2007 proving this.

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

## Training tributes

Having recently attended an LGA leadership academy training award ceremony to collect certificates at Warwick University, we had the pleasure of an open question and answer session with Lord Gary Porter, the former LGA Chairman.

## sound bites

### **Cllr Warren Whyte (Con, Buckinghamshire)**

"Getting stuff done is why I got involved in politics. Last week catching up on some **#Buckingham** highway issues with **@tfbalerts** and reviewing some recent improvements thanks to **@bucksc** funding."

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

### **Cllr Seema Kumar (Con, Ealing)**

"So pleased to be at the yearly ultra fun **#homezone #fiveroads** residents street **#teaparty #Ealingbroadway**. Great **#community** spirit, unbeatable homemade cakes & savouries, raffle, tombola, face painting home grown fruit **#organic veg** & top of the list street **#hockey**. Played & WON!"

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

### **Cllr Luthfur Rahman (Lab, Manchester)**

"Did you know that Manchester has 143 Beautiful Parks that are the focal points of our communities & neighbourhoods and 77% of our residents visit a park at least once a week?"

**@ManCityCouncil @ky1iew @parks\_great**"

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

### **Cllr Anna Rothery (Lab, Liverpool)**

"Yesterday I became Lord Mayor of Liverpool and made history as the first black Lord Mayor. This is a recognition of our black community and sends a very clear message that Liverpool is committed to diversity."

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

### **Cllr Joe Harris (Lib Dem, Cotswold)**

"Proud to fly the flag above **@CotswoldDC** to mark **#MerchantNavyDay** honouring the sacrifice merchant sailors have made and continue to make to keep the country 'afloat'."

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

### **Cllr Helen Sprawson-White (Ind, Mendip)**

"I had great fun meeting students at **@StrodeCollege** today with my **@WHYwehearyou** hat on! Was also great to catch up with **@tessamunt** and her **#LiberalYouth** team, always fabulous to see young people engaged in politics, whatever party they support!"

[www.twitter.com/CllrHelen\\_SW](http://www.twitter.com/CllrHelen_SW)

I wish to put on record our thanks and appreciation to Gary for answering all the questions in a clear, constructive manner and being open and transparent, and to wish him well as the outgoing Chairman of the LGA.

Tributes must also be paid to the organisers from the LGA and the tutors who attended the June training sessions.

**Cllr Kevin Etheridge (Ind)**, Caerphilly County Borough 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

## Spending Round 2019

The Chancellor has set out a £3.5 billion funding package for councils, covering cost and demand pressures in the coming financial year

Councils now have some of the funding certainty and stability they need to plan their budgets for 2020/21, after Chancellor Sajid Javid announced the biggest year-on-year real terms increase in local government spending power in a decade.

His one-year Spending Round included more than £3.5 billion for vital local services. This will allow councils to meet the increase in cost and demand pressures expected in 2020/21, which the LGA has calculated as £2.6 billion.

The Chancellor confirmed that key grants to local government will continue next year, including New Homes Bonus, troubled families, winter pressures, and the Better Care Fund.

There was also confirmation that 75 per cent business rates retention and the Fair Funding Review will now be introduced in April 2021, not next year. This will allow time for the remaining decisions to be made over the design of the reforms, and for councils to be consulted.

The Government has proposed a council tax referendum limit of 2 per cent, which would raise £1.1 billion after taking into account the increase in the tax base. The ability to levy an adult social care precept for a further year gives councils the potential to raise a further £500 million to help people in our communities who need care and support.

However, council tax cannot provide a long-term solution to funding social care, as it raises different amounts of money in different parts of the country and not necessarily related to need.

Overall, we are pleased the Government has responded to our calls and provided desperately needed new money, including £1 billion for social care and £700 million for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

With this investment, councils will be better able to ensure older and disabled people can live the lives they want to lead, and to support our most vulnerable young people.

This Spending Round shows that the LGA and councils are successfully making the case that investing in local government is good for the nation's prosperity, economic growth and health and wellbeing. The evidence shows that giving councils the freedom and funding to make local decisions improves national outcomes.

The LGA now wants to work with the Government on how its Queen's Speech can reignite the devolution process so councils can continue to lead their local areas and improve the lives of their residents (see p29). Over the coming year, we will continue to press for long-term financial certainty and sustainable funding for local government.



### Public health

- Real terms increase to the public health grant budget.

LGA view: *"A real terms increase for public health is a welcome change of direction and recognises councils' record on public health improvement."*



### Town centres and high streets

- £241 million from the Towns Fund in 2020/21 to support high street and town centre regeneration.

LGA view: *"It will be important that the fund is flexible and that any processes for bidding are kept simple and proportionate."*



This is an edited version of the LGA's 'on the day' briefing on the Spending Round, see [www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/spending-round-2019-day-briefing](http://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/spending-round-2019-day-briefing). The Treasury documents are available at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-round-2019-document](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-round-2019-document). The LGA's annual finance conference takes place on 7 January – visit [www.local.gov.uk/events](http://www.local.gov.uk/events) to book your place





### Social care

- Additional £1 billion for adult and children's social care.
- £2.5 billion of existing social care grants to continue.
- Consultation on 2 per cent adult social care council tax precept, for a further £500 million.

**LGA view:** *"The Spending Round is positive for social care and will help in the coming year. However, with people living longer, pressures will continue to rise... we need national solutions to how we fund care and support for the long term."*



### Education and children

- Per pupil funding for all schools to rise in line with inflation (1.8 per cent) in 2020/21.
- Additional £700 million to support children and young people with SEND.
- An extra £66 million to increase the hourly rate paid to childcare providers for free childcare.
- £30 million more to safeguard children from child sexual exploitation.

**LGA view:** *"We are keen to work with the Government to tackle the high needs funding gap facing councils as demand for support continues to increase."*



### EU funding

- The Government has guaranteed funding for UK organisations receiving EU funding in the event of a 'no deal' Brexit.
- There was no announcement on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Government's replacement for EU funding.

**LGA view:** *"The ESIF Programme has provided £5.3 billion to local areas in England and it is essential there is not a gap before the introduction of a domestic replacement. This... should be viable, locally driven, democratically accountable and at least equal in value to the funding streams it is replacing."*



### Building safety programme

- Additional £24 million to support the new building safety regime – on top of £600 million for removing dangerous ACM cladding on private and council flats.

**LGA view:** *"Councils will also need funding to address other building safety issues, including replacing other dangerous cladding systems and fire doors that do not meet the required standard."*



### Housing and homelessness

- An additional £54 million (total £422 million) for MHCLG to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping.
- MHCLG to consult on mandatory accessible housing standards in building regulations.

**LGA view:** *"This additional resource will enable local authorities to continue to prevent people from becoming homeless... however, a long-term solution is needed to place homelessness services on a sustainable footing and prevent people from losing their home."*



### Health education

- A £1,000 central training budget for each nurse, midwife and allied health professional over three years.

**LGA view:** *"Local government needs confirmation that the £210 million set aside for nurses' continuing professional development will extend to health visitors and school nurses."*

Over recent years, there has been an upsurge in public interest in the environment and in climate change.

Television programmes like Blue Planet and high-profile campaigns such as Sky Ocean Rescue have propelled issues such as waste, pollution and recycling to the forefront of popular concern.

Coupled with hotter summers and colder winters, public awareness about the impact of climate change has never been higher.

Since China started refusing to take our waste in 2018, the UK has been exporting it to countries with some of the highest levels of ocean plastic pollution.

We have to clean up our natural environment and halt the flow of plastic and other waste into our oceans. For far too long we have behaved as though the Earth has an unlimited supply of everything we need, and is a bottomless rubbish bin into which we can throw things when we no longer feel the need for them.

It is time for us to be responsible for our own waste. Local authorities are responsible for recycling and they are doing all they can to increase recycling levels, working with residents and businesses to collect as much recyclable material as they can.

All councils collect paper and 99 per cent collect plastics to recycle. Many local authorities also offer recycling facilities for materials such as glass and food waste, as well as clothing and electrics.

The things we use have an environmental cost as well as a financial cost: the environment and climate emergency demands that we act differently and local authorities are leading the way in doing so.

Air quality is a public health and a climate emergency, causing ill-health and premature death in our towns and cities.

Once again, councils are the ones leading the way in taking measures to tackle air quality – such as introducing clean air zones in town and city centres, encouraging electric vehicle use, cleaning up public transport, encouraging residents to change how they travel to work, and much more.

But the Government needs to empower local authorities to take further bold and radical action to tackle air quality by giving them the powers they need to take the right steps which will work for local communities – and no time should be wasted in doing so.

# Time for a green industrial revolution?

## Local authorities are leading the way in tackling environmental concerns about waste and air quality



Sue Hayman MP (Lab) is Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

*“It is time for us to be responsible for our own waste”*

Brexit has shifted the focus away from critical issues such as the climate emergency and the Government needs to refocus efforts in this area. We need to take a new look at what we make, buy and use, at how

we live and travel, and take real action.

The Labour Party nationally has been calling for a green industrial revolution, transforming the economy into one that is efficient and green with new jobs.

Reducing waste, managing what we have in a sustainable manner and tackling poor air quality must play a vital part in this revolution, and local authorities must play a key role in this.



The Labour Party Conference takes place in Brighton from 21-25 September. You can find out about LGA party conference events by visiting [www.local.gov.uk/parliament](http://www.local.gov.uk/parliament)



# A local voice

The Conservative Party Conference in Manchester looks set to be dominated by Brexit, but councillors will be discussing how to secure further powers for their communities

I am writing this preview of the Conservative Party Conference in September at the end of yet another extraordinary week in Westminster.

After a series of contentious votes on Brexit, a General Election is looking increasingly likely, and may even have been called by the time you are reading this. If that is the case, this conference will undoubtedly have a very different feel to any that I have previously attended.

While it will inevitably be dominated by Brexit and discussions over electoral strategy, for those of us in local government it will also provide a great opportunity for Conservative councillors to come together and discuss some of the key issues we are facing.

For many councillors, this will be their first opportunity to meet Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick MP, and the other new members of his team at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG): Housing Minister Esther McVey MP; Luke Hall MP, the Minister for Local Government; and Viscount Younger, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the House of Lords.

As usual, we will be sponsoring the Conservative Councillors' Association's (CCA) question and answer session with the MHCLG ministerial team. This will take place from 12.45pm to 2pm on Tuesday 1 October. To attend this meeting, you will need to be a CCA member and register your attendance with the CCA beforehand at its stand in the Councillors' Lounge.

Later that day, we will be holding our two main events of the conference. Our fringe meeting, which we are organising in partnership with political and community

party conferences 2019



*“Councillors are the backbone of our party, so let us make sure that our voice is heard loud and clear”*



Councillor Izzi Seccombe OBE  
is Leader of the LGA's  
Conservative Group

consultancy Curtin&Co, will discuss: ‘Why is the Queen’s Speech important for local government?’

This will take place in Exchange 10 of Manchester Central from 4pm to 5.30pm. I am delighted to be speaking at this event, which will be chaired by our LGA Chairman, Cllr James Jamieson, alongside Luke Hall MP, Emma Norris, Director of Research at the Institute for Government, and Martin Curtis, the former Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council and Associate Director of Curtin&Co.

Following our success in securing significant additional funding for local government in the recent Spending Round, this will give an ideal opportunity for us to discuss how we can work with the Government to secure further powers and freedoms for our communities.

Later that evening, Cllr Jamieson and I will be hosting our LGA drinks reception from 8pm to 9.30pm in Charter 4 (Manchester Central). I am delighted that Robert Jenrick has confirmed his attendance at this event, which is always a great opportunity for Conservative councillors to mix informally with colleagues from around the country.

In addition to these two events, Conservative members of the LGA's policy boards and I will be speaking at a large number of events organised by our partner organisations throughout the conference.

Further information about these events, which will cover a wide variety of subjects ranging from reducing rough sleeping to achieving more devolution to securing the future of adult social care, will be included in a guide that will be circulated at the end of September.

I am looking forward to seeing colleagues in Manchester at what will be my first conference as the LGA's Conservative Group Leader. As we all know, councillors are the backbone of our party, so let us make sure that our voice is heard loud and clear throughout the event.



The Conservative Party Conference takes place in Manchester from 29 September to 2 October. You can find out about LGA party conference events by visiting [www.local.gov.uk/parliament](http://www.local.gov.uk/parliament)

# Let's get paper and card sorted.

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**The household paper and card we  
all put into recycling has value.**

But contaminated material won't be accepted by recycling plants, costing local authorities money and condemning it to landfill.

**Don't let your recycling go to waste.**

**Separate paper and card from  
other recycling streams.**

Find out how at [ourpaper.org.uk](https://ourpaper.org.uk)



**Our Paper**

**Helping local authorities improve  
paper and card recycling**



# Going greener



**Councillor David Renard**  
is Chairman of the LGA's  
Environment, Economy,  
Housing and Transport Board

I am fortunate enough to be taking over chairmanship of the LGA's Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board at a time when environmental issues are high on everybody's agenda.

Councils have always been at the forefront of these discussions, whether it be delivering cycling lanes or introducing new recycling schemes. But it feels like we now need to be able to deliver, quicker.

In the coming year, we will be dealing with a packed environmental agenda, demonstrating local government's leadership role. Some of the key policy areas are detailed below.

## Resources and waste strategy

Earlier this year, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) launched three major consultations connected to the Government's resources and waste strategy.

These addressed consistency in recycling collections, reforming the producer responsibility scheme and the introduction of deposit return schemes. Taken collectively, these represent a significant overhaul of what we recycle, how we recycle and who will pay for it. The LGA lobbied hard and effectively during the first phase of this work to ensure councils' views were heard.

DEFRA's second phase of consultation should take place next year. Its focus will be on calculating how much councils spend on recycling and waste services, and how much producers should pay.

Councils must know how much they are spending on these services and ensure these full costs are represented through any of the work undertaken by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) over the next few years. This could significantly impact on your future funding, so make sure your data within the WRAP modelling is accurate.

## Environment Bill

An Environment Bill has been promised to ensure that environmental ambition and accountability remain at the heart of government after Brexit. The Bill will focus



## The LGA is gearing up to provide more support to member councils on environmental issues

on environmental governance, air quality, biodiversity, waste, and water management.

Councils will need to start thinking about what leading on environmental improvement means to them. What will it mean for you to be able to deliver enhancements to your local natural environments? What resources will this require and what skills are needed?

As the Bill progresses, the LGA will be engaging in the detail so that we can be confident that what becomes law is something on which councils can deliver.

## Climate emergency

At the LGA's annual conference in July, a climate emergency was declared and a commitment made to supporting councils in their work to tackle climate change by providing a strong, unified voice for local government, and sharing best practice across all councils.

There was cross-party support for this declaration. To date, 230 councils in the UK have declared a climate emergency and many others have agreed measures to become carbon neutral. Following on from this, the LGA will be offering the Government a joint national taskforce between local leaders and

relevant Whitehall departments to consider the most appropriate actions, funding, coordination and collaboration needed to drive the UK's climate change agenda.

Our policy team is prepared with specific asks around transport, planning and waste. And our improvement team is planning a suite of offerings to help elected members get to grips with the details of climate change.

The coming year promises to be full of environmental action. I'm happy to hear any feedback elected members may have. Please get in touch with me at [drenard@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:drenard@swindon.gov.uk)

*“Councils have always been at the forefront of environmental discussions, whether it be delivering cycling lanes or introducing new recycling schemes”*



For more information, please visit [www.local.gov.uk/topics/environment-and-waste](http://www.local.gov.uk/topics/environment-and-waste)

# Making the decisions

## Meet the councillors who will be leading the work of the LGA over the coming year

**T**he LGA is a politically led, cross-party organisation that works with and for our member councils to ensure local government has a strong, credible voice with national government.

We aim to influence and set the political agenda on the issues that matter to local authorities so they are able to deliver local solutions to national problems.

One of our strengths is that we are a membership organisation, and member-led, with councillors directing our day-to-day

activities and business, setting our long-term priorities and goals, and agreeing campaigns and strategies.

This is reflected in our governance structures, with each of our four political groups (Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, and Independent) electing and providing the councillors who sit on the LGA Executive, our Board of Directors and our programme boards.

The Board of Directors (also known as the Leadership Board) directs the LGA's activities, business and strategic priorities. Its members –

the LGA's chair, vice-chairs and deputy chairs – sit on and advise the LGA Executive, and hold the LGA's programme boards to account.

The LGA Executive plays a coordinating role, providing strategic direction to the association's work through the business planning process. Its members include the LGA's board chairs, representatives of Wales and the English regions, and non-voting members representing important partners.

Each year, the LGA Executive is reconstituted to reflect the outcome of the English and Welsh local elections. The LGA's current political balance is: Conservative – 38.8 per cent; Labour – 38.0 per cent; Liberal Democrat – 12.5 per cent; and Independent – 10.7 per cent.

## board of directors (leadership board)



**Cllr James Jamieson** (Con, Central Bedfordshire) was elected Chairman of the LGA in July and was previously Leader of the LGA's Conservative Group from July 2018. He was first elected to Central Bedfordshire Council in 2009 and became its Leader in 2011.  
[james.jamieson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:james.jamieson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)



**Cllr Nick Forbes CBE** (Lab, Newcastle) is the LGA's Senior Vice-Chair and became Leader of the LGA's Labour Group in 2015. He has been a Labour councillor since 2000 and was elected Leader of Newcastle City Council in 2011.  
[nick.forbes@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:nick.forbes@newcastle.gov.uk)



**Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE** (Con, Warwickshire) is an LGA Vice-Chairman and was elected Leader of the LGA's Conservative Group in July. She was elected to Warwickshire County Council in 2001 and became its first female Leader in 2013.  
[cllrmsseccombe@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:cllrmsseccombe@warwickshire.gov.uk)



**Cllr Howard Sykes MBE** (Lib Dem, Oldham) is an LGA Vice-Chair and was elected Leader of the LGA's Liberal Democrat Group in 2017. First elected in 1987, he is a former Leader of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council and is currently Leader of the Opposition.  
[howard.sykes@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:howard.sykes@oldham.gov.uk)



**Cllr Marianne Overton MBE** (Ind, Lincolnshire) is an LGA Vice-Chair and has been Leader of the LGA's Independent Group since 2011. She is Leader of the Lincolnshire Independents and sits on Lincolnshire County Council and North Kesteven District Council.  
[cllr.m.Overton@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.m.Overton@lincolnshire.gov.uk)



**Cllr Robert Alden** (Con, Birmingham) is a Deputy Chairman of the LGA. First elected in 2006, he is Leader of the Conservative Group on Birmingham City Council.  
[robert.alden@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:robert.alden@birmingham.gov.uk)



**Cllr John Fuller OBE** (Con, South Norfolk) is an LGA Deputy Chairman, Leader of South Norfolk District Council, and Chairman of the District Councils' Network.  
[jfuller@s-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:jfuller@s-norfolk.gov.uk)



**Cllr David Simmonds CBE** (Con, Hillingdon) is a Deputy Chairman of the LGA and has been Deputy Leader of Hillingdon Council since 2002.  
[dsimmonds@hillington.gov.uk](mailto:dsimmonds@hillington.gov.uk)



**Cllr Peter Box CBE** (Lab, Wakefield) is an LGA Deputy Chair, Chair of the Key Cities Group, and has been Leader of Wakefield Metropolitan Borough Council since 1998.  
[pbox@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:pbox@wakefield.gov.uk)



**Cllr Anntoinette Bramble** (Lab, Hackney) is a Deputy Chair of the LGA, and Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Young People and Children's Social Care at Hackney Council.  
[anntoinette.bramble@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:anntoinette.bramble@hackney.gov.uk)



**Cllr Michael Payne** (Lab, Gedling) is an LGA Deputy Chair, Deputy Leader of Gedling Borough Council and a member of Nottinghamshire County Council.  
[cllr.michael.payne@gedling.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.michael.payne@gedling.gov.uk)



**Cllr Anne Western CBE** (Lab, Derbyshire), is an LGA Deputy Chair and former Leader of Derbyshire County Council. She was first elected in 1997.  
[anne.western@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:anne.western@derbyshire.gov.uk)



**Cllr Ruth Dombey OBE** (Lib Dem, Sutton) is a Deputy Chair of the LGA. First elected in 2002, she has been the Leader of Sutton Council since 2012.  
[ruth.dombey@sutton.gov.uk](mailto:ruth.dombey@sutton.gov.uk)



**Cllr Clive Woodbridge** (Residents Association, Epsom & Ewell) is an LGA Deputy Chair and was Leader of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council for five years.  
[cwoodbridge@epsom-ewell.gov.uk](mailto:cwoodbridge@epsom-ewell.gov.uk)

## board chairs and other executive members



**Cllr Kevin Bentley** (Con, Essex) is Chairman of the LGA's People and Places Board. He is also Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure at Essex County Council.  
[cllr.kevin.bentley@essex.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.kevin.bentley@essex.gov.uk)



**Cllr Peter Fleming OBE** (Con, Sevenoaks) is Chairman of the LGA's Improvement and Innovation Board and has been Leader of Sevenoaks District Council since 2005.  
[cllr.fleming@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.fleming@sevenoaks.gov.uk)



**Cllr Ian Hudspeth** (Con, Oxfordshire) is Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board and Leader of Oxfordshire County Council. First elected in 2005, he became Leader in 2012.  
[ian.hudspeth@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ian.hudspeth@oxfordshire.gov.uk)



**Cllr David Renard** (Con, Swindon) is Chairman of the LGA's Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board. He has been Leader of Swindon Council since 2013.  
[drenard@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:drenard@swindon.gov.uk)



**Cllr Simon Blackburn** (Lab, Blackpool) is Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board and has been Executive Leader of Blackpool Council since 2011.  
[cllr.simon.blackburn@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.simon.blackburn@blackpool.gov.uk)



**Cllr Judith Blake CBE** (Lab, Leeds) is Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board. A councillor since 1996, she became Leeds City Council's first female Leader in 2015.  
[judith.blake@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:judith.blake@leeds.gov.uk)



**Cllr Sir Richard Leese CBE** (Lab, Manchester) is Chair of the LGA's City Regions Board, Leader of Manchester City Council, and Greater Manchester Combined Authority's Deputy Mayor for business and the economy.  
[r.leese@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:r.leese@manchester.gov.uk)



**Cllr Richard Watts** (Lab, Islington) is Chair of the LGA's Resources Board and has been the Leader of Islington Council since 2013. He joined the council in 2006.  
[richard.watts@islington.gov.uk](mailto:richard.watts@islington.gov.uk)



**Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE** (Lib Dem, Portsmouth) is Chair of the LGA's Culture, Tourism and Sport Board, and a former Leader of Portsmouth City Council.  
[geraldvj@gmail.com](mailto:geraldvj@gmail.com)

*Two Balancing Members are also due to be appointed to the LGA's Executive from the LGA's Liberal Democrat Group*



**Cllr Rosemarie Harris** (Ind, Powys) is a Balancing Member on the LGA's Executive. She was elected as the first female Leader of Powys County Council in 2017.  
[cllr.rosemarie.harris@powys.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.rosemarie.harris@powys.gov.uk)



**Cllr Paul Woodhead** (Green, Cannock Chase) is an LGA Executive Balancing Member. He is Leader of the Green Party Group on Cannock Chase District Council.  
[paulwoodhead@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:paulwoodhead@cannockchasedc.gov.uk)

## regional and Wales



**Cllr David Finch** (Con, Essex) represents the East of England LGA. He is also a member of the LGA's Resources Board and has been Leader of Essex County Council since 2013.  
[cllr.david.finch@essex.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.david.finch@essex.gov.uk)



**Cllr John Hart** (Con, Devon) has been Leader of Devon County Council since 2009 and is Chairman of South West Councils.  
[john.hart@devon.gov.uk](mailto:john.hart@devon.gov.uk)



**Cllr Roy Perry** (Con, Hampshire) is Chairman of South East England Councils. First elected in 2005, he was Leader of Hampshire County Council from 2013 to May this year.  
[roy.perry@hants.gov.uk](mailto:roy.perry@hants.gov.uk)



**Cllr Nicholas Rushton** (Con, Leicestershire) represents East Midlands Councils on the LGA Executive. He has been Leader of Leicestershire County Council since 2012.  
[nicholas.rushton@leics.gov.uk](mailto:nicholas.rushton@leics.gov.uk)



**Cllr Simon Henig CBE** (Lab, Durham) represents the North East on the LGA Executive. First elected in 1999, he has been Leader of Durham Council since 2008.  
[simon.henig@durham.gov.uk](mailto:simon.henig@durham.gov.uk)



**Cllr Peter John OBE** (Lab, Southwark) is Chair of London Councils and Leader of Southwark Council. He is also a member of the LGA's City Regions Board.  
[peter.john@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:peter.john@southwark.gov.uk)



**Cllr Debbie Wilcox** (Lab, Newport) is the Leader of the Welsh LGA, Leader of Newport City Council, and also sits on the LGA's City Regions Board.  
[debbie.wilcox@newport.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.wilcox@newport.gov.uk)



**Cllr Ralph Bagge** (Con, South Bucks) is a Regional Representative Substitute on the LGA Executive. He is Chairman of South Bucks District Council's planning committee.  
[cllr.ralph.bagge@southbucks.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.ralph.bagge@southbucks.gov.uk)

*The North West, West Midlands, and Yorkshire and Humber will be appointing regional representatives to sit on the LGA Executive at their next meetings.*

## non-voting members



**Cllr David Williams** (Con, Hertfordshire) represents the County Councils Network. First elected in 2013, he is Leader of Hertfordshire County Council.  
[david.williams@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:david.williams@hertfordshire.gov.uk)



**Cllr Sir Stephen Houghton CBE** (Lab, Barnsley) is Leader of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and Chair of the LGA's Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities (SIGOMA).  
[cllrstephenhoughton@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:cllrstephenhoughton@barnsley.gov.uk)

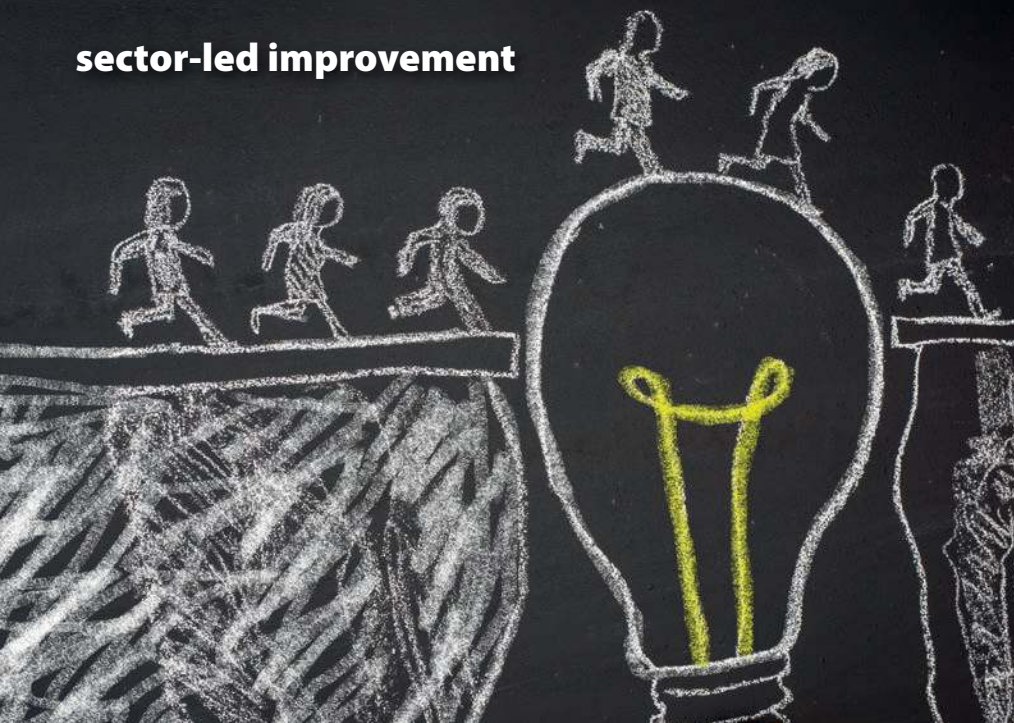


**Alderman Sir David Wootton** (Ind, City of London) is Chairman of Local Partnerships and a member of the City of London Corporation.  
[david.wootton@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:david.wootton@cityoflondon.gov.uk)



**You can find out more about your LGA Executive colleagues** and other councillors who sit on the LGA's boards by visiting [www.local.gov.uk/about/our-meetings-and-leadership/our-meetings](http://www.local.gov.uk/about/our-meetings-and-leadership/our-meetings)





# Commercialisation for councils

Local authorities are developing new and innovative ways to generate income, to ensure services are sustainable

Local government finances remain challenging, and exploring new ways to maximise income is essential.

In order to protect valuable frontline services and ensure positive outcomes for local communities, councils are increasingly thinking through a more commercial approach to their activities.

These innovative councils are using their assets wisely, trading services with others across the public and private sectors, and selling commodities to generate income.

During the lifetime of a commercial strategy, councils will typically experience changes to political or organisational leadership. By creating the right foundations, they can ensure that income generation activity is future-focused, sustainable and resilient within changing contexts. Here are our top tips for commercialisation,

gleaned from the experiences of the LGA's member councils.

## Commercial purpose

Purpose should sit at the heart of all commercial activity, and should be shared by both political and organisational leadership teams. It is critical that leaders can articulate and explain the purpose to everyone in the organisation. Ensure that the purpose is relevant in the short, medium and longer term, and that no individual scheme is greater than the overall purpose.

## Governance

The importance of governance in commercialisation cannot be overstated. While it ensures the interests of the council and the public are represented in commercial investments, equally important is that

governance protects the decision makers – as long as they act within the remit assigned to them.

By providing clear direction around delegated powers of decision making, officers are empowered to take appropriate decisions, which are required for councils to take part in commercial activity.

Within the governance, there should be a recognition that not all commercial opportunities will be successful. Political leaders and senior management should agree on the level of risk they can tolerate, so appropriate guidance can be created that clarifies risk parameters for individual asset classes as well as for the overall portfolio.

For trading companies, councils should clearly understand the implications of directorships, including de facto directors, and the expectations of the company board compared to shareholder expectations. Even for a wholly owned company, these may not be the same.

Embrace challenge – scrutiny is a valuable part of the governance process. Engage early with scrutiny colleagues and use it to constructively build robustness into the process, helping to identify and address any challenges early on.

## Commercial strategy

A commercial strategy should organise all the organisation's commercial activity into a single document, which should sit alongside the council's overarching strategy and medium-term financial plan.

For example, by identifying and organising emerging commercial projects into a single, concise strategy, Warrington Borough Council was able to develop its portfolio of investments including property acquisition, green energy and schools trading. A key benefit was being able to identify and determine its risk tolerance and appetite across a portfolio of investments and to develop appropriate approaches and monitoring for each element.

## Finance

Commercialisation initiatives are often new opportunities and so begin with projected returns without a financial history. It is important to monitor the financial health of any trading entities on a regular basis and to keep projections updated.

Beyond the financial return, it is also important to measure 'social value' – such as creating local jobs and training opportunities or area regeneration – to understand the overall benefit. There are a number of measures to do this, which include 'social return on investment' and 'social cost benefit analysis'. These measures should directly reflect the purpose that underpins the commercial activity.



For more on the LGA's commercial skills support and to view commercialisation case studies from councils across the country, please visit [www.local.gov.uk/commercialisation](http://www.local.gov.uk/commercialisation). The LGA is running a commercial skills masterclass for councillors on 9 October, and a training programme for officers on 7 October. For more information and to book a place, please visit [www.local.gov.uk/events](http://www.local.gov.uk/events)



# Managing demand-led services

The LGA's Behavioural Insights programme can help councils manage rising demand for services such as support for children with special educational needs

Councils are supporting a growing number of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), with many overspending their allocated budgets to do so.

The LGA is helping councils manage demand for these and other services by supporting projects that use insights from behavioural science – the study of how we respond and react to our surroundings and interventions (see panel, right).

Last year, Warrington Borough Council successfully applied for support from the LGA's Behavioural Insights Programme for a project looking at its SEND services, in the face of rising demand and significant pressures on its high needs budget.

The council recorded a 66 per cent increase in pupils with education, health and care plans (EHCPs) between 2014 and 2018, up from a relatively stable 969 to 1,610. There would have been 203 fewer pupils with EHCPs if it had matched the national average for pupils with EHCPs (2.8 per cent, compared with 3.5 per cent in Warrington).

The behavioural insights project looked at the work of the council's EHCP Panel. It uncovered a wide range of issues including inconsistent paperwork and evidence; a lack of engagement and input from partners about how to meet the needs

of the child and their family; and a varying approach to applying thresholds for support, which was worsened by parents threatening to go to tribunal, and schools claiming they would be unable to support the child without additional resources.

Following meetings with key partners, a range of interventions were agreed. These included: awareness-raising sessions about the thresholds for assessments and EHCPs; the use of white boards in meetings to display information about each child, to help improve decision making; a commitment from key partners to attend the EHCP panel – they were further encouraged to attend meetings by personal email invitations and text reminders; a new form to standardise the information presented at meetings; and a triage system to identify inappropriate or incomplete submissions.

As a result, it is expected that Warrington will prevent £585,390 of additional spend and save £145,000 over 12 months.

Cllr Matt Smith, Warrington's Cabinet Member for Children's Services, said: "Officers have introduced interventions to improve process and practice that are delivering better outcomes for users of our services as well as delivering direct cost savings.

"We are planning to continue the work in other areas of our children's services."

## What are behavioural insights?

Behavioural insights have been used across public services to generate low-cost interventions to manage demand for services, improve outcomes and decrease costs.

They use behavioural science – the study of how people react and respond to their environment and stimuli – to help develop interventions that encourage people to make better choices for themselves and society.

For example, many councils have improved financial outcomes by changing the way they write their council tax letters. Highlighting that the substantial majority of local residents pay their council tax on time makes individuals more likely to change their behaviour and pay on time via direct debit.

The latest phase of the LGA's Behavioural Insights Programme, part of its sector-led improvement offer, is offering £20,000 per project towards the cost of up to eight new council-led projects focusing on managing demand for overstretched local services.

Successful projects will commission a behavioural insights supplier to design, deliver and evaluate an evidence-based behavioural insights trial.

Applications are open until 5pm on 1 November.

Please visit [www.local.gov.uk/lga-behavioural-insights-2019](http://www.local.gov.uk/lga-behavioural-insights-2019) for the application form and further information.



See [www.local.gov.uk/behavioural-insights](http://www.local.gov.uk/behavioural-insights)



# interview

## 'Vim and vigour'

Speaking exclusively to **first**, local government's new Secretary of State sets out his priorities for the sector

One of the priorities of the recent Spending Round was to put councils on a "strong and sustainable footing for the future", and in particular

to address the pressures on social care.

That's according to Robert Jenrick MP, who was appointed Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in late July.

"To do that, you have to create a platform from which you can build. So the Chancellor and I worked hard to ensure the sector has the resources it needs for this year," he explains.

"Local councils have been heroic in working so hard over the past 10 years to find efficiencies, make savings, and play a really critical role in the recovery of the public finances.

"This Spending Round was an opportunity to turn a page and invest more in public services and in a wider renewal of our infrastructure, our towns. It was important to me, as the new Secretary of State, to ensure that local government was part of that investment because local government plays such an important role in delivering public services."

The former Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury was "absolutely delighted" with the extra £3.5 billion for the sector announced by Chancellor Sajid Javid – one of his predecessors at the Ministry for Homes, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), and with whom he is "aligned" on priorities including house building, home ownership and investment in infrastructure.

But he agrees that next year's three-year Spending Review will be crucial for local government.

"Local authority leaders were clear to me that they need the stability that comes with a multi-year settlement and, clearly, it will be very important for me to deliver that for them next year."

Social care remains "one of the great challenges that we face", says Mr Jenrick, and he acknowledges the long wait for a green paper on the issue.

"The Prime Minister wants to find a long-term answer, to reach across the political divide to find that solution, and we're going to be bringing forward proposals as soon as possible."

An enthusiast for devolution, Mr Jenrick feels the country is "far too centralised", and promises a return to this agenda "with all the vim and vigour it had just a couple of years ago".

"There are many people across the UK who feel that London and the South East get more than their fair share of investment and attention by politicians in Westminster," he says.

"I sincerely believe that we have to put spreading prosperity and opportunity across the country at the absolute heart of this Government. And local government will play an absolutely critical role in that."

Mr Jenrick wants to work with local leaders to create more opportunities for devolution, and says his "door is always open" to discuss possible deals, and to try to take these forward "at pace".

He is planning to draw up a framework that sets out the devolution opportunities available to different parts of the country, "so that there's a levelling up of powers and opportunities for existing mayors, and it's very clear what's available to those parts of the country that don't already have specific devolution deals".

But Mr Jenrick wouldn't be drawn on the details – whether there would be rural or county deals, or if the mayoral model would remain the model of choice.

"This is very early days in the life of this government and a great deal more work needs to be done. But I would like to see the opportunity to take greater ownership over the future of your area spread as widely possible, and beyond the great cities that are already enjoying them," he says.

Meanwhile, councils are also awaiting more details of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), the UK replacement for the billions of pounds of EU regeneration funding currently used by local areas to create jobs and stimulate local economies.



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*“Local authority leaders were clear to me that they need the stability that comes with a multi-year settlement and, clearly, it will be very important for me to deliver that for them next year”*

Mr Jenrick hopes the prosperity fund “will be bigger and better, and more tailored to the needs of communities in the UK than is possible as part of an EU-wide scheme”.

“We’ve given this a great deal of thought in the department. We’ve held more than 25 outreach events across the country involving hundreds of people, many of whom have been drawn from local authorities, and with that learning we are designing the UKSPF, which we are going to consult on in due course,” he says.

“The guiding principles are that it should be a fund that unites the country, that helps us to level up and share prosperity and opportunity to all parts of the country, and that it’s focused on productivity and competitiveness.

“In designing something new, we’re very conscious about those parts of the country that are heavily reliant on funding today and those organisations for whom it is absolutely critical that we provide the transition and reassurance that they will need to move smoothly to the new and better regime.”

He adds: “I really wanted to thank the sector for the way in which it has responded

to the Brexit challenge. I know a huge amount of work was done before 29 March and, in the short period in which I have been Secretary of State, I have been incredibly impressed by local councils’ professionalism and commitment to delivering Brexit on 31 October.

“I’m working very closely with the Brexit Delivery Group, which brings together a really experienced group of local government councillors and chief executives.

“I see my role as being the voice of local government within the Whitehall Brexit preparedness operation and ensuring that the concerns and questions that the sector has are voiced at the highest level within government, and that we get answers and solutions wherever possible.”

Mr Jenrick’s passion, though, is housing.

“I want to be a Secretary of State who increases the number of homes that are built and who works productively with local councils to ensure that we are building the right homes in the right places, of design quality that makes these homes to last,” he says.

Worryingly, though, for councils, which

currently approve nine out of 10 planning applications, the first change he references are “further planning reforms...to make the system faster, cheaper and better for developers”.

“I want to work very closely with local councils to ensure the system is working for them and that they have the capacity they need in their planning departments to get the system working faster,” he says.

Pressed on the issue of planning fees – councils are not currently able to recoup the actual costs of processing applications – he adds: “If there are further steps we can take to make sure councils are properly remunerated for the work that they do and in return are processing applications on time, efficiently, then I’m interested in what we can do in that area.”

Mr Jenrick concludes: “Home ownership is very important to me and to the Prime Minister so we will be bringing forward more proposals to boost home ownership, particularly for young people and those on lower incomes.

“The first step that we have taken is announcing a new model for shared ownership, which I hope housing associations will take up, and which enables people to increase their equity in increments of as little as 1 per cent or £1,000. That’s the kind of initiative we’ve going to be working on in the months ahead.”

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*“This Spending Round was an opportunity to turn a page and invest more in public services”*

Members of the Local Government Association (LGA) Independent Group are invited to our annual conference to debate the big issues affecting local government.

Hear experts, take part in workshops and network with colleagues from across England and Wales.

Free to LGA Independent Group Members

**Where:** 18 Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ

**When:** Friday 8 November 2019

**Time:** 11am (registration from 10.30am) – 5pm for the main conference, followed by a drinks reception

**Who:** Independent Councillors, Green Councillors and other elected members outside the political affiliation of the Liberal Democrats, Labour and Conservative parties.



**Find out more** [www.local.gov.uk/lga-independent/events](http://www.local.gov.uk/lga-independent/events) **or contact Sarah Woodhouse**  
on [sarah.woodhouse@local.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.woodhouse@local.gov.uk) telephone 020 7664 3206



## Do you know a rising star? Nominate them for **LG Challenge**

### Who?

To compete in Local Government Challenge 2020, now in its eleventh year, the LGA is looking for 10 of the best and brightest local government officers, master problem solvers who are passionate about delivering the best for the residents they serve.

### What?

Contestants will come up with innovative solutions to real life challenges faced by councils across the country. With a £10,000 Bruce-Lockhart scholarship for the winner, contestants have the opportunity to make a significant and long lasting impact in their area.

### How?

The application deadline is **Sunday 13 October**. To find out more, watch last year's challenge films and download the toolkit to promote the LG Challenge in your council, visit **[www.local.gov.uk/lgchallenge](http://www.local.gov.uk/lgchallenge)** or email [lgchallenge@local.gov.uk](mailto:lgchallenge@local.gov.uk)

# comment

**Earlier this year, the Rural Services Network launched its call for the Government to develop a comprehensive, funded rural strategy.**

Rural communities are frequently overlooked in a policy environment dominated by urban thinking and policy concerns. This often means communities do not benefit – or experience unintended consequences – from policies that are poorly thought through from a rural perspective.

A fifth of the population of England – that is more people than live in Greater London – live in a rural area, and key challenges for rural businesses and communities are compounded by a lack of a coordinated approach from government.

Policy challenges that contribute to the need for a joined-up rural strategy include:

- a higher proportion of older people in rural areas, with the fastest growth in those aged over 85
- higher living costs, with soaring house prices, increased transport costs, expensive heating solutions, and wages below the national average
- increased delivery costs in rural areas of vital infrastructure such as mobile and broadband services, disadvantaging both businesses and individuals
- poor public transport, which can lead to difficulty accessing employment, skills, training, education and health services, and can leave vulnerable residents more isolated
- the higher cost for service providers and local authorities of delivering services in sparsely populated areas compared to urban areas
- the 'chocolate box' perception of life in rural areas, which hides real poverty and deprivation.



## Time for a rural strategy



**Cllr Cecilia Motley (Con)** is Chair of the Rural Services Network and Shropshire County Council's Rural Issues Champion

To create a thriving rural economy, there is a need for a digitally connected countryside, an affordable place to live, a fair deal on health and social care, a place to learn and grow, and a settlement to support rural action, including fair funding.

The House of Lords Select Committee on the Rural Economy took evidence from experts, including the Rural Services Network. Its recommendations for government included the need for a comprehensive rural strategy to be developed.

The Government's response was disappointing, merely saying that it would expand on its strategic vision for rural areas. It accepted rural-proofing needed improvement

and that it would revise its guidance and develop additional resources for departments – but would not develop a rural strategy. This is disturbing news for rural communities.

Lord Foster, Chair of the Lords Select Committee on the Rural Economy, was the keynote speaker at our Annual National Rural Conference in Cheltenham from 3-4 September.

He was very clear in his committee's report, saying: "We must act now to reverse this trend, but we can no longer allow the clear inequalities between the urban and rural to continue unchecked. A rural strategy would address challenges and realise potential in struggling and under-performing areas, and allow vibrant and thriving areas to develop further. Doing nothing is not an option."

At our conference, Lord Foster said the Government appeared to have a blind spot as far as rural areas are concerned.

Despite a lack of commitment from the Government to address the rural challenges specifically, our campaign for a rural strategy will continue – it has to. No-one should be disadvantaged by where they live.

*"Key challenges for rural businesses and communities are compounded by a lack of a coordinated approach from government"*



The Rural Services Network represents more than 150 rural local authorities and a similar number of other services providers in the public and private sector delivering services to rural communities. For more information about its campaign for a rural strategy, please visit [www.rsnonline.org.uk/time-for-a-rural-strategy](http://www.rsnonline.org.uk/time-for-a-rural-strategy)



### Time for a true end to austerity

*“Local communities should be given the powers they need to take back control”*



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

It is difficult to overstate the turbulent state of politics as we head into party conference season.

A flailing Boris Johnson has closed Parliament for one of the longest periods of prorogation in decades after losing all six of his first important votes in the Commons and despite Brexit being entirely unresolved.

Many are looking to a General Election to provide a way out of the mess but, with public opinion divided, there is a good chance that a new Parliament will be just as unable to provide a solution as this one.

One apparent certainty is that October will bring the first Queen's Speech for almost two and a half years, and that perhaps gives us a novel chance to talk about issues other than

Brexit! For Labour in local government, it's also chance to talk about our key priorities for the next Labour government.

Unsurprisingly, Labour councillors all agree that the most pressing priority is for a true end to austerity. For all that the Government made a big hullabaloo about the Spending Round providing an extra £1.6 billion in funding for councils next year, this is a drop in the ocean when compared with the £16 billion lost since 2010.

The savage cuts made to local public services by the Conservative government in the past decade must never be allowed to happen again – so we'd like to see legislation put in place that would introduce an independent Sustainable Funding

Commission, set up on similar lines to the Low Pay Commission, which will make binding recommendations on the minimum level of funding required by local government to ensure that councils can carry out their responsibilities.

Local communities should also be given the powers they need to take back control. The Queen's Speech should include a Devolution Bill, co-produced by local and national government, to put local people and communities at the heart of decision-making, and permanently fix the imbalance of power between Westminster and local communities.

I look forward to discussing all of this further with my Labour colleagues in Brighton – see you there.

## Chairman's comment

### Spending Round delivers certainty



Councillor James Jamieson  
is Chairman of the LGA

The Chancellor's Spending Round has provided councils with much of the certainty they need about how they will be funded next year – as well as £3.5 billion for our vital local services.

This is the biggest year-on-year real terms increase in spending power for local government in a decade and will allow councils to meet the rising cost and demand pressures they face in 2020/21.

Key announcements included £1 billion for adult social care, with another £500 million to come from continuing the social care council tax precept; £700 million for children and young people with special educational

needs and disabilities (SEND); and a real-terms increase in funding for public health.

The LGA's call for a review of support for children with SEND was answered by the Government, and there was also confirmation that one-off funding and grants will continue into the next financial year.

The LGA has worked hard to demonstrate to government the financial pressures facing councils next year – working across Whitehall, Westminster and the media to get across our key messages on everything from adult social care to public health, and homelessness to SEND.

Our efforts culminated in our #CouncilsCan tweetathon two days before Chancellor Sajid Javid's announcement, and I would like to thank all who helped make it a success. More than 3,400 #CouncilsCan tweets were sent by 1,800

contributors, reaching 6.8 million people.

Our #CouncilsCan campaign will now focus on the next Queen's Speech (see p29) and the three-year Spending Review due in 2020, as we continue our work for sustainable funding for the sector and a wider role for councils in the longer term.

Local government is a good investment: councils have demonstrated time and again that they can deliver efficiencies, ensuring public money gives the best possible value and improves outcomes for local people.

We now need a new localism settlement for England that empowers councils, as the democratically elected leaders of their communities, to take on greater responsibilities for their areas.

*“We continue our work for sustainable funding for the sector and a wider role for councils in the longer term”*

## group leaders' comments



**Councillor Izzi Seccombe**  
OBE is Leader of the LGA's  
Conservative Group

### More funding for local services

*“The Spending Round demonstrates that the Government is listening to councils”*

The £3.5 billion in funding for local services announced in the Spending Round in September was warmly welcomed by Conservative councillors across the country.

I would like to place on record my thanks to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and our Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick MP, for listening to our lobbying in the run-up to the announcement and responding so positively.

The uplift of £1.5 billion for adult social care and the £700 million for children and young people with special educational needs will help councils to provide the support that the most vulnerable members of our community deserve.

Also significant was the £422 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping as well as £24 million in additional funding for the Building Safety Programme.

Councils will also welcome confirmation that key grants will continue next year, giving them early certainty as they start planning their 2020/21 budgets.

The announcement of the largest year-on-year real terms increase in spending power for local government in more than a decade demonstrates that the Government is listening to councils.

As attention now turns to the Queen's Speech, I look forward to continuing to work in partnership with our colleagues in Westminster to improve the lives of the people we serve.



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

### Climate change – more important than Brexit

*“When the rainforest burns, so too does the Saddleworth and Crompton moorland”*

Brexit, no deal, delays on exiting, extensions, and General Elections will be old news by the time this is printed.

So let us consider something more important – our climate change emergency.

When the rainforest burns, so too does the Saddleworth and Crompton moorland on my doorstep. We have to take action now.

I am pleased to say there are many examples of good practice out there, including from many Liberal Democrat-run and influenced councils.

Eastleigh Borough Council requires housing developments to be more energy efficient than national building regulation standards, and encourages the use of 'Passivhaus' energy efficiency standards.

Cornwall is supporting a project to explore geothermal energy and Bedford has a hydro-electric power scheme. Sutton Council is working with partners to build a 'Passivhaus' secondary school.

South Somerset District Council is creating the largest council-owned battery storage system in the UK, providing instantly available electrical power on demand to the National Grid. It will also bring in much-needed funding for the authority.

If your council is doing something good to tackle the climate change crisis then get them to make sure they are telling the LGA, so we can tell others!

Or better still, why don't you tell us at the LGA's Liberal Democrat Group (and we will shout it from the roof-tops). This is our agenda – please do not keep it a secret!



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

### Spending plans favour upper-tier councils

*“Longer-term funding certainty is needed as the impact of years of cuts is still felt acutely by many”*

Chaos in Westminster has seen the Prime Minister lose vote after vote and now his tactical shutting down of Parliament could be unlawful. Many of his own members have turned against the party whip, determined to vote with their consciences.

There are now more than 30 Independent MPs in Parliament, joining our Green and Plaid Cymru colleagues. If they remain so and run as Independents when the looming election is called, we will have a formidable team in the Commons.

Before Parliament was prorogued, the Chancellor announced his spending plans for the year ahead. Many of us at the LGA have worked hard for the £3.5 billion result achieved, but this was only a one-year budget and favoured upper-tier authorities.

Longer-term certainty is needed as the impact of years of cuts is still felt acutely by many.

Our work continues to prepare for Brexit and to support members to make the most of their climate change commitments, and I will be attending our groups' party conferences to discuss what we want to see in the imminent Queen's Speech.

With so much going on, our LGA Independent Group Conference on 8 November will be a key event for our members to hear from policy experts, inform priorities and network with other members. I hope to see you there (see [www.local.gov.uk/events](http://www.local.gov.uk/events) to book your place).



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



# Preparing for emergencies



**Cllr Sue Murphy (Lab)** is Deputy Leader of Manchester City Council

**In May 2017, an explosion triggered by a suicide bomber killed 22 people leaving an Ariana Grande concert at Manchester Arena.**

Manchester City Council worked with its Greater Manchester local resilience forum partners to respond to the immediate aftermath of the attack, and since then has been leading work to help the city and its communities recover.

After the attack, Manchester was offered

advice and support from cities across the world that had also suffered devastating acts of terrorism. Doctors in the United States even ordered takeaway pizza for their counterparts in Manchester, knowing from their experience after the Boston Marathon bomb that they would be working long hours without taking a break to eat.

In turn, we want to share our experience, so that other communities and councils can ensure they are as prepared as possible for when an emergency strikes.

This isn't just about places that suffer terrorist attacks, although we were quick to reach out to the authorities in Christchurch, New Zealand, earlier this year. But the evacuation in August of residents from Whaley Bridge, following concerns about the stability of the Toddbrook reservoir, was a clear reminder of

the various civil emergencies to which councils and their partners may need to respond.

Emergencies can come in many different forms, with little or no notice, and we all need to be prepared.

From scrutinising your council's preparedness to respond, being aware of your local risk register, to using local knowledge and community leadership skills to support local residents through a crisis, all councillors have an important role to play in civil resilience matters.

I've recently been working with the LGA on a series of civil resilience masterclasses that help councillors understand their role. The session hears from councillors who can talk through the different stages of preparation, response and recovery, based on their recent experience of responding to an emergency. If you are a new councillor, or would like a refresher on this important issue, please do come along.



**The next LGA civil resilience political leadership masterclass** takes place on 14 October in Durham. To book a place, please visit [www.local.gov.uk/emergency-planning-and-civil-resilience-political-leadership-masterclass](http://www.local.gov.uk/emergency-planning-and-civil-resilience-political-leadership-masterclass)

# Supporting the armed forces community

**Every council has signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant – the nation's commitment to ensuring service personnel, veterans and their families are treated fairly and have the same access to public services as any other citizen.**

Many of you will be directly involved in providing this support – perhaps as your council's Armed Forces Champion, as a cabinet member leading on key policy areas such as housing, employment or education, or as a ward member representing forces' families.

We at Forces Connect South East (pictured) – a partnership comprising Surrey, Kent, Hampshire, East and West Sussex County Councils, Brighton & Hove City Council, Medway Council, the NHS, 11 Infantry Brigade, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and service charities – can help you, with an offer of armed forces awareness training, free until 31 October and for a modest fee thereafter.



**Cllr Peter Martin (Con)** is Chairman of Forces Connect South East

We were awarded £321,300 of MoD covenant grant funding in 2017 to deliver a project enabling fair and consistent advice and access to public services for the armed forces community across the South East and nationally. So far we have reached Yorkshire, Cumbria, Lancashire, East and West Midlands, and East Anglia, and have the capacity to deliver more.

We have trained more than 3,000 people in the South East with courses designed for councillors, officer-level customer-facing staff, front-of-house and call centre staff.

For example, our elected councillor



training is designed to strengthen the role of Armed Forces Champions and help connect them to their local covenant leads and the armed forces community. It promotes consistency in advice and the sharing of best practice through cross-border networking with neighbouring authorities.

Our bespoke training packages emphasise the importance of asking, in line with covenant messages: 'Have you (or your partner) served?'

Other strands of the project include developing digitalised armed forces referral pathways in service areas ranging from carers and families to education and training, to ensure quick and easy access to local support.



**For more information please email Amanda Barnes, Programme Officer, at [FCSE@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:FCSE@surreycc.gov.uk) or visit [www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/armed-forces/forces-connect-south-east](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/armed-forces/forces-connect-south-east)**



# Stand together for a better future



**Olivia Marks-Woldman** is Chief Executive of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust

## Councils are at the very heart of the local community.

In the face of enormous challenges to community cohesion, both locally and nationally, councils are bringing their residents together in innovative and powerful ways. In January this year, more than 200 councils did just this by marking Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD).

The event takes place every year on 27 January. It is the international day when we remember the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, the victims of Nazi persecution and those murdered in genocides that have taken place since, in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

On HMD, we not only remember the past – we take action to create a better future that is free of genocide and all other forms of identity-based hostility.

This is now more urgent than ever. In

the year 2017/18, there were 94,098 hate crime offences recorded by the police in England and Wales. This is an increase of 17 per cent from the previous year, suggesting that prejudice not only persists, but is growing stronger.

As part of their essential work responding to this threat, councils are using HMD as an opportunity to reflect and inform. Learning about the Holocaust and subsequent genocides, and the steps that led to them, equips people with the facts they need to resist hatred.

We know that HMD helps to achieve this. In 2016, a study into its impact carried out by Sheffield Hallam University found that 70 per cent of respondents who had taken part in an HMD activity became more aware of the causes and conditions that can lead to genocide.

More than three-quarters of respondents said HMD inspired them to make a greater

effort to stand up to the unfair treatment of others.

Local councils are already doing incredible work on HMD up and down the country. Every year, councils mark the day by organising activities such as civic ceremonies, film screenings, displays in libraries and much more.

In 2019, Newcastle City Council collaborated with local organisations including the university, arts organisations and cinemas to organise a programme for HMD that reached hundreds of people.

Shropshire County Council marks HMD by growing a cherry tree of remembrance in a different school each year, with the aim of building an orchard that reaches across the county (pictured).

In 2018, Kettering Borough Council invited residents, faith leaders and young people to a flag-raising ceremony in front of the council offices, followed by readings of poems, prayers and reflections.

The Holocaust Memorial Day theme for 2020 is Stand Together. The theme encourages us all to challenge oppression by standing together with marginalised groups. We look forward to seeing councils reflect on the theme in informative, poignant and creative ways.



## The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust is the national charity that promotes and supports Holocaust Memorial Day.

It provides free resources and support for everyone who wants to mark HMD, and has recently launched a new resource for councillors. For a copy of the 'Get involved guide: local authorities', resources and advice on planning an HMD activity, please visit [www.hmd.org.uk](http://www.hmd.org.uk)



*“On Holocaust Memorial Day, we not only remember the past – we take action to create a better future”*



The West Midlands Combined Authority's Wellbeing Board with (front) board Chair Cllr Izzi Seccombe signing the Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health

# Improving workplace wellbeing



Sean Russell is Director of Implementation at the West Midlands Combined Authority

*“Our ambition is to make a small difference to the West Midlands by equipping people to be a little bit more resilient, responsive and restorative”*

**Looking back over 30 years of work in a variety of roles, I can honestly say that work has generally been good for me. So why isn't everyone feeling the same?**

Working in the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) has given me the opportunity to test an approach that helps to put our staff at the heart of what we do, and to understand the impact that poor mental health has on the workforce.

In the West Midlands, 4.1 million working days are lost each year through poor mental health with an estimated loss of £2 billion through economic inactivity. The human cost is equally challenging, with people exiting the workplace and – in extreme circumstances – taking their own life.

Working with Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, the WMCA and a constituted Wellbeing Board (pictured), has enabled us to shine a light on this issue. Understanding that health and wealth are two sides of the same coin, we sought to develop workplace programmes that not only create good work environments but are also testing new ways to get people into work who have poor mental or physical health conditions.

Our 'Thrive into Work' programme is currently testing a supported employment scheme, working with primary health care professionals and businesses to recognise that people are at different stages of the 'entry into work' journey and that this continues even

when someone starts a job.

Starting from a premise that good work can be good for you and that we spend a significant amount of our adult life in the workplace, we have also designed a workplace commitment – 'Thrive at Work'.

Using a public health approach, we wanted to give employers the tools to support their staff and develop a supportive culture. This market is swamped with apps and tools. Our research showed that there was too much choice and the evidence base was limited.

Working with partners in the region, we developed tools that businesses can implement at little or no cost – but which can and do make a tangible difference.

Our programme aligns Mental Health First Aid, the 'This is Me' campaign and also

supported the pilot of Public Health England's Every Mind Matters digital campaign (see below). All these are designed to help us reduce the stigma associated with mental health and provide the tools to help keep ourselves well.

So what's next? Our ambition is to make a small difference to the West Midlands by equipping people to be a little bit more resilient, responsive and restorative.

Ensuring we design our new houses and developments with wellbeing in mind, making sure our transport infrastructure supports an active travel agenda, working with the food sector to create a healthy weight region – all combine to help us build a happier, healthier and more prosperous region, and a place I am proud to call home.

## Every Mind Matters

Public Health England (PHE) is launching a new national social marketing campaign, designed to support adult mental health literacy and promote simple, proactive steps people can take to develop and maintain good mental health and wellbeing.

Every Mind Matters was piloted in the West Midlands and is a versatile resource that can be used in different settings alongside existing local services and wellbeing programmes.

PHE is encouraging councils and their partners to sign up for its free campaign resources ahead of the October launch of Every Mind Matters – see <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/>



# parliament

## A Queen's Speech for councils

Among all the parliamentary uncertainty, it appears that regardless of if, or when, a General Election might take place, there will be a Queen's Speech on 14 October.

The Queen's Speech comes hot on the heels of the Spending Round, which – following a successful LGA campaign to make the case for more funding and certainty for the next financial year – saw councils get £3.5 billion, the largest allocation for a decade.

Having worked to secure this new investment, our attention now turns to the legislative agenda and how a forthcoming Queen's Speech can spark the radical programme that will reignite the devolution process, so councils get the freedoms they need to lead their local areas and improve the lives of their residents.

In our #CouncilsCan document, published at this year's LGA annual conference, we set out the key legislative changes that we believe will deliver the funding and powers to enable councils to transform local areas:

- **English Devolution Bill** – enshrining an English devolution settlement in primary legislation and providing options for devolved powers in England to at least the level of the Scottish Government; and that expands devolution to those areas outside the metropolitan combined authorities
- **Local Government Finance Bill** – providing full local control over council tax, including abolition of referendum limits, local powers to set levels of discounts, and powers over banding. In addition, we need 100 per cent business rates retention so councils have a stable and predictable financial outlook, and annual, rolling, multi-year settlements
- **Education and Skills Bill** – giving back to councils the powers to build new schools, and reversing the legal ban on councils supporting inadequate maintained schools and struggling academies. The
- **Electoral Bill** – helping protect councillors and candidates from intimidation through a new electoral offence of intimidatory behaviour, and providing guidance for the general public on what is reasonable protest and comment
- **Domestic Abuse Bill** – providing a statutory definition of domestic abuse, to include economic abuse, and giving councils the powers required to tackle domestic abuse and support victims, in particular through focusing on early intervention and preventative work (including with perpetrators)
- **Building Safety Bill** – implementing the Hackitt Review recommendations by placing new duties on building owners, and establishing new regulatory powers with effective sanctions, a new competence regime for industry and tougher product safety and assurance standards.



Bill should also enable devolution of employment and skills provision and the transfer of powers and funding from the Secretary of State

In addition, there are multiple policy changes and reforms needed to ensure councils have the freedom and funding to make the local decisions that will improve outcomes for all and ensure the country gets better value for money. These include new policies on adult social care and preventative services for children and adults; a reformed waste strategy; changes to housing and homelessness policies including devolving Right to Buy; devolution of transport powers and an updated air quality policy; improvements to children's mental health services; and stronger powers for health and wellbeing boards.

Councils are in the unique position of being able to make the change needed locally that will ultimately solve some of the biggest problems the nation is facing – shaping the places we live in, improving the environment, making our communities more cohesive and changing the lives of those who live there.

With the right powers and funding, #CouncilsCan.



For more details of our proposals for the Queen's Speech, please see our 'Councils can' conference paper, at [www.local.gov.uk/councils-can-2019-conference-paper](http://www.local.gov.uk/councils-can-2019-conference-paper)



# councillor



## Supporting councils to tackle modern slavery



**Councillor Simon Blackburn**  
is Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board

**Our recent Safer and Stronger Communities Board meeting heard from the new Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Dame Sara Thornton CBE QPM (see p7). Supporting councils to tackle modern slavery has been a key priority of the board for several years now, following an early presentation from Dame Sara's predecessor Kevin Hyland.**

In 2017, the LGA and commissioner's office published comprehensive guidance for councils on the role they can play in helping to tackle modern slavery and support victims. This was followed by a series of regional events on modern slavery, which were well attended by both councillors and officers.

The board recently reappointed Nottinghamshire's Cllr Alan Rhodes to the important role of LGA champion for tackling

modern slavery, to ensure that the issue continues to receive the attention it deserves.

We are now publishing two new documents on modern slavery. The first is a series of case studies highlighting some of the good work that councils are doing on this issue, in terms of facilitating reception centres for victims who have been rescued; using regulatory powers in areas such as housing to disrupt slavery; and supporting adult and child victims.

The second gives guidance on the specific role that individual members can play on this agenda. It draws on the experience of areas that have been proactive in tackling modern slavery, and suggests ways in which councillors can increase and share knowledge of modern slavery – for example, through arranging and attending training, and understanding what anti-slavery charities are working locally.

Councillors can help raise awareness of the issue – there is still relatively little understanding of the scale of modern slavery taking place in the UK, although coverage of the recent West Midlands case (outlined, right) may help to change that. Councillors can share

information with their colleagues, networks and local residents.

They can also link work to tackle slavery into their roles and networks – modern slavery cuts across a number of council services, including regulation and community safety, housing, social care and procurement. Councillors can help embed anti-slavery work through their individual portfolios and committee roles. They also have a key role in scrutinising their council's activity and local work to tackle modern slavery.

We know from our work that councils have already taken a number of positive steps to try to stamp out slavery in their areas, and particularly from their supply chains, where local government is leading the way on transparency.

We also know that resources are a key challenge. We will continue to make the case to central government that with more cases being identified and an increasing number of victims being referred, more resources are needed both centrally and locally to address this.

In the meantime, I hope that colleagues will find these new documents a useful reference point when thinking about the personal role they can play in working with officers and their communities to try to address this terrible crime.

### Slavers imprisoned

**The UK's largest modern slavery case concluded in July, following an investigation by West Midlands Police dating back to February 2015.**

**Eight gang members from two Polish crime families were jailed after more than 400 vulnerable people were forced to work for nothing after being lured to the West Midlands.**

**The gang targeted vulnerable people such as the homeless, ex-prisoners or alcoholics and told them they could earn good money in the UK, but instead placed them in poor accommodation and paid them as little as 50p an hour.**



See [www.local.gov.uk/modern-slavery](http://www.local.gov.uk/modern-slavery) for case studies, councillor guidance and additional information on modern slavery

# elections

Despite the national party's continuing struggles at Westminster, Conservative candidates defended two seats and gained another in recent local contests.

In Eden District Council's Penrith South ward, a vacancy was caused by the death of Independent Paul Connor, first elected only months before. Conservative Helen Fearon, a well-known local figure, who has represented Penrith West on Cumbria County Council since 2009, won with almost half the votes cast.

By contrast, Labour's vote fell in every case and it lost Bury's Radcliffe West to complete a disappointing picture.

Last May, the Radcliffe First group was within 80 votes of snatching a spectacular victory in a ward held by Labour at every election since its creation in 2004. The group won in the neighbouring East ward earlier this year, and now Mike Smith represents Radcliffe West rather than Labour's Jamie Walker.

Just 32 votes spared Labour's blushes in

## Conservatives defend seats as turnout falls



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



three in the 1980s and 1990s, fewer electors are engaging with these contests.

Instead, the decline in turnout follows from fewer people now regarding voting as part of their 'civic duty'. As older voters, born during the 1940s and 1950s and

with a stronger sense of local identity, are replaced by electors for whom such feelings are less apparent, turnout is certain to fall.

How that problem can be resolved is a conversation that is best led by local elected members who do have a sense of civic pride and do care for their local communities.

A crucial step in that conversation is that all councillors look at their own election results published on the council website. Our evidence suggests that around four in 10 councils are still not publishing figures for electorate and turnout, despite the fact that those data are held by electoral services. If not, why not?

### local by-elections

#### Bury, Radcliffe West

RADCLIFFE FIRST GAIN FROM LAB

5.9% over Lab

Turnout 23.4%

#### Coventry, Wainbody

CON HELD

31.6% over Lib Dem

Turnout 29.1%

#### Eden, Penrith South

CON GAIN FROM IND

6.9% over Ind

Turnout 23.6%

#### Hull, St Andrew's & Dockland

LAB HELD

1.7% over Lib Dem

Turnout 17.9%

#### Rugby, Rokeby and Overslade

LIB DEM HELD

36% over Con

Turnout 28.9%

#### Shropshire, Meole

CON HELD

11.1% over Lib Dem

Turnout 36.8%

the battle with the Liberal Democrats for St Andrew's & Dockland ward in Hull. In 2018, Labour easily won all three seats in the newly created ward, with Nadine Fudge heading her party's slate. Her recent death caused this by-election.

In the absence of Green and For Britain candidates this time round, voters were forced to make another choice, and some appear to have swung behind the Liberal Democrats. Their vote share rose by more than 30 percentage points but Labour's narrow win means Nadine's daughter, Leanne, now represents the ward.

Traditionally, voter turnout falls in by-elections held during the school holidays, as in the above examples. But there is a general trend towards lower turnout that should be addressed.

Our analysis of more than 10,000 council by-elections held over four decades demonstrates average turnout is declining. Excluding by-elections taking place on the same day as the main May local elections and/or parliamentary elections, average turnout has declined from 35 per cent during the 1980s to just 28 per cent in this decade. Even in the most fiercely contested elections where a seat changed hands, turnout now struggles to an average of 30 per cent, an eight-point drop compared with 30 years ago.

Many factors are known to affect voter turnout, party competition being one of them – with turnout rising as more parties campaign for votes. But despite today's voters having more choice, with an average of four or five candidates on the ballot compared with



For more details of these and previous local by-election results, please visit [www.local.gov.uk/first](http://www.local.gov.uk/first)

# LGA Annual Fire Conference 2020

## 10-11 March, Grand Hotel, Blackpool

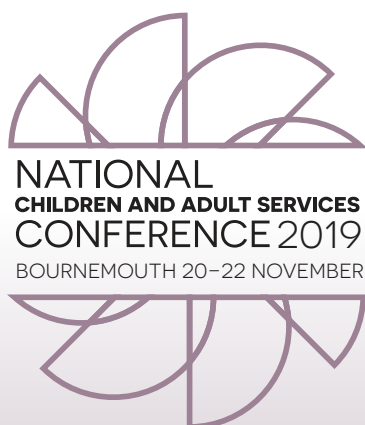
The annual fire conference and exhibition is a key event in the conference calendar for senior fire officers and members of fire and rescue authorities.

The fire and rescue sector is in the midst of a programme of significant change. The Government's Fire Reform Programme is progressing at pace with key areas of focus like inspection and the Fire Standards Board coming to fruition. The results of HMICFRS' first two tranches of inspection are beginning to inform improvement activity across the sector. The publication of the Grenfell Inquiry's first report in autumn 2019 and the final tranche of inspection reports in December 2019 will have an equally significant impact on the service.

Funding remains an issue, and with the delay of the next Spending Review it is vital that we continue to make the case for fire and rescue authorities to secure the funding they need to provide a service which is fit for the future.

The 2020 Fire Conference provides an opportunity to consider these issues further and look at the future of the service.

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



### Confirmed speakers include

**The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP**  
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

**Caroline Dinenage MP**  
Minister of State for Care

**Amanda Spielman**  
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Ofsted

Vital to councillors, directors, senior officers, directors of public health, policy makers and service managers as well as organisations with responsibilities for children and adults in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors, the conference will include a mix of keynote and ministerial addresses as well as plenary sessions by expert representatives from the adult, children and education sectors.

There will also be opportunities to participate in a wide range of workshops and networking sessions. In addition, delegates will be able to visit the exhibition and speak with suppliers and providers of relevant services. **#ncasc19**

Book your place at [www.ncasc.info](http://www.ncasc.info)