

Chief Executive's Report – March 2019

Purpose

For discussion and direction.

Summary

The LGA business plan for 2018/19 centres on seven external priorities:

- Funding for local government;
- Adult social care and health;
- Children, education and schools;
- Housing;
- Inclusive growth, jobs and devolution;
- Britain's exit from the EU; and
- Supporting councils

Part 1 of the six-weekly Chief Executive's report sets out the LGA's main achievements against those priorities. Part two focusses on our internal priority – *a single voice for local government* – including membership and our media outreach activities.

Recommendation

That the LGA Leadership Board notes the Chief Executive's report for March 2019.

Action

As directed by members.

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Chief Executive's Report – March 2019

Achievements against our external priorities

Priority 1 – Funding for local government

- 1.1 **Business Rates Retention and the Fair Funding Review:** the LGA published our response to the Government's consultation on the Fair Funding Review as well as our response to the business rates retention consultation. They reflect the points of agreement reached between our member councils. The Fair Funding Review response includes consideration of deprivation in the foundation formula and ways to reflect costs of longer journey times in sparsely and densely populated areas, and remoteness. For the business rates retention consultation, we indicated a willingness to explore phased resets (where growth is kept for a certain number of years) and an alternative way of administering the system and dealing with appeals. Our joint regional consultation events with MHCLG have also concluded, attracting more than 220 delegates from over 150 councils.
- 1.2 Both Business Rates Retention and the Fair Funding Review are covered by separate items on the agenda of Leadership Board.
- 1.3 **Final Local Government Finance Settlement 2019/20:** the Government announced the 2019/20 Final Local Government Finance Settlement on 29 January in the form of a written ministerial statement and published associated documents on the MHCLG website. On the day of the settlement, we issued a media statement. There were no major changes to the final settlement compared to the provisional settlement published in December 2018. The settlement was debated and approved in the House of Commons on 5 February. We briefed parliamentarians for the debate, and several MPs referred to information in our briefing including our analysis of the funding gap facing local services in 2019/20.
- 1.4 **Spending Review:** on 1 February, we launched our Spending Review campaign, with information on the reductions in resources to councils since 2010, the funding gap facing the sector and the discretionary services at risk, such as bus services and council tax support. We also wrote to the Chancellor ahead of his 2019 Spring Statement, highlighting the funding gap and offering to work together with HM Treasury to build the case for local government funding as part of the Spending Review.
- 1.5 The Spending Review is covered by a separate item on the agenda of Leadership Board.
- 1.6 **Public Accounts Committee report:** a report on local government funding was published by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). Among the recommendations, Government was urged to explain how it will move local government to a stronger financial position and to clarify how its estimates for councils' funding needs compares to those made by the LGA. This was in reference to our evidence to the Committee which outlined a funding gap of more than £3 billion facing councils in 2019/20. The PAC is also seeking information on how the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) assures itself the sector is sustainable. In our response, we agreed with the Committee that the financial sustainability of local government cannot be defined by the ability of councils to just provide statutory duties.
- 1.7 **LGIU/MJ Local Government Finance Survey:** these results very much support our key messages on council funding. They show the continued pressure councils are under with grant funding at its lowest level for decades at the same time as demand for services is increasing. Nearly all councils plan to raise council tax this year while more than half (53 per cent) say they will have to dip into their reserves, according to the results. As we say in our response, our 2019 Spending Review campaign will be highlighting all these issues and will press Government to pay for the vital local services people rely on. Securing the financial sustainability of councils must be the top priority.

- 1.8 **The Institute for Fiscal Studies:** new analysis shows Government would need to find an additional £5 billion by 2023–24 to 'end austerity' in the 2019 Spending Review. We responded that councils were at the front of the queue when austerity started so local services should be at the front of the queue when it ends.
- 1.9 **Business rates treatment of self-catering accommodation:** we responded to the consultation on the business rates treatment of self-catering accommodation. Our response welcomes the Government's proposals and calls on the Government to take action more broadly on business rates avoidance, to assess how a similar scheme is working in Wales and ensure that any lessons are incorporated into the scheme for England.
- 1.10 **Review of enforcement agent (bailiff) reforms:** we made a submission in response to a Ministry of Justice call for evidence on enforcement agent (bailiff) reforms. It is important local authorities are able to collect income that is due to them otherwise valuable local services may need to face further cuts. The submission recognised the steps councils make to help people in financial difficulty, whether through signposting to free debt advice, or through the joint Council Tax Protocol, which we developed alongside Citizens Advice.

Priority 2 – Adult social care and health

- 2.1 **Community wellbeing:** our Community Wellbeing Board met with Matt Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, to discuss the NHS Long Term Plan, the adult social care green paper and the forthcoming Spending Review. Our board members emphasised the role of councils, not just in providing vital adult social care services and public health but also their role as leaders of place, driving forward plans to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for their citizens. Board members also pressed him on the rationale for undertaking a review of locally commissioned public health services. We have called on Government to give us assurances that no decision will be taken without the full involvement of local government.
- 2.2 **Public health:** our Chairman, Lord Porter, also met with Matt Hancock MP. They discussed public health and the Government's social care green paper. Lord Porter pointed him to our recently published report, 'Improving the public's health: local government delivers', highlighting how the changes to public health over the last six years should be seen as an exemplar of public sector reform. We want to showcase councils' hard work in delivering public health services that are effective, accountable, efficient and offers great value for money. It was agreed that a focus on outcomes is needed and that the best way to achieve this is through jointly agreed local plans.
- 2.3 **Adult social care green paper:** we again called on Government to bring forward its adult social care green paper and provide the long-term solutions the system needs. This came as research by Age UK found that more than 54,000 older people have died since Government announced its intention to publish its adult social care green paper almost two years ago. In our own green paper, 'The lives we want to lead', we made a series of recommendations and have been pressing Government to include them in their own document.
- 2.4 **Value for money in adult social care:** workshops are being held in each of the nine ADASS regions to discuss a new approach to value for money in adult social care. The approach is designed to encourage councils to look at how resources are used and seek to improve value for money, allowing benchmarking against the national and regional level to give a better understanding of each council's performance. There has been a positive response from councils and we aim to launch the approach via LG inform to support sector led improvement.
- 2.5 **Shaping healthy places:** we have launched a new report, Shaping Healthy Places, highlighting some of the great work district councils do in health. We have received positive feedback on the report, including from Public Health England. It is now important that Government's forthcoming Green Paper

delivers on its promise to put health at the heart of policy-making and to enable better health outcomes for individuals.

- 2.6 **HIV prevention:** NHS England announced funding for the expansion of the pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) Impact Trial to 26,000 participants by 2020. The announcement is a positive step but we said that extra work needs to be done to ensure sexual health clinics and councils have capacity to take on additional places. Matt Hancock MP subsequently committed the UK to being the first country to reach zero HIV transmissions by 2030. In our statement, we highlighted the successes already achieved, including the fact that HIV is no longer the death sentence it once was and that councils are working hard with their health and community partners to deliver innovative programmes that support people with HIV. For this ambition to be achieved, however, we are clear that Government needs to reverse the £700 million real terms public health cuts by 2020.
- 2.7 **Suicide prevention:** the Suicide Prevention Expert Advisory Group's first meeting took place on 4 February. It brings together local government, Public Health England, Department for Health and Social Care, people bereaved by suicide and academics to steer the development of a national and regional thematic reports that will highlight good practice and key learning from the ADPH/LGA self-assessment that was completed by 89 per cent of councils. Additionally, on 22 January, Cllr Richard Kemp gave evidence to the Health and Social Care Select Committee on suicide prevention and outlined the work that councils are doing to prevent suicides and that every local council now has a suicide prevention plan.
- 2.8 **Social Care Digital Innovation Programme:** nine councils are developing their digital solutions in the implementation phase of the Social Care Digital Innovation Programme. Currently, Isle of Wight Council are working with a developer to test an exoskeletal support for carers. South Tyneside Council have commissioned a tech start-up to create an app to help people with learning disabilities plan for meetings with social workers and remember what was said in the meetings. Next year's programme has also been launched with 7 March the deadline for council led applications.
- 2.9 **Armed Forces Covenant:** in January we made a submission to the Defence Committee inquiry into the Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report 2018. We highlighted the positive ongoing work of councils in meeting the needs of armed forces veterans and their families. We expressed concern that the Ministry of Defence Covenant funding for councils is coming to an end from March 2019. This funding is essential for councils are to maintain and build on the current level of support for veterans in vulnerable circumstances.
- 2.10 **Sleep-in care worker payments:** we updated our briefing for councils in the light of the Supreme Court's decision to grant Unison leave to appeal the Court of Appeal judgment on sleep-in care worker payments. We have been informed that the Supreme Court hearing will not take place before October 2019, but the actual timetable is yet to be confirmed.

Priority 3 – Children, education and schools

- 3.1 **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities funding:** this continues to be a priority for our lobbying. Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Chair of our Children and Young People Board, appeared in front of the Education Select Committee on 12 February and highlighted the constraints facing councils in delivering services and the £472 million funding gap for high needs spending as demonstrated in our research. Cllr Bramble also pointed to data showing a 67 per cent increase in the numbers permanently excluded from school since 2014, including those with special educational needs.
- 3.2 Our work around special educational needs and disabilities was mentioned at Prime Minister's Questions. Robert Halfon MP, Chair of the Education Select Committee, quoted this figure and asked for an update on the Timpson Review on school exclusions. The Prime Minister replied that there was extra support and money going to SEND pupils, and that councils should work with schools to help children who are excluded. The following week, Caroline Lucas MP quoted our special needs

education funding gap figure of £1.6 billion.

- 3.3 **SEND money:** in December the Secretary of State for Education announced an additional £350 million was being made available to support children and young people with SEND. £100 million was for SEND capital and the Department has now published the allocations for councils, as well as information on how this funding can be accessed.
- 3.4 **Children's spending:** the National Audit Office concluded that the Department for Education does not fully understand what drives demand for children's social care, nor why variations exist between councils in their children's social care activity and costs. We responded, highlighting the pressures councils face in meeting demand while attempting to manage significant funding reductions. We also said the majority of the variation between councils is due to economic or geographic circumstances beyond their control.
- 3.5 **First 1001 Days Review:** as part of the First 1001 Days Ministerial Review we have been making the case to Andrea Leadsom MP, Leader of the House of Commons, about the importance of a whole council approach to giving children the best start in life and the positive track record of councils in delivering on public health outcomes since 2013. Her final recommendations will be made ahead of the Spending Review.
- 3.6 **Child obesity:** thirteen councils are beginning the discovery phase of the Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Programme. Each project will be testing the limits of existing powers to tackle childhood obesity and developing locally defined solutions. The councils have ten weeks to complete their user and stakeholder research, refine their ideas and develop a plan to be one of five three-year trailblazer councils.
- 3.7 **Deaf children:** we responded to new analysis warning that England's deaf children are falling behind their classmates, and called for councils to receive the right funding levels. Without it, the excellent work councils do to support these and other pupils with special educational needs could be undermined.
- 3.8 **Early years education:** the Commons Education Committee published a report on early years education and called for reform of the 30 hours free childcare offer and target provision to early education for disadvantaged children. It also calls for maintained nursery schools to be fully funded. In response, we highlighted the concerns that councils have about the future of maintained nurseries, especially for children with special educational needs and disabilities. We called on Government to commit to an extra year of funding in 2020/21 as part of wider work to find a long-term sustainable funding solution in the Spending Review.
- 3.9 **Academies:** a new report from Parliament's Public Accounts Committee found examples of academy failure and misuse of funds, while there is also alarm at research that reveals two-thirds of academy chains perform below average for disadvantaged pupils. We said that councils, and not Government, are best placed to provide effective oversight of academies and provide parents with the certainty and confidence in knowing that their child's school is able to deliver the best possible education. Education Secretary, Damian Hinds MP, later went on to call for more schools to become academies and we responded highlighting the success of council-led school improvement in turning around failing schools. We also pointed to figures showing 91 per cent of council-maintained schools are rated good or outstanding compared with 85 per cent of academies.
- 3.10 **Home schooling:** the Children's Commissioner has recommended a compulsory home education register, more support for families who home educate and greater oversight of home schooled children in a new report. In response, we restated our call for councils to be given powers and appropriate funding to enter homes or other premises to check a child's schooling, and make sure they aren't being taught in unsuitable or dangerous environments.
- 3.11 **Young carers:** new research to mark Young Carers Day from the Carers Trust has shown that one-

third of young carers in the UK have experienced mental wellbeing problems, while 37 per cent felt “stressed” because they are caring for someone. We highlighted the support councils are providing, with every young carer being offered the right to an assessment to find out if they need additional support.

- 3.12 **Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children:** our analysis of Government figures shows that the amount of money spent on unaccompanied asylum-seeking children has almost doubled from £77.8 million to £152.4 million in just four years to 2017/18. We’ve pointed out that, despite all the vital work councils are already doing to provide vital care and support to these children, funding pressures and growing demand are challenging these ambitions. We called on Government to complete its review of the costs to councils of supporting unaccompanied children, and for this to provide the required long-term funding arrangements.

Priority 4 – Housing

- 4.1 **One Public Estate:** 57 council partnerships will share £15 million of funding, announced by Government, as part of the One Public Estate (OPE) programme we formed with the Cabinet Office MHCLG. This money includes: £305,000 for Shropshire to provide homes and economic growth in Oswestry and to co-locate emergency services across the county; £505,000 for regeneration projects in Devon and Torbay; and £405,000 to support plans to deliver new housing around Kettering Station in Northamptonshire, among others. Through OPE, we are working with over 95 per cent of English councils on projects that aim to deliver £615 million in capital receipts and £158 million in running cost savings, created 44,000 jobs and released land for 25,000 homes by the end of 2020.
- 4.2 **Planning report:** the National Audit Office has published a report which said the Government’s planning system is a barrier to building more homes. In our statement we highlighted the incredible job council planning departments are doing with limited resources, approving nine out of 10 applications, with the majority processed quickly. We have also stressed that the Government’s housing needs formula does not take account of the complexity and unique needs of local housing markets, which vary significantly from place to place. We are also calling on Government to adequately fund planning departments and give councils the powers to make sure developers build out approved homes in a timely fashion.
- 4.3 **Social housing:** the House of Lords debated the need for investment in social housing in Parliament. During a debate our Chairman, Lord Porter, highlighted the positive role that council housing can have on the lives of children and families across the country. As we stated in our briefing, the Government’s decision to lift the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap is recognition of this fact. There were also calls for councils to retain 100 per cent of receipts from Right to Buy sales, and recognition of the 100th anniversary of the 1919 Addison Act, which first gave councils powers to build homes.
- 4.4 **Permitted development:** we have sent a letter to James Brokenshire MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which has attracted signatories from a number of other high-profile national organisations. The letter highlights cross-sector concerns about the impact that permitted development rights allowing change of use to housing has had on the delivery of affordable homes.
- 4.5 **Homelessness:** we responded to the news that Government has announced 42 ‘early adopters’ for the rapid rehousing pathway. With the numbers of people in a housing crisis continuing to rise, we are calling on Government to provide proper resources to give councils the ability to prevent and tackle all forms of homelessness with lasting impact. Government should address the £110 million funding gap which councils’ homelessness services will face by 2019/2020, with long-term joined-up funding. Also critical to this is allowing councils to keep 100 per cent of Right to Buy receipts, including the ability to set discounts locally, which will allow them to reinvest in building more good-quality affordable homes.
- 4.6 **Tenant Fees Act:** this has been given Royal Assent and will prohibit unfair letting agent fees and cap

deposits in the private rented sector at six weeks. We welcomed the Act, and have highlighted that councils want to work with letting agents to make renting fairer and more affordable. We proposed changes to the legislation to help ensure homeless households are helped to remain in secure accommodation and it was great to see these make it into the final Act. We will be producing a guide to the legislation which will provide information on the key provisions for councils.

- 4.7 Fire Finance Senior Sector Group:** we have been working with the Home Office on a submission for the Spending Review through the Fire Finance Senior Sector Group. This group is designed to support the fire sector in producing a submission to the governmental Spending Review and has representatives from the National Fire Chiefs Council and the Home Office. Members of FSMC also attended a Fire Finance Workshop in February to consider Efficiency and Productivity. In mid-February we also briefed parliamentarians ahead of a debate on funding of blue slight services in the Commons.
- 4.8 Fire doors safety:** MHCLG has now published the results of tests carried out on Glass-Reinforced Plastic (GRP) composite fire doors on the [building safety programme website](#). These tests, which were carried out following the failure of the fire doors in Grenfell Tower, identified a systemic issue with GRP doors meeting the required standards. The test results are accompanied by a [Written Ministerial Statement](#), which sets out issues and subsequent actions carried out by MHCLG. We are supporting councils to identify and respond to the implications for their buildings.
- 4.9 Building safety roundtables:** we have held three building safety best practice roundtables for councils and housing associations. These are organised jointly with the National Housing Federation and cover the organisational change needed by social housing building owners in light of building safety regulatory reform.
- 4.10 Housing, Planning and Infrastructure Conference:** the annual LGA Housing, Planning and Infrastructure Conference will take place on 13 March 2019 and Kit Malthouse MP, Minister for Housing, will address the Conference. He will be joining a range of other high profile speakers, including Kate Henderson, Chief Executive at National Housing Federation, and other leading housing professionals.

Priority 5 – Inclusive growth, jobs and devolution

- 5.1 Waste:** the Government has launched a review of waste services with a series of consultations on the subject. One of these will ensure producers of waste cover the full cost of recycling and disposal and another would see greater consistency in the materials collected for recycling and how they are collected. While the first has come about through our work to press Government on this issue, the second could have significant effects on councils' waste collection approaches. Two other consultations are looking into a [deposit return scheme](#) and a [plastic packaging tax](#). We will be working with Government to ensure it recognises the good work being done by councils on recycling rates, which stand at around 45 per cent, and that any extra burdens placed on councils are funded.
- 5.2 Taxi licensing:** in February, the Department for Transport published their response to the recommendations made by the taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) task and finish group. The response was very positive and accepted many of the group's recommendations including those that we have been calling for, most notably that Government intend to legislate, when time allows, to strengthen taxi and PHV licensing. Many councils are already doing fantastic work to strengthen their licensing processes, including many who have signed up to the LGA-led [National Register of Revocations and Refusals](#). Government have also launched a consultation on new statutory guidance for taxi and PHV licensing authorities on how to use their licensing powers to protect children and vulnerable adults. The consultation closes on Monday 22 April.
- 5.3 High streets:** in a wide-ranging report, MPs have put forward reforms to online taxation, business rates and planning in order to revitalise our high streets and town centres. We were among many councils and partners who submitted evidence to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee's inquiry, calling for councils to have greater place-shaping powers in a number of areas.

Underpinning the report's recommendations is the need for locally-led strategies, and we have made clear that councils are leading the way in transforming their town centres. The Centre for Cities also published a [report](#) on the future of city centres, arguing that its focus should shift away from retail towards high tech industries, citing Leeds and Manchester as recent success stories. The report goes on to suggest that the well-paying jobs created by this shift and the increased footfall lead to more custom for high street restaurants, bars and other leisure activities. Recommendations included allowing city leaders access to investment for city centre improvements and exemptions for commercial-to-residential conversions.

- 5.4 **Devolution Framework:** James Brokenshire MP spoke at the Creating Communities conference on the upcoming devolution framework. He said this will call for a significant transfer of powers to councils. He also referenced the work we have been doing looking into how we can help councils develop the knowledge and skills to deliver large scale home building. Mr Brokenshire did not give a date for when he expected the devolution framework to be released and we will continue to press Government to do so as soon as possible.
- 5.5 **Skills taskforce:** last year we established a [Skills Taskforce](#) in recognition that we need to do more to engage stakeholders and industry experts on our [Work Local](#) ambitions for a place based approach to employment and skills. To achieve this the Taskforce is convening three themed roundtables. The second roundtable *Careers and Retraining for a changing local economy* took place in February, bringing together leading councillors and industry representatives. It was both a wide ranging and extremely positive discussion about how the current system around careers advice, apprenticeships and adult learning could be improved.
- 5.6 **Civic university report:** the Civic University Commission, chaired by Lord Kerslake, [published its report](#) setting out the role universities can play to support local communities. The report highlights the provision of social care, for instance, as an area that could benefit from the highly innovative problem-solving capabilities universities can bring to bear. In [our response](#), we welcomed this timely report and called on universities to work with councils and other partners to help address local challenges, highlighting our previous work in this area through the [Leading Places Project](#).
- 5.7 **Parks:** MHCLG has [announced](#) new money for parks, pledging £9.7 million of investment for councils to spend on maintenance and development. They also announced a further £2.75 million for pocket parks on top of the £1 million which I mentioned back in December. In our [response](#) to this new money, we highlighted the important role parks play in promoting wellbeing and welcomed the extra money, while warning more needs to be done in the 2019 Spending Review.
- 5.8 **Town deals:** at PMQ's on 27 February, when asked if Government investment in Northern communities would be accessible to other towns, the Prime Minister stated that the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government would soon be making a statement about this and that all towns will be able to apply for 'Town Deals'. More details are expected by 4 March latest. We will provide a response in due course once more information is known.
- 5.9 **The Post-Brexit England Commission:** the seventh and final roadshow was held in Durham in February. The Commission has visited all English regions outside London and heard from over 200 non-metropolitan stakeholders on the opportunities and challenges their rural areas are facing. Evidence from the roadshows will feed into the Commission's final report which will launch at LGA Annual Conference 2019.
- 5.10 **Modern Slavery:** earlier in the year, officers submitted a response to the Home Offices review of the First Responders roles. We continue to work with the Home Office and other modern slavery stakeholders, including the office of the new Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Sara Thornton CBE, on the ongoing reform of the National Referral Mechanism and of the First Responder role.
- 5.11 **Knife crime:** in January, officers attended the Ben Kinsella Trust site in Islington with Cllr Simon Blackburn, Chair of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board. This visit was to learn more about

their early intervention programmes with children and young people, which help to raise awareness of the consequences of knife crime and serious violence.

- 5.12 **Serious Violence inquiry:** in January, officers attended the Home Affairs Select Committee with Cllr Simon Blackburn, who gave oral evidence as part of their inquiry on serious violent crime. This evidence highlighted the importance of tackling the root causes of serious violent crime, through early intervention and prevention initiatives, which require sustainable and long-term Government funding. The LGA has also submitted supplementary written evidence to the committee, outlining some of the LGA's recommendations.
- 5.13 **Domestic abuse strategy:** Government published its Draft Domestic Abuse Bill and the consultation response, as well as a briefing which outlines the economic and social costs of domestic abuse. Government has confirmed a joint committee of both Houses of Parliament will be set up to examine the Bill before it is debated. In our response we highlighted the importance of funding vital earlier support services and prevention schemes to help stop domestic abuse occurring in the first place.
- 5.14 **Prevent and counter-extremism:** we submitted our response to the Commission for Countering Extremism's call for evidence. Our submission set out councils' core role in countering extremism and building cohesive and resilient communities, and how, working with communities and partner agencies, councils are best placed to understand the complexities of local issues and what works in response. The submission explores the impact of extremism on local areas, the evolving threats from extremism and how understanding, responding and building resilience to it requires a dynamic, joined-up and long-term approach at both local and national levels. It also highlights the impact of funding challenges on work to counter extremism and foster cohesion.

Priority 6 – Britain's exit from the EU

- 6.1 On 26 February the Prime Minister announced that she will put the withdrawal agreement – including any changes she has agreed with the EU – to a meaningful vote by 12 March. If that fails, MPs will be offered two separate votes. One, on the following day, on whether MPs support a no-deal Brexit – where the UK would leave without a deal as consented to by the House. If that fails, then MPs will get a vote by 14 March on requesting an extension to the Article 50 negotiation process to delay EU withdrawal beyond 29 March.
- 6.2 Brexit 'no-deal' preparations continue to be high on councils' agenda. MHCLG has created a hub for all advice relevant to councils. The Government will also be re-launching its advertising campaign directing people to the gov.uk website. We are continuing to work with Government to ensure that the opportunities and risks facing councils are not overlooked by Government and that information relevant to councils from across Whitehall is available at the MHCLG Brexit hub. We will continue to update our own Brexit site with information from Government.
- 6.3 We know that councils, ports and airports are working tirelessly with their partners to help prepare for Brexit scenarios. Councils are reporting that engagement with some national transport agencies needs to be improved and we have been raising this with colleagues in Government.
- 6.4 **Regional nine:** nine chief executive colleagues have been asked by MHCLG to act as a focal point for signalling the practical implications for councils of a Deal/No Deal Brexit to Government. They are: Martin Swales (North East); Tom Riordan (Yorkshire & Humber); Tony Reeves (North West); Nick Page (West Midlands); Anthony May (East Midlands); Richard Carr (East of England); Becky Shaw (South East); John O'Brien (London); Phil Norrey (South West).
- 6.5 Mark Lloyd, representing the LGA, joined them for their first meeting with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, James Brokenshire MP. During the session we made it clear that Government needs to be more joined up between departments and in its communications with councils; be seen to act upon the issues flagged by councils; and not fetter existing important

arrangements like Local Resilience Forums. We shone a light on: concerns about delivery of some services including adult social care; issues about ports and airports around the country and the need for better links with the Department for Transport and Highways England; and councils' work to help support businesses and local economies through the transition. The LGA continues to work closely with the chief executives involved.

- 6.6 **Ports:** MHCLG has announced that some councils with major ports and airports will receive a share of £3.14 million towards Brexit preparations. This amounts to £136,362 for each of the 19 unitary and district councils in England, including Dover, East Riding of Yorkshire, Manchester, Hillingdon and Suffolk Coastal. This funding is part of the £56.5 million announced at the end of January to help councils adapt to the changes caused by Brexit. We are aware that some councils with ports and airports did not receive funding and we have sought clarification from MHCLG on the selection criteria. With the indication being that MHCLG have retained some funding which they could release at a later date.
- 6.7 **Waste:** DEFRA has released new guidance on importing and exporting waste in the event of a 'no deal' Brexit. The guidance provides information on the steps that need to be taken. This includes being aware of the EU customs guidelines and the EU Waste Shipment Regulations if you wish to export to or import waste from the EU. These explain the rules for EU waste imports from outside the EU.
- 6.8 **Business:** Government has developed an online tool for supporting businesses to prepare for Brexit. It provides guidance on what businesses need to do, what's changing in their industry and information on specific rules and guidance.
- 6.9 A detailed update of all of our work in preparation for Brexit is covered by another item on the agenda of Leadership Board.

Priority 7 – Supporting Councils

- 7.1 **Asylum dispersal:** a Home Office and Local Government Chief Executive Group on asylum dispersal has been established with the aim of achieving: better engagement and oversight; access to funding and data; and a reduction in pressures, with discussions at a political level to continue via the member-led LGA Task Group. Joint actions in advance of a meeting hosted and co-chaired by the LGA on 27 February have focused on building governance arrangements across government, councils and the new providers. Discussion at the meeting included a draft Memorandum of Understanding to formalise collaboration between local government and Home Office, options for moving forward work on equitable distribution and the mapping of current data, costs and impacts. Following pressure from the LGA, the Asylum Accommodation & Support Contracts (AASC) and the Advice Issue Reporting & Eligibility (AIRE) contracts were shared and were discussed at the February meeting.
- 7.2 **Universal Credit:** we responded to a new report from Citizens Advice highlighting that many people on Universal Credit are struggling to pay their rent. While recent Government announcements to address this are welcome, they are only part of the answer and it is becoming increasingly difficult for councils to help people avoid going into arrears. We are continuing to press Government to work with councils to ensure that the design and implementation of housing support, welfare reform and Universal Credit works for people.
- 7.3 **Cyber security:** we will be opening the second phase of our Cyber Resilience programme to grant applications later in the spring. Phase one has already seen grant funding for over 100 councils agreed. Eligible councils can take advantage of support from an independent cyber security expert, fully funded by the programme.
- 7.4 **Library and cultural peer challenges:** our second round of applications closed on 31 January. We are now reviewing applications for the 13 available challenges are now with funders Arts Council England. On 30 January we held a successful training day for those who will form the challenge teams.

7.5 LGA's Annual Culture and Tourism Conference: taking place on the 5-6 March and hosted by the City of London at the Guildhall, this event contains a choice of walking tours around London, a range of speakers and the launch of our culture-led regeneration research.

7.6 Sports Leadership Essentials course: delivered in partnership with Sport England, this took place from 28 February to 1 March. It provided valuable training and insight to sports portfolio holders, and there have been 22 successful versions of the programme already.

7.7 Teachers Pay 2019: the National Employers' Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST) submitted its written response in January calling for a fully funded pay award in 2019. The remit for School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) particularly welcomed consultees' views on affordability and any further targeting of pay.

7.8 Term Time Employees (NJC for Local Government Services): the NJC has produced the first tranche of guidance on working arrangements for Term-Time only employees which will be incorporated as Part 4.12 into the next updated version of the National Agreement ('Green Book').

7.9 Exit Payments: HM Treasury have informed us they are still intending to consult on the £95k cap 'shortly'. If that proves to be the case then we would not expect regulations to be in force until autumn at the earliest. Subsequent consultations on exit payment recovery and wider reforms may follow.

7.10 Data Protection: we briefed parliamentarians ahead of debates on the Data Protection (Charges and Information) (Amendment) Regulations 2019. This Regulation exempts elected representatives, including councillors, from paying a charge to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO).

Internal Priority – A single voice for local government

LGA Membership

8. The total number of councils on notice to leave the LGA on 31 March 2019 is three. These are;
 - 8.1 Leicestershire County Council;
 - 8.2 Lincolnshire County Council; and
 - 8.3 Southend Borough Council.

9. The Broads Authority National Park are also on notice to leave the LGA on 31 March 2019 and East Staffordshire Borough Council, the London Borough of Richmond and Exmoor National Park have given notice for 31 March 2020.

10. Four councils remain out of membership – the London Boroughs of Bromley, Wandsworth and Barnet and Gosport Borough Council.

11. As a result of local government reorganisation, we have been informed by a further fifteen authorities that they wish to give notice to leave LGA membership on 31 March 2019 as these councils will cease to exist. These are;
 - 11.1 Poole Borough Council;
 - 11.2 Bournemouth Borough Council;
 - 11.3 Christchurch Borough Council;
 - 11.4 North Dorset District Council;
 - 11.5 West Dorset District Council;
 - 11.6 Weymouth & Portland Borough Council;
 - 11.7 Purbeck District Council;
 - 11.8 East Dorset District Council;
 - 11.9 Dorset County Council;
 - 11.10 Forest Heath District Council;
 - 11.11 St Edmundsbury Borough Council;
 - 11.12 Suffolk Coastal District Council;
 - 11.13 Waveney District Council;
 - 11.14 West Somerset District Council; and
 - 11.15 Taunton Deane Borough Council.

12. We have been informed that their successor authorities intend to take up LGA membership on 1 April 2019.

New LGA Company

13. Further to the meeting of the Board of Directors of the LGA company on 7 March 2018, and the Special Resolution passed by the first General Meeting of the company on the same day, the Articles of Association were lodged with Companies House, directors' details submitted and the accounting date changed to 31 March. The new LGA came into effect on 1 April 2018.

14. All member authorities have now completed their applications to be admitted as a member authority to the new LGA.

15. Following the resolution of the General Assembly that the unincorporated LGA be dissolved at such point as the Leadership Board shall determine, we have written to all member authorities to seek the agreement of at least two-thirds of our membership, to the dissolution, as required by the constitution of the unincorporated LGA. Approval has now been received from the required minimum of two-thirds of councils in full LGA membership.

Membership engagement by the Strategic Management Team

Chief Executive	
30 January	Cheshire West and Chester Council
1 February	South West Chief Executive's Meeting
4 February	Leading Edge event, Milton Keynes
7 February	DCN Annual Conference
8 February	LGA Labour Leaders Summit
12 February	Chief Executive, Leader, Sunderland City Council
14 February	Berkshire Chief Executive's Meeting
25 February	Chief Executive, Leader, Hertfordshire County Council
26 February	Chief Executive, St Helen's Council
1 March	Yorkshire and Humber Chief Executive's Meeting
<i>Forward Plan</i>	
12 March	North West Chief Executive's Meeting

Media

Funding for local government
Resources Board Chair Cllr Richard Watts was interviewed live on BBC News, TalkRadio and Sky News Radio about the launch of our Spending Review campaign and warning about the growing risk to local services. A comment piece from Lord Porter also ran in the Express, and the FT Leader comment piece supported our call for local government funding in the Spending Review. (Mail, Express, Metro, Huffington Post, trade press)
Vice Chairman of the Resources Board Cllr John Fuller was interviewed live on the BBC News channel to discuss the final Local Government Finance Settlement. Cllr Richard Watts was interviewed by BBC Radio London and Huffington Post. Chairman Lord Porter also featured on BBC Online and Mirror Online about the funding pressures facing councils this year. (BBC Radio 4's Today programme, BBC Online, Mirror Online, Huffington Post, FT, Mirror, Express, Metro)
Cllr Watts was interviewed on LBC to discuss our response to the Local Government Information Unit and Municipal Journal findings that eight in 10 councils believe the current funding system is "unsustainable". (BBC Online, Mail Online, Metro Online, Huffington Post, Express Online, Mirror Online, BBC Radio 4, FT, Guardian, i, Sun, ITV Online and Evening Standard Online)
Our campaign to influence the forthcoming Spending Review to fill the £8 billion funding gap by 2025 (Guardian, Huffington Post, Mirror Online, Independent, Mirror)
Cllr Watts was interviewed on the BBC Victoria Derbyshire show to discuss our response to the IFS report on council tax support.
Our response to a Centre for Cities study which found communities in the north of England have been hardest hit by reductions to local government funding (Guardian, Huffington Post, Observer, Star)

Our Spending Review analysis which found the free bus pass scheme is being underfunded by government by an estimated £652 million a year (BBC News, Sky News paer reviews, Sky News Radio, Sky News, BBC Radio 2, BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio 5 Live, BBC local radio news bulletins, LBC, TalkRadio, Telegraph, Sun, Mirror, i paper, Mail, Express, Express Online, Huffington Post, Evening Standard, BBC Online, Sky News Online)
Our figures that councils have now lost 60p in every pound of funding they received from central government in 2010 (Guardian)
The Andrew Marr Show referenced our figures and put them to Home Secretary Sajid Javid, showing central government funding for youth offending teams has fallen from £145 million in 2010 to £72 million last year
Our previous call for councils to be able to retain a proportion of nationally collected taxes and our lines on the £8 billion funding gap facing local government (Guardian, FT Online)
Our response to the Institute of Fiscal Studies findings that the Government will need to find an extra £5 billion in this year's Whitehall spending review to reverse planned cuts (Guardian Online)
Cllr Watts warned that extra council tax income will not be enough to plug growing funding gaps (Sunday Times)
Adult social care and health
Our concerns about fast food delivery apps delivering to schools and on child obesity (Times, Mail)
Our response to Care England's analysis that one in five councils has not been able to pay an increase in fees per resident to private care firms for 2018/19 (Mirror)
New figures on care travel payments showing care workers are forced to cut short home visits or be left out of pocket (Guardian)
Our call for "significant and sustainable funding" for public health and social care in the Government's NHS long-term plan (Times)
Community Wellbeing Board Chairman Cllr Ian Hudspeth's evidence to the Health and Social Care Select Committee on sexual health services (BBC Online)
Our response to the delay to the Government's social care green paper and on the number of people who have passed away waiting for social care since 2010 (Mirror)
Our lines on the work councils are doing to ensure people can access the right support and treatment for alcohol illnesses (Independent Online)
Our report 'Improving the public's health: Local government delivers' which shows many public health indicators are heading in the right direction (Guardian Online)
Children, education and schools
Asylum, Migration and Refugee Task Group Chairman Cllr David Simmonds was interviewed live on LBC and featured in a pre-recorded interview with Sky News about our research which found town hall spending on lone child asylum-seekers has almost doubled in four years (BBC Online, BBC Radio 4, Sky News Online, Mail Online, Huffington Post, Guardian Online, Independent Online, Telegraph, LBC News)
Children and Young People Board Chair Cllr Annetonette Bramble was interviewed on BBC Radio 5 Live about regulations for home-schooled children in England (Independent, Guardian)
Our response to National Audit Office claims that the Department for Education does not fully understand what is driving demand for children's social care (Huffington Post, Times, BBC Online)
Our response to the Public Accounts Committee report which found academy failures and misuse of public funds by academy schools (Times, Huffington Post)
Our warnings of further nursery closures because of continued funding pressures in the early years sector (i paper online)
Our response to concerns that children's adventure playgrounds are too high-risk to insure (Observer Online)
Cllr Bramble's response to a report by the Fostering Network on the pressures facing foster carers (Observer)
Our previous lines on rogue businesses illegally selling knives to children (Telegraph)
Our previous lines on childhood obesity were reported after a study found watching TV puts children at the greatest risk of obesity in comparison to other downtime activities (Mail Online)
Housing
Improvement and Innovation Board Chair Cllr Peter Fleming featured on BBC Radio 4's You and

Yours programme about the LGA-led open letter calling on the Government to scrap permitted development rules (FT)
Our new report, Saving through Social Rents, looked at the implications of building 100,000 government-funded social rent homes each year over the past two decades (Mirror)
Cllr Fleming was interviewed by Talk Radio to discuss the report published by Civitas on home ownership among young people (Mail Online)
Our response to the National Audit Office report warning that the Government's housing planning system is unable to demonstrate it is meeting housing demand effectively (BBC Online, Huffington Post, Telegraph, LBC, BBC Radio 4 Today programme)
Inclusive growth, jobs and devolution
Resources Board Chair Cllr Richard Watts was interviewed on BBC News, BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio 2 and appeared on BBC News at One bulletins about BBC research on the growing number of households with rent arrears, particularly those on Universal Credit.
Our response to a HCLG report calling for government to urgently consider an online sales tax to help secure the future of the high street (ITV Online, Mail Online, Mirror, Sky News Online, Times Online, Sun Online, LBC, Metro)
Our response to the Campaign for Better Transport figures showing bus fares have risen faster than tickets since 2005 (Express, Mirror)
Our response to figures showing the number of bus journeys taken in Great Britain have fallen by more than 90 million in one year (BBC Online, Guardian, Mirror Online)
Supporting councils
Our concerns about "county lines" and the exploitation by criminals of children and vulnerable adults (Mirror)
Safer and Stronger Communities Board Chair Cllr Simon Blackburn was interviewed live by LBC on our response to the Department for Transport's updated taxi and minicab licensing guidance published, which includes many LGA recommendations (Guardian Online)
Cllr Simon Blackburn was interviewed live on Talk Radio about our calls for councils to be given licensing powers to tackle shisha bars that flout smoking and fire safety laws. Cllr Peter Fleming was interviewed on Sky News Radio (Sun, Guardian, Telegraph, Mail, ITV Online, Independent, Times)
EEHT Chairman Cllr Martin Tett appeared across Sky News bulletins in response to the launch of the Government's consultation to overhaul the country's waste system (i paper).
Our lines on council winter readiness were reported across the media. Deputy Chairman Cllr David Simmonds was interviewed on BBC Radio 5 Live to discuss how schools decide when to close because of bad weather (Sun, Independent, ITV Online, Mail Online, Telegraph Online, Metro Online, Evening Standard, Telegraph)
The Head of the National FGM Centre – run by the LGA and Barnardo's – was interviewed on BBC Victoria Derbyshire following the first UK conviction for FGM. The response also featured across the media (BBC Online, Mail Online, Times, i paper online)
Our lines on the asylum dispersal scheme (BBC Online)
Our work to explore the benefits of local taxation was referenced in a piece about the introduction of a tourist tax in Edinburgh (ITV Online)
Our previous advice for people to check a vehicle's history before buying it to avoid becoming victims of illegal mileage reduction fraud (Express Online)
The announcement of government funding for the maintenance of parks and to increase recreational space (i paper)
Our response to research on the amount of care equipment recycled by councils (BBC Online, BBC Inside Out)
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Our response to UK statistics on waste, announced by Defra, showing waste recycling rates from households was 45.7 per cent in 2017, an increase from 45.2 per cent in 2016 (Mail Online)
EEHT Chairman Cllr Martin Tett was interviewed live on the BBC News channel and TalkRadio about council waste collection services. Cllr Peter Fleming also appeared on BBC News bulletins about the same story (i paper online, Mail Online, BBC Radio 5 Live, BBC News channel, BBC news bulletins, Telegraph, Express, Mirror, Sun, Metro) Our response to the work councils are

doing to prevent fly-tipping was also reported (Telegraph, Mail Online, Mail, Star)
Our lines on the work councils are doing to fix potholes (BBC Online, BBC Breakfast, ITV Online, Telegraph, Mail Online, Mirror)
Our statement on the sale of cheap, illegal tobacco (ITV Online, Sky News, Sky News Online, LBC Online, BBC Breakfast, BBC News, Sun, Express, Mail Online)
Our response to figures showing seven out of 10 councils partially dim or switch-off streetlights at night (Mail, Star)
Our health warnings about purchasing and consuming fake alcohol (Express)
Brexit
Brexit Taskforce Chairman Cllr Kevin Bentley's response to Age UK calls for EU carers to be allowed to continue coming to the UK for work regardless of the Brexit outcome (ITV Online)
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, James Brokenshire MP, referenced the work his Department is doing with the LGA on Brexit preparations (Huffington Post)