

Chief Executive's Report – June 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 June 2019.

Action

As directed by members.

Contact officer: Mark Lloyd
Position: Chief Executive
Phone no: 020 7664 3213
Email: mark.lloyd@local.gov.uk

Chief Executive's Report – June 2019

Achievements against our external priorities

Priority 1 – Funding for local government

- 1.1 **Business Rates Retention and the Fair Funding Review** are covered separately on the Leadership Board agenda.
- 1.2 **2019 Spending Review:** we are continuing our work on preparing for the forthcoming 2019 Spending Review by building the case for local government and reviewing evidence of how local government is a 'good investment' by generating savings in public spending.
- 1.3 The 2019 Spending Review is covered in more detail elsewhere on the Leadership Board agenda.
- 1.4 **CIPFA Financial Management Code:** we have responded to CIPFA's consultation on a new Financial Management Code for Local Government which CIPFA believe will support good practice in financial management and assist local authorities in demonstrating their financial sustainability. We welcomed the code as an additional tool for councils but believe it should be viewed as guiding principles and should not prescribe what councils have to do.
- 1.5 **National Audit Office (NAO) consultation on the new Code of Audit Practice from 2020:** this consultation is the first part of a two stage review of the Audit Code of Practice, which is reviewed every five years. This first stage seeks to identify high level issues for the review and the second stage, to be conducted later in the year, will look at the actual draft text for the new code, based on the responses to the first stage. The new code will be laid before Parliament in time for it to come into force no later than 1 April 2020. Our response was submitted to Resources Board for clearance.
- 1.6 **Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) report:** a new IFS report has said council spending on local services has fallen by 21 per cent between 2009/10 and 2017/18. It said the funds available to councils would become increasingly inadequate in the 2020s, rendering the current financing system for the country's local authorities through council tax and business rates unsustainable. We responded, highlighting that councils in England will have lost almost 60p in the £1 from central government in the decade to 2020, and face an overall funding gap of £8 billion by 2025.
- 1.7 **District Council finances:** our work to highlight the pressures councils face featured in a debate on district council finances. Shadow Minister, Jim McMahon MP, said Government should adopt our ideas for the future of council finances. MPs also backed our calls for local flexibility over Right to Buy receipts, praised the removal of the HRA cap and the decision not to pursue negative Revenue Support Grant. In response, the Minister, Rishi Sunak MP, paid tribute to those in local government for playing a starring role in helping to bring our public finances back to a sustainable position.
- 1.8 **County Councils Network (CCN):** CCN has published analysis it commissioned from PWC of councils' financial sustainability up to 2025. It provided further support for our argument that rising demand and costs will have a significant impact on council finances.
- 1.9 **Treasury Select Committee inquiry:** we provided written evidence to the Treasury Select Committee inquiry into *The impact of business rates on business*. In our submission we called for greater business rates retention and highlighted issues with appeals. Cllr Richard Watts, Chair of our Resources Board, gave evidence to MPs on this issue and the session was an opportunity to call for councils to retain 100 per cent of business rates.
- 1.10 **Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee inquiry:** we provided written evidence to the inquiry into *Local Government Finance and the 2019 Spending Review*. The submission outlined the funding gap facing councils and our calls for investment at the Spending Review. Our Chairman Lord Porter gave evidence to the inquiry and the evidence was an opportunity to set out the financial challenges facing councils.

1.11 **Council funding:** to conclude its inquiry into the 2019 Spring Statement, the Treasury Select Committee heard evidence from the Chancellor, Philip Hammond. The discussion covered a range of topics including local government funding, Brexit, the budget deficit, and cladding removal. MPs asked the Chancellor if he agreed with our assessment of the funding gap facing councils, which we project to be £8 billion by 2025. In reply Mr Hammond acknowledged that council services are under financial pressure. There were calls from the Committee for the Spending Review to address the sustainability of council funding.

Priority 2 – Adult social care and health

- 2.1 **Social care green paper:** Matt Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, gave evidence to the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee as part of its social care inquiry. He was asked about the Government's social care green paper and said it would be released in 'due course' and that his vision for the paper is that it will bring forward debate and set the direction of travel. He warned against thinking there was one single solution to the social care crisis, and that the green paper will be tackling a raft of different issues. These include funding, a possible national insurance auto-enrolment scheme similar to that around pensions, recruitment into the sector, access to provision of social care and whether an insurance market-based approach might be appropriate.
- 2.2 **Social care funding:** a new report from the King's Fund warns that the adult social care system is at crisis point as a result of rising demand. In our response we highlighted the good work councils are already doing to manage considerable pressures including increasing costs and funding cuts. With adult social care facing a £3.5 billion funding gap by 2025 it is absolutely vital Government sets out how it plans to tackle this crisis in its social care green paper and the Spending Review. We have already proposed a variety of measures in our response to our own green paper, The Lives We Want to Lead.
- 2.3 **Social care ideas:** a new report was released by the Centre for Policy Studies on the future of social care. This recognises the current system as unsustainable and proposes a new model for care and support in the future. We said the report was another important contribution to the debate around tackling adult social care. We also called on Government to publish its adult social care green paper and use it, and the Spending Review, to put care and support on a sustainable footing.
- 2.4 **Mental health:** the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill is now an Act of Parliament, replacing the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards with the new Liberty Protection Safeguards. Whilst supporting reform, we have pushed for more effective protection of human rights and on a recognition of the current and future resource impacts on councils and local partners, including care homes. We are continuing to work with Government to ensure councils receive all the support, information and funding they need to transition to and then implement the new legislation. The Department of Health and Social Care will run a public consultation on the underpinning Code of Practice over the summer which will provide more detail on the impacts of the Act, with the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, LGA and councils represented on the working groups developing this statutory code.
- 2.5 **NHS Long Term Plan:** the NHS engagement exercise on implementing the NHS Long Term Plan and possible changes to legislation closed on 25 April. We submitted a response which highlights the need for greater collaboration between the NHS and local government and to make the most of the existing legal framework. We have also given written evidence to the Health and Social Committee, which is scrutinising the proposals. Our Deputy Chief Executive, Sarah Pickup, gave oral evidence to the Committee.
- 2.6 **Health inequalities:** we are pleased to be involved in a new programme of support to local areas to reduce health inequalities, together with Public Health England and the Association of Directors of Public Health. The package of support will initially include self-assessment guides and practical support with processing data, aimed at strengthening approaches to public health. This will be launched in the summer.

- 2.7 **Public health:** we briefed MPs ahead of a debate on public health. During the debate, LGA Vice President Preet Kaur Gill MP quoted our briefing and the £700 million public health funding gap facing local government.
- 2.8 **Obesity:** the latest NHS figures show that nearly one-third of adults and 20 per cent of year six children in England are obese. In our response we highlighted the work councils do on early intervention and prevention that not only reduces risks associated with obesity-related conditions such as diabetes and heart disease, but also relieves pressure on the NHS and adult social care services. We called on Government to ensure the forthcoming green paper on prevention contains the measures needed to help those afflicted by obesity.
- 2.9 **Arthritis:** a new report from Versus Arthritis found that an overwhelming proportion of sufferers found council support to access relevant aids and adaptations helpful. In our response, we stressed that it is vital that those suffering from arthritis are signposted to the right information to ensure they are able to access support.
- 2.10 **Four Seasons:** the administrator has announced that indicative bids for Four Seasons Health Care (FSHC), which went into administration on 30 April, are to be submitted by 21 June. FSHC has 157 homes and over 8,000 beds mainly purchased by councils. We continue to be in regular discussion with FSHC, along with the Care Quality Commission, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care. FSHC and the administrators have reassured us it is business as usual in their homes.

Priority 3 – Children, education and schools

- 3.1 **Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children:** following sustained lobbying from the LGA, councils and partners, the Government announced more funding for councils supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC). From 1 April 2019, the grant will be uplifted to £114 per child per night from the current rates of £71, £91 and £95. We welcomed this increase in our response and restated our call for Government to ensure all costs for children and children leaving care are fully funded. The member-led LGA Asylum, Migration and Refugee Task Group will meet with Caroline Nokes MP, the Immigration Minister, on 8 July and will discuss progress on this and the impacts of other asylum and resettlement programmes.
- 3.2 **Schools:** our new research has shown that schools which remain under council control are more likely to keep a good or outstanding Ofsted rating than those which become an academy. It also found that schools that were rated as requires improvement or inadequate were more likely to become good or outstanding if they remained council-maintained and did not convert to an academy. As part of our #CouncilsCan campaign, and in our accompanying response to the report, we are calling for councils to be given powers to intervene and improve all school types found to be inadequate, regardless of whether it is a maintained school or academy.
- 3.3 **"Off-rolling":** a new report from the Education Policy Institute has found that unexplained pupil exits from school rolls, or "off-rolling", stood at 8.1 per cent for those children who finished Year 11 in 2017. This totals over 55,000 unexplained pupil exits for reasons that are not accounted for by family decisions. We highlighted councils' serious concerns about this, and stressed that they should be given new powers and funding so they can monitor the situation in their areas. Schools should be incentivised by Government to be more inclusive and not resort to such tactics to improve league table positions.
- 3.4 **Timpson Review:** DfE has published the Timpson Review, which explored how head teachers use exclusion, and why pupils with particular characteristics are more likely to be excluded from school. The report contained some 30 recommendations in areas such as leadership, skills, incentivisation and safeguarding. In its response, the Government has committed to support head teachers, schools and partners and provide greater clarity for school leaders on the appropriateness of exclusion. We will be considering the recommendations and working with DfE and councils on this issue.
- 3.5 **SEND funding:** the Education Committee's inquiry into special educational needs funding held its final

evidence session with ministers Nadhim Zahawi MP and Nick Gibb MP. In the questioning James Frith MP raised our analysis which shows a £1.6 billion shortfall on SEND funding by 2020/21. In response to the question, Mr Zahawi said he would be raising this issue during the Spending Review. We are expecting the Committee to publish their report by the summer recess and we will share this with you. Additionally, the Department for Education (DfE) has announced a call for evidence on funding arrangements for young people with SEND. DfE is keen to understand how the current funding is distributed, and how to improve the financial arrangements in the future to get the best value from available funding.

- 3.6 **Youth Offending:** councils should have received notification of their Youth Justice Grants for 2019/20. As outlined in the Youth Justice Board business plan, these have been cut by £0.8 million to £70.2 million, with additional investment of £1.5 million allocated for Pathfinder projects to help share good practice. This follows our campaign to highlight the unacceptable uncertainty created for councils by the delay in receiving their allocations. We will continue to press the Government to appropriately fund the vital work of Youth Offending Teams in supporting young people and preventing them from getting involved in criminal activity.
- 3.7 **Children's services:** a new report from the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee has supported our call for more funding and our analysis of the £3.1 billion funding gap facing children's services by 2025. It goes on to recommend Government address this in the Spending Review. This is good news and shows that the Committee listened to the arguments we made in our evidence. In our response, we highlighted the huge financial pressures councils face, with nine out of 10 having overspent on their 2017/18 budgets to support vulnerable children and young people.
- 3.8 **Social mobility:** in our response to the Social Mobility Commission's new State of the Nation report, we reaffirmed that councils want to work with Government to ensure everyone gets the best start in life. We used our statement to call on Government to give councils oversight of all school improvement, sufficient funding for local welfare support and schools, and more access to free childcare. This will help reduce the 'privilege gap', identified by the Commission, which has remained largely static over the past four years.
- 3.9 **Children deprived of liberty:** a new report from the Children's Commissioner has found that almost 1,500 children were securely detained in England in 2018. In our response we highlighted the work councils do to ensure children in this position are safe, that their needs are being met and to ensure that they are only in that placement for as long as is necessary and appropriate. We also pointed to funding pressures councils face and that this means they are less able to intervene early and provide the necessary support to children at risk and their families before it becomes a much more serious and complex problem.
- 3.10 **Crisis support:** the Children's Society is looking to pilot improved provision of "coordinated crisis support". We have been engaged in the development of this programme, and we will draw on the learning within our work on 'reshaping financial support'. The pilot will work in partnership with councils to provide local welfare assistance schemes. The aim is to encourage collaboration between the voluntary care sector and local government, ensure support is available for those who need it, and reduce repeat instances of financial crisis by addressing underlying causes.
- 3.11 **Child protection:** the Department for Education (DfE) has launched a national programme to provide support and boost protection for children at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation. Councils will be able to apply for bespoke support from the scheme to tackle specific threats, bringing together social workers, police forces, schools, health services and charities to improve responses to cases of exploitation, and learn from what works. In our response, we said this will help councils who are working hard with their partners to identify and protect at-risk children and young people amid funding cuts and rising demand for urgent child protection work.
- 3.12 **Kinship Care:** we submitted written evidence to the Parliamentary Task Force on Kinship Care. Our evidence highlighted the vital role that kinship carers provide, stepping in to provide care for children who are no longer able to live with their birth parents. We stated that councils are struggling to provide effective care and support for children and families outside of the statutory child protection system, due to rising demand and diminished resources.

- 3.13 **Modern slavery:** the Home Office has produced a new toolkit for those working to safeguard children and young people under the age of 18 from sexual and criminal exploitation. This is in support of the National Crime Agency's (NCA) latest week of action which will take place in the middle of June and focus on the exploitation of non-UK national under-18s. NCA is encouraging councils to work with relevant partnerships and local police leads during the week of action to identify opportunities for collaboration and multi-agency working.
- 3.14 **Fostering carers:** we responded to news that over 8,500 additional foster families are needed across the UK over the next year. Every day 88 children go into care and councils must have the right foster carers to keep them safe, happy and well. Foster carers make a heroic contribution to improving the lives of our most vulnerable children and councils cannot keep these children safe without them.
- 3.15 **Teenage pregnancies:** we responded to the latest data from the Office of National Statistics that showed there was a continued decrease in under-18 conceptions in England and Wales for 2017, for the 10th year running. This is a testament to the hard work of councils to improve the health, wellbeing and life chances of young people. We also said that Government should reverse the £700 million real terms reductions in public health grants between 2015/16 and 2019/20 if it wants to see continued falls in these rates.

Priority 4 – Housing

- 4.1 **Cladding:** the Government has announced £200 million of funding to remove unsafe cladding from around 170 privately owned high-rise buildings, following our work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to put pressure on HM Treasury. We emphasised the relief this announcement will bring to those leaseholders who have had to suffer under the uncertainty of whether this cladding will be removed and whether they will have to pay for it. We also agreed that Government should do everything in its power to ensure they recoup the full cost for the removal of the unsafe cladding from those responsible for its installation.
- 4.2 **Rapid rehousing:** James Brokenshire MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, announced the allocations of up to £25.6 million of funding for 108 areas of the country as part of the Rapid Rehousing Pathway. Councils across the country are set to benefit from this money. The money will pay for extra 'Somewhere Safe to Stay Hubs', support for people with a history of rough sleeping to sustain tenancies in homes and 130 'Navigators' who will work to develop relationships with, and provide help to over 2,500 rough sleepers.
- 4.3 **Rough sleeping:** as part of its Rough Sleeping Strategy, Government has announced £50 million of funding through its Move On Fund. This aims to open up hostel and refuge spaces by increasing the availability of affordable second stage housing for rough sleepers and victims of domestic abuse. The fund will provide capital grants towards the cost of developing move-on accommodation. Councils wishing to apply for funding or seeking further information are being encouraged to contact Homes England area investment teams.
- 4.4 Councils are being invited to bid for £1.9 million of funding from Public Health England aimed at helping improve the health of rough sleepers. Priorities for the funding are projects that improve access to health services for those with mental health and substance abuse problems for rough sleepers or those at risk of rough sleeping.
- 4.5 **Homelessness funding:** we welcomed a report from St Mungo's, the homelessness charity. They found that councils are spending £1 billion less each year on homelessness compared to a decade ago. This reinforces our message that councils have lost 60p out of every £1 from Government to spend on services, and that homelessness services specifically face a £421 million funding gap by 2024/25. In order to prevent homelessness happening in the first place, the Government needs to use the upcoming Spending Review to reform the welfare system, free councils to build more social homes and sustainably fund them to deliver homelessness services.

- 4.6 **Unfair evictions:** the Government has announced new measures to protect tenants. We pointed out that while a small minority of landlords have too little regard for the welfare of tenants, the vast majority are responsible and provide decent housing. While the Government's proposals are welcome, they do not address the issue of unaffordable housing. They must also look at measures such as adapting the welfare system and reforming Right to Buy rules so councils can build more genuinely affordable homes.
- 4.7 **Housing targets:** a National Audit Office report has found that Government is unlikely to meet its target to release sufficient public sector land to build 160,000 homes by 2020. It also reported that it does expect to achieve its target to raise £5 billion in proceeds by selling land and property. In our response, we pointed to programmes such as One Public Estate, which show councils are best-placed to lead efforts to make best use of public land to deliver the homes we need.
- 4.8 **Local Housing Allowance:** our calls for welfare reforms to help prevent homelessness were raised in the House of Lords. Peers referred to our joint campaigning to highlight the link between the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) freeze in the private rented sector and increases in homelessness. We welcomed the decision in October 2017 not to apply the LHA rate freeze to social housing, following our submission, and are now calling for this to be extended to all rented housing. Allowing the LHA to rise in line with local market rents will help to prevent homelessness by ensuring more private tenancies are affordable.
- 4.9 **Discounted homes funding:** local community groups will benefit from an £8.5 million pilot fund to build discounted homes. The fund will help groups identify suitable sites for discounted homes, get planning permission for them and to provide other technical support. In our response, we welcomed this money and the encouragement it will give community groups. We did however point out that councils must also be empowered to build more affordable, good-quality homes. We restated our call for councils to be able to keep 100 per cent of Right to Buy receipts to ensure they can replace any homes sold.

Priority 5 – Inclusive growth, jobs and devolution

- 5.1 **Domestic abuse:** the Government has announced that councils will be subject to a legal duty to deliver support to survivors of domestic abuse through accommodation-based services. A consultation has been launched to seek views on how this could work. Our response highlighted the importance of multi-agency working to tackle domestic abuse and the need to ensure councils are supported to implement the duty. We also emphasised the need to focus on early intervention and prevention schemes that stop domestic abuse occurring in the first place.
- 5.2 The Government has published its response to the Home Affairs Committee report on domestic abuse. Cllr Simon Blackburn, Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, gave evidence as part of the Committee's inquiry. He outlined the importance of investing in early intervention and prevention to tackle and prevent domestic abuse from occurring. In its response, the Government recognises that growing up in a household with domestic abuse can have a detrimental impact on children, which lasts into adulthood. The response also outlined a number of measures that are due to be considered in the draft Domestic Abuse Bill.
- 5.3 **Knife crime:** we responded to the findings in a report from the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Knife Crime which found that areas suffering from the largest cuts to spending on young people have seen bigger increases in knife crime. We highlighted the success of councils' youth offending teams working with children and young people to stop them coming into the youth justice system. Falling grants from Government, rises in demand for children's services and a funding gap of £3.1 billion by 2025, however, mean councils have been forced to divert money away from preventative work such as youth offending teams.
- 5.4 Councils have found that in some areas six out of ten retailers are selling knives to underage children. In our response to these findings we pointed out that the Home Office Prosecutions Fund – set up as part of the Serious Violence Strategy – does not provide enough help to council trading standards teams to enforce breaches of knife law sales. We are calling for more funding to be allocated to the

Prosecutions Fund to support enforcement activity in 2019/20, to be made available to more councils and extended beyond 2020 as part of the Spending Review.

- 5.5 **Violence reduction funding:** eighteen police forces from some of the areas worst affected by violent crime have been allocated the final part of a dedicated £100 million fund to bolster their operations by Government. This came ahead of the Prime Minister's roundtable with Secretaries of State, to discuss serious violent crime. Around one-third of the funding – £35 million – has been allocated to support the setting up of violence reduction units and other preventative activity across the country. The VRUs will bring together police, health agencies, local government, and community representatives to tackle violent crime. The LGA is working with the Home Office to gather further information on the VRUs and how they will operate locally.
- 5.6 **Serious violence:** Sajid Javid MP, the Home Secretary, delivered a speech on the importance of protecting young people's futures and the need to tackle serious violent crime. This comes after the Home Office published its consultation on a new legal duty to support multi-agency action to tackle serious violent crime.
- 5.7 **Community Trigger:** Baroness Newlove, the Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales, published her report into anti-social behaviour. In it she calls for residents to be able to more easily access the Community Trigger mechanism, used to resolve anti-social behaviour, on police, council and Police and Crime Commissioner websites. We responded that residents' complaints are taken extremely seriously by councils and ensure that where action is required this happens quickly and effectively. For further details of the Community Trigger process, the Home Office guidance provides a useful overview of how it works and how residents can access it.
- 5.8 **Gambling:** the Gambling Commission has launched a new three-year strategy aimed at reducing gambling harms through prevention, education, treatment and support - an approach we supported. Councils play an important role in tackling harmful gambling. We have published a guide for councils on how they can help local residents who are impacted by gambling harms.
- 5.9 **Apprenticeships:** we welcomed a Public Accounts Committee report that raised concerns about the apprenticeship programme. We called on the Government to pause its plans to begin clawing back unspent Apprenticeship Levy funding following delays to the standards in adult care, early years and building control, against which the Levy funds could be spent. This follows on from our open letter to Damian Hinds MP, Secretary of State for Education, which called on Government to extend the time organisations, including councils, have to draw down on unspent Apprentice Levy funding. This is in light of figures showing a fall in apprenticeship starts in England since the levy's introduction from 494,900 in 2016/17 to 375,800 in 2017/18.
- 5.10 **Skills:** a new skills report from Impetus on the youth employment gap has found that poorer children were twice as likely to be 'not in employment, education or training' (NEET) than their better-off peers with the same grades. We responded that it is vital that young people are able to access post-16 technical and academic education easily and this should be tailored to individuals' and areas' needs. We highlighted our proposals for devolved careers advice, post-16 and adult skills budgets and extra powers to local areas. These would allow councils, schools, colleges and employers to work together to improve provision for young people so that they can get on in life.
- 5.11 **Trade and investment:** we have continued to push key asks for local government relating to trade and investment, including through written parliamentary questions from the LGA Chairman and a positive meeting held between the LGA and Graham Stuart MP, Minister for Investment. A guide for councils looking to increase the level of foreign capital investment into their area has been developed and is now in the final stages of design with final publication in June.
- 5.12 **Post-Brexit England Commission:** officers are preparing the final report of the Post-Brexit England Commission which will explore the issues and opportunities facing local areas outside England's major city regions. The report will launch at LGA Annual Conference and has been informed by new research and nationwide stakeholder consultation.
- 5.13 **Heritage Action Zones funding:** Government has announced £44 million funding for a new round of

Heritage Action Zones to improve and revive up to 60 historic high streets across England. The funding will give councils, businesses and community groups access to expert advice and investment to bring historic buildings back into use and support historic high streets to adapt to the challenges they face. The four year programme will be delivered by [Historic England](#), and expressions of interest must be submitted by midday on 12 July 2019.

- 5.14 **Buses:** the House of Commons Transport Committee published its [report](#) on bus services in England and supported our calls for Government to develop a national bus strategy. We welcomed the Committee's report and highlighted the impact cuts to the Bus Service Operators' Grant (BSOG) have had. We also [said](#) any strategy would have to be backed by adequate resources and a long term solution to concessionary fares, which are underfunded by at least £652 million a year. We called on Government to give councils controls of the BSOG and properly fund free bus passes if essential bus services are to be maintained and congestion and pollution reduced.
- 5.15 **Recycling:** we issued a briefing to MPs for a debate on plastics recycling. We outlined the progress councils have made with recycling rates and called for the Government to ensure producers bear greater responsibility for their packaging.
- 5.16 **Food waste:** we have been engaging with the sector during the consultation on Government's ambition proposals for waste and recycling. Activity included an LGA conference on 4 April, a deep dive on food waste and sessions with councils and financial analysts to review the costs presented in DEFRA's impact assessment. Formal consultation responses were submitted in May and we will continue to work with Government to understand the full cost implications.

Priority 6 – Britain's exit from the EU

- 6.1 A detailed update of all of our work in preparation for Brexit is covered by another item on the agenda of Leadership Board.
- 6.2 We are continuing to work with the nine regional chief executives to make the case to MHCLG and other Government departments about various issues related to Brexit. Our [Brexit hub](#) provides the latest information.
- 6.3 **EU Settlement Scheme:** the Government has [published](#) a list of 57 organisations from across the UK that are being funded to provide help and information to vulnerable European Union and Swiss citizens applying under the EU Settlement Scheme. Support is being offered for those with a range of needs including physical disabilities, mental health conditions, victims of human trafficking or domestic abuse and the elderly or isolated.

Priority 7 – Supporting Councils

- 7.1 **Select Committees:** according to research by the House of Commons Web and Publications unit, the LGA is the highest provider of written evidence to select committees (the research is from 2013-2019). Since 2013 we have provided [179 pieces](#) of written evidence to parliamentary inquiries.
- 7.2 **Local elections 2019:** following the local elections, we offered support to new councillors through [our quick reference guide](#) setting out the key things they need to know. We also offer [training](#) for councillors and mentoring for new leaders and portfolio holders.
- 7.3 **Sector Led improvement 2018/19:** take up of our support in the last financial year was again very strong. Highlights include: delivering 145 peer challenges; training 842 councillors; recruiting over 120 graduates for councils; helping councils save over £100m and supporting 60 councils on specific housing projects.
- 7.4 **Children's services guides:** we produced a [guide](#) for new lead members for children's services with political accountability under the Children Act 2004. We have worked with existing councillors with expert

knowledge of the area to help new portfolio holders navigate their first few weeks in office. Additionally, we published our new 'must know' [publication](#) on children's services for council chief executives. This clear summary guide is intended to help chief executives address some of the challenges involved with leading one of the most sensitive and high-risk areas of local government.

7.5 Local governance: the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee published its [report](#) into local governance. The report found that councils have a good track record with governance arrangements generally robust across the sector. It also referenced our Chairman Lord Porter's point that councils still have to deliver the services people rely on despite Government cuts and so have to find alternative ways of paying for them, which could be riskier.

7.6 One Public Estate: we provided a briefing to MPs on One Public Estate ahead of a debate on the programme. In it, we said it shows how effective collaboration between public sector organisations can be. We also pointed to data that showed early projects have already raised £164 million in capital receipts, reduced running costs by £24 million, created 5,745 jobs and released land for 3,336 homes.

7.7 Local government pension scheme changes: MHCLG has launched a [consultation](#) on its proposals to amend the rules of the local government pension scheme (LGPS) in England and Wales. These include proposals for flexibility on exit payments, changes to exit credits and changes to the employers required to offer membership of the LGPS. The consultation closes on 31 July.

7.8 Cohesion and integration: our new LG Inform [report](#) aims to support councils in measuring cohesion and integration in your areas. A key feature of the report, which follows the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's [Integrated Communities Action Plan](#), is the ability to compare your profile with your 'nearest neighbours'.

7.9 Building safety knowledge hub: working in partnership with the National Housing Federation, we have set up a [Building Safety Knowledge Hub](#) to enable social landlords to learn from each other's experiences in tackling some of the biggest issues of our time. The hub provides the latest updates about the government's building safety programme, and resources to enable councils and housing associations to share learning and best practice.

7.10 Self-improvement: the prototype of our new [self-improvement tool](#) is now available to try. It has been developed by councils for councils. This is just one of the many resources planned for our new improvement hub, putting practical help from across local government about innovation and efficiency in one place.

7.11 Innovation Zone: this year's [Innovation Zone](#) programme has been agreed. Over thirty councils and other organisations will present their brave, innovative ideas through practical and lively small group sessions at this year's [LGA Annual Conference](#) in Bournemouth.

7.12 Transformation and Innovation Exchange: developed by councils, for councils, the prototype of our new self-assessment tool is now available to try. This is just one of the many resources planned for our new improvement hub that brings together practical help for local government about innovation and efficiency into one place. To make sure we get this right please [take a look](#) and let us know what you think.

7.13 EnAble Fund: the first phase of the EnAble Fund which provides funding to support people with disabilities who face potentially greater costs when standing for elections has now completed for the 2019 local elections. 20 candidates who received assistance from the programme have been elected. In total, 42 grants were administered from the fund.

7.14 Library and Culture Peer challenges: we have accepted applications for ten library peer challenges and four cultural peer challenges, funded by our contract with Arts Council England (ACE). Three library peer challenges have taken place in April and May and initial feedback has been very positive. The remaining challenges will be completed by 31 July 2019.

7.15 Leadership Essentials – Sport and Physical Activities: in partnership with Sport England we have delivered two Sports and Physical Activities Leadership Essentials courses for officers in April and May. These courses continue to be well received gaining positive feedback. We are now commissioning further

courses for 2019/20 for both councillors and officers as well as working with Sports England to develop masterclasses and place based events.

7.16 Exit Payment Cap: we have published a brief guide to the Treasury consultation on a cap on payments made to public sector workers who are made redundant or receive a severance payment. The cap, proposed to be set at £95,000, includes payments made to the pension scheme for those aged 55 and over.

7.17 Low Pay Commission: we submitted our response to the Low Pay Commission's consultation on the National Living Wage (NLW) for 2020.

7.18 Mental health in the local government workforce: mental health issues are the main cause of sickness absence in local government. We have explored the impact of this and what councils can do to tackle the issue in our latest edition of LGA Workforce News. We spoke with Cllr Sharon Taylor (Leader, Stevenage Council), Nick Page (Chief Executive, Solihull Council) and Faye McGuinness (Mind).

7.19 Advice for Social Workers on returning to practice: the LGA Workforce Team in collaboration with Community Care have produced advice and guidance for social workers about the next steps in their career. The guidance forms part of the continuing work to help social workers looking to return to practice and has been written together with practising social workers and managers. The guides and templates include useful information from how to draft CVs, all the way through to re-registering with the regulator and how to make an impact on the first day. The Careers Zone is due to be launched in May 2019.

7.20 Smith Square debate: on 8 May we held a debate on the importance of the Spending Review for councils. Our high profile panel included Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Rt Hon Liz Truss MP, Shadow Minister for the Treasury, Anneliese Dodds MP, Baroness Pinnock and Lord Adebowale. It was a lively discussion on the future of council services, and there were some excellent questions to the panel.

7.21 Insurance mutual: the Local Government Mutual has officially opened for business and we hope councils will find it a cost-effective alternative to traditional insurance services. We know that councils spend hundreds of millions of pounds a year, so we hope this will be able to save significant sums of money. It has been set up by local government for local government.

Internal Priority – A single voice for local government

LGA Membership

8. All LGA member councils will remain in LGA membership for the forthcoming year.
9. Four councils are currently on notice to leave the LGA on 31 March 2020. They are:
 - 9.1 East Staffordshire Borough Council;
 - 9.2 Hastings Borough Council;
 - 9.3 Leicestershire County Council; and
 - 9.4 Lincolnshire County Council.
10. The Broads Authority National Park is on notice to leave LGA associate membership.
11. As of 28 May 2019, Exmoor National Park has withdrawn from LGA associate membership. Chippenham Town Council have joined associate membership via our corporate scheme with NALC.
12. Four councils remain out of membership – the London Boroughs of Bromley, Wandsworth and Barnet and Gosport Borough Council.

LGA properties

13. The transfer of 18 Smith Square to the LGA is underway, with all formal Board decisions in place. Subject to Land Registry timescales, our intention is for the transfer to complete on 1 July 2019. Responsibility for oversight of 18 Smith Square will then transfer to the Commercial Advisory Board in line with the Leadership Board's earlier decision.
14. The transfer of Layden House (now renamed the Stills) will commence once the refurbishment is complete – currently scheduled for early December 2019. The old LGA will need to reconvene briefly to agree the transfer and to pass the resolution to dissolve itself once it is satisfied that all outstanding business is complete.

Membership engagement by the Strategic Management Team

Chief Executive	
4 April	Chief Executive, Doncaster Council
4 April	Chief Executive, Newcastle City Council
9 April	Chief Executive, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
10 April	Chief Executive, London Borough of Harrow
11 April	MJ Future Forum, Hertfordshire
30 April	Chief Executive, Welsh LGA
13 May	Chief Executives of Suffolk County Council, East Suffolk District Council, West Suffolk District Council, Ipswich Borough Council and Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils
23 May	Chief Executive, Northampton Borough Council

23 May	Chief Executive, Northamptonshire County Council
30 May	Chief Executive, Nottingham City Council
<i>Forward look</i>	
18 June	Chief Executive, North East Lincolnshire
19 July	North East Chief Executive Meeting
1 August	Chief Executive, York City Council
10 September	Kent Chief Executive Meeting

Media

Funding for local government
Chairman Lord Porter's response about government funding to cover replacing Grenfell Tower-type cladding on private tower blocks (BBC Online, Mail Online, Mirror Online, iNews Online, Sky News Online, Times, Independent, Express, Guardian, LBC and BBC Radio 4's Today programme)
Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Chair of the Children and Young People Board, was interviewed about the financial pressures on councils supporting care leavers (Five News)
Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Chairman of the Community Wellbeing Board, was interviewed on BBC Radio 5 Live about our calls for councils to be able to spend money raised from the soft drinks levy on local public health services.
Our estimations that the funding gap facing adult social care is £1.5 billion this year, rising to £3.5 billion by 2025 and our response to proposals for reform of the sector (Telegraph, Telegraph Online, Express (twice), Mirror, BBC Online, i paper, Express)
We warned that efforts to tackle knife crime, county lines drug dealing and gangs is being undermined by uncertainty over youth offending team funding (Mirror, Independent Online Sky News Online)
We responded to the Government announcement of a new £8.5 million fund to help young families get on to the housing ladder (Express)
Our analysis of the £8 billion funding gap facing local government by 2025 (Times)
The Home Office's announcement that councils will receive more funding to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (Independent Online)
Our analysis of central government funding reductions in a piece about councils investing in new offices (FT)
Our warning that adult social care faces a £3.6 billion funding gap by 2025 featured in a piece about the care provider Four Seasons (FT, Telegraph Online)
Estimations that councils in England face a SEND funding gap of the more than £500 million (Guardian Online, Independent Online)
We were referenced about our core government funding analysis that shows councils have seen reductions of £16 billion between 2010-20 (BBC Politics Live (twice))
Our response to a report by HCLG Committee warning that children's services in England are at breaking point and supporting our analysis that children's services face a £3.1 billion funding gap by 2025 (Independent, Mirror Online)
We previously warned about cuts to local bus services (BBC Online, Mail Online (twice) ITV Online, Huffington Post (twice), i paper)
Our calls for the Government to fully fund local services featured in a Keir Mudie opinion piece on (Mirror Online, People)
Our warnings on potential reductions to the revenue support grant (Mirror Online, Mirror)
Adult social care and health
Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Chairman of the Community Wellbeing Board, was interviewed on Sky News about the Government's delayed social care funding plans (Sky News Online, LBC Online)
The latest figures on obesity-related hospital admissions in England (Times and Guardian).
Our polling showing 56 per cent of people would support paying extra money for social insurance, in a piece about adult social care (FT)
Our lines on council tax discounts for those living with mental impairments (BBC Online, BBC News at One, BBC Radio 4 You & Yours, Express)
Our lines in response to a Royal Society for Public Health report calling for greater availability of

public toilets (ITV News, Five News, BBC Radio 5, BBC Radio 2, BBC Online, iNews Online, LBC Online, the Mail, Mirror and Sun)
Children, education and schools
LGA Deputy Chairman, Cllr David Simmonds, was interviewed live on BBC Radio 4's Today programme and the Victoria Derbyshire Show about suspected illegal schools (BBC News, BBC News at 5, BBC Radio 4 Six O'Clock News, BBC Radio London and BBC News at One)
Our response to a report by the Children's Commissioner on children deprived of their liberty (Independent)
We were reported in a piece about childhood obesity and the long-term impact on an individual's health (Mail Online (twice)).
Newsnight referenced our analysis which showed councils spent more than £152 million on unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in 2017/18 – a figure which has almost doubled in four years. Our lines on EU foster children and EU citizenship (Sky News, LBC Online, Mail Online)
Our response to the Children's Commissioner report on children's mental health spending (Guardian Online)
Our lines on young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) (Metro, Times)
BBC Victoria Derbyshire and BBC Online featured our lines in a piece about girls in gangs (BBC Radio 1 and BBC Radio 2 news bulletins)
Our response to research that found more than 49,000 pupils from a single year disappeared from school rolls (Guardian)
Our response to the allocation of primary school places (Mail Online, Guardian Online)
Our press release which shows schools that stay council-maintained are more likely to improve or remain good/outstanding than those which convert to an academy (the Times and Guardian)
Housing
Deputy Chairman, Cllr David Simmonds, was interviewed on BBC's Victoria Derbyshire programme on our response to government announcing a new legal duty on councils to provide accommodation to victims of domestic violence (BBC Online, Guardian Online, Sky News Online, ITV News Online, LBC Online, Huffington Post Online, Mail Online, Mirror Online, Times, BBC Radio 2, BBC Radio 3 and BBC Radio 4 Today programme, LBC Radio)
Chairman of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, Cllr Martin Tett, was interviewed by TalkRadio on our Homelessness Reduction Act survey, which found that 83 per cent of councils saw a rise in homelessness presentations following the implementation of the Act (Guardian)
Cllr Richard Watts, Chair of our Resources Board, featured on LBC news bulletins about funding for homelessness support.
Our findings that the introduction of permitted development rules has prevented the building of more than 10,000 affordable homes (FT, ITV, LBC, the Mirror and Times)
Our lines on Right to Buy, warning that the Government needed to provide more funding for councils (Express)
Our response to a report by Versus Arthritis on home support for people living with arthritis (Express)
We responded to the National Audit Office report on land availability and new homes (Mail Online).
Inclusive growth, jobs and devolution
Cllr Martin Tett, Chairman of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, was interviewed live on TalkRadio about the future of highstreets and planning.
Supporting councils
Cllr Peter Fleming, Chairman of the Improvement and Innovation Board, was interviewed on LBC and TalkRadio about our press release warning that six out of 10 retailers in some areas are breaking the law on underage knife sales amid a lack of funding for enforcement activity by councils (Sky News, Times, Telegraph, Express, Mirror, Star, Sky News Online, ITV Online, Independent Online (twice), Evening Standard Online, Mail Online)
Cllr Peter Fleming was interviewed on Sky News Radio about our press release which warned that motorists could be putting lives at risk buying second-hand tyres (ITV Online, Mail Online, Express Online, the Sun, i, Mirror, Star, and on ITV News, Sky News and LBC)
Cllr Simon Blackburn, Chair of the Safer, Stronger Communities Board, appearance at the special Joint Committee examining the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill (BBC Online)
Following a report by the Victim's Commissioner for England and Wales, our response received

<p>wide coverage (BBC Online (twice), BBC News channel (twice), BBC 1 Breakfast, BBC 2 News, BBC 2 Politics Live, BBC Radio 5, BBC Radio 5 Live, ITV Online, Sky News Online, Guardian Online, LBC Online, Telegraph, Mail, Sun, Express, Times, ITV Good Morning Britain, BBC Radio 4 Today programme, BBC Radio 4 the Long View programme and TalkRadio)</p>
<p>Our lines on council recycling services (Independent Online)</p>
<p>Our lines on the introduction of residential parking schemes by councils and action taken on parking permits (BBC Radio 5 Live Investigates, BBC Radio 5 Sunday Breakfast, Express, Mail)</p>
<p>Our previous calls for the government to introduce greater enforcement powers to tackle metal theft operators (Times)</p>
<p>In coverage of local elections, our national census of local authority councillors 2018 and lines on councillors facing intimidation putting young people off standing for election (BBC Online (three times), BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio 5 Live, Guardian Online)</p>
<p>Our previous lines on potholes were reported in the Telegraph and Express.</p>
<p>We responded to new figures from the Fostering Network, showing more than 8,500 foster families are needed across the UK over the next year (Guardian Online)</p>
<p>We called for existing and outdated taxi laws to be updated and strengthened (Star)</p>
<p>Our lines on the work councils are doing to stop seagulls disturbing residents and visitors (Guardian, Times)</p>
<p>A single voice for local government</p>
<p>Deputy Chairman, Cllr David Simmonds, was interviewed live on BBC Radio 4's Today programme about Public Spaces Protection Orders issued by councils in England in 2018.</p>
<p>Cllr Martin Tett, Chairman of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, was interviewed on BBC News channel, BBC Radio 5 Live and BBC Radio 4 You and Yours, and Cllr Peter Fleming, Chairman of the Improvement and Innovation Board, was interviewed on Sky News and ITV News about our press release calling for courts to issue tougher punishment for fly-tipping (Times, Express, Guardian, Sun, Independent, i paper, Telegraph and BBC Online, ITV Online, Mail Online, Mirror Online, Sky News Online, ITV News Online, LBC Online, BBC Breakfast, BBC Radio 2, BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 5 Live, TalkRadio, 5 News, and LBC)</p>
<p>Our response to a report by Citizens Advice on council tax debt (BBC Online, BBC News channel (twice), BBC 2, BBC Radio 2, BBC Radio 5 Live, BBC Radio 4 Today programme, and Mail Online)</p>
<p>Our response on the efforts of councils to run EU elections at short notice (Sky News Online, ITV Online, LBC Online, the Telegraph, Mail and LBC)</p>
<p>Our response to the Taxpayer's Alliance report on council employee pay featured on Mail Online, Metro Online, Times, Sun, Express, Telegraph, City AM and BBC News channel.</p>
<p>Our response to the Government's allocation of £10 million to improve the National Citizen Service's image (Guardian)</p>
<p>Brexit</p>
<p>We responded to consumer group Which? warnings that dangerous toys, cars and household goods could flood into the UK after Brexit (Mirror Online, i)</p>