

Chief Executive's Report – October 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 focuses 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 October 2019.

Action

As directed by members.

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Chief Executive's Report – October 2019

Achievements against our external priorities

Priority 1 – Funding for local government

- 1.1 **Queen's Speech:** ahead of the Queen's Speech on 14 October, we set out our seven-point plan. In the Queen's Speech, the Government has brought forward proposals on a range of key issues for local government, particularly around devolution, local growth, Brexit, health and social care, building safety, preventing domestic abuse and protecting the environment. We undertook a thorough analysis of the Speech and the supporting documents. Our full on-the-day briefing contained our headline response to the key measures affecting local government, as well as an LGA view on the key announcements. As part of our #CouncilsCan campaign, we will continue to make the case for a long-term settlement that gives local government the powers, funding and certainty to transform their areas.
- 1.2 **2019 Autumn Budget:** the next priority date we are working towards is the Budget, due to take place on Wednesday 6 November. Our submission has been drafted to reflect the conversations we have had with councils. The 2019 Autumn Budget and 2020 Spending Review are covered in more detail under Leadership Board agenda Item 16.
- 1.3 **Business Rates Retention:** the Business Rates Retention Steering Group, which brings together officers from MHCLG, the LGA and councils, met to discuss a range of important issues relating to council finances. We continue to work with Government to ensure that local government is shaping the Government's thinking on business rates, fair funding and the forthcoming local government finance settlement. Business Rates Retention and the Fair Funding Review are covered in more detail under Leadership Board agenda Item 11.
- 1.4 **Council finances:** the Government issued a technical consultation to inform the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2020/21. It contains further details on the new Social Care Grant, the proposed referendum principles (including the adult social care precept), the New Homes Bonus, the Improved Better Care Fund and the Rural Services Delivery Grant. The Technical Consultation is covered separately on the Leadership Board agenda under Item 10.
- 1.5 **Audit:** an independent review on the quality and effectiveness of the audit and financial reporting of local authorities is now underway, following its announcement in July. The review is being led by former Local Government Ombudsman, Sir Tony Redmond. The LGA will be responding to the consultation and will engage fully with the review. The Review is covered separately on the Leadership Board agenda under Item 4.
- 1.6 **Public Works Loans Board:** HM Treasury announced a 1 per cent increase in the Public Works Loans Board's (PWLB) interest rate for new loans. This could cost councils an extra £70 million in the next 12 months. We have expressed concerns over the impact this will have on the financial viability of capital schemes, including vital council house building projects. Councils will be looking for ways of safeguarding their capital programmes and may wish to consider the revised offer from the UK Municipal Bonds Agency. The Agency has selected PFM asset management and financial consulting as its managed service provider.
- 1.7 **Adult social care and public health formulas:** the Chairman and Group Leaders have agreed to publish the local authority level analysis of the potential impact of the new adult social care and public health formulas. The main reason for sharing this analysis is to help councils respond to future consultations, rather than aid their financial planning. This is because individual formulae - even for major services - are not indicative of the overall outcome, as other factors, such as the Government's decisions on which specific formulas distribute more of the funding in comparison to others, the adjustments for council tax and the new area cost adjustments will have a significant impact.

Priority 2 – Adult social care and health

- 2.1 **Local health systems:** we welcomed the Health Secretary, Matt Hancock MP, to our Community Wellbeing Board. He made a commitment to making local government equal partners in reshaping the model of health and social care outlined in the NHS Long Term Plan.
- 2.2 **CQC ‘State of Care’:** the Care Quality Commission’s (CQC) annual ‘state of care’ report has shown that, despite severe funding pressures, quality levels in social care remain high overall, with 84 per cent of providers rated as good or outstanding. This is testament to the incredible efforts of every part of the social care workforce, which has also helped achieve reductions in the number of NHS beds being used unnecessarily. We commented that more must now be done to make sure the right support is being offered and called on Government to ensure its proposals on adult social care are substantive and brought forward at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.3 **Delayed Transfers of Care:** we published analysis showing how over the past two years, councils have supported people back into the community as part of their efforts to reduce the number of delayed transfer of care days attributed to social care. Our report shows that there has been a reduction of 513,773 in delayed days attributable to social care over the period from July 2017 to June 2019, freeing up essential beds and improving people’s lives for the better. This hard work is estimated to have saved the NHS £177 million. We have also highlighted how a commitment by the Government in the recent Spending Round to continue the iBCF next year, alongside an extra £1 billion for children’s and adult social care services and the option to again levy an adult social care council tax precept, will help councils meet some of the rising cost and demand pressures they face in 2020/21. We now await the publication of the Government’s proposals on the future of adult social care.
- 2.4 **Social care:** NHS Providers has published a report which shows that the majority of NHS trust leaders are concerned about a lack of investment in social care, public health and prevention. We welcomed the report, saying it reinforces our call for long-term sustainable funding for vital council services, including adult social care, public health and prevention. We briefed MPs ahead of a House of Commons debate on social care funding, welcoming the funding included in the Spending Round and calling for a long term funding settlement and certainty.
- 2.5 **Social care complaints:** there was a small decrease in the number of complaints and enquiries received by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in 2018/19 as compared to 2017/18. We said in our media release this is a result of the hard work councils and the care providers they commission put in to provide the best possible service to those who rely on vital adult social care support, despite funding and demand pressures. We also called on Government to publish its proposals for the future of adult social care as soon as possible to find a long-term, sustainable funding solution and to provide the certainty councils and those in care need.
- 2.6 **Smoking:** Action on Smoking and Health has highlighted the extra social care costs for smokers compared to non-smokers and we underlined the work councils are doing to help smokers quit, including running a range of innovative programmes and services. We also called on greater targeting of resources to those most in need of support, such as younger adults, and a move towards promoting healthy choices, preventing sickness and early interventions to reduce overall costs to social care providers and hospitals.
- 2.7 **Health visiting:** the Institute of Health Visiting has published a vision for the future of health visiting. The report has been developed in response to the Government’s request to inform plans to refresh the health visiting model. We welcomed the report as an important contribution to the debate on the future of health visiting as it will help join-up the delivery of the Government’s Healthy Child Programme.

- 2.8 **Nurses training fund:** we called on the new £210 million of funding for training for NHS nurses to be expanded to cover a wider range of public health workers and allied health professionals. These roles are vital in the early support offer for children and young families and greater training opportunities will help ease recruitment and retention problems, by encouraging people into nursing and to stay in the profession for longer. We cited the role that councils have played in increasing the number of contacts with children and families since they took over responsibility for the public health of those aged 0-5 in 2015.
- 2.9 **Sexual health commissioning:** our report highlights a series of case studies showing how councils are working with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and NHS England to commission integrated sexual health services. The case studies highlight the important work of councils in commissioning since the transfer of public health. They show examples of joint commissioning in urban and rural areas, by councils with widely varying population profiles and facing differing sexual health challenges.
- 2.10 **Suicide prevention:** we have joined up with the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) to launch a suicide prevention sector led improvement programme. This provides an opportunity for councils and partners to access leading expertise, learn from one another and share good practice. There will be a series of tools, products and events to help learning, alongside grant funding allocated to ADPH networks, to develop and support regional suicide prevention activity. There is also local bespoke expert support available for up to twelve councils and partners.
- 2.11 **Mental health:** we briefed MPs ahead of a House of Commons debate on women's mental health. We highlighted our support for a public health approach to tackling serious violent crime against women and girls as this is a key contributor to poor mental health.
- 2.12 **Loneliness:** £2 million is being made available to help tackle loneliness a year after the Government published its Loneliness Strategy. In our response, we highlighted that councils are ideally placed to lead on tackling loneliness and that Government should provide the right funding for services such as libraries, museums and public parks that reduce the need for residents to visit their GP or use other health services.
- 2.13 **Sport England Active Lives:** new data from Sport England shows the efforts councils make to get people active are working. In our media response, we highlighted how campaigns such as 'This Girl Can' and 'We are Undefeatable' are creating opportunities every day for residents to be more active. We said that it was important that we also ensure our core leisure offer is maintained for all residents who want to increase their activity levels. Government should, therefore, look to provide more funding for council-run facilities – in the same way that they have recently made important investments in cultural infrastructure – to ensure residents continue to benefit from excellent services.
- 2.14 **Asylum seekers dispersal and support:** the Home Office and local government Chief Executive Group met on 8 October to discuss the asylum dispersal process. The group considered the resource implications for councils and data sharing at a local, regional and national level and also agreed that better communications between the Home Office, accommodation and support providers and councils was needed, in order to manage the pressures in the dispersal process.

Priority 3 – Children, education and schools

- 3.1 **Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND):** the Local Government Ombudsman published a report on the lack of provision of education, health and care plans for children with SEND. The report supports our long-term concerns that councils are in danger of being unable to meet their statutory duties for children with SEND. A further report by the National Audit Office assessed how well pupils with SEND are being supported. The system was found to be financially unsustainable, echoing the findings our own research. The Government's announcement of an additional £700 million for children

with SEND is welcome, but these reports are evidence that long term certainty over funding is needed. We will continue to work closely with the Government as part of its review of the system.

- 3.2 **SEND home schooling:** Ofsted raised concerns about the families of children with SEND being encouraged to educate their children at home, concerns which councils share. The vast majority of children with SEND would benefit from a mainstream education and we called on inspectors to consider the levels of mainstream inclusion when grading a school. We'd also like to see mainstream schools incentivised to provide a more inclusive education environment for children with SEND.
- 3.3 **School funding:** the Government has published school funding allocations showing how much money is being allocated to schools and local authorities in England next year, using the National Funding Formula (NFF). Every secondary school will be able to receive a minimum of £5,000 per pupil next year, and every primary school will receive a minimum of £4,000 from 2021-22. The new funding includes £780 million in 2020-21 to help children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The DfE has also launched a consultation on the conditions and regulations applying to the dedicated schools grant (DSG). The consultation seeks to clarify that it is a ring-fenced specific grant, separate from the general funding of local authorities. The consultation also clarifies that local authorities are expected to carry forward any deficits they may have on their DSG accounts, and the deficit does not have to be covered by their general reserves. This will be used to inform the setting of local authority budgets for the 2020 to 2021 financial year.
- 3.4 **School exclusions:** the Education Policy Institute (EPI) has published information on unexplained pupil exits. The report highlights which school groups have the highest rates of unexplained pupil exits, including those schools within several local authority areas and multi-academy trusts (MATs). We share the concerns outlined by the EPI about children leaving school without an explanation. Ofsted's role in considering exclusions as part of its inspections process is important and we are also calling for councils to be given the powers to hold all schools to account where there is evidence of unexplained pupil exits.
- 3.5 **Adoption:** as Gavin Williamson MP, Secretary of State for Education, announced an extension to the Adoption Support Fund (ASF), we called on Government to make the ASF permanent in next year's Spending Review. We also said we wanted to see adoptive families continue to receive the help they need to thrive together and to get the very best outcomes for children.
- 3.6 **Runaway children:** the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults published a report claiming that placing children in out-of-area children's homes puts them at risk of involvement with county lines gangs. We responded that out-of-area placements were sometimes in a child's best interest, but increasing pressure on children's homes places meant that sometimes councils had less choice about placements. We called for funding and support to develop more and better options and help for children.
- 3.7 **Children's manifesto:** the Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield, has published a six-point plan, calling on the political parties to make positive commitments in their election manifestos in order to transform the life chances of disadvantaged children. Proposals included in the Commissioner's plan included expanding the Troubled Families Programme, ensuring every school has a mental health counsellor, opening schools at evenings and weekends to provide a safe place to children to go and a Cabinet committee for children. We responded that councils want to help all children get the best possible start in life, and that any new responsibilities will need to be fully funded.
- 3.8 **Childhood obesity:** the outgoing Chief Medical Officer, Professor Dame Sally Davies, has published an independent report on childhood obesity. The report calls for stronger planning powers to help deal with some of the underlying causes of obesity, such as tackling the clustering of takeaways and restricting junk food advertising. Childhood obesity is one of the biggest public health challenges and the report is another reminder of the urgent need for to combat this epidemic. We submitted written evidence to the Health and Social Care Committee as part of its follow-up inquiry on childhood obesity. Our submission highlighted the contribution from councils in tackling childhood obesity and learnings from the Trailblazer Programme.

- 3.9 **Teenage mental health:** with mental health issues affecting around one in eight children and young people, the Government has announced a £35 million research programme into children and adolescent mental health (CAMHS). The research aims to build a better understanding of the adolescent mind to improve the standards of care available to young people.
- 3.10 **Young people's future health:** we responded to a new report from the Health Foundation, supporting their calls for a joined up approach to addressing the challenges young people face that are putting their health at risk. These were found to include fragmented funding streams, a challenging housing market and tough job market, according to the Health Foundation. Funding early intervention measures can relieve significant pressures on children's services and other essential parts of the public sector like the NHS and police.
- 3.11 **Youth services:** a new report from the YMCA on spending cuts for youth services has further supported our calls for adequate funding to make sure that every young person gets the support they need to live healthy, safe and fulfilling lives. We also again stated councils' willingness to work with Government to ensure the extra resources announced as part of the Spending Round are used in the best possible way to help young people access the entire range of services and opportunities.
- 3.12 **Youth resettlement:** a joint report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation and the Inspectorate for Prisons on children leaving custody suggests that they are being 'set up to fail', through a lack of support. In our response, we say that councils are committed to meeting the needs of individual children and young people before and after their time in custody. We are however, hindered by a lack of information from the youth justice system and a shortage of suitable accommodation. We also submitted written evidence to the House of Commons Justice Committee on Children and young people in custody. Our submission highlighted councils the success of council youth offending teams in supporting young people getting involved in crime and the need for better coordination with other parts of the youth justice system.
- 3.13 **Child victims of modern slavery:** 18 October was Anti-Slavery Day and the latest crime statistics show the number of council referrals of suspected child victims of modern slavery in England has risen from 127 in 2014 to 1,152 in 2018, a staggering increase of 807 per cent, which is putting pressure on children's services. Wider estimates put the number of victims in the UK of modern slavery anywhere between 13,000 to more than 130,000, costing UK society between £3.3 billion and £4.3 billion. We highlighted the work we are doing with the Home Office and our recently updated guidance for councillors on modern slavery. We also have a very useful set of resources to support councils in eradicating modern slavery from their supply chains.

Priority 4 – Housing

- 4.1 **Shared ownership:** Government has announced a new national model for shared ownership, which they hope will make it easier for people to buy their own homes. This could include by allowing them to buy in 1 per cent increments, as opposed to 10 per cent as currently. This could give thousands of social tenants an opportunity to purchase a stake in their own homes, in some areas with deposits as low as £2,000. We will be making the case that if we are to meet our housing targets and ensure everyone gets the chance to own their own home, councils must be able to build at scale. We will be calling for councils to be able to keep 100 per cent of Right to Buy receipts and set their own discounts locally.
- 4.2 **Housebuilding:** the Government has released the latest house building statistics which show that, in the period from April to June, there was an 8 per cent decrease in the number of new starts compared to the same period last year. Research published by the National Housing Federation has also revealed that more than 8 million people in England are living in an unaffordable, insecure or unsuitable home. In our response, we highlighted that this reinforces how critical it is for Government to give councils the powers and funding they need to get building the social housing the country

desperately needs. We highlighted that councils built 44 per cent of homes the last time we built over 300,000 in a year, and that to do so again councils should retain all their Right to Buy receipts to reinvest in building new homes.

- 4.3 **Modern methods of construction:** the Government published its response to the Commons Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee's report on modern methods of construction. Our former Chairman, Lord Gary Porter, gave evidence to the inquiry earlier in the year, which considered how councils and central government can support new and non-standard construction to help deliver the homes we need. The Government agreed with many of the Committee's recommendations and outlined its work in supporting councils in housebuilding, including removing the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing cap, which was a key priority for councils and the LGA.
- 4.4 **Green homes:** the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick MP, has announced a new green standard for new build homes. This aims to improve home building and tackle climate change, while keeping household bills low. The Future Homes Standard will see heating systems such as gas boilers banned from new homes by 2025 and replaced with clean technology. There will also be a consultation on an overhaul the planning system.
- 4.5 **Permitted development:** the Government announced that developers will be able to convert commercial buildings into homes without planning permission. In our response we highlighted that councils are committed to building new homes. Permitted development rules have, however, removed the ability of local communities to shape their areas and ensure homes are well-designed with the necessary infrastructure. These rules have also resulted in the potential loss of thousands of affordable homes as developers are not required to provide them.
- 4.6 **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106:** from December 2020 councils will be required to publish annual statements regarding infrastructure funded through the CIL and section 106 planning agreements. This will provide an opportunity for councils to demonstrate what they are able to deliver for their communities through developer contributions and it is vital that this information is communicated effectively and transparently. The Planning Advisory Service will be supporting councils to implement these new requirements.
- 4.7 **#HousingDay:** 9 October was an opportunity to highlight local government's role in building new homes. Norwich City Council have won the RIBA Stirling Prize 2019 for the best new building in the UK for their council housing project. The 105 new council homes were rightly recognised for their high quality architecture which has been developed to be environmentally and socially conscious.
- 4.8 **Homelessness:** data from the Office for National Statistics shows an estimated 22 per cent increase in the deaths of homeless people in England and Wales in 2018. In our response, we called on the Government to provide councils with a long term sustainable funding solution that will help them reduce homelessness and fund drug and alcohol treatment services. We have also worked with the National Housing Federation to launch a joint report considering how local authorities and housing associations can work together to end homelessness. The report includes a number of case studies where housing associations and local authorities have successfully collaborated in our goal to end homelessness and shares best practice. We highlight the need for changes to the retention of right to buy receipts and the setting of discounts; an effective welfare system; and, secure, long-term funding for homelessness prevention.
- 4.9 **Homeless veterans:** the new No Homeless Veterans Campaign called for councils to identify and support veterans in housing need. In response we pointed to the support councils were providing to armed forces veterans, including a range of services such as housing, money advice, employment support and health and wellbeing services. We also called on Government to help councils build the social homes we desperately need to address the one million households on the housing waiting lists.
- 4.10 **Building safety:** the Grenfell Tower Inquiry has announced that its Phase 1 report covering what happened on the night of the fire will be published on 30 October. We anticipate it will make recommendations that will have implications for the London Fire Brigade and other fire and rescue

services. Publication of the report is likely to bring a renewed focus on making safe those private high rise residential buildings with aluminium composite material cladding. The Government has made clear it expects building owners to remediate these buildings. Where building owners do not act, Government will expect councils to take enforcement action. The Joint Inspection Team hosted by the LGA is able to provide advice and support on taking enforcement action.

- 4.11 **National Housing Summit:** our Chairman, Councillor James Jamieson attended the National Housing Federation summit on 25 September. He took part in a discussion which considered the future of housing supply and the need to build more homes with a variety of tenures. There was a clear consensus on the need for partners to work together to tackle the current housing crisis.

Priority 5 – Inclusive growth, jobs and devolution

- 5.1 **Devolution:** the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sajid Javid MP, has announced that Government will publish a White Paper on further devolution in England. The LGA will continue to work with ministers and officials to shape the development of this policy agenda and its implementation. In our [#CouncilsCan report](#), we've also called for an English Devolution Bill and we will be making the case that new legislation is needed in order to give councils the powers and essential funding to support economic growth and to improve local services. In particular, the White Paper provides an opportunity to enable council leaders to drive local public service reform and bring forward proposals for fiscal devolution, alongside powers to support economic growth. In the coming weeks we will be engaging with Chief Executives alongside Councillors and others to help develop the detail of an ambitious sector-wide devolution proposition to Government.
- 5.2 **Environment Bill:** Government announced new measures to improve air quality and water quality, tackle plastic pollution and restore habitats so plants and wildlife can thrive, as part of the Environment Bill. We [responded](#) to the announcement, noting local government's commitment to work with the Government to ensure the Environment Bill and Office for Environmental Protection is effective in addressing the concerns of communities, but we also stressed that whilst the sector wants to lead the environmental improvement agenda, they need to be empowered to do so.
- 5.3 **Domestic Abuse:** Government has released its [response](#) to the consultation on future delivery of support to domestic abuse victims and their children in accommodation-based domestic abuse services. In it, Ministers propose putting councils at the heart of future commissioning of support for victims and their children, by placing a duty on councils to convene a Local Partnership Board for domestic abuse accommodation support services. This will include Police and Crime Commissioners, health bodies, children's services and housing providers. We will continue to work with Government as they implement their proposals.
- 5.4 **Domestic Abuse Commissioner:** the Home Office has announced the UK's first Domestic Abuse Commissioner, Nicole Jacobs. Nicole is currently Chief Executive of Standing Together Against Domestic Violence. She will lead a national conversation about domestic abuse, ensuring that the voices of victims and survivors - and their children - are heard. We [welcomed](#) her appointment as a positive step to tackling domestic abuse.
- 5.5 **County lines:** the Government has [announced](#) a series of measures including additional funding to the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre to help tackle county lines drug gangs. We are working closely with the Centre to help them join up the efforts of national government and its agencies and share best practice with councils. We are also continuing to develop our own support for councils on this issue, with an event in early 2020.
- 5.6 **Countering extremism:** the Commission for Countering Extremism has published a [report](#) calling for a new approach to tackling extremism. The report rightly recognises the role of councils in tackling extremism and promoting cohesion, and acknowledges the very real impact of extremist activity in our towns and cities. [Tackling extremism](#) requires a joined-up approach at both local and national levels. Local government must be part of any proposals in tackling extremism, particularly with our knowledge

of local communities.

- 5.7 **Safer Streets:** the Home Secretary, Priti Patel, has announced a new £25 million fund to tackle burglary, theft and other offences in crime hotspots. Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) across England and Wales will be able to bid for Safer Streets Fund investment for measures aimed at preventing acquisitive crime in disproportionately affected areas. PCCs must work with local authorities and other partners to develop these plans, which need to be based on evidence, demonstrate value for money and engage local communities.
- 5.8 **Digital connectivity:** the Government pledged to invest in full-fibre broadband in hard-to-reach areas with £5 billion of investment, to deliver on the Government's commitment of nationwide full-fibre by 2025. We called for this funding to be followed by a range of reforms. These include flexibilities that ensure enough people are trained in fibre deployment, national business rates relief on digital infrastructure, along with changes to local wayleave, planning and roadworks policy.
- 5.9 **Rural broadband:** a report from a cross-party group of MPs highlighted the continuing digital divide between urban and rural areas. The Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee also found that poor access continues to marginalise rural communities and is the cause of much frustration. Our response stated that councils understand the digital needs of their local areas and that they have been at the centre of delivering the Superfast Broadband Programme, but cannot fix the issue alone. Our report *The Future of non-metropolitan England*, recommended that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund should be designed to ensure rural business support programmes can be placed on a sustainable financial footing, post-Brexit.
- 5.10 **Licensing laws:** we briefed MPs ahead of the debate on taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) licensing laws. We called on the Government to take forward commitments made in response to its task and finish group's report and introduce reform legislation to update and strengthen existing outdated laws.
- 5.11 **Armed Forces Covenant:** the House of Commons Defence Committee has published its annual Armed Forces Report, outlining concerns around the support for veterans and the armed forces community. In our written evidence we highlighted our concern that councils would not be able to maintain current levels of support for veterans when Covenant grants end. We called on the Ministry of Defence to ensure that veterans do not experience a decline in current support, something which the Committee agreed with.
- 5.12 **Transport infrastructure:** we welcomed an announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer of further funding for new roads infrastructure, the creation of a national bus strategy and an accompanying £220 million to improve bus services. With councils facing a £652 million funding gap in providing the concessionary bus fare scheme, as well as a £9 billion roads repair backlog, it is vital the Government goes further and provides financial support on an ongoing basis. Released before the announcement, new government data showed that the number of bus passenger journeys has continued to fall – by 30 million in the last year – and is now at its lowest level since 2007. Polling we have previously commissioned shows almost 70 per cent of residents think councils should be the main decision-makers on bus services.
- 5.13 **Idling vehicles:** the RAC has called for fines for drivers who leave their engines idling. Its research found that 72 per cent of drivers want to see councils tackle motorists who leave their engines running when parked. Whilst fines can be issued to drivers who leave their engines idling, the legislation to enable this to happen is hard to enforce. Councils of course have a pivotal role in tackling air pollution and are doing this through initiatives such as promoting the use of electric vehicles with recharging points, encouraging cycling and introducing clean air zones. We are called on the Government to give councils outside London more powers to enforce offences such as banned turns and obstructing yellow box junctions, which would help unblock congestion hotspots and reduce pollution from stationary and slow-moving traffic.
- 5.14 **Tree management:** following the death of an unborn child that was hit by a tree which fell on her mother's vehicle, the Coroner overseeing the inquiry has issued a report which includes learnings for

councils. There were a number of findings, including that the council involved did not have a proactive and robust tree management system in place. The report also found an over reliance on using external contractors to deal with issues, without enough oversight from council officials. To fulfil the requirements of the 'Regulation 28' report issued by the Coroner, we will circulate the findings to councils to assist in a review of their tree management policies.

5.15 **Green number plates:** green number plates could be introduced to encourage use of electric vehicles, according to new proposals announced by Government. We supported this suggestion as a helpful tool for councils to encourage use of zero emission vehicles, while highlighting the work councils have already done. This includes promoting cycling, investing in cleaner buses, managing air pollution monitoring networks and pioneering low-emission zones. We now need to see a strengthening of the electric car charging point market if the transition to electric vehicles is to be successful.

5.16 **Climate-friendly councils:** Friends of the Earth has produced analysis of climate-friendly councils which highlights local government's important and sometimes overlooked role in cutting carbon emissions and solving the climate crisis. As we said in our response, councils are already doing significant work to protect the environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change. We called for a joint national taskforce led by councils to ensure we have a strong partnership between local and national government that will coordinate and drive climate change action for the benefit of communities. Through our Sector-Led Improvement offer we will be providing support to councils who are looking to address this issue locally. We already offer a Climate Emergency Leadership Essentials programme which will help councillors explore the crucial local leadership role in responding to the climate emergency. In addition, councils can explore innovative solutions to the problem through our Behavioural Insights and Productivity Experts Programmes. Guidance on topics such as climate change and adaption, waste, litter and fly-tipping, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and severe weather can also be found on our website. There is also our New Conversation 2.0 guide to engaging and enabling better dialogue with residents at every level, from consultation through to people's everyday interactions with the local authority, including on issues of climate change.

Priority 6 – Britain's exit from the EU

- 6.1 We are continuing to work with the nine regional chief executives acting as communications links in the central and local government Brexit work.
- 6.2 **Brexit Delivery Board:** our leading members met Ministers at the Brexit Delivery Board on 15 October. They advised on councils' preparations and the risks and opportunities for councils, including the lack of progress on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the opportunity to devolve repatriated powers below Whitehall.
- 6.3 **NAO on Brexit readiness:** the National Audit Office (NAO) reported on the challenges facing the health and social care sectors in accessing the medicines they need in the event of a no deal Brexit. We responded pointing out the existing fragility of the care sector and the resources councils need to prepare for Brexit, whilst saying that councils are doing all they can to prepare for Brexit and that they continue to work tirelessly to ensure their communities and businesses, including social care providers, are as prepared as they can be.
- 6.4 **Brexit** is covered separately on the Leadership Board agenda under Item 6.

Priority 7 – Supporting Councils

- 7.1 **Party conferences:** the LGA ran a programme of engagement at the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat party conferences, hosting debates on the importance of the Queen's Speech for

local government as well as a range of other fringes, seminars and workshops. We also worked closely with organisations such as Shelter, the Centre for Cities, the NHS Confederation, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and the Prince's Trust to secure speaking slots for our councillors so that a local government perspective was provided on subjects including housing, social care, devolution and economic growth, education and youth services.

- 7.2 **Chief Executive recruitment:** we have launched a new joint Recruitment Guide with Solace to provide advice to help councils in hiring chief executives or other senior managers.
- 7.3 **SOLACE Ignite:** the LGA-sponsored Solace Ignite programme is recruiting delegates for its 2019/20 programme. Ignite has been designed to provide a unique personal development opportunity for chief executives, supporting them in their leadership roles. A collection of essays demonstrates the difference the programme has made to the confidence, ambition and capabilities of already impressive local leaders.
- 7.4 **National Graduate Development Programme:** the LGA's National Graduate Development Programme (ngdp) was recognised in the Times Top 100 graduate employers once again, having risen in the rankings from 73rd in 2018 to 64th in 2019. We partner with over 50 different councils every year.
- 7.5 **Menopause:** we have published a new guide that aims to advise councils on what they can do to be 'menopause friendly' employers. With 75 per cent of local government's workforce female and an average age around 40, a significant portion of the sector will be affected by the menopause while working. Many councils ensure female staff and their managers are supported to discuss and consider ways to manage the impact of the menopause at work.
- 7.6 **Cyber security:** in collaboration with councils, we have developed a new tool to help councils evaluate their cyber security arrangements. The aim is to help assess current arrangements, identify good practice within the council or shared service and identify risks and areas for improvement as early as possible.
- 7.7 **Digital:** the Local Digital Collaboration Unit at MHCLG has announced the projects that will be funded as part of the second round of the Local Digital Fund. The Fund aims to help local councils implement the Local Digital Declaration. As part of our Sector-Led Improvement offer, we are also providing support and advice on digital transformation and will be holding an event on the 4 November where councils will be sharing learning on how to make best use of digital and technology.
- 7.8 **Digital connectivity:** we have also launched a guide for councillors on digital connectivity. This has been drafted in consultation with mobile network operators and broadband providers, and explores how councillors can help better connect their areas and includes hints, tips and case studies from those who have undertaken work to help improve their community's connectivity.
- 7.9 **Guide to being an inclusive employer:** the guide, launched at our sell-out equalities event earlier this month, offers suggestions for action in key policy areas to help councils to be at the forefront of creating inclusive workplaces.
- 7.10 **Cultural Investment Fund:** a new £250 million fund aimed at regional museums and libraries around the country and expanding the Cultural Development Fund has been launched by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. We welcomed this news, saying that it will help libraries and museums to adapt, reach even wider audiences, and continue their roles at the heart of the community. Arts Council England will have a key role in distributing the funding.

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. 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. 18 Smith Square: Guinness Asset Management have now moved into the building, based on the third floor. Negotiations are now underway with a single tenant for the second floor, with the aim of the lease being completed by December 2019 and tenant fit out works beginning in January 2020. Subject to successful completion of the lease, this will complete letting of the building.
14. The Stills/Layden House: negotiations with a single tenant to lease all office floors are progressing well, with the tenant keen to take possession of the building as soon as possible after practical completion.
15. A more detailed update on both LGA properties is covered separately on the Leadership Board agenda under Item 21.

Membership engagement by the Strategic Management Team

Chief Executive	
17 September	South Tyneside Council, Chief Executive
18 September	Spelthorne Borough Council, Chief Executive
19 September	Wigan Council, Chief Executive
23 September	Lancashire Council, Chief Executive
30 September	Hampshire County Council, Chief Executive
7 October	Deal Conference 2019, Wigan, Mark Lloyd speaking slot
8 October	London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, Chief Executive
11 October	North East Chief Execs meeting (ANEC)
17 & 18 October	SOLACE Summit, Mark Lloyd speaking
25 October	Essex County Council, Chief Executive
<i>Forward plan</i>	
7 November	DCN Chief Executive's Forum
14 November	Member Peer Conference, Mark Lloyd speaking
18 November	CCN Conference, Mark Lloyd speaking
28 November	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, Mark speaking slot
29 November	Society of Metropolitan Chief Executives, Mark speaking slot
6 December	MJ Future Forum, Mark Lloyd speaking slot
Deputy Chief Executive	
17 September	Worcestershire County Council, Sarah Pickup speaking slot
17 September	Worcester City Council, Leader

Media

Funding for local government
Chairman of the Improvement and Innovation Board, Cllr Peter Fleming, was interviewed about our Queen's Speech press release, which called for councils to be given powers and funding to be able to resume their historic role as major builders of affordable homes (Independent Online, Times, LBC Radio, Sky News, Sky News Radio and Talk Radio)
Cllr Kevin Bentley, Chairman of our Brexit Taskforce, wrote an opinion piece calling for the Government to urgently announce details of its plans for a UK Shared Prosperity Fund to replace EU regional aid funding (Telegraph Online)
Our previous local homelessness services funding shortfall figures featured in a piece looking at the Homelessness Reduction Act (Huffington Post)
We responded to a YMCA report on youth services funding cuts and our call for long term sustainable funding ahead of next year's Spending Review (Independent)
Our previous estimates that since 2010, councils have lost 60p out of every £1 they received from central government, in coverage of the resurgence of council house-building since last year's financial restrictions were lifted (Guardian Online)
LGA adult social care funding gap estimations featured in coverage of the Labour Party proposal to introduce free personal care for over-65s in England (BBC Online)
Our response to an Independent Age report which found up to 330,000 older people have been forced to sell their homes to pay for care costs, including our call for a long-term sustainable funding settlement for adult social care (Express, FT Online)
We responded to Grandparents Plus, which called on the Government to support and fund family members and friends who step in to look after a child (Mail Online)

Our response to the Treasury's announcement of a 1 percentage point increase in PWLB borrowing rates (Guardian Online, Times)
Our lines on the increased demand and funding pressures for children with special educational needs (SEND) (BBC Radio 4 You & Yours)
We responded to a plea by the Royal National College for the Blind, for councils to get more government funding so they can pay for facilities for blind children (BBC Online, iNews Online)
Our response to proposals in the Queen's Speech to reduce serious violence, and our call for increased funding to meet the proposed legal duty (Independent)
Adult social care and health
We responded to a Queen's Speech announcement, which promised to reform adult social care and inject £1 billion next year into social care services (Express, Mail, Express)
Our lines about how investment in the public health grant would relieve pressure on other essential services like the NHS and the criminal justice system in the long-term, in relation to a story on rehabilitation services for drug and alcohol addiction (ITV Regional News)
Our lines on the care services councils provide for elderly and vulnerable residents (Mail, Telegraph)
Children, education and schools
Vice Chairman, Cllr Izzi Seccombe, was interviewed live about our response to the Chief Medical Officer's report on childhood obesity, including our Queen's Speech call for extra powers and funding for councils to make their areas healthier, safer and easier for children to get active (BBC Radio 4 You and Yours)
Deputy Chairman, Cllr David Simmonds, was interviewed about our response to the NAO report on financial pressures for councils to support children and young people with special educational needs (Channel 4 News, BBC Victoria Derbyshire)
Cllr David Simmonds, Deputy Chairman, discussed a fall in the number of pupils offered free transport by 9 per cent between 2016 and 2018 (BBC Radio 4 You & Yours)
Deputy Chairman, Cllr David Simmonds, was interviewed live about our response to an inquiry by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults on children being placed in residential care out of area (Huffington Post, Independent Online, LBC Radio, Telegraph)
Our response to Local Government Ombudsman figures showing nine out of 10 complaints against special needs support provided by councils were upheld in 2018/19 (BBC Online, Mail Online, ITV Online, Guardian)
We supported calls on the Government to fund family members and friends who step in to look after a child (Times, Express, Mail Online)
Our lines about the provision of hearing aids for children with auditory problems (BBC Online)
We previously warned that social services have seen the number of children with mental health conditions rise in recent years, featured in coverage of new funding for a child mental health research centre (Times)
Our lines on council support for kinship carers featured in coverage of a survey which found that three-quarters of kinship carers faced financial hardship after agreeing to raise vulnerable children of relatives (Guardian Online)
We responded to a Local Government Ombudsman report on the pressures on councils to provide education, health and care plans for children with special educational needs, (Independent Online)
Our response to a Royal Society for Public Health report, about improving the street environment to help tackle childhood obesity (LBC Online, Sky News Online, ITV Online, Mail Online, Telegraph)
Recent LGA school places analysis and our call for councils to be given powers to expand schools to help meet future demand in coverage of the Prime Minister announcement of 30 new free schools (Mail Online, Star Online)
Our response to an Ofsted report which warned against home educating children to try and resolve difficulties they are having in school (Mail)
Housing
Housing spokesman, Cllr David Renard, was interviewed about our press release, calling on the Government to use the Queen's Speech to scrap the permitted development right after figures showed an almost 230 per cent increase in agricultural to residential conversions in the last three years (Sky News Radio, LBC Radio, Mail, i, Telegraph)
Our lines on the work councils are doing to tackle rogue landlords from illegally converting flats and houses, and our calls for the Government to grant local authorities further banning powers for landlords (Times)
We responded to a National Housing Federation report which found that more than 8 million people across England are living in unaffordable, insecure or unsuitable homes (Independent)
Our response to ONS figures showing there has been a 22 per cent year-on-year increase in the number of deaths of homeless people in 2018 in England and Wales (ITV Online, Mail Online, Independent)
Our lines on affordable housing featured in coverage of figures that show the number of older people seeking help for homelessness has risen by 39 per cent in the last five years (Mail Online)
We responded to the latest homelessness statistics, which showed the number of households living in temporary accommodation in England is at its highest level in more than a decade (Mirror Online, Times)
Our response to a report by Homes for Later Living, which claims poor housing is set to contribute to almost 1

million more older people suffering falls-related injuries (Express)
Inclusive growth, jobs and devolution
A previous LGA report featured in coverage of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Inclusive Growth's report on the gap in healthy life expectancy between parts of Britain (Guardian Online)
Supporting councils
We responded to an RAC survey which found that almost 70 per cent of motorists want councils to take action against drivers who leave their engine running while their car is parked (Mail Online, Mirror Online, Metro Online, ITV Online, Times, BBC Radio 5 Live)
Our response to analysis by the Food Standards Agency which found that the number of council food hygiene inspections has dropped from 415,000 five years ago to 345,000 in 2018/19 (Times)
We responded to a Confused.com survey about the provision of blue badges for disabled parking spaces (ITV Regional News)
Our lines on council garden waste collection services (BBC Online, Telegraph Online and Mail Online)
Our call for the Government to increase penalties for smugglers of illegal cigarettes following research that found a 72 per cent increase (Sunday Mirror, Star, People)
We featured in coverage of calls by the tattooing industry and the Royal Society for Public Health for a uniform approach to the licensing of tattooists by councils (ITV News)
Our recent school places analysis featured in a report on Labour's proposals to scrap business rates discounts for independent schools (Telegraph Online)
Our lines on councils using algorithms to make decisions for welfare matters (Guardian Online)
A single voice for local government
Chairman Cllr James Jamieson took part in a Q&A with the National Association of Local Councils, for a piece in their next membership publication
Our Chairman was interviewed by Public Sector Executive magazine on what freedoms and flexibilities councils need to improve and protect services
Vice Chair, Cllr Marianne Overton, was interviewed about our press release, warning people to avoid illegal skin lightening creams 'at all costs' after recent seizures by trading standards officers found many to contain mercury and a bleaching agent that can remove the top layer of skin (Sky News Radio, BBC Radio 1, BBC Radio 2, BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio 5 Live, BBC Online, Independent Online, iNews Online, Guardian Online)
Transport spokesman, Cllr David Renard, was interviewed about our press release, calling for all councils to be given oversight of local bus services after figures showed the number of journeys had fallen by more than 300 million in five years – the lowest level in over a decade (Sky News Radio, BBC Radio 5 Live, LBC Radio, TalkRadio, Mail Online, ITV Online, i, Sunday Telegraph, Times, Mirror, Guardian)
Resources Board Chairman, Cllr Richard Watts, was interviewed about our response to a Money Advice Trust report into councils' debt collection practices and use of bailiffs (Independent Online, Sky News Online, LBC Online, BBC Online, Guardian, TalkRadio)
Our call for all councils in England to be able to ban parking on pavements, during an interview with campaign group Living Streets chief executive Joe Irvin (BBC Radio 4's In Touch programme)
We responded to a Money Advice Trust report into councils' debt collection practices and use of bailiffs (Mail Online)
Our lines on the work councils are doing for their residents ahead of the UK's exit from the European Union on 31 October (Guardian Online)
We responded to the Home Office announcement of the UK's first Domestic Abuse Commissioner, Nicole Jacobs (Mail)
Our previous lines on producer responsibility in coverage of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee's calls for a 'fundamental shift' away from single-use packaging, including plastic, to help the environment (ITV Online)