

# Councillors' Forum

## Agenda

Thursday, 21 January 2021  
12.30 pm

Online via Zoom

**To:** Members of the Councillors' Forum  
**cc:** Named officers for briefing purposes

**Councillors' Forum**  
21 January 2021

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There will be a meeting of the Councillors' Forum at **12.30 pm on Thursday, 21 January 2021** taking place online via Zoom.

**Political Group meetings:**

The group meetings will take place in advance of the meeting. Please contact your political group as outlined below for further details.

**Apologies:**

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting.

<b>Conservative:</b>	Group Office: 020 7664 3223	email: <a href="mailto:lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk">lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk</a>
<b>Labour:</b>	Group Office: 020 7664 3263	email: <a href="mailto:labour.grouplga@local.gov.uk">labour.grouplga@local.gov.uk</a>
<b>Independent:</b>	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: <a href="mailto:independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk">independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk</a>
<b>Liberal Democrat:</b>	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: <a href="mailto:libdem@local.gov.uk">libdem@local.gov.uk</a>

**LGA Contact:**

Richard Kember  
020 7072 7420 / [richard.kember@local.gov.uk](mailto:richard.kember@local.gov.uk)

**Carers' Allowance**

As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of £9.00 per hour or £10.55 if receiving London living wage is available to cover the cost of dependants (i.e. children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.

**Social Media**

The LGA is committed to using social media in a co-ordinated and sensible way, as part of a strategic approach to communications, to help enhance the reputation of local government, improvement engagement with different elements of the community and drive efficiency. Please feel free to use social media during this meeting. **However, you are requested not to use social media during any confidential items.**

## Councillors' Forum – Membership 2020/2021

Councillor	Authority
<b>Conservative ( 39)</b>	
Cllr James Jamieson (Chairman)	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE (Vice Chairman)	Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Robert Alden	Birmingham City Council
Cllr John Fuller OBE	South Norfolk District Council
Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE	Bexley Council
Cllr Philip Atkins OBE	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Marc Bayliss	Worcester City Council
Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
Cllr Paul Bettison OBE	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
Cllr Abi Brown	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Cllr Nick Chard	Kent County Council
Cllr Janet Clowes	Cheshire East Council
Cllr Steve Count	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Andrew Day	Warwick District Council
Cllr Geoff Driver CBE	Lancashire County Council
Cllr Peter Fleming OBE	Sevenoaks District Council
Cllr Peter Golds CBE	Tower Hamlets Council
Cllr John Hart	Devon County Council
Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Teresa Heritage	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Ian Hudspeth	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Rory Love OBE	Kent County Council
Cllr Paul Middlebrough	Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Colin Noble	Suffolk County Council
Cllr William Nunn	Breckland Council
Cllr Tim Oliver	Surrey County Council
Cllr John Pennington	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
Lord Gary Porter CBE	South Holland District Council
Cllr Andrew Proctor	Norfolk County Council
Cllr David Renard	Swindon Borough Council
Cllr John Riley	Hillingdon London Borough Council
Cllr Linda Robinson	Wychavon District Council
Cllr Nicholas Rushton	Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Glen Sanderson JP	Northumberland Council
Cllr Linda Taylor	Cornwall Council
Cllr Michael Wilcox	Lichfield District Council
Cllr Katrina Wood	Buckinghamshire Council
<b>Substitutes</b>	
<b>Labour ( 36)</b>	
Cllr Nick Forbes CBE (Senior	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council

Vice-Chair)	
Cllr Tom Beattie	Corby Borough Council
Cllr Nesil Caliskan	Enfield Council
Cllr Judi Billing MBE	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Judith Blake CBE	Leeds City Council
Cllr Anntoinette Bramble	Hackney London Borough Council
Cllr Clare Coghill	Waltham Forest London Borough Council
Cllr Doina Cornell	Stroud District Council
Cllr Amy Cross	Blackpool Council
Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
Cllr Tudor Evans OBE	Plymouth City Council
Cllr Georgia Gould	Camden Council
Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
Cllr Paulette Hamilton	Birmingham City Council
Cllr Richard Henry	Stevenage Borough Council
Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Cllr Simon Henig CBE	Durham County Council
Cllr Helen Holland	Bristol City Council
Sir Stephen Houghton CBE	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Anthony Hunt	Torfaen County Borough Council
Cllr Farah Hussain	Redbridge London Borough Council
Cllr Brigid Jones	Birmingham City Council
Cllr Naushabah Khan	Medway Council
Sir Richard Leese CBE	Manchester City Council
Cllr John Merry CBE	Salford City Council
Cllr Dhanisha Patel	Bridgend County Borough Council
Cllr Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
Cllr Oliver Ryan	Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Timothy Swift MBE	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Shama Tatler	Brent Council
Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE	Stevenage Borough Council
Cllr Leigh Redman	Somerset County Council
Cllr Darren Rodwell	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council
Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
Cllr Richard Watts	Islington Council
Cllr Andrew Western	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
<b>Substitutes</b>	
Cllr Muhammed Butt	Brent Council
Cllr Shaun Davies	Telford and Wrekin Council
Cllr Peter Marland	Milton Keynes Council
Cllr Shabir Pandor	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Cllr Alice Perry	Islington Council
Mayor Marvin Rees	Bristol City Council
Cllr Bryony Rudkin	Ipswich Borough Council
Cllr Sian Timoney	Luton Borough Council
Cllr Alan Waters	Norwich City Council
Cllr Debbie Wilcox	Newport City Council
<b>Independent ( 10)</b>	
Cllr Marianne Overton MBE (Vice-Chair)	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Sue Baxter	Bromsgrove District Council

Cllr Wayne Davies	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Cllr Rosemarie Harris	Powys County Council
Cllr Phelim MacCafferty	Brighton & Hove City Council
Cllr Colin Mann	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Cllr Sarah Rouse	Malvern Hills District Council
Cllr Carolyn Rule	Cornwall Council
Cllr Clive Woodbridge	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Cllr Paul Woodhead	Cannock Chase District Council
<b><i>Substitutes</i></b>	
<b>Liberal Democrat ( 11)</b>	
Cllr Howard Sykes MBE (Vice-Chair)	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Alan Connett	Devon County Council
Cllr Mark Cory	Colchester Borough Council
Cllr Ruth Dombey OBE	Sutton London Borough Council
Cllr Liz Green	Kingston upon Thames Royal Borough Council
Cllr Richard Kemp CBE	Liverpool City Council
Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
Cllr Adele Morris	Southwark Council
Cllr Bridget Smith	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE	Portsmouth City Council
Cllr Chris White	Hertfordshire County Council
<b><i>Substitutes</i></b>	
Cllr Keith House	Eastleigh Borough Council
Cllr Anita Lower	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Cllr David Neighbour	Hart District Council

## Agenda

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### Councillors' Forum

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c) Community Wellbeing Board - Cllr Ian Hudspeth <i>Report to follow</i>	
d) Culture, Tourism and Sport Board - Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE	13 - 14
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**Date of Next Meeting:** Thursday, 11 March 2021, 12.30 pm, Online via Zoom





## **Presentation from The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government**

**Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP**



1. Robert Jenrick was appointed Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on 24 July 2019.
2. Robert was Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury from 9 January 2018 to 24 July 2019. He was elected Conservative MP for Newark in June 2014.
3. Robert is also Ministerial Champion for the Midlands Engine.
4. The minister is responsible for the overall leadership and strategic direction of the department. Responsibilities include:
  - 4.1 Strategic oversight of the department's business
  - 4.2 Midlands Engine Champion
  - 4.3 Chair Grenfell Ministerial Recovery Group
5. Robert entered Parliament following a by-election in June 2014. He served on the Health Select Committee from July 2014 until he was appointed Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Minister for Employment at the

Department for Work and Pensions. He was appointed as Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice in May 2015 and from June 2017 served as Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Home Secretary. From July 2017 until his appointment as Exchequer Secretary he was a member of the Board of the Conservative Party.

## Chairman's Update

This report covers the Chairman's activities from 1 November 2020 – 31 January 2021

### LGA and Ministerial/Parliamentary business

<b>November 2020</b>	
4	Local Outbreak Plan Advisory Board
5	Local Government Transition Delivery Board
12	Kelly Tolhurst MP
12	Invitation to give evidence to the HCLG Committee inquiry into The Spending Review and local government finance.
18	Invitation to produce evidence Devolution APPG Inquiry
20	Local Outbreak Plan Advisory Board
23	Chris Pincher MP
25	SofS MHCLG
27	Local Outbreak Plan Advisory Board
30	CYP Parliamentary Briefing
<b>December 2020</b>	
02	Will Quince MP
09	Evidence session Lords Constitution Committee: COVID-19 - use and scrutiny of emergency powers
14	Local Outbreak Plan Advisory Board
16	SofS MHCLG
16	SofS DHSC proposal challenge session
17	Luke Hall MP
18	Local Outbreak Plan Advisory Board
18	Luke Hall MP Local Government Finance Settlement briefing
30	SofS Education
<b>January 2021</b>	
05	Local Government Trans
06	LG Finance Conference
08	Local Outbreak Plan Advisory Board
25	Invitation to give evidence to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee

**Meetings with organisations and individuals**

<b>November 2020</b>	
4	Emma Dean, Special Adviser to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
6	London Councils - Cllr Govindia Ravi, Jade Appleton
10	DHSC - Raghuv Basin, Carolyn Wilkins, Steve McManus, Jeanelle de Gruchy
26	Natural England - Marian Spain, Tony Juniper
30	Homes England – Peter Freeman
30	DHSC – Sean Povey
<b>December 2020</b>	
03	Mayor of Nancy
07	HSE – Sarah Newton (Chair)
09	BSA Roundtable
15	Interview Russell Lynch, Economics Editor, Telegraph
<b>January 2021</b>	
07	DHSE Challenge Session
12	Baroness Armstrong
19	NHS Confed – Lord Adebawale, Danny Mortimer
19	Population Health Stakeholder Advisory Group
21	DHSE Challenge Session
25	HSE – Sarah Newton
27	DHSE Challenge Session

**Events and speaking engagements**

<b>November 2020</b>	
4	National Children's & Adult Services Conference
6	Independent Group Conference
9	CBI Webinar
12	Health and care system reform: stakeholder roundtable
26	2020 LGIU & CCLA Cllr Awards
<b>December 2020</b>	
01	Launch event for Rough Sleeping Peer Support Programme
16	IFG / House of Lords Public Services Committee debate
<b>January 2021</b>	
18	West Midlands Leaders Meeting
27	The UK Commemorative Ceremony for HMD 2021
28	CEMR 70th Anniversary – Horizon 2051: Local Futures for Europe

## **Children and Young People – report from Cllr Judith Blake CBE (Chair)**

### *Early Years*

1. The Children and Young People's Board published its research into Early Years funding 'Understanding the Effectiveness of the Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund, Disability Access Fund and Early Years Pupil Premium'. The research shows that there are significant improvements that could be made to improve take-up of each fund, reduce bureaucracy for parents, providers and local authorities and ensure that the funding achieves its aims.
2. On 3 December I wrote to Children's and Families Minister, Vicky Ford, sharing the research. I welcomed a conversation with the Department to explore how the recommendations made in these reports could be taken forward.

### *Youth Justice*

3. On 3 December I wrote to the National Probation Service (NPS), asking them to re-consider their policy of not permitting seconded probation officers from undertaking home visits. We have been concerned that, where seconded probation officers are unable to conduct visits, this is in some cases resulting in children not getting the support they need or is placing additional pressure on other members of the team, who are not employed by the NPS.

### *Spending Review*

4. On 25 November we responded to the Government's Spending Review. We noted that while additional funding for adult's and children's social care was welcome, it would only address some of the pressures, and significant additional funding was still required to ensure children, young people and their families received the help they needed. We also welcomed additional funding for secure children's homes and school places for children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities, along with the extension of the Troubled Families programme for a further year.
5. We noted that while a small uplift to hourly rates for early years entitlements was helpful, immediate investment was required to support providers whose businesses had struggled due to COVID-19. We were also disappointed that additional funding was not made available to schools to cover exceptional costs incurred as a result of the pandemic.

### *Child-Centred Recovery*

6. On 30 November we hosted a parliamentary briefing on our child-centred recovery policy document. We used this opportunity to brief parliamentarians on the challenges facing councils with regard to supporting children and families, and to emphasise the importance of all government departments working together to create child-friendly policies. The briefing was well received, and we have arranged several follow up conversations with parliamentarians to take this work further.

*National Children and Adult Services Conference*

7. On 4-6 November, we joined ADCS and ADASS to host NCASC virtually for the first time. The conference was extremely well attended, and we received positive feedback from councils who welcomed the opportunity to 'meet' and consider a broad range of important topics. We were pleased to welcome Vicky Ford MP, Minister for Children and Families, who spoke to delegates about a range of issues including adoption, kinship care, SEND and early help. She also confirmed the Government's intention to proceed with a review of the children's care system, and thanked those working to support children around the country.

*Children's Services Funding*

8. On 1 December I attended a children's services funding roundtable organised by several charities including The Children's Society and NSPCC. At this roundtable, I emphasised the importance of early help and of putting children at the heart of our pandemic recovery plans.

*Education and SEND*

9. Deputy Chair of the Children and Young People Board, Cllr Lucy Nethsingha, gave evidence to the Education Committee inquiry on home education that took place on the 24<sup>th</sup> November. Speaking alongside ADCS President Jenny Coles and representatives from the home education lobby, Cllr Nethsingha highlighted the need to raise the profile of children missing formal full-time education, strengthen the legislative framework around electively home educated children and resource local authorities adequately to fulfil their responsibilities to ensure all children receive a suitable education.
10. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> December, Vice-Chairman Cllr Teresa Heritage gave evidence to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on SEND. Cllr Heritage emphasised the need for long-term certainty of high needs funding to help councils support children with SEND, as well as the need for the Government's on-going review of SEND to increase levels of mainstream inclusion and give councils the powers to act as leaders of local SEND systems and hold partners to account for their work in supporting children and young people with special needs.

*Children's Improvement*

11. I chaired the most recent meeting of the LGA/ADCS/Solace/DfE/Ofsted Children's Improvement Board, which took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> October. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the Department for Education's work to support councils rated as *requires improvement* by Ofsted, the LGA's work to develop a tool to also support *R/* councils and the work of the East of England's Regional Improvement & Innovation Alliance.

*Youth Employment & Skills Update*

12. We have continued to maintain our focus on improving youth participation work, considering that young people's training and employment prospects are being disproportionately affected by COVID-19 restrictions and the economic fallout of the crisis. Engagement with member authorities and stakeholders have continued to shape our views and emerging policy on

what should be an appropriate offer for young people and employers to support economic recovery.

13. We continue to work closely with the LGA Workforce team, as many of the employment and skills measures, for example, Apprenticeships, Traineeships, T Levels, Kickstart Scheme, involve the sector workforce.
14. The youth participation report, culminating our engagement work with the sector and stakeholders, including the impact of COVID-19 crisis on young people was published. The report [Re-thinking youth participation for the present and next generation: education to employment](#) was launched early October 2020 with a [press release](#) calling for COBRA-style action to save the 'lost generation' of young people. The publication received good traction and has reached a broad range of stakeholders.
15. To sustain the momentum on our youth campaign and shine a light on the work more widely, we are publishing a series of First articles from Autumn 2020 to Spring 2021. The introductory feature appeared with a by-line from the Chairs of the three boards (CYP, P&P and CRB), demonstrating the importance of a joined-up education and employment and skills policy. The [feature](#) (p11) highlighted the plight of young people and the job crisis. It set out the reports recommendation, including LGA's calls for a youth, employment and skills taskforce and a youth minister.
16. The LGA Chairman wrote to several Ministers about the report, including Mims Davies, Minister of State for Employment, DWP; Gillian Keegan, Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills, DfE; Luke Hall, Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government, MHCLG. The LGA initiated and organised a roundtable session in December 2020 with the Minister for Employment and P&P and CR Lead Members to discuss how local government could support DWP COVID-19 related employment support schemes.
17. Separately, the LGA along with council/combined authority representatives have continued to maintain a dialogue with DfE on young people and those not in education, employment or training (NEET) though regular meetings with officials. Discussions have focussed on raising concerns about appropriate careers advice and guidance, relevance and sufficiency of provision and funding.

### **Press Releases & Publications**

18. There have been a number of Press Released and Publications put out by the LGA Children and Young People team, you can view them [here](#).

<b>Contact officer:</b>	Ian Keating
<b>Position:</b>	Principal Policy Adviser
<b>Phone number:</b>	0207 664 3032
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:ian.keating@local.gov.uk">ian.keating@local.gov.uk</a>





## **City Regions Board – report from Cllr Sir Richard Leese CBE (Chair)**

### **Health Devolution**

1. In November, the City Regions Board held a joint meeting on health devolution with lead members of the People and Places Board and the Community Wellbeing Board. This meeting heard from speakers from Cornwall Council and Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership on their experiences of health devolution, before discussing and agreeing the LGA lines on health devolution. Following this meeting, lead members also fed into the LGA's response to the NHS England and NHS Improvement consultation on integrated care systems.

### **Urban Recovery**

2. The City Regions board has commissioned Cambridge Econometrics to carry out work on "A Vision for Urban Growth and Recovery", looking at the ways in which urban areas have been uniquely affected by Covid-19, and identifying the key interventions needed for a successful, sustainable recovery for urban areas. Work has commenced on this project, which will use data analysis, case studies and interviews with key stakeholders to map out a vision for what recovery could look like for urban areas. Cambridge Econometrics have presented their plans to the City Regions board, and the work is due to be completed by March.

### **Devolution APPG**

3. In December Lead Members of the People and Places and City Regions Boards signed off the LGA's written submission to the Devolution All Party Parliamentary Group's Inquiry into the role that central government has in making a success of devolution in England. Over the course of the autumn an inquiry panel, including Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe (Vice Chair of the City Regions Board), have been holding a series of oral evidence sessions with experts from across government, academia and the private sector. The final report is expected to be published in March. More details can be found on the [APPG Website](#).

### **Adult skills and lifelong learning**

4. In December, the Education Select Committee released its [recommendations](#) from its adult skills and lifelong learning inquiry. It recommends that there should be a community learning centre in every town, and singles out providers of adult and community learning – which includes local authorities - as "the jewel in the crown of the nation's adult education landscape". This is good news for councils. We already set out the good work on the sector in our LGA councillor handbook on making the best of adult learning service we published last Autumn [Learning for Life: the role of adult community education in developing thriving local communities - A handbook for councillors | Local Government Association](#). In addition, I represented the LGA at the Festival of Learning last November to present the award for best adult learning project.

### **Restart employment support for long term unemployed people**

5. Councils face growing concerns about the impact of unemployment on residents, communities and wider local economy as the Covid-19 crisis continues to unfold. People & Places and City Regions Board Members worked together to put forward practical suggestions on how DWP's three-year, £2.9 billion, national [Restart programme](#) to support long-term unemployed (LTU) people back to work could be delivered to best effect. While it remains a national programme, DWP has since issued a letter to the LGA and other local government representatives seeking input on the national procurement exercise. We have relayed this offer to our member authorities.

### **Improving the relationship with DWP**

6. In late December, the LGA initiated a roundtable session with Mims Davies MP, the Minister for Employment, and Lead Members of the City Regions and People and Places Boards. At that meeting, members reinforced the need for DWP to work with us on existing and upcoming initiatives under the Government's Plan for Jobs, and to localise by default.

### **Youth employment and skills**

7. We continue to maintain our focus on improving youth participation work, considering that young people's training and employment prospects are being disproportionately affected by COVID-19 restrictions and the economic fallout of the crisis. Engagement with member authorities and stakeholders have continued to shape our views and emerging policy on what should be an appropriate offer for young people and employers to support economic recovery.
8. We continue to work closely with the LGA Workforce team, as many of the employment and skills measures, for example, Apprenticeships, Traineeships, T Levels, Kickstart Scheme, involve the sector workforce.
9. The youth participation report, culminating our engagement work with the sector and stakeholders, including the impact of COVID-19 crisis on young people was published. The report [Re-thinking youth participation for the present and next generation: education to employment](#) was launched early October 2020 with a [press release](#) calling for COBRA-style action to save the 'lost generation' of young people. The publication received good traction and has reached a broad range of stakeholders.
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11. The LGA Chairman wrote to several Ministers about the report, including Mims Davies, Minister of State for Employment, DWP; Gillian Keegan, Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills, DfE; Luke Hall, Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government, MHCLG.
12. Separately, the LGA along with council/combined authority representatives have continued to maintain a dialogue with DfE on young people and those not in education, employment or training (NEET) through regular meetings with officials. Discussions have focussed on raising concerns about appropriate careers advice and guidance, relevance and sufficiency of provision and funding.

### **UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

13. The UKSPF was one of the key priorities of the LGA's response to the Spending Review, which included the announcement of the Heads of Terms. This includes a £220 million pilot for 2021/22 before the fund will be introduced fully. We are expecting in the coming weeks a prospectus for the fund to be launched. The LGA has offered to help speed the development of the detail of the new fund by offering to set up task groups with Government departments to help codesign the fund. We understand the Government has agreed in principle to this and we are working to determine how this will operate.

### **EU Exit**

14. On Christmas Eve, the Prime Minister and the President of the European Commission announced the outcome of the negotiations between the UK and the European Union and a deal on future trade arrangements, which has since been agreed by the UK Parliament. We have sent out communications on the key issues for local government in the agreement and members of the EU Exit Taskforce have met with ministers to raise these issues.

<b>Contact officer:</b>	Sonika Sidhu
<b>Position:</b>	Principal Policy Adviser
<b>Phone number:</b>	0207 664 3032
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:sonika.sidhu@local.gov.uk">sonika.sidhu@local.gov.uk</a>



## **Culture, Tourism & Sport Board – Report from Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE (Chair)**

1. Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson gave oral evidence to the [House of Lords Committee on the National Plan for Sport and Recreation](#) on Wednesday 16 November at 4.30pm. The Committee's focus was on alternative ways to support more active lifestyles, such as through active travel. They have requested that the LGA write to them as a follow up to outline how we can support more inclusive levels of activity.
2. A written response to the [Committee's call for evidence](#) is also being developed for submission by 29 January. The response will highlight our calls for further investment in public leisure facilities, both as a response to the additional pressures related to Covid-19 and due to the need to replace or refurbish more than half of the public leisure estate.
3. Cllr Peter Golds represented local government at the Ministerial Working Group on Sport on 7 January. Cllr Golds raised the importance of public leisure to the nation's health and wellbeing, and the financial challenge facing public leisure providers.
4. Cllr Vernon-Jackson chaired a joint event with the Football Foundation on '[Unlocking the power of football investment](#)' on 19 November 2020. The event marked the culmination of two years work by the Foundation to develop a [local football facilities plan](#) for every council area. These were published on the day, and the event explored how areas could access the £100 million being made available by the Foundation to deliver the plans, and the benefits of working in partnership to improve facilities. Attended by 275 delegates, the event featured presentations from Gareth Southgate, Tim Hollingsworth, Martin Glenn, Cheshire West and Chester Council, and Sunderland City Council.
5. Cllr Vernon-Jackson wrote two articles for the October edition of *First* magazine:
  - 5.1. [Just do it](#) explored the key role of sport and physical activity in supporting and leading communities through Covid-19.
  - 5.2. [Supporting economic recovery](#) explored the way in which libraries can support an economic recovery, through their CV writing and job clubs, business and intellectual property centres, and free internet access – which was recognised as an essential service during lockdown and granted an exemption to keep operating.

**Contact officer:** Ian Leete  
**Position:** Senior Adviser – Culture, Tourism & Sport  
**Phone number:** 0207 664 3143  
**E-mail:** [ian.leete@local.gov.uk](mailto:ian.leete@local.gov.uk)



## **Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board – report from Cllr David Renard (Chairman)**

### **Housing, planning and homelessness**

#### *Housing Improvement*

1. After some delays due to the impact of COVID-19 we are now moving forward with the Housing Advisers Programme (HAP) for 2020/21 which is designed to support councils seeking to innovate in meeting the housing needs of their communities. The 2020/21 HAP opened for applications on 12 November 2020 with a closing date of 7th January 2021. Successful bids are expected to be announced by 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021. For more information visit [www.local.gov.uk/housingadvisersprogramme](http://www.local.gov.uk/housingadvisersprogramme)
2. Together with the National Federation of ALMOs and the Association of Retained Council Housing we commissioned published [a report](#) by Pragmatix Advisory demonstrating that a post-pandemic building boom of 100,000 new social homes for rent each year would meet demand for affordable homes and deliver a £14.5 billion boost to the economy. The report was [cover story in The Observer](#) and covered in other media channels.
3. In November we held a webinar on the obligations and opportunities for custom or self-build housing. The webinar included presenters from the Right To Build Task Force and Mid Devon District Council.

#### *Planning reforms*

4. In October we responded to [Government's Planning for the Future White Paper](#) consultation. In [our response](#) we raised our concerns with a number of the wide-ranging proposals such as a shortened 30-month Local Plan timeframe; land in future Local Plans being allocated into one of three areas - Growth, Renewal, Protect; a new Infrastructure Levy; and the reduction of councillor and community input. We have begun working with Government on proposals we support such as the shift to a more digital approach and a skills strategy.
5. We simultaneously responded to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee's parallel [inquiry into the future of the planning system in England](#) which examined how well the proposed reforms would support Government's wider building strategy, including their target of 300,000 new homes a year. In our evidence we stated that only a locally-led planning system in which councils and the communities they represent have a say over the way places develop will ensure the delivery of high-quality affordable homes with the necessary infrastructure to create sustainable, resilient places.

*Decarbonisation of housing*

6. In November we responded to the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee's [inquiry into decarbonising heat homes](#). In our evidence we noted the vital role local government plays in accelerating the shift towards achieving net carbon zero. We also noted that it is important that councils have the tools, powers and flexibilities they need to improve quality standards and decarbonise heat in existing and new build homes and deliver the types of new homes and infrastructure their communities need.

*Homelessness*

7. In December, the LGA published [a policy paper on Rethinking Homelessness Prevention](#). Based on research commissioned by the LGA and delivered by the Institute for Social Policy, Housing, and Equalities and Neil Morland and Co., the paper calls for an explicit, national-level focus on upstream homelessness prevention, with the associated resources for councils.
8. In December, Councillor Rachel Blake gave evidence to the Housing, Communities, and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into the impact of coronavirus on private renting and homelessness, on behalf of the EEHT board. She raised issues relating to local government funding, the No Recourse to Public Funds condition, and welfare benefits, including Discretionary Housing Payments. The committee has also [published the LGA's written evidence into the inquiry](#).
9. Working with Local Partnerships, [the LGA published a briefing on the lessons learned from the COVID response](#) for local authorities' homelessness services in November. In December, I chaired a webinar to discuss the report's findings with councils. Steve Philpott, the Strategic Lead for Rough Sleeping at Birmingham City Council, attended to share Birmingham's experiences and approach.

*Building safety*

10. The LGA has [published a briefing](#) aimed at any ward councillors supporting residents experiencing cladding issues in their local areas. It explains the background to cladding issues, highlights issues facing residents, and sets out ways in which councillors might support them.

**Environment and climate change**

11. A number of key policy documents on climate change were published at the end of 2020. These include:



11.1 [Ten Point Plan](#): announced by Government which sets out ambitions for a Green Industrial Revolution and the approach that government will take on the UK's path to net zero. It outlines investment and support for developing the low carbon economy, in areas such as clean transport, green jobs, renewable energy, homes and public buildings, carbon capture and storage, nature and innovation. Key commitments include bringing forward the ban on selling new petrol and diesel cars to 2030, creating 250,000 jobs and mobilising £12 billion of government investment. The LGA provided a [response](#) which is published on our website.

11.2 [Energy White Paper: Powering our net zero future](#): published by The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) which sets out plans for a clean energy system. The White Paper builds on the government's Ten Point Plan and at the centre is a green economic recovery by supporting up to 220,000 jobs across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and, keeping energy bills affordable.

11.3 [Sixth Carbon Budget](#) (the limit on UK emissions for 2033 – 37): which consists of recommendations by the Committee on Climate Change to Government on meeting the UK's carbon reduction targets. It includes a number of reports including on a pathway to net zero by 2050 and a specific report on [the role of local authorities to achieve net zero](#). This report highlights that councils share Government's climate change ambitions, and key recommendations include a delivery framework incorporating local and national action and, flexible long-term financing for local authorities.

12. Biodiversity and Ecosystems – Cllr Philip Glanville gave evidence to the Parliamentary Environment Audit Committee Inquiry into Biodiversity and Ecosystems on 12 November, highlighting our concerns about the impact of the new measures in the Environment Bill on councils, particularly the introduction of biodiversity net gain through the planning system. The Environment Bill is expected to move to the House of Lords shortly, and we are waiting for a revised timetable.
13. We responded to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) inquiry on managing flood risks. We also contributed to the LGA's submission to the Environment Audit Committee's (EAC) inquiry on green jobs.
14. The [results](#) of the LGA's climate change survey, which was issued by officers in February 2020 and closed in October 2020 due to Covid-19, has been published on our website. A press release on the findings on climate-related incidents affecting councils was also [released](#).
15. The LGA has worked with Local Partnerships to publish a [green finance practical guide](#) to help councils understand the options available for financing their green ambitions and how these might apply to different types of projects. We delivered a webinar to support the launch of the guide and it forms part of our activities in the lead up to COP26. We are working on a number of activities based on the five areas of focus announced by Government in the lead up to the Summit, namely finance, clean energy, clean transport, nature-based solutions, and adaptation and resilience.

These activities seek to demonstrate and showcase the role of councils in delivering a local path to net zero.

## **Transport**

### *National Infrastructure Strategy*

16. The Government has launched its long delayed National Infrastructure Strategy (NIS) which is a response to the National Infrastructure Assessment (NIA) carried out by the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) and published in 2018. The strategy sets out the Government strategic infrastructure priorities for the coming parliament. We were disappointed that the Government did not fully implement the NICs recommendation that cities should have five-year guaranteed funding settlements for transport infrastructure.
17. Instead the Government is only seeking to guarantee these budgets for Mayoral Combined Authorities. We will continue to push the government to make long term settlements available to all areas to allow them to create long term infrastructure plans based on guaranteed and predictable funding.

### *Decarbonisation of transport*

18. We completed our series of webinars on the decarbonisation of transport. The webinars were well attended and covered a wide variety of topics. The final webinar on active travel was recorded and can be viewed [here](#). The web resource for our decarbonisation project is available [here](#) and includes practical information for councils decarbonising their transport networks.

### *Public transport*

19. The board has concluded our research project examining the future of public transport and councils' ambitions for their role in getting the industry going again post pandemic. We held a webinar on 19 January to reflect on the findings and discuss councils' role in the future of public transport. The webinar details are available [here](#).

<b>Contact officer:</b>	Eamon Lally
<b>Position:</b>	Principal Policy Adviser
<b>Phone number:</b>	0207 664 3132
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:eamon.lally@local.gov.uk">eamon.lally@local.gov.uk</a>

## **Improvement and Innovation Board – from Cllr Peter Fleming OBE (Chairman)**

### **Sector-led Improvement**

1. In light of COVID-19 and recent national lockdown measures, we continue to provide a wide range of remote support to councils, including [Recovery & Renewal Panels and Bespoke Remote Peer Support](#), to assist councils with their immediate responses to COVID-19 and plans for recovery and renewal. Our Peer Support Offer includes a new interim virtual support offer, the [Remote Corporate Health Check](#), which provides an opportunity for councils to focus on key corporate issues—such as priority setting, place leadership and financial planning—over a period of days.
2. We are reviewing the resumption of Corporate Peer Challenge and other peer support offers that require on-site face to face activity. We are applying the learning from the recent evaluation and from the experience and benefits of delivering peer support remotely. We intend to recommence during the next financial year.

### **Housing and Homelessness**

3. In November, we launched the [Housing Advisors Programme](#), which provides bespoke expert support to councils – or groups of councils – wanting to transform the delivery of homes and places, the quality and security of existing homes and/or to prevent and reduce homelessness. This will help to make a significant difference to the housing crisis and help to build capacity in councils by ensuring the sustainability of projects in the longer term. We will also take the opportunity of sharing learning from these projects to ensure that the wider sector can benefit from knowledge generated through this programme.
4. We are also delivering the Peer Support programme for the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP). There is an expectation that all successful councils will engage in a peer support process, delivered through our [Rough Sleeping Peer Support offer](#). This involves Delivery and Impact Panels, which offer councils a safe space, framework and process for council lead officers to come together, reflect on their work to date, share and challenge learning and highlight good practice across the sector. The programme was officially launched on 1 December by the LGA Chairman and the Minister for Housing and Rough Sleeping.

### **Economic growth and Income generation**

5. We have launched an [Economic Growth Support Hub](#) to support councils in their role of helping economies renew and recover. The hub provides councils with a range of resources across all aspects of their economic development plans. Our Economic Growth Advisors Programme is also looking to engage councillors this year.

6. On October 13, I chaired the Zoom conference [What will the future of commercial activity look like post COVID-19](#), attended by 179 officers and councillors. The conference was part of our targeted support offer to councils refocusing commercial activity impacted by COVID-19 and changes to investment guidance by central government and CIPFA. The conference featured experts from the University of Oxford and London Business School, who presented new ideas about purposeful commercial investments and their social impact. It also included practical commercial surgeries hosted by local government officers and selected commercial experts, answering questions on commercial business planning, financial modelling and legal powers, plus a closing expert panel discussion.

### **Procurement and Commissioning**

7. Embedding social value in contracts is a way to support communities and make resources go further, while still maintaining the quality and breadth of services. Our Procurement team worked with the Social Value Taskforce, a subset of our National Advisory Group for procurement, to develop a [social value statement template](#) for councils to use to set out their key messages and Social Value commitments.

### **Digital**

8. Councillor Prior and I represented the LGA at BrightTalk's webinar on [Local Government Transformation: How Councils are driving Digital Outcomes](#), where we considered the impact of modernising IT systems and the implications of that transformation at Pembrokeshire and Sevenoaks councils respectively.
9. In November, Councillor Prior and I also chaired and facilitated the annual [LGA Digital Showcase on digital innovation](#), inclusion and transformation. This event involved workshops led by Shropshire County Council, Norwich City Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, Norfolk County Council, Worcestershire County Council and Southwark Council; speakers from MHLCG and was attended by 140+ delegates.
10. I presented at the Westminster Insight Forum, where I discussed how the LGA has supported councils to conduct channel shifts within their organisations and encouraged councils to embrace present opportunities to do the same.
11. I chaired a webinar on the future of remote and hybrid council meetings in this environment where national and local restrictions are fluctuating. This session involved discussion with sector experts and council representatives and was attended by more than 200 delegates.
12. In December, I launched the [Digital Connectivity Programme](#), which has awarded funding to seven councils with the projects looking to deliver sustainable rural

connectivity mapping, toolkits for tackling urban not-spots and initiatives for targeted take up of local connectivity offers.

13. I also launched the case study series for the Digital Housing Programme with a [recorded introductory video](#). The programme has projected resource and non-financial savings of over £430k across four councils.

### **Research and Data**

14. We launched a predicative analytics programme to support the increasing use of predictive analytics within councils. This includes a [guide to using predictive analytics in local public services](#), which draws together contributions from councils and national organisations with policy and technical expertise, and a [practitioners' network for local government](#), to provide an interactive space where councils can share learning and support in this rapidly evolving area.

### **Leadership**

15. We launched two new [Leadership webinars](#): one on **presentation skills** and another on **coalition administrations**. We also launched a new **module on leading mentally healthier communities** and a new [Leadership Essentials Childrens Services Alumni Event](#) for experienced lead members.
16. Councillor Kelham Cooke and Councillor Wayne Davies took part in an NGDP 'Working with politicians' session on 15 December and 17 December respectively. This session gave participants a chance to hear from councillors about their lives and their political motivations, as well as providing a chance to explore and better understand the expectations councillors have of officers.

### **Equalities, diversity and inclusion**

17. In response to feedback we are developing a more comprehensive programme of support to equalities, diversity and inclusion. This support offer will include the development of a central hub, where councils can easily navigate to the range of equalities, diversity and inclusion tools and resources available.

### **Climate Change**

18. In October we held a webinar on [Locking in positive behaviours and co-benefits of green recovery](#). Chaired by Councillor Neil Prior, Cabinet Member for Transformation and IT, Pembrokeshire County Council and Deputy Chair of the LGA's Improvement and Innovation Board, this online event was attended by 150 people and covered how local government can continue to embed the behaviours we have seen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to climate action. 82 per cent of attendees were very satisfied and the remaining 18 per cent were fairly satisfied with the event and the [blog post](#) and the [slides](#) are available on the LGA website.

19. On 11 December we held a another webinar, [Seeing the Wood for the Trees](#), which explored the case for planting trees in terms of finance and carbon, the challenges this presents for local authorities and the benefits of urban tree planting. This event was chaired by Councillor Mike Haines, Leader of the Independent Group at Teignbridge District Council and included speakers from Cornwall County Council, the City of Wolverhampton Council, the Forestry Commission, the Woodland Trust and Local Partnerships. The event was attended by 170 people.

### **Press and external communications**

20. Since the last Forum, I have commented on the following LGA press releases and external communications on behalf of the Board:
- [A press release to announce the opening of the LGA's Digital Connectivity Programme](#), which is helping councils to provide vital services for residents who do not have access or confidence to use digital platforms
  - [A press release announcing funding for seven councils](#) under the Digital Connectivity Programme
  - [A press release promoting the second #CouncilsCan Day](#) highlighting the work of local government during the pandemic
  - [The Local Government Third Party Spend 2019/20 Almanac](#), published by EY and Oxygen Finance. The Almanac brings together a view of expenditure across local government in England and provides a look into the spending behaviours of councils over the previous three financial years.
21. I contributed to a [piece in the New Statesman](#), which looks at how the pandemic has affected cyber security in different sectors. This article highlighted that cyber threats have not gone away and that the risk associated with a cyber incident is greater than ever. The work of councils has never been so vital to the most vulnerable in our society, and the digital communications and services that they use have never been so critical to our efforts.
22. I also wrote an article for *first magazine for councillors*, [Making it count](#), about the importance of the Census and councillors' role in making it a success.

<b>Contact officer:</b>	Dennis Skinner
<b>Position:</b>	Head of Improvement
<b>Phone number:</b>	02076643017
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:Dennis.Skinner@local.gov.uk">Dennis.Skinner@local.gov.uk</a>

## **People & Places Board – report from Cllr Kevin Bentley (Chairman)**

### *Broadband*

1. Following our submission to The Public Account Committee's (PAC) Inquiry into Improving Broadband, the PAC made a direct recommendation for Government to set out what steps it is taking to support the retention of (broadband team's) knowledge, skills and delivery expertise in local authorities. Our submission called for additional annual funding of £30 million for councils to support local government to lead the co-ordination of publicly funded broadband roll out at a local level.

### *The Future Role of Town and Parish Council in Devolution*

2. The Board have commissioned a piece of analysis and research which will map out a framework for devolution from principal to parish and town councils for those councils interested in pursuing it. The work will explore what the future role of town and parish councils might look like in local areas and establish a benchmark for what double devolution across specific service areas could look like if fully realised. It will be alive to the variation across the parish and town council sector, and present realistic and viable scenarios for the devolution of services according to size and capacity. It is due for completion in April.

### **Health Devolution**

3. In November, the People and Places Board held a joint meeting on health devolution with lead members of the City Regions Board and the Community Wellbeing Board. This meeting heard from speakers from Cornwall Council and Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership on their experiences of health devolution, before discussing and agreeing the LGA lines on health devolution. Following this meeting, lead members also fed into the LGA's response to the NHS England and NHS Improvement consultation on integrated care systems.

### *Devolution APPG*

4. In December Lead Members of the People and Places and City Regions Boards signed off the LGA's written submission to the Devolution All Party Parliamentary Group's Inquiry into the role that central government has in making a success of devolution in England. Over the course of the autumn an inquiry panel, including Cllr Maurice Bright (Vice Chair of the People and Places Board), have been holding a series of oral evidence sessions with experts from across government, academia and the private sector. The final report is expected to be published in March. More details can be found on the [APPG Website](#).

### *Adult skills and lifelong learning*

5. In December, the Education Select Committee released its [recommendations](#) from its adult skills and lifelong learning inquiry. It recommends that there should be a community learning centre in every town, and singles out providers of adult and community learning – which includes local authorities - as “the jewel in the crown of the nation's adult education landscape”. The LGA submitted evidence to the

Committee and will progress discussions now the inquiry has concluded. Related to this, I wrote a joint foreword with the Chair of the City Regions Board for LGA's councillor handbook on making the best of adult learning service which can be viewed here. [Learning for Life: the role of adult community education in developing thriving local communities - A handbook for councillors | Local Government Association.](#)

*Restart employment support for long term unemployed people*

6. Councils face growing concerns about the impact of unemployment on residents, communities and wider local economy as the Covid-19 crisis continues to unfold. People and Places and City Regions Board Members worked together to put forward practical suggestions on how DWP's three-year, £2.9 billion, national [Restart programme](#) to support long-term unemployed (LTU) people back to work could be delivered to best effect. While it remains a national programme, DWP has since issued a letter to the LGA and other local government representatives seeking input on the national procurement exercise. We have relayed this offer to our member authorities.

*Improving the relationship with DWP*

7. In late December, the LGA initiated a roundtable session with Mims Davies MP, the Minister for Employment, and Lead Members of the City Regions and People and Places Boards. At that meeting, members reinforced the need for DWP to work with us on existing and upcoming initiatives under the Government's Plan for Jobs, and to localise by default.

*Youth employment and skills*

8. We continue to maintain our focus on improving youth participation work, considering that young people's training and employment prospects are being disproportionately affected by COVID-19 restrictions and the economic fallout of the crisis. Engagement with member authorities and stakeholders have continued to shape our views and emerging policy on what should be an appropriate offer for young people and employers to support economic recovery.
9. We continue to work closely with the LGA Workforce team, as many of the employment and skills measures, for example, Apprenticeships, Traineeships, T Levels, Kickstart Scheme, involve the sector workforce.
10. The youth participation report, culminating our engagement work with the sector and stakeholders, including the impact of COVID-19 crisis on young people was published. The report [Re-thinking youth participation for the present and next generation: education to employment](#) was launched early October 2020 with a [press release](#) calling for COBRA-style action to save the 'lost generation' of young people. The publication received good traction and has reached a broad range of stakeholders.
11. To sustain the momentum on our youth campaign and shine a light on the work more widely, we are publishing a series of First articles from Autumn 2020 to Spring 2021. The introductory feature appeared with a by-line from the Chairs of the three boards (CYP, P&P and CRB), demonstrating the importance of a joined-up education and employment and skills policy. The [feature](#) (p11) highlighted the plight of young people



and the job crisis. It set out the reports recommendation, including LGA's calls for a youth, employment and skills taskforce and a youth minister.

12. The LGA Chairman wrote to several Ministers about the report, including Mims Davies, Minister of State for Employment, DWP; Gillian Keegan, Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills, DfE; Luke Hall, Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government, MHCLG.
13. Separately, the LGA along with council/combined authority representatives have continued to maintain a dialogue with DfE on young people and those not in education, employment or training (NEET) though regular meetings with officials. Discussions have focussed on raising concerns about appropriate careers advice and guidance, relevance and sufficiency of provision and funding.

*UK Shared Prosperity Fund*

14. The UKSPF was one of the key priorities of the LGA's response to the Spending Review, which included the announcement of the Heads of Terms. This includes a £220 million pilot for 2021/22 before the fund will be introduced fully. We are expecting in the coming weeks a prospectus for the fund to be launched. The LGA has offered to help speed the development of the detail of the new fund by offering to set up task groups with Government departments to help codesign the fund. We understand the Government has agreed in principle to this and we are working to determine how this will operate.

*EU Exit*

15. On Christmas Eve, the Prime Minister and the President of the European Commission announced the outcome of the negotiations between the UK and the European Union and a deal on future trade arrangements, which has since been agreed by the UK Parliament. We have sent out communications on the key issues for local government in the agreement and members of the EU Exit Taskforce have met with ministers to raise these issues.

<b>Contact officer:</b>	Sonika Sidhu
<b>Position:</b>	Principal Policy Adviser
<b>Phone no:</b>	02076643076
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:sonika.sidhu@local.gov.uk">sonika.sidhu@local.gov.uk</a>



## **Resources Board – report from Cllr Richard Watts (Chair)**

### **Local Government Finance**

#### *COVID-19*

1. The LGA continues to receive access to data from the monthly returns submitted to MHCLG on the financial challenges arising from COVID-19, which based on the December data (prior to the new COVID-19 strain and national lockdown) amounts to nearly £10 billion of in-year pressures (cost pressures and non-tax income losses), with a further £3 billion of local tax income losses, impacting budgets in 2021/22. This is prior to considering mitigating factors and Government support provided so far.
2. To date, the Government has provided £4.6 billion of unringfenced funding to assist local authorities with financial pressures in 2020/21, as well as additional funding for tier areas and other ringfenced grants. Alongside the Local Government Finance Settlement, the Government announced a funding package worth £3 billion to local authorities to support COVID-19 pressures in 2021/22.
3. At the time of the meeting we will have responded to the consultation on the COVID-19 funding package for local government in 2021/22, highlighting the financial challenges the sector is facing. We called on the Government to guarantee the financial challenge facing councils as a result of COVID-19 will be met in full, and to revisit the 2021/22 funding package in light of information on the new COVID-19 strain and national restrictions. Members of Resources Board cleared this response.

#### *Provisional 2021/22 Local Government Finance Settlement*

4. On 17 December the Secretary of State delivered the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2021/22. LGA officers produced an [on the day briefing](#) highlighting key information from the settlement.
5. At the time of the meeting we will have submitted our response to the Government's consultation on the proposals set out in the provisional settlement, with members of the Board providing comments and clearance.

#### *Redmond Review*

6. Alongside the settlement the Government published its [response](#) to the Independent review of Local authority financial reporting and external audit (the [Redmond Review](#)). The Government has accepted recommendations for practical changes that can be made quickly many of which were also suggested [in our own response](#).

#### *2020 Spending Review*

7. Following the Chancellor's Spending Review delivered on 25 November LGA officers produced an [on the day briefing](#), highlighting the key announcements affecting local government.

*Budget 2021 submission*

8. On 17 December 2020, the Chancellor announced the Budget for 2021 will take place on 3 March 2021. We submitted our Budget representation which focused on key topics including COVID-19, Brexit, economic recovery, jobs, devolution, Spending Review 2021, local government finance reform, adult social care reform, children's social care and education.

*LGA Finance Conference*

9. Our local government finance conference took place online, with two separate webinars on 7 and 12 January. Each of the webinars attracted over 300 registered delegates. I chaired the conference and attendees heard from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and our Chairman on 7 January as well as the Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 12 January. We also had speakers from the National Audit Office, the Institute for Fiscal Studies, and Public Sector Audit Appointments.

**Workforce Update**

**Local Government  
Pay 2021**

10. The National Joint Council ('NJC Green Book') unions for local government have informed the LGA their pay claim will not be lodged until later this month at the earliest. Councils will be consulted to inform the National Employers' position.
11. Meeting the government's target for the National Living Wage remains a challenge, with forecasts expecting it to reach £10.10 by 2024 and £10.46 by 2025. The bottom hourly rate for 'Green Book' employees is currently £9.25 outside London. On current forecasts the total increase to the pay bill by 2025 would be 13 per cent compared with 2020.

*COVID*

12. The National Joint Council for local government services issued a [circular providing guidance for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable people](#) who have been told by the government to shield and not go to the workplace if they live or work in [Tier 4 areas](#).

*Fire*

13. A [one-year pay award of 2 per cent](#) for 2020 has been agreed for senior fire service managers falling within the scope of the NJC for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services.

**Education**

14. The [STRB](#) remit for 2021 was published on 15 December, focusing on how to best implement the SR 2020 pay announcement for those earning less than £24k, wider recruitment and retention issues, impact of COVID-19 and affordability.
15. The LGA launched an online consultation of local authorities in December 2020.

16. Government has reconfirmed their commitment to raise teachers' starting salaries to £30k, but this year's pay restraint means this will now be met later than 2022.

#### **Public Sector Exit Payment Regulations 2020 – Judicial Reviews**

17. Judicial Reviews requested by ALACE/LLG, Unison and GMB/Unite have been granted permission to be heard, expected to be in late March.
18. The LGA was named as an interested party and will provide a submission in line with actions agreed at the LGA Board on 3 December. A further four judicial reviews on the regulations do not involve the LGA. MHCLG has confirmed they will not lay regulations changing the rules of the LGPS or introduce 'further reforms' until the judicial reviews have been heard.

#### **Apprenticeships & T-Levels**

19. Apprenticeship Incentive payments for employers who take on new apprentices have been extended until March 2021. A new online service to match employers who want to transfer unspent levy funds with SMEs will be launched in August 2021.
20. A new public sector apprenticeships target will be introduced from April 2021. A formal announcement is expected this month.
21. Working with DfE, the LGA will launch a campaign to promote the new T-Level qualifications. Councils will be encouraged to provide at least one 45-day industry placement from September 2021 and the LGA will help councils to work with their local T-Level provider.

#### **Local Government Earnings and Demography Survey**

22. For the first time since 2015, the LGA has conducted a [major survey](#) of the earnings and demographic characteristics of the local government workforce, including key workforce statistics in [infographic form](#).

#### **Return to Work Programmes**

23. Successful applicants onto the Return to Planning, ICT and Legal programmes are beginning their training and support to return to work. Councils that have registered their interest in offering employment will shortly be contacted to connect with potential new skilled employees.

#### **Social Work Healthcheck 2020**

24. The Social Work Healthcheck has now closed, receiving over 9,000 responses from social workers across 133 councils. Each participating council will receive a bespoke report by the end of January 2020.

#### **Environmental Health Together**

25. This talent platform went live at the end of October. 189 qualified EHOs and 94 councils have subscribed so far. Councils can use this resource free of charge to help support their busy Environmental Health teams. [EHTogether@local.gov.uk](mailto:EHTogether@local.gov.uk).



### **Social Work Together**

26. This LGA talent pool has over 1,000 qualified social workers registered, and 126 councils subscribed. Councils can use this resource free of charge to help support their Social Work teams and avoid agency costs by employing directly. [Socialworktogether@local.gov.uk](mailto:Socialworktogether@local.gov.uk)

### **Support for Low Income Households**

27. The LGA continues to work with a growing number of councils and partners on 'reshaping financial support'. Further guidance and good practice will be available soon on improving access to financial services and affordable credit; and good practice in debt support and debt recovery. We continue to press Government on the need for sustainable funding for local welfare schemes and to make the case for investing in preventative support for low income households as we recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic.
28. DHSC have wrote to councils on 11<sup>th</sup> January to confirm that the Test and Trace payments scheme will now continue until the end of March 2021. They have also confirmed additional funding for both the main payment and the discretionary payment, responding to considerable concerns raised by the LGA and councils about the resources needed to prevent hardship and reduce the spread of the virus. DHSC are working with councils and the LGA to review the impact of the current increase in cases, and increased testing, and the funding will be reviewed again in February.

### **EU Funding and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

29. Through the Growth Programme Board and Performance and Dispute Resolution National Sub-Committee, the LGA has helped shape the use of the European Structural Investment Fund to support communities and economies through COVID. This includes the reopening High Streets fund and measures to tackle the digital divide. The LGA will continue to press MHCLG and DWP to ensure all the remaining ESIF funds are spent by the time the programme ends in 2023.
30. While we have still not received significant detail of the replacement of EU funding, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the LGA continues to lobby for a domestic replacement that is driven by councils and combined authorities. Through the Ministerial Local Transition Board, the LGA's cross party EU Exit Taskforce has secured an agreement for MHCLG to conduct a local government taskforce to help codesign the fund.

**Contact officer:**

**Position:**

**Phone no:**

**Email:**

Sarah Pickup  
Deputy Chief Executive  
02076643109  
[sarah.pickup@local.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.pickup@local.gov.uk)

## **Safer and Stronger Communities Board – Update report from Cllr Nesil Caliskan (Chair)**

### **Serious Violence Reduction Orders consultation**

- 1 The LGA has submitted a response to the Government's [consultation](#) on Serious Violence Reduction Orders (SVROs), a proposed new court order to target known knife and offensive weapon carriers. The proposed Serious Violence Reduction Orders would give the police personalised powers to target those already convicted of certain knife offences – giving them the automatic right to search those who pose the greatest risk. These searches could take place without suspicion so that these known criminals could be stopped at any time.

### **MHCLG workshops on domestic abuse accommodation support and services**

- 2 The LGA also jointly hosted a second series of workshops with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to discuss the new statutory duty proposed in the Domestic Abuse Bill, which will be placed on Tier 1 local authorities to commission domestic abuse accommodation support and services. Officers working in housing, domestic abuse services and community safety joined the workshop sessions to share their views on the duty and discussed what the challenges and opportunities would be locally. There were also discussions about how the new [£6 million Building Capacity Fund](#) could be used leading up to the new statutory duty coming into place. If you would like any further information, please contact [Rachel.Phelps@local.gov.uk](mailto:Rachel.Phelps@local.gov.uk)

### **MHCLG consultation on allocation methods for the associated New Burdens Funding**

- 3 The LGA has submitted a [response](#) to the Government's [consultation](#) on proposals for the allocation of new burdens funding to support the delivery of the new duty on local authorities to provide domestic abuse support in safe accommodation services in England. In our response we emphasised the new funding needs to fully account for any increases in demand for domestic abuse services. Additional funding is also required to provide wider community-based support.

### **Counter Extremism**

- 4 In November, SSCB Chair Cllr Caliskan wrote to Baroness Williams, Lords Minister with responsibility for counter-extremism, setting out some of the extremism challenges for councils that have emerged over recent months; expressing concern about how these might continue to evolve; and urging Government both to continue to take seriously extremism threats and retain investment in measures to build resilience and prevent division and polarisation from taking hold. The letter was co-signed by co-Chairs of the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE), Cllr Hazel Simmons (Leader, Luton Council) and Cllr Debra Coupar, Deputy Leader, Leeds City Council).

### **Building Safety**

- 5 The LGA has [published a briefing](#) aimed at any ward councillors supporting residents experiencing cladding issues in their local areas. It explains the background to cladding issues, highlights issues facing residents, and sets out ways in which councillors might support them.

### **HMICFRS fire and rescue service covid inspection**

- 6 In November Cllr Ian Stephens, Chair of the Fire Services Management Committee, provided feedback to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) regarding the fire and rescue service's activities during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. Cllr Nick Chard also provided feedback to the inspection in his role as Chair of the Employers side of the National Joint Council for local authority fire and rescue services.

### **HMICFRS – Fire External Reference Group**

- 7 Councillor Stephens also attended HMICFRS's Fire External Reference Group in December. The main discussion was centred on the initial findings from HMICFRS's inspection of the fire and rescue services activities during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Media work**

- 8 Since the last report I have commented in relation to the following issues on behalf of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board:

8.1 Covid vaccine scams <https://www.local.gov.uk/spread-word-about-covid-19-vaccine-scam-protect-family-and-friends-councils-urge>

8.2 The risks of buying illegal and unsafe toys online  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/christmas-shoppers-warned-about-risk-buying-illegal-unsafe-toys-online>

8.3 The dangers of fireworks <https://www.local.gov.uk/avoid-replacing-professional-displays-dangerous-fireworks-home-councils-and-fire-services-warn>

8.4 Tougher powers for councils to take action against businesses flouting Covid rules <https://www.local.gov.uk/lga-statement-tougher-powers-councils-tackle-businesses-flouting-covid-19-rules>

8.5 Funding for councils for Covid enforcement <https://www.local.gov.uk/lga-responds-new-covid-19-enforcement-funding-councils>

8.6 The new duties on councils in the Domestic Abuse Bill  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/lga-responds-funding-new-domestic-abuse-duty-councils>

**Contact officer:** Mark Norris  
**Position:** Principal Policy Adviser  
**Phone no:** 02076643241  
**Email:** [mark.norris@local.gov.uk](mailto:mark.norris@local.gov.uk)



## Digest of last Councillors' Forum meeting

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**Title:** Councillors' Forum  
**Date:** Thursday 22 October 2020  
**Venue:** Via Zoom

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### Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

Item	Decisions and actions
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**1 Chairman's Welcome**

The chairman welcomed members to the first Councillors' Forum of 2020/21.

**2 LGA Review of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct**

Abigail Gallop gave a presentation on the progress of the review of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct and gave a timeline of when the review would be completed.

Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE highlighted how this kind of policy would make politics a level playing field for all councillors, allowing them all to take part in the democratic process. Parish Councils need to be brought into scope of a policy like this, they do important work and are often close to local issues. Social media has changed how councillors engage with residents and a better line between freedom of speech and appropriate engagement needs to be found.

Cllr Ruth Dombey OBE stated that a policy like the model councillor code of conduct needs to define how we can disagree, agreeably. When Councils run controversial projects, members need to be defended from unacceptable comments and celebrate what is welcomed criticism. This environment is making it harder to find diverse candidates for elections.

Cllr Marianne Overton MBE reported on how pleased they are at the hard work the LGA has put into this process. The Model Councillor Code of Conduct is very important, and this feels like a campaign a lot of member councils will sign up to. Work like this will make a difference to councillors across local government.

Jane Ramsey, Committee on Standards in Public Life, informed members on the work of the committee has done to ensure that a code of conduct policy is of the highest standard and to ensure that the public have faith in local government office holders. It is a grave concern that potential candidates have been put off standing and current members not to re-stand.

Jane Ramsey welcomed the leadership the LGA has shown on this policy will be positively felt for generations of councillors. This draft code considers modern issues not addressed by previous policies and allows for local authorities to take ownership of their own local issues and to support their members.

Members made the following comments

- When a member is acting in a personal capacity is often used as a barrier not to hold members to account. Better guidance is needed for social media for members and leadership needs to be shown from political groups
- Member behaviour in virtual meetings needs to be addressed in the policy
- Members and residents need to have confidence in the system and the LGA must ensure that standards are the same across all local government. The depth of investigation needs to be higher for monitoring officers.
- Councillor personal addresses needs to be highlighted as a safety concern that members have. The law needs bringing in line with parliamentary candidates
- Councillors are often not seen as employees and councils will state that they have no duty of care of members, who will raise safety concerns.
- Members need to be realistic on social media, they should already have a good behavioural standard when engaging with residents. This works both ways, and members should expect that same level of support that other politicians get. This has affected not just members, but also their families and groups.

The Panel Responded

- The code needs to be accessible but also give the best detailed guidance for councils. The policy tries to provide consistency for all local councils to provide adequate guidance
- The code applies to all kinds of meetings, including a virtual council meeting
- Monitoring officers have decreasing levels of capacity when it comes to investigating complaints and clearly more resources are needed.
- The new code has brought clarity to the private and personal role of a councillor, which considers when a member is using their position. But there also needs to be new legislation to support this. The LGA has social media guidance that councils can adopt
- Sanctions are needed to ensure that the policy is taken seriously but support is needed for councillors going through this process.
- Lower tier councils will be embraced into future codes of conduct and treated as equals in line with other public office holders.
- Public intimidation is a growing concern within the LGA, and more work needs to be done.

### **Decision**

Members noted the presentation and agreed the current direction of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

### **3 Chairman's Update**

The Chairman presented the update, highlighting key funding work that the LGA has taken part in.

### **Decision**

Members noted the updated.

### **4 LGA Board Chair Reports**

The Chairman asked members were asked to note the reports and send any questions to the relevant board chairs.

**Decision**

Members noted the reports.

**5 Digest of the last meeting held on Thursday 16 July 2020**

Members agreed the digest from Thursday 16 July 2020

**Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr James Jamieson	Central Bedfordshire Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE	Warwickshire County Council
Vice-Chair	Cllr Marianne Overton MBE	Lincolnshire County Council
Members	Cllr Robert Alden	Birmingham City Council
	Cllr John Fuller OBE	South Norfolk District Council
	Cllr Philip Atkins OBE	Staffordshire County Council
	Cllr Marc Bayliss	Worcester City Council
	Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
	Cllr Paul Bettison OBE	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
	Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
	Cllr Abi Brown	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
	Cllr Nick Chard	Kent County Council
	Cllr Janet Clowes	Cheshire East Council
	Cllr Steve Count	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Cllr Andrew Day	Warwick District Council
	Cllr Geoff Driver CBE	Lancashire County Council
	Cllr Peter Fleming OBE	Sevenoaks District Council
	Cllr Peter Golds CBE	Tower Hamlets Council
	Cllr John Hart	Devon County Council
	Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
	Cllr Teresa Heritage	Hertfordshire County Council
	Cllr Ian Hudspeth	Oxfordshire County Council
	Cllr Rory Love OBE	Kent County Council
	Cllr Paul Middlebrough	Worcestershire County Council
	Cllr Colin Noble	Suffolk County Council
	Cllr William Nunn	Breckland Council
	Cllr Tim Oliver	Surrey County Council
	Cllr John Pennington	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
	Lord Gary Porter CBE	South Holland District Council
	Cllr Andrew Proctor	Norfolk County Council
	Cllr David Renard	Swindon Borough Council
	Cllr John Riley	Hillingdon London Borough Council
	Cllr Linda Robinson	Wychavon District Council
	Cllr Nicholas Rushton	Leicestershire County Council
	Cllr Glen Sanderson JP	Northumberland Council
	Cllr Michael Wilcox	Lichfield District Council

Cllr Katrina Wood	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Nick Forbes CBE	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Cllr Tom Beattie	Corby Borough Council
Cllr Judi Billing MBE	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Judith Blake CBE	Leeds City Council
Cllr Anntoinette Bramble	Hackney London Borough Council
Cllr Clare Coghill	Waltham Forest London Borough Council
Cllr Doina Cornell	Stroud District Council
Cllr Amy Cross	Blackpool Council
Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
Cllr Tudor Evans OBE	Plymouth City Council
Cllr Louise Gittins	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Cllr Georgia Gould	Camden Council
Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
Cllr Paulette Hamilton	Birmingham City Council
Cllr Richard Henry	Stevenage Borough Council
Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Cllr Simon Henig CBE	Durham County Council
Cllr Helen Holland	Bristol City Council
Sir Stephen Houghton CBE	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Anthony Hunt	Torfaen County Borough Council
Cllr Farah Hussain	Redbridge London Borough Council
Cllr Brigid Jones	Birmingham City Council
Cllr Naushabah Khan	Medway Council
Sir Richard Leese CBE	Manchester City Council
Cllr Iain Malcolm	South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr John Merry CBE	Salford City Council
Cllr Dhanisha Patel	Bridgend County Borough Council
Cllr Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
Cllr Oliver Ryan	Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Timothy Swift MBE	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Shama Tatler	Brent Council
Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE	Stevenage Borough Council
Cllr Leigh Redman	Somerset County Council
Cllr Darren Rodwell	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council
Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
Cllr Richard Watts	Islington Council
Cllr Andrew Western	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Alan Connett	Devon County Council
Cllr Mark Cory	Colchester Borough Council
Cllr Ruth Dombey OBE	Sutton London Borough Council
Cllr Liz Green	Kingston upon Thames Royal Borough Council
Cllr Richard Kemp CBE	Liverpool City Council
Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
Cllr Adele Morris	Southwark Council
Cllr Bridget Smith	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Gerald Vernon- Jackson CBE	Portsmouth City Council
Cllr Chris White	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Sue Baxter	Bromsgrove District Council
Cllr Wayne Davies	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Cllr Rosemarie Harris	Powys County Council

Cllr Phelim MacCafferty	Brighton & Hove City Council
Cllr Colin Mann	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Cllr Sarah Rouse	Malvern Hills District Council
Cllr Carolyn Rule	Cornwall Council
Cllr Helen-Ann Smith	Ashfield District Council
Cllr Clive Woodbridge	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Cllr Paul Woodhead	Cannock Chase District Council

Apologies

Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE	Bexley Council
Cllr Howard Sykes MBE	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council

