

Councillors' Forum

Agenda

Thursday, 27 January 2022
12.30 pm

Virtual Meeting

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

Guidance notes for members and visitors

18 Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ

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There will be a meeting of the Councillors' Forum at **12.30 pm on Thursday, 27 January 2022** held virtually.

Please note: *The Political Group meetings will be held prior to this, as follows:*

11.00am Conservative
11.00am Labour
11.00am Independent
11.00am Liberal Democrat

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.

Conservative:	Group Office: 020 7664 3223	email: lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk
Labour:	Group Office: 020 7664 3263	email: Lewis.addlington-lee@local.gov.uk
Independent:	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat:	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: libdem@local.gov.uk

Location:

A map showing the location of 18 Smith Square is printed on the back cover.

LGA Contact:

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Councillors' Forum – Membership 2021/22

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (39)	
Cllr James Jamieson OBE (Chairman)	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE (Vice Chairman)	Warwickshire County Council
Cllr John Fuller OBE	South Norfolk District Council
Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE	Bexley Council
Cllr Robert Alden	Birmingham City Council
Cllr Philip Atkins OBE	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr David Fothergill	Somerset County Council
Cllr Linda Robinson	Wychavon District Council
Cllr Joanne Laban	Enfield London Borough
Cllr Nicholas Jones	Bury Metropolitan Borough
Cllr Paul Bettison OBE	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
Cllr Rory Love OBE	Kent County Council
Cllr William Nunn	Breckland Council
Cllr Teresa Heritage	Hertfordshire County Council
Lord Gary Porter CBE	South Holland District Council
Cllr Abi Brown	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Cllr Peter Golds CBE	Tower Hamlets Council
Cllr David Renard	Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Peter Fleming OBE	Sevenoaks District Council
Cllr Richard Wenham	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Mohan Iyengar	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
Cllr Nick Chard	Kent County Council
Cllr Alan White	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Andrew Proctor	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Michael Wilcox	Lichfield District Council
Cllr Glen Sanderson JP	Northumberland Council
Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Barry Lewis	Derbyshire County Council
Cllr Tim Oliver	Surrey County Council
Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Antony Mullen	Sunderland City
Cllr Martin Hill OBE	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen	Breckland District Council
Cllr Emily Barley	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough
Cllr Olivia Lyons	Cannock Chase District Council
Cllr Linda Taylor	Cornwall Council
Substitutes	
Labour (36)	

Cllr Nick Forbes CBE (Senior Vice-Chair)	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Cllr Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
Cllr Anntoinette Bramble	Hackney London Borough Council
Cllr Jas Athwal	Redbridge London Borough
Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Cllr Oliver Ryan	Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Alice Perry	Islington Borough Council
Cllr Georgia Gould	Camden Council
Cllr Tudor Evans OBE	Plymouth City Council
Cllr Shabir Pandor	Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Paulette Hamilton	Birmingham City Council
Cllr Andrew Western	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Mayor Marvin Rees	Bristol City Council
Cllr Judi Billing MBE	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Darren Rodwell	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council
Cllr Shaun Davies	Telford and Wrekin Council
Cllr Simon Henig CBE	Durham County Council
Cllr Nesil Caliskan	Enfield Council
Cllr Carl Johnson	North Tyneside Council
Cllr Timothy Swift MBE	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Richard Henry	Stevenage Borough Council
Cllr Damien Greenhalgh	Derbyshire County Council
Cllr Rachel Sutton	Exeter City Council
Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz	Islington London Borough
Cllr Naushabah Khan	Medway Council
Cllr Dhanisha Patel	Bridgend County Borough Council
Cllr Andrew Morgan	Rhondda Cynon Taff
Sir Stephen Houghton CBE	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Amy Cross	Blackpool Council
Cllr Doina Cornell	Stroud District Council
Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE	Stevenage Borough Council
Cllr Brigid Jones	Birmingham City Council
Cllr John Merry CBE	Salford City Council
Cllr Shama Tatler	Brent Council
Cllr Amanda Serjeant	Chesterfield Borough Council
Cllr Louise Gittins	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Substitutes	
Independent (11)	
Cllr Marianne Overton MBE (Vice-Chair)	North Kesteven District Council
Cllr Hannah Dalton	Epsom and Ewell District Council
Cllr Paul Woodhead	Cannock Chase District Council
Cllr Sue Baxter	Bromsgrove District Council
Cllr Rosemarie Harris	Powys County Council
Cllr Colin Mann	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Cllr Andrew Cooper	Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Helen-Ann Smith	Ashfield District Council
Cllr Sarah Rouse	Malvern Hills District Council
Cllr Mike Haines	Teignbridge District Council

Cllr Ian Stephens	Isle of Wight Council
<i>Substitutes</i>	
Liberal Democrat (9)	
Cllr Joe Harris (Vice-Chair)	Cotswold District Council
Cllr Bridget Smith	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Keith Aspden	York City Council
Cllr Keith House	Eastleigh Borough Council
Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
Cllr Howard Sykes MBE	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE	Portsmouth City Council
Cllr Sean MacLeod	Lewes District Council
Cllr Vikki Slade	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
<i>Substitutes</i>	

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Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, 10 March 2022, 12.30 pm, Bevin Hall, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Covid-19 vaccination in the community

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment Programme will provide an overview, including work to tackle barriers to vaccination uptake. They will share some key facts about the COVID-19 vaccine, including who has been offered COVID vaccination, how people can get vaccinated and why people are advised to get a booster. This will also be an opportunity to hear about the work the LGA's new Local Government Vaccine Engagement Programme team will be undertaking and to discuss these topics further.

Recommendations

That members note the information shared by the vaccine programme and share their views in the discussion.

Actions

As directed by members.

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Chairman's Update

This report covers the Chairman's activities from 25 October 2021 – 21 January 2022

LGA and Ministerial/Parliamentary business

October	
25	Adam Memon, Emma Dean Special Advisers DHSC
26	Lee Rawley MP
27	Gillian Keegan MP
27	SofS Michael Gove MP
28	NGDP Graduation Event
29	Independent Group Conference
November	
01	Mims Davies MP
03	SofS Michael Gove MP, Kemi Badenoch MP – Local Government Roundtable
08	Ministerial Covenant & Veterans Board
08	APCC/LGA Quarterly Meeting
09 – 11	COP 26 Glasgow
12	4 LGA's Joint Finance Summit
16	Local Outbreak Plan Advisory Board
17	DCN/LGA
17	Andrew Selous MP
22	Kevin Foster MP, Will Quince MP
24	Neil O'Brien MP
25	Gillian Keegan MP, Eddie Hughes MP – Ministerial Homeless Health Roundtable
30	Gillian Keegan MP
December	
01	Lords Constitution Committee – Future Government of the UK evidence session
01	Iain Stewart MP
07	Matt Hancock MP
09	Ed Argar MP
09	DLUHC Ministerial Roundtable
13	Kemi Badenoch MP
14	Baroness Grey-Thompson
15	Local Outbreak Plan Advisory Board
17	SofS Michael Gove MP
January 2022	
11	Chris Pincher MP
11	Kemi Badenoch MP
12	Victoria Atkins MP
13	Local Government Finance Conference
19	LGA/HSE Quarterly Meeting

Meetings with organisations and individuals

November	
08	Stephen Chandler, ADASS
29	Gareth Lyon, Associated Community Retirement Operators
December	
01	Sir Gordon Messenger, DHSC
06	South & East Lincolnshire Council Partnership
08	Carolyn Wilkins
14	Brendan Cox, Together
January 2022	
17	Dame Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner

Events and speaking engagements

November	
04	LGC Awards
17	MPC Social Value Webinar
19	South West Councils AGM
22 – 23	CCN Conference
24	NCAS Conference
30	FuturePlaces Round Table Dinner
December	
01	2021 LGIU & CCLA Cllr Awards
07	Localis Report Lunch "True Value: towards ethical public service commissioning"
January 2022	
20	APCC General Meeting
21	Council of European Municipalities and Regions Panel Debate
21	Association of North East Councils (ANEC) Regional Leaders and Mayors Meeting

Children and Young People Board – Report from Cllr Antoinette Bramble (Chair)

Children's Leadership Essentials

1. I led two Children's Leadership Essentials courses that took place on the 21st and 22nd October and 20th and 21st November. Lead Members for Children's Services and Children's Scrutiny leads had the opportunity to discuss topics including the shape of an effective Lead Member/Director of Children's Services relationship, the evolving council role in education, effective use of data, multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and the SEND review

NCASC 2021

2. The National Children's and Adult Services conference took place online from the 24th – 26th November. I chaired a session with Will Quince MP, the new Children's Minister and Charlotte Ramsden ADCS President. Other children's topics covered included early years, education, mental health, inspection and child and family poverty.

Youth services

3. In December, I attended a roundtable focused on youth services chaired by Nigel Huddleston MP, who was appointed in the October Cabinet reshuffle as the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society) which also covers youth. I raised the key role that councils have in delivering and facilitating youth services but due to funding reductions and increased need for urgent child protection work, council spending on youth services has had to be cut by 69 per cent since 2010/11, from £1.4 billion to £429 million in 2018/19 and more than 4,500 youth work jobs have been cut and 750 youth centres closed.

Spending Review

4. On 27 October, I met with Will Quince MP, Minister for Children and Families, to discuss the Spending Review announced that day. I welcomed additional funding provided through the Spending Review, including for family support, early years provision and children's residential care. I also expressed my concern around the ongoing delays to the SEND review and called on the Government to write off high needs block deficits. I also noted that challenges for children's social care funding remained, and emphasised the need for further mental health support for children and young people.

Independent Review of Children's Social Care

5. The Design Group for the Independent Review of Children's Social Care met on 27 October. Our representative on the group, Baroness Blake of Leeds, attended this meeting where a range of ideas for possible improvements to the children's social care system were



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discussed. Baroness Blake spoke in particular on the ways in which kinship carers can best be supported and the importance of listening to children themselves.

Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board (ASGLB)

6. The Children and Young People Board representative on the ASGLB, Councillor Mark Sutton, attended the ASGLB meeting on 4 November. At this meeting a wide range of issues were discussed including the national adoption strategy, data on adoption and special guardianship and issues of racial disparity.
7. Councillor Sutton met the Chair of the ASGLB, Dr Krish Kandiah, on 20 December to discuss kinship care and how to share best practice with councils to support them in developing their offers to kinship carers.

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City Regions Board – Report from Mayor Marvin Rees (Chair)

Levelling Up

1. Ahead of the Levelling Up White Paper, expected to be published in early 2022, we have taken soundings from Core Cities, Key Cities, the County Councils' Network, the District Councils' Network, London Councils and the Special Interest Group of Metropolitan Authorities. We have also made fresh contact with national organisations like the Confederation of British Industry, the National Farmers Union, the Institute for Government and ADEPT to take soundings on their positions.
2. Many of our policy proposals such as those related to skills devolution, Local Enterprise Partnership reform and funding defragmentation are mentioned positively as part of the Government's emerging vision. Furthermore, from our conversations with local authorities, their representatives and national stakeholders we are confident that these proposals reflect the diversity and ambition of councils across the country and resonate with organisations beyond the sector.
3. We have recently launched a [Levelling Up Hub](#) on the LGA website, including information about the LGA's Levelling Up Local Inquiry. The inquiry will look into how the Government's levelling up agenda might better strengthen local communities, and we have appointed a number of independent experts to its steering group.
4. Alongside the Inquiry, officers at the LGA have also started work, drawing on the expertise of the International Public Policy Observatory, to develop an evidence base of demographic change. This will help develop our understanding of potential shifts in population distribution following the Coronavirus pandemic and provide a better sense of the typologies and priorities likely to feature in debates surrounding the levelling up agenda, including equalities, diversity and inclusion implications.

Employment and skills

The Skills for Jobs [White paper](#) introduced in 2021 proposes a range of reforms which give new employer representation bodies (e.g. Chambers of Commerce) a lead role in setting out the technical skills provision needed for their local areas. Our latest briefing to influence the Skills and post-16 Education Bill currently in the Commons is [here](#). We are advocating for councils and combined authorities to have a core and strategic role working alongside ERBs. While the House of Lords agreed an amendment along these lines, it has been watered down in the Commons. We await a date for the next report stage in the Commons.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Community Renewal Fund

5. Due to the delays in the announcement of the successful Community Renewal Fund programmes, the LGA lobbied the Government for an extension of the delivery deadline

through tabling parliamentary questions, press work and raising concerns through the officer level UKSPF taskforce. The Secretary of State had since extended the deadline for delivery of programmes from March 2022 to June 2022. We have commissioned Shared Intelligence to capture learning from the Community Renewal Fund to support local government with the introduction of the UKSPF. They have commenced conducting interviews with 12 local authorities as both Lead Authorities and delivery partners.

6. Further details of the UKSPF are expected to be announced as part of the Levelling Up White Paper. The Chairs of the City Regions and People & Places Board wrote to the Secretary of State calling for a member led taskforce where central government and local government collaborate and codesign the UKSPF. The LGA will continue to lobby the Government for the need for the UKSPF to be a codesigned, localised, place based fund that tackles inequalities and delivers locally determined outcomes.

Health Devolution

7. We have fed into the work of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board on the Health and Care Bill, and in particular the implications of the roll out of integrated care systems (ICSs) on the potential for future health devolution. This was of especial interest to the Board as we expect new devolution deals to be announced alongside the publication of the Government's levelling up white paper.
8. At the last meeting of the board, Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the Community Wellbeing Board discussed with members issues around the roll out of ICSs, including the need to continue to lobby for a strong role for local government in the new structures of ICSs, concerns about the potential exclusion of councillors and MPs from integrated care boards (ICBs), issues relating to the size of some ICSs such as the North East and North Cumbria, and the importance of not allowing the introduction of ICSs to roll back power from councils where health devolution is already at an advanced stage, such as in Greater Manchester, where the combined authority has an integrated budget with the NHS.

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Community Wellbeing Board – Report from Cllr David Fothergill (Chairman)

Health Integration

1. On 26 October I spoke at an NHSE webinar on the importance of place based partnerships and the role of local government in the development of integrated care systems (ICS).
2. On 2 November I gave a presentation to the Lords All Party Health Group on the Health and Care Bill.
3. On 10 November I gave a keynote address to the NHS Confederation's first national conference for ICS leaders. Cllr Paulette Hamilton, Vice Chair of the Community Wellbeing Board and Sarah Pickup, LGA Deputy Chief Executive, also contributed to sessions at this important event.
4. On 12 January I joined the City Regions Board for a discussion on the LGA's policy positions, influencing and support activity on the Health and Care Bill and the development of ICSs.

November's National Adults and Children's Service Conference

5. Board Lead Members contributed to key sessions at November's National Adults and Children's Service Conference. This included sessions with the Secretary of State, the Chief Executive of NHS England, the Chief Medical Officer and opposition spokespeople, alongside workshops on adult social care reform and funding, health reform, autism, and mental health and wellbeing. Attended by over 700 delegates, key issues raised across the three days included the importance of addressing adult social funding, workforce pressures, co-production and a person and place based approach to integration.

Suicide Prevention

6. On 6 December Cllr Rosemary Sexton attended the Suicide and Self-harm Prevention APPG. The meeting focussed on the importance of timely and personalised bereavement support for people affected by suicide. Cllr Sexton emphasised councils' vital role in partnership with health colleagues and others.

Mental Health

7. On 24th November Cllr Sexton chaired the NCASC session on the Community Mental Health Framework. The session set out the aspirations of the framework, the opportunities for local authorities and how councillors as place leaders can shape and implement community mental health locally

Autism

8. On 26th November Cllr Osborne chaired the NCASC session on the national strategy for autistic children, young people and adults. The session looked at how councils can contribute to the ambitions of the autism strategy, and what are the emerging issues for local government across all ages.

Learning Disabilities

9. On 30 November, Cllr Rosemary Sexton and I met people and their families supported by Getta Life to live independently with support in their own home. The visit was a powerful reminder about the importance of personalised and quality support for learning disabled people.

Health inequalities hub

10. The LGA launched their [Health Inequalities Hub](#) at the end of November 2021 which includes new case studies and think pieces. A part of our work on health inequalities has been a number of webinars on key areas including mental health, age & gender and ethnicity. A Community Wellbeing Board member has Chaired each of these, which are listed below;
 - 10.1. Cllr Louise Gittins chaired the first webinar on Tuesday 30 November [focussed on how people with learning disabilities](#) were impacted by COVID-19.
 - 10.2. Cllr Paulette Hamilton chaired the second webinar on 14 December focused on [how black and minority ethnic people have been, and continue to be, impacted by the virus.](#)
 - 10.3. I chaired the third webinar on 18 January focused on how the pandemic has exacerbated the inequalities in different ways for older and younger people. The summary when completed will be found on our [health inequalities hub](#).
11. The next webinar will be focussed on the impact of the pandemic on mental health and is on 15 February. This can be found on the LGA events site [here](#) for anyone interested in joining us.
12. I am also chairing a webinar in which Professor Clare Bambra will share the findings of her recent co-authored book '[The Unequal Pandemic: COVID-19 and Health Inequalities](#)' on 15 February, the page on the LGA events site to book to attend can be found [here](#).

Social Care

13. On 2 November, Cllr Rosemary Sexton attended a roundtable on the care workforce organised by the Future Social Care Coalition. Cllr Sexton was invited to give a presentation on the LGA's reaction to the Government's report, 'Build Back Better: Our plan for health and social care'. Cllr Sexton welcomed aspects of the plan but raised concerns about the adequacy of the funding allocated to deliver all aspects of the

announced reforms. She also offered reflections on the Spending Review and what it meant for adult social care.

14. On 4 November, I attended and spoke at the All Party Parliamentary Group on adult social care. Discussing their vision for care and support reform, I set out the LGA's views on the funding pressures facing councils and the priority issues that needed addressing in the reform agenda, including tackling unmet and under-met need, pressures on the care workforce and care worker pay, a greater investment in prevention, greater stability for the provider market, and action to ease the pressures on unpaid carers.
15. On 12 January, Cllr Paulette Hamilton represented the LGA at the first meeting of a new adult social care policy network established by Public Policy Projects and chaired by Rt Hon Damian Green. The network, attended by a range of senior figures from across the social care sector, is examining the issues of integration, funding, workforce and digitisation, with reports on each planned over the coming twelve months. As well as contributing to the general discussion, Cllr Hamilton also gave a short presentation setting out the LGA's position on the integration agenda, including our perspective on the Health and Care Bill and what we want to see from the forthcoming integration white paper.

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Culture, Tourism and Sport Board – from Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE (Chair)

Culture

1. On the 17th November Cllr Julian German, Vice-Chair of the Board gave a presentation at the Arts Council England/LGA **Leadership Essentials** culture programme.
2. On the 6th December Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Chair of the Board met with the Director General of the **Royal British Legion** to discuss changes to the Legion's acceptance of risk in the delivery of Remembrance Day events and agreed to resume sending a joint letter to councils ahead of memorial events.
3. Lead Members had a constructive introductory meeting with **Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay, Minister for Arts** on the 9th December. Lead Members set out a clear position on the vital role of councils in funding, supporting and convening cultural activity.
4. The CTS Board has contributed to the development of the **Commission on Culture and Local Government**. Cllr Vernon-Jackson met with Baroness Lola Young on the 15th December to invite her to chair the Commission, a role which she has accepted. Lord Neil Mendoza, DCMS Commissioner for Cultural Recovery and Renewal, has expressed his support for the aims of the project.
5. The LGA Board has held two meetings outside the standard Board cycle to focus on issues of interest to the Board in more detail. The first looked at council support for the creative industries, with a presentation from the **Creative Industries Council**. The second focused on the work of Business and IP Centres in libraries, with a presentation from **the British Library**.
6. Cllr Phil Seeva has joined the **Creative Industry Council's Regions and Clusters Working Group** as a Board representative and spoke at their October meeting.
7. Cllr Tom Hollis has become co-chair of an Arts Council England/LGA **councillor sounding board for libraries**, which will meet twice a year to provide insight into library developments from an elected member perspective.

Responses

8. Responding to the Museum Association's new report on **Local Authority investment in Museums** on the 26th October, [Cllr Vernon-Jackson commented](#) that funding for museums and other cultural services has been affected in recent years by rising pressure on council budgets and growing demand for statutory services like social care, as well as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
9. [Cllr Vernon-Jackson responded](#) on the 27th October to the announcement of **new funding for culture, tourism and sport in the Spending Review**.

10. [Responding to the announcement](#) of further funding made available through the **Cultural Recovery Fund** on the 21st December, Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson welcomed the news and urged the Government to keep this support under review if restrictions tighten.

Tourism

11. On the 8th of November Cllr Vernon-Jackson joined the **APPG for Holiday Parks and Campsites** to discuss councils' role.
12. On 1st December the LGA joined its first meeting as a member of Government's **Tourism Industry Council** to discuss issues such as skills and support to businesses.
13. On the 15th of December officers joined a **DCMS roundtable on plans for short-term lets registration** to represent councils' views and contribute to the early development of government policy.

Sport, Leisure, Parks and Green Spaces

14. Ahead of the Spending Review, Cllr Vernon-Jackson called for the Government to [invest £875 million in leisure facilities, pitches, and parks](#).

Responses

15. On the 27th October Cllr Vernon-Jackson [welcomed the Government's announcement](#) of funding for **pocket parks** in the Spending Review, but commented that there is a need to deliver parks provision at scale, rather than on the micro-scale of pocket parks.
16. [Responding to the publication](#) of this year's **National Fitness Day activity levels** by ukactive on the 22nd November, Cllr Vernon-Jackson, said it was positive to see an increase in the number of people taking part in National Fitness Day this year.
17. [Responding to Sport England's new implementation plan](#) on the 2nd December, Cllr Vernon-Jackson welcomed the plan which would enable the right support and funding to be directed to places that need it most.
18. [Responding to a new report](#) from The House of Lords Committee on a **National Plan for Sport and Recreation** on the 10th December, Cllr Vernon-Jackson commented that local authorities are place-shapers at the forefront of delivery in sport and recreation and stand ready to support the development and implementation of the plan.

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Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board – Report from Cllr David Renard (Chairman)

Housing, planning and homelessness

Housing improvement

1. The [Housing Advisers Programme](#) (HAP) has returned for a fifth year and has now announced 30 successful projects for 2021/22. The programme continues to fund the provision of 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.
2. Following the receipt of additional in year funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), HAP has awarded £25,000 to the 30 successful projects, supporting 90 councils across the country. This will secure expert advice in transforming how a service or partnership meets the housing need of communities.

Building safety levy

3. We [responded](#) to the government's consultation on a building safety levy. The levy will apply to relevant developments in England seeking building control approval from the Building Safety Regulator at the "Gateway 2" stage of the new building safety regime. Our response focused primarily on concerns about the potential impact of the tax on affordable housing delivery and who should be responsible for administering and collecting the levy.

Permitted development rights

4. We [responded](#) to the government's consultation on the future of two temporary permitted development rights introduced to support businesses and the high street in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. The consultation also sought views on new permitted development rights for the Ministry of Defence to modernise and develop the Defence estate.

Ground Rent Bill

5. We have [briefed](#) parliamentarians for second reading of the Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Bill, stressing the importance for new burdens funding to enable councils to undertake the proactive work necessary to ensure compliance with the new legislation.

Public Accounts Committee Inquiry into Rough Sleeping

6. We [responded](#) to a call for evidence which looked at the governments "lack of progress towards either the promise to end rough sleeping entirely by 2024, or the Government's manifesto commitments on house-building". We highlighted the vital role council housing plays in preventing homelessness and made the argument for a cross-departmental homelessness and rough sleeping prevention strategy following on from the achievements of 'Everyone In' to reap the benefits and deliver on promises to end rough sleeping by 2024.

Temporary Accommodation Peer Support Programme

7. Work is underway on setting up a number of delivery and impact panels to engage with 100-150 councils on the topic of temporary accommodation. Temporary accommodation use in England is on the rise and as councils continue to work with the legacy of Everyone In and an ongoing lack of affordable housing, homelessness services are faced with the increasing difficulty of finding suitable accommodation within their area which meets the various needs of their priority need households.
8. Following on from the success of the [Rough sleeper peer support programme](#), we are looking to utilise this workshop format again for the topic of temporary accommodation provision to capture best practice, uncover the main challenges and opportunities for change, and produce a voice of the sector report which will provide guidance to councils and be shared with central government.
9. To launch the programme, which will take place in February, we hosted [a webinar](#) on 17th January which featured speakers from DLUHC, our procured project lead Steve Bedser, and various councils sharing their local examples of best practice. We had 100+ attendees indicating a huge interest in this topic across the sector.

Homelessness Prevention Project with Local Partnerships

10. Leeds and Cornwall have been selected to take part in some research to identify best practice in relation to homelessness prevention and to begin to develop a case for investment that can help to improve homelessness prevention services nationally. This work is partially commissioned by LGA and will be carried out by Local Partnerships, a public sector advisory agent owned by LGA.
11. As part of this work, Local Partnerships will look to compare national and local KPIs in relation to homelessness prevention expenditure and outputs. They will be looking to understand what works well and how broad outputs associated with homelessness prevention can be measured or estimated. We will then work with Local Partnerships to consider making recommendations to DLUHC based on any examples of good practice which are replicable.

Other Parliamentary activity

12. We have also briefed for debates on: [access to affordable housing and planning reform](#); [role of developers, house-builders and management companies in new homes](#) and [insecurity in the private rental market](#).

Economic Growth

Public/ private partnerships

13. We have published a [good practice guide and case studies](#) on how councils are working with the private sector to deliver investment in energy, housing and town centre development. The guide was accompanied by a [webinar](#) which included a case study from Energetik, a district heating company owned by Enfield Council. The guide sets out how robust and well-coordinated public/private partnerships present opportunities to

bring together resources, expertise, and powers available in ways that cannot be achieved by either sector in isolation. Developed by experts from Partnering Regeneration Development and Newbridge Advisors, with input from Local Partnerships, the guide sets out seven key steps of governance and control that should be put in place to manage and mitigate risks throughout the partnership.

Councils' relationship with business beyond Covid 19

14. The LGA commissioned Shared Intelligence to undertake research to identify and capture the learning from councils' extensive contact with businesses over the last 18 months in the context of COVID-19. The [report](#) and accompanying [webinar](#) set out how councils can engage more effectively with businesses in the future to support economic recovery. This firm foundation built through the pandemic gives an opportunity to bring a strong business voice into local action and policy making.

Environment and Climate Change

Waste and recycling

15. Household waste and recycling services have been under pressure from staff shortages related to the Omicron variant. We have responded to media requests for information and continue to work with Defra and the waste officer networks to understand the impact on service delivery. There are signs of localised disruption but the overall picture is still unclear. We also responded to the release of updated figures on household recycling rates from Defra in December, which covered 2020 and the period of national lockdowns. Our response highlighted the significant achievements from local government in increasing food waste collections and reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill by 7% on the previous year.

Cop26

16. In November 2021 a delegation of local leaders and EEHT members, Cllrs Pippa Heylings, Claire Holland and myself, attended COP26 in Glasgow, alongside our Chairman Cllr James Jamieson and Chief Executive Mark Lloyd. The LGA had representation in both the Blue Zone, where the negotiations took place, and the public-facing Green Zone where we showcased the important work of councils tackling climate change. In the Blue Zone, we hosted a series of important discussions and events focusing on the vital role of councils in delivering net zero and the potential for local government to make this happen further and faster. Throughout COP26, the delegation worked hard to make sure the importance of councils in tackling climate change was recognised in the final wording of the Glasgow Climate Pact and that was achieved.

Phasing out fossil fuel heating

17. On Wednesday 12 January 2022 we responded to government consultations on [Phasing out the installation of fossil fuel heating in homes off the gas grid](#) and [Phasing out the installation of fossil fuel heating in non-domestic buildings off the gas grid](#). You can read our response to the [consultation relating to homes](#) and to the one on [non-domestic buildings](#).

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in Domestic Soft Seating Furniture

18. Officers have been working with Defra and the Environment Agency on guidance for Local Authorities on managing domestic soft seating furniture waste following [New research](#) confirming that many items of domestic seating soft furnishings waste contain significant amounts of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), meaning that the POPs content must be destroyed. Officers are looking to ensure that the guidance is clear, aims to maintain current levels of repair and reuse, doesn't exhaust existing EFW disposal capacity and that councils are not financially burdened from new regulatory requirements.

Nutrient neutrality

19. Councils subject to advice from Natural England on "nutrient neutrality" met with the LGA policy team and the Planning Advisory Service in November. This applies to certain river catchment areas where high levels of chemicals are entering the water supply and damaging protected natural habitats. The meeting highlighted the immediate pressures on planning departments, as well as longer term concerns for growth and land use. The EEHT Board will discuss the issue at their February meeting.

Environment Agency

20. The EEHT Board welcomed Tony Grayling from the Environment Agency to their November meeting. This was a timely discussion and an opportunity for the LGA and the Environment Agency to look at ways to work together on climate change.

Environment Act

21. The Environment Act received Royal Assent in December after a long journey through the Houses of Parliament. The Act gives significant new responsibilities to local authorities on nature and biodiversity, and provides the legislative basis for reforms to waste and recycling services. We are working with Defra on the next steps, and seeking clarity on the timetable for implementation of the waste and recycling reforms.

Transport

EV Charging infrastructure

22. On 23rd November I met with the new minister responsible for EV charging and OZEV (Office of Zero Emission Vehicles), Trudy Harrison MP. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the role of councils in delivering the EV charging infrastructure that will help the country to transition to a electric vehicles. As well as roles, the discussion also covered issues such as local capacity, future funding and the forthcoming EV charging infrastructure strategy from OZEV. The LGA also submitted a [response](#) to OZEV's Future of transport regulatory review: zero emission vehicles consultation on whether there should be a statutory obligation to plan and deliver a charging infrastructure.

Last mile freight

23. The LGA has commissioned research to explore councils' perspectives on zero carbon solutions for last-mile freight, including enablers/barriers to their implementation in England. Through a series of engagements with councils, the project aims to improve



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understanding of the challenges around last mile freight and opportunities for local intervention and consider views towards managing local freight systems. Led by Dr Daniela Paddeu, senior research fellow at the Centre for Transport and Society (UWE, Bristol), this work will help inform future LGA policy on freight and the Department for Transport's decarbonisation strategy. The project aims to present findings by March 2022.

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

Improvement Update

1. Despite escalating issues related to the pandemic, the LGA has continued to work with councils to provide in-person Corporate Peer Challenges. Remote peer support does remain available as an option to councils also including recovery and renewal panels, remote corporate health checks and bespoke remote peer support.
2. The LGA Annual Conference, taking place in Harrogate Convention Centre, (running June 28th – June 30th 2022) will again feature our Innovation Zone offering a vibrant and creative space within the wider conference programme, where councils, partners and others will be able to showcase their innovative ideas and approaches. The Innovation Zone will feature engaging, interactive sessions and will encourage delegates to think differently about issues they may be facing in their own authorities.
3. The theme for this year's Innovation Zone will be Resilience and Renewal and presentations are to span topics including Place, Leadership, Environmental Sustainability and Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion. Councils who are keen to take the opportunity to showcase excellent practice, ideas and work are encouraged to make an application via the [LGA's website](#) by Friday 4th March.

Leadership and Localism

4. Cllr James Jamieson, LGA Chair, spoke at the NGDP 'Wrap up' graduation event for Cohort 21 in Warwick on 28th October. It was a celebratory event to mark the completion of their NGDP journey.
5. The Improvement & Innovation Board Chairman, Cllr Peter Fleming, was interviewed by **Sky News** about abuse and attacks on key workers including waste collection crews.
6. The LGA continued to offer a range of development opportunities and events to councillors. From November, we commenced our LGA Leaders Programme 2021/2022. Other programmes that started included: Leadership Essentials Adult Social Care; Leading Healthier Places; Sports; Cultural Services; Effective Scrutiny and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Our yearly Young Councillors Weekender took place on 13-14 November 2021 with over 30 young councillors attending.
7. [More programmes](#) are set to take place in the near future including Councillors weekenders for LGBTQ+ Councillors on 11-12 February; Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic Councillors on 19-20 February and Women Councillors on 26-27 February 2022.

Climate Change

8. **Local climate action planning webinar** - Chaired by Cllr Liz Green, Lead Member for Climate Change/Sharing Practice, 136 people attended this webinar. It focused on how councils are creating their climate action plans, engaging local partners and communities

in the process and how to monitor success. The slides and blog are available to view:
[Local climate action planning, 6 October 2021 | Local Government Association](#)

9. The UK hosted, for the first time, the United Nations international climate change conference in Glasgow from 31 October – 13 November (COP26). The conference brought together international delegations to agree on a process to accelerate progress towards the goal of the Paris agreement. The LGA was pleased to lead local government's presence at COP26 and to deliver the core message that councils have a unique and powerful role in tackling climate change and are best placed to turn national climate ambitions into joint action on the ground.

Behavioural Insights

10. The LGA launched another episode of "Nudges for Social Good" in December. This podcast covered work completed with LB Barking and Dagenham on using behaviour change techniques to support debt services.
11. Our Behavioural Insights Conference will be taking place virtually on 22 February 2022. This conference will look at how we can use behavioural change techniques in our council services to work with communities and change their behaviour. It will feature councils who have used behavioural change techniques to tackle some of the biggest challenges of our day – climate emergency and health inequalities

Finance

12. The LGA is working with councils around the country to ensure that a forum for Audit Committee Chairs is established in each region. Each forum will provide an opportunity for Chairs to network, build relationships, share experiences and good practice and consider common issues. Inaugural events are being planned for March with further announcements to come.

Cyber, Digital and Technology

13. On 25 November the Cyber, Digital and Technology team hosted a webinar to promote awareness around connected places (Connected Places and the Future of the Public Sector). The webinar was chaired by Cllr Neil Prior, Lead Member for Transparency, Productivity & Efficiency, and included a panel of representatives from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, National Cyber Security Centre, Newcastle City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, and South London Partnership. The event illustrated the importance of security practices that are needed to design, build and manage innovative connectivity and technology in local areas. This webinar was attended by 37 people.
14. Owen Pritchard, Programme Manager, attended the Improvement & Innovation Board on 21 October 2021 and updated the board on the Cyber, Digital, and Technology programmes.
15. The LGA announced the nine successful councils in its new [Digital Pathfinders Programme](#). The programme will deliver pioneering solutions to improve digital inclusion, connectivity and cyber security. Each project will contribute to service transformation to

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meet the needs of local communities. 75 councils in England were shortlisted through a competitive bidding process.

Housing

16. The LGA has announced the 30 successful projects, supporting 90 councils, for its Housing Advisors programme 2021/22. The scheme looks to support innovative approaches to help councils overcome housing challenges in their local areas, address the housing crisis and meet the housing needs of local communities.
17. The LGA has awarded up to £25,000 to each project for the purpose of securing expert advice to drive forward locally-led solutions to housing challenges. The successful projects include delivery and provision of housing, exploring new approaches to temporary accommodation, early intervention to prevent homelessness and support to achieve high quality social landlord services. The list of successful councils can be [seen here](#).

Publications

18. This section outlines the publications and media releases that have occurred since the previous Councillors' Forum.

Local Government First Magazine - First 665, dated Nov 21 - [Understanding cyber risk](#) - by [Councillor Neil Prior](#), (covering urgent need for councils to manage cyber risk)

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People and Places Board – from Cllr Kevin Bentley (Chairman)

Levelling Up

1. Ahead of the Levelling Up White Paper, expected to be published in early 2022, we have taken soundings from Core Cities, Key Cities, the County Councils' Network, the District Councils' Network, London Councils and the Special Interest Group of Metropolitan Authorities. We have also made fresh contact with national organisations like the Confederation of British Industry, the National Farmers Union, the Institute for Government and ADEPT to take soundings on their positions.
2. Many of our policy proposals such as those related to skills devolution, Local Enterprise Partnership reform and funding defragmentation are mentioned positively as part of the Government's emerging vision. Furthermore, from our conversations with local authorities, their representatives and national stakeholders we are confident that these proposals reflect the diversity and ambition of councils across the country and resonate with organisations beyond the sector.
3. We have recently launched a [Levelling Up Hub](#) on the LGA website, including information about the LGA's Levelling Up Local Inquiry. The inquiry will look into how the Government's levelling up agenda might better strengthen local communities, and we have appointed a number of independent experts to its steering group.
4. Alongside the Inquiry, officers at the LGA have also started work, drawing on the expertise of the International Public Policy Observatory, to develop an evidence base of demographic change. This will help develop our understanding of potential shifts in population distribution following the Coronavirus pandemic and provide a better sense of the typologies and priorities likely to feature in debates surrounding the levelling up agenda, including equalities, diversity and inclusion implications.

Employment and skills

The Skills for Jobs [White paper](#) introduced in 2021 proposes a range of reforms which give new employer representation bodies (e.g. Chambers of Commerce) a lead role in setting out the technical skills provision needed for their local areas. Our latest briefing to influence the Skills and post-16 Education Bill currently in the Commons is [here](#). We are advocating for councils and combined authorities to have a core and strategic role working alongside ERBs. While the House of Lords agreed an amendment along these lines, it has been watered down in the Commons. We await a date for the next report stage in the Commons.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Community Renewal Fund

5. Due to the delays in the announcement of the successful Community Renewal Fund programmes, the LGA lobbied the Government for an extension of the delivery deadline

through tabling parliamentary questions, press work and raising concerns through the officer level UKSPF taskforce. The Secretary of State had since extended the deadline for delivery of programmes from March 2022 to June 2022. We have commissioned Shared Intelligence to capture learning from the Community Renewal Fund to support local government with the introduction of the UKSPF. They have commenced conducting interviews with 12 local authorities as both Lead Authorities and delivery partners.

6. Further details of the UKSPF are expected to be announced as part of the Levelling Up White Paper. The Chairs of the City Regions and People & Places Board wrote to the Secretary of State calling for a member led taskforce where central government and local government collaborate and codesign the UKSPF. The LGA will continue to lobby the Government for the need for the UKSPF to be a codesigned, localised, place based fund that tackles inequalities and delivers locally determined outcomes.

Digital connectivity

7. We have been working with the LGA public affairs team to highlight the importance of good digital connection, collating a briefing for a [Westminster Hall Debate on Tackling the Digital Divide](#) and submitting evidence to the Public Accounts Committee inquiry into [DCMS recall \(broadband\)](#).
8. The LGA's publication '[Councils' role supporting the digital skills pipeline](#)', alongside [LG Inform forecasts for digital employment](#), outlines the key roles councils play in supporting local digital skills progression, which, in turn, plays a vital role in levelling up communities. We recently met with officials from DCMS to promote the report as a basis for further collaborative work with DCMS following the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper.

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Resources Board – Report from Cllr Shaun Davies (Chair)

Workforce

Local Government Pay 2021

1. The National Employers met on 19 October 2021 and agreed by a majority to reaffirm as full and final the pay offers made previously in respect of [local government services](#) ('Green Book'), [craftworker](#) ('Red Book'), [chief executives](#) and [chief officers](#). The final offer for the bulk of local government staff, covered by the 'Green Book' is:
 - With effect from 1 April 2021, an increase of 2.75 per cent on NJC pay point 1
 - With effect from 1 April 2021, an increase of 1.75 per cent on all NJC pay points 2 and above
 - Completion of the outstanding work of the joint Term-Time Only review group
 - A national minimum agreement on homeworking policies for all councils
 - An agreement on a best practice national programme of mental health support for all local authorities and school staff
 - A joint review of the provisions in the Green Book for maternity / paternity / shared parental / adoption leave
2. During September 2021, all three local government unions (UNISON, GMB and UNITE) consulted their memberships with a recommendation to reject the final offer. UNISON members voted 79 per cent to 21 per cent to reject; GMB members voted 75 per cent to 25 per cent to reject; and Unite voted 81 per cent to 19 per cent to reject.
3. In order for industrial action to take place, the law requires that there is a ballot of employees in accordance with strict legal requirements before industrial action is called for or endorsed. Only where such a ballot produces a majority in favour of industrial action and at least 50 per cent of those eligible to vote have voted will the action be lawful.
4. The ballot will only be effective for and mandate industrial action that takes place within six months, beginning with the date of the ballot (which is the date the ballot closes).
5. In previous disputes, all three unions have balloted members on an aggregated basis. This means that to take action, 50 per cent of their national memberships were required to vote. This time, we understand that one or more of the unions may operate on a disaggregated basis. This means that action could be taken at each organisation where a turn-out of over 50 per cent is secured (if members vote in favour strike action).
6. A timetable for the three unions to conduct ballots on industrial action was confirmed before Christmas. UNISON is conducting a formal ballot between 1 December and 14 January on an aggregated basis. Unite's runs 14 January to 17 February (24 February in Northern Ireland) and is understood to be on a disaggregated basis. GMB conducted a consultative ballot on a disaggregated basis that closed on 13 December (at time of

writing, no announcement has been made regarding the outcome of GMB's consultation).

National Living Wage and Public Sector Pay Freeze

7. As part of the recent Budget and Spending Review, government announced a 6.6 per cent increase to the National Living Wage (NLW), taking it to £9.50 per hour from 1 April 2022, as well as re-confirming their long-term ambition for the NLW to reach two-thirds of median earnings in 2024. The government also announced an end to the public sector pay freeze.
8. Removing the pay freeze remit for public sector pay review bodies in itself does not lead to a universal increase in public sector pay. Local government, fire and police staff pay awards are collectively bargained and affected by the budgets of those employers.
9. The reiteration of the target for the National Living Wage of 66 per cent of median earnings in 2024 provides confirmation of existing policy but the forecasts from the Low Pay Commission show that their central path leads to a NLW of £10.70 in 2024, 37p an hour higher than the forecast made in April this year.

Youth and Community Workers: Pay 2021

10. The National Employers have made a final offer of 1.75 per cent to the Staff Side on all pay points and allowances for Youth and Community Workers for 2021.

Soulbury: Pay 2021

11. The National Employers have made a final offer of 1.75 per cent to the Officers' Side on all pay points and allowances for Soulbury Officers for 2021.

Teachers' Pay 2021

12. The School Teachers Pay & Conditions Document (STPCD) 2021 sets out teachers' pay and was published on 1 October, becoming law on 22 October.
13. As a result of feedback from councils additional wording was included in the final STPCD to clarify the criteria relating to an allowance for tutoring under the catch-up program. This was as a direct result of the National Employers Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST) submission in September in response to the Government's consultation on teachers' pay 2021.
14. A reminder that all qualified teachers were included in the public sector pay freeze policy apart from a relatively small number of qualified teachers who earned below £24k attracting a £250 consolidated uplift. NEOST supports the uplift for lower paid unqualified teachers, whilst agreeing with the School Teachers' Review Body's conclusion that the pay freeze for qualified teachers is likely to increase existing recruitment and retention difficulties.

15. The School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) remit that this year covers a two-year pay period (2022/23 and 2023/24) was [published in December](#). The LGA consulted with local authorities to inform the national employers ([NEOST](#)) response to the STRB. This consultation concludes on 21 January 2022.

Exit Payment Reform

16. Discussions with DLUHC officials indicate that further proposals on exit pay reform will be forthcoming in 2022 and that such proposals will be specific to each department (in our case local authority severance and LGPS regulations) rather than the cross-government approach adopted in the withdrawn HMT regulations.

Transitional Pension Arrangements legal cases (Sergeant/McCloud)

17. Agreement has been reached between the LGA and the Fire Brigades Union on a Memorandum of Understanding and Framework in respect of pension Immediate Detriment issues related to the Sergeant/McCloud legal judgment. [A joint statement was issued to fire and rescue authorities](#) who will now consider adoption of the Framework.
18. Since the publication of the framework HMRC have proposed changes to the taxation of late lump sums. Discussions are continuing with FBU and Home Office to clarify the potential financial impact on Fire Authorities who use the framework.

Employment Relations Unit FAQs page updated

19. The [FAQ page has been updated](#) following the reintroduction of working from home and other changes in response to the Omicron variant in England from 13 December 2021.

Flexible Working

20. The Government (via the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)) recently consulted on 'Making flexible working the default'. The LGA responded to the consultation. You can read our response [here](#).
21. The headline proposal is to make the statutory right to request flexible working (i.e. request a change to working pattern or arrangements) a 'day one' right, rather than one subject to a 26 week qualifying service condition as it is now. The other parts of the consultation address associated aspects such as whether the current specified business reasons for refusing a request remain valid, whether employers who refuse a request should be required to provide alternatives, whether the statutory administrative process should be amended and what would encourage employees to request temporary changes to their working pattern.

Public Sector Apprenticeships Target

22. Government published the latest data set on public sector organisations' progress towards meeting the public sector apprenticeships target. This covered organisations' progress in 20/21 and across the four-year target period. The data shows that:

- 22.1 Local government created 12,227 apprenticeship starts in 2020/21, taking the sector to over 53,000 apprenticeships created since April 2017.
 - 22.2 Starts fell almost 23 per cent year-on-year from 2019/20, but were still over 1,000 higher than 17/18 and more than double the level the sector achieved before the target and apprenticeships levy were introduced in 2017.
 - 22.3 Apprenticeships created by local government in 2020/21 were equivalent to 1.2 per cent of our headcount against a target of 2.3 per cent. Over the full four year period (2017/18 - 2020/21) it was also 1.2 per cent, below the public sector average of 1.7 per cent.
 - 22.4 33 councils and combined authorities met their public sector targets across the full four-year period.
23. A further one-year public sector apprenticeships target has been in operation since 1 April 2021 and will run until 31 March 2022. We expect a new public sector target to run from 1 April 2022 to be agreed and announced by government some time during Q1 of 2022.

Apprenticeship Incentives Extended

- 24. Following lobbying by the LGA, government announced that the Apprenticeship Incentives will be extended until January 2022. The incentives, worth £3,000 per apprentice, were due to expire on 30 September but have now been extended for a further four months to 31 January 2022.
- 25. Employers can now claim the incentive payments for any apprentice that started their employment between 1 October and 31 January and being their apprenticeship before 31 March 2022. The application period is open until 15 May 2022. More information on how to apply is available [here](#).

Gender Pay Gap

- 26. The 2020/21 [LGA Research Summary Report – Gender Pay Gap](#) has been updated, based on the 5 October extended deadline. While there's a slight trend towards pay equalisation, in 52.6 per cent of English local authorities mean hourly pay rates for male staff are 5 per cent or more higher than female staff (51.4 per cent in 2019/20).

Wellbeing

- 27. Information and guidance on new hybrid working arrangements on the LGA website has been promoted to councils as well as ongoing promotion of an offer from the NHS in the Health Improvement Network about a wellbeing approach to managing musculoskeletal conditions.
- 28. The Employment Relations Unit have also developed a set of [FAQs](#) that cover some key wellbeing issues including managing clinically extremely vulnerable staff as

restrictions are eased, managing self-isolating staff and managing staff who have long covid.

Workforce and earnings surveys and data infographic

29. The latest update to the LGA's infographic presenting key workforce statistics for the local government sector is now [available on the LGA website](#).

Wellbeing web pages

30. We've updated our pages to ensure easier navigation. [Access our guides, links and best practice](#).

Local Government Finance

Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement

31. On 16 December the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities published a [written ministerial statement](#) on the [Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/23](#). LGA officers produced an [on the day briefing](#), highlighting key information from the settlement, which was sent to member authorities.
32. Funding announcements were in line with the outcome of the 2021 Spending Review, with a potential increase of 6.9% in Core Spending Power available to local authorities in 2022/23, assuming all local authorities raise council tax by the maximum allowable limit without a referendum. This includes:
- 32.1. An inflationary uplift in Revenue Support Grant and business rates multiplier compensation
 - 32.2. £4.6 billion of grants for social care including £700 million of additional funding (an inflationary uplift to the improved Better Care Fund, and a £636 million increase in the social care grant for adults and children's services)
 - 32.3. £162 million to support councils to prepare social care markets for reform and the fair cost of care
 - 32.4. £556 million of New Homes Bonus
 - 32.5. A one-off £822 million Service grant
 - 32.6. Continuation of the £111 million lower tier services grant and the £85 million Rural Services Delivery
 - 32.7. And council tax principles of:
 - 32.7.1. a core principle increase of 2% for all local authorities, with a 2% or £5 increase (whichever is higher) for shire districts.

- 32.7.2. an additional 1% adult social care precept (along with any unused flexibility from the previous year).
 - 32.7.3. a £5 increase for the 8 lowest charging fire and rescue authorities; and
 - 32.7.4. a £10 maximum increase for Police and Crime Commissioners.
 - 32.7.5. No referendum principles for Combined Authorities or Town and Parish Councils.
33. The Government announced its commitment to ensuring that funding allocations for councils are based on an up-to-date assessment of their needs and resources, and noted that the data has not been updated for a number of years. There was, however, no mention of the future of further business rates retention, the business rates reset, or new homes bonus reform at the settlement.
34. The settlement included no information on public health funding for 2022/23.
35. We [responded](#) to the settlement consultation by the 13 January deadline. The response was cleared by the LGA Chairman and Resources Board Lead Members.
36. The LGA Chairman and Group Leaders met the Minister for Levelling Up Housing and Communities on 11 January and summarised the main points we made in our settlement response. This included the pressures in adults and children's social care and special educational needs and the need for clarity on the scope, outcome and timetable for local government finance reform. The minister agreed to meet with the LGA Chairman and Group Leaders more regularly on the issues raised during the meeting.

Spring Statement/Budget 2022 submission

37. On 23 December 2021, the Chancellor [commissioned](#) the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) to produce an economic and fiscal forecast for Wednesday 23 March 2022. The Chancellor has not announced a formal Spring Statement or Spring Budget for the 23 March. We propose to send a letter to the Chancellor ahead of a Spring Statement/Budget. The letter would cover key topics including the need for a long-term sustainable funding settlement for local government, social care, levelling up and other key policy issues. This will be kept under review in case the need for fuller policy submissions becomes more appropriate.

CIPFA Prudential Code and Treasury Management Code

38. In the autumn CIPFA consulted on amendments to the Prudential Code for Capital finance and the Treasury Management code. These codes are two (of four) statutory codes that form the Prudential Framework for Capital Finance which enables councils to determine local capital investment free from centrally imposed controls, providing any borrowing is affordable. Following discussion at Resources Board, lead members cleared a [response on the Prudential Code](#) in which we raised a number of concerns about the clarity of what was being proposed and what effects this could have on councils, particularly on their property assets, investments and on income they rely on. In [our response on the Treasury Management Code](#) we raised concerns about how the changes to the Prudential Code would interact with and impact on treasury management.
39. Since then, officers have been involved in further discussions with CIPFA and with DLUHC. CIPFA took on board many of the comments we made and the revised [Prudential code](#) and [Treasury Management code](#) that were published in late December were much clearer than the versions consulted on. While the changes may appear to be minor, they have wider implications and address the LGA's most serious concerns.

Support for Low Income Households

40. The LGA has been working with councils and the Department for Work and Pensions on the future of local welfare support when the Household Support Fund comes to an end in March 2022.
41. The LGA hosted a round table with councils on 10th November. One of the key actions to come out of that session was a request from the sector for further improvement support on the role of councils in helping low-income households impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. The first of a series of action learning events will take place, with a commissioned delivery partner, on 16th and 17th February.
42. We are also hosting some joint focus group sessions on the future of local welfare with the Department for Work and Pensions during January.
43. We have submitted a response to the Work and Pensions Committee on Universal Credit and Childcare Costs, highlighting the benefits to the economy and to low-income households of removing barriers to entering or increasing work, in particular the requirement for UC claimants to pay childcare fees upfront.
44. We have submitted a response to the Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities Committee on Council Tax Collection. This submission references the work that the Resources Board is leading on 'fair and effective debt management', which includes engagement with a wide range of policy development and improvement work. For example, we are working with Cabinet Office on development of a cross-Government



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data-sharing pilot on vulnerable debtors, which will include sharing between councils and Government departments

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Safer and Stronger Communities Board – Report from Cllr Caliskan (Chair)

Taxi licensing

1. On 3rd November Cllr Clive Woodbridge, one of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board Licensing Champions, chaired a webinar on taxi licensing and implementing the statutory standards. The webinar had around 500 delegates and speakers included the Taxis Minister, Baroness Vere.

Gambling licensing

2. Lead Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board wrote to the Gambling Minister, Chris Philp MP, to highlight the LGA's priorities for the Gambling Act Review. The letter reiterated the need to limit the statutory aim to permit and give councils the full powers they require to effectively manage local gambling premises.
3. In the Minister's reply, he noted Lead Members concerns and confirmed that Government is carefully considering the issue of local authority powers in the Gambling Act Review.

Food regulation

4. In early January, Cllr Nesil Caliskan met with the new Chair of the Food Standards Agency, Professor Susan Jebb. The meeting discussed the FSA's Achieving Business Compliance programme, which is aiming to update the framework for food regulation and discussed local authorities' role within the framework for food regulation. The meeting also considered the challenges councils face in using the planning system to promote health eating and target obesity and the broader role the FSA may take on health, as well as food safety, in future.

Drink spiking

5. On Wednesday 19th January, Cllr Jeanie Bell, one of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board Licensing Champions, is providing oral evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee's inquiry on drink spiking. Cllr Bell will provide an overview of the role of licensing committees in regulating the night-time economy and promoting safeguarding.

Domestic Abuse

6. On Tuesday 11 January, Cllr Nesil Caliskan attended the Ministerial Roundtable, chaired by Rachel Maclean MP, to discuss the Government's forthcoming Domestic Abuse Strategy. Cllr Caliskan highlighted the importance of the forthcoming strategy aligning with wider Government legislation and guidance and called for prevention of domestic abuse to be central to the strategy.



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7. Domestic abuse-related crimes represent a higher percentage of all crimes in December than the rest of the year. The [LGA joined forces with Women's Aid and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner Nicole Jacobs to urge people to look out for common signs of domestic abuse this Christmas](#). As well as a community effort to spot the signs of domestic abuse and report concerns, we are calling for greater investment in early intervention and prevention schemes that helps stop it from occurring in the first place.

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill

8. The LGA has [briefed](#) Peers during the Report Stage debates for the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill. Amendments have been agreed on Harpers Law (mandatory life sentences for those who kill an emergency worker in the course of their duty), data-sharing protocols, and the extension of the serious violence duty to include domestic abuse and sexual offences. The Bill [continues](#) in Report Stage until 17 January 2022.

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Note of last Councillors' Forum meeting

Title: Councillors' Forum
Date: Thursday 21 October 2021
Venue: Bevin Hall, 18 Smith Square, and online via Zoom

Attendance

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

Item

1 **The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP - Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities**

The Chairman introduced the Rt. Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up Housing & Communities.

The Secretary of State thanked LGA members for inviting him to speak to the Forum.

He explained that the Department had been renamed to reflect the new emphasis on levelling up and stated that levelling up would consist of 4 broad strands:

- Strengthening local leadership
- Economic development – attracting new investment into areas and creating high skilled jobs
- Improving quality of public services where they are not of acceptable standard. There are still too many areas which have poor public health and education outcomes when compared to other areas.
- Giving people pride in where they live

On Adult Social Care, the Secretary of State said that he recognised many of the concerns held by local government and, in particular, singled out staff shortages as a significant challenge that needed to be addressed urgently. A lot of the issues had been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic and in that regard, the Secretary of State put on record his sincere thanks to the sector for all their efforts during the last 18 months.

On housing, the Secretary of State said that he was currently in the process of reviewing the Planning White Paper but remained committed to making reforms to the system. He wanted to see more high quality, beautiful homes in the right places and stressed that they must contribute towards the UK's net zero commitment as well as being completely safe for their residents.

Following the Secretary of State's introduction, members raised the following points and questions:

- Cllr Izzi Seccombe – social care was currently facing a workforce crisis with 110,000 vacant positions. With significant additional funding going into the NHS there was a real danger that trained social care staff would leave to work in the health sector. Council tax and the social care precept was not the solution to the funding shortfall as it didn't necessarily match the areas of highest demand. During covid, councils had demonstrated that the public health function was best carried out within local government. SoS response: This issue is top of his priority list and he was speaking with No. 10 and the Secretary of State for Health about getting the right support in the right places. The National Insurance increase was part of the solution but recognised that more needed to be done, in particular about upskilling and retaining the workforce whilst at the same time ensuring the solvency of providers. He agreed that local government has a crucial role to play in public health.
- Cllr Nick Forbes – Welcomed the Secretary of State's clarification of levelling up and stated that local government is best placed to help deliver on this agenda. Local leaders needed to be empowered within their areas to drive change. He asked if the Secretary of State could explain how levelling up would be a whole programme of government rather than just a series of initiatives? SoS response: agreed that levelling up should be a place-based philosophy. It is not about funding one-off projects, rather it is about ensuring that systems are in place to make localities attractive places in every respect. Powers of local leaders to bring about change in this regard was crucial. To be successful, levelling up needed to be UK wide, cross-party and cross-tier.
- Cllr John Fuller – highlighted the importance of councils in delivering housing through the planning system and asked the Secretary of State to help councils through providing powerful fiscal incentives. SoS response: agreed that proper incentives need to be in place. Also, important to ensure that local communities get a proper share of the land value uplift from new housing developments.
- Cllr Marianne Overton – Expressed real concern about attacks on politicians culminating in the tragic murder of David Amess. What was the Government doing to tackle this? Also emphasised the importance of allowing councils to conduct their meetings both in-person and online to increase accessibility and to enable greater participation. SoS response: agreed that councils should have the capacity to hold hybrid or virtual meetings but recognised that there may be occasions where this isn't appropriate.
- Cllr Joe Harris – Councils are at the forefront of fighting climate change. They want to facilitate the delivery of zero carbon homes but legislation currently doesn't allow them to insist on this in new developments. Homes that are now being built will require expensive retrofitting in a few years' time. Can the Government bring forward the Future Homes Standard to enable councils to do this? SoS response: Agreed on the vital importance of reducing emissions from homes but there was a fine balance between this and impacting on the economics of housing delivery. Also wanted

to address embodied carbon in the construction industry.

- Cllr Andrew Western – Called for an urgent review of the delivery of SEND services. Councils currently don't have any control of the levers that drive demand which makes budgeting very problematic. SoS response: Agreed that this needed to be addressed.

2 Chairman's Welcome

Following the Secretary of State's session, the Chairman commenced the rest of the meeting by formally welcoming members, in particular those members who were new to the Forum.

He noted the sad passing of MPs James Brokenshire and Sir David Amess and said that he had passed on condolences and best wishes to their families on behalf of local government. The murder of Sir David Amess had profound consequences for all public servants and the LGA would be redoubling its work around civility in public life to try and ensure greater protections could be put in place.

3 Digest of the last meeting held on 22 July 2021

The digest of the previous meeting held on 22 July 2021 was agreed as an accurate record.

4 Chairman's Update

The Chairman reported that he was getting around to meeting new ministers who had been brought in as part of the October Cabinet reshuffle and had met on a one-to-one basis with the new Secretaries of State for DLUHC and Education.

Decision:

Councillors' Forum **noted** the update.

5 LGA Board Chair Reports

The Chairman invited the following Board representatives to discuss their reports:

- a) City Regions Board – Mayor Marvin Rees (Chair)
 - Mayor Rees introduced himself as the new Chair of the Board and said he was looking forward to working with colleagues at the LGA.
 - He welcomed the Secretary of State's attendance at the Forum and for offering his perspective on levelling up which was a vital issue for councils moving forward.
 - The LGA was working to influence the Skills and post-16 Education Bill, introduced to Parliament in May. The bill, currently in the House of Lords, designates new employer representative bodies (ERBs), seeks to make it a legal requirement that ERBs and colleges collaborate to develop

Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), introduces new Secretary of State powers to intervene when colleges fail to deliver, and puts in place provisions for a new Lifelong Learning Entitlement.

- The LGA was looking to host an annual urban leadership summit.

b) Improvement & Innovation Board – Cllr Judi Billings (Deputy-Chair)

- The Board had been stepping up its programme of support to councils on climate change ahead of the COP26 summit in Glasgow in November.
- The launch of the Be A Councillor programme (www.local.gov.uk/be-councillor) which works to attract a diverse group of potential candidates and supports councils with a toolkit to help reach outside of established networks to encourage new people to stand for election – particularly from under-represented groups.
- With the easing of Covid-19 restrictions in July, face to face support offers have been able to resume, including the Corporate Peer Challenges. However, as part of a hybrid approach, remote peer support remains available, including recovery and renewal panels, remote corporate health checks and bespoke remote peer support. This situation would remain under review over the autumn and winter as the course of the pandemic becomes clearer.

c) Safer & Stronger Communities Board – Cllr Mohan Iyengar (Vice-Chair)

- The Board has responded to the second part of the Government's Review into the role and remit of Police and Crime Commissioners in respect of Community Safety Partnerships and the responsibility and accountability of PCCs.
- The team successfully delivered two Governance and Leadership workshops for our Fire and Rescue Authority members with another planned for November 2021. The bi-annual Fire Leadership course, held virtually this year, attracted a large number of delegates.
- Lead members wrote to all licensing authorities to raise awareness of the National Register of Licence Revocations and Refusals and to encourage authorities to use the database.
- The LGA has been participating in the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's strategic reference group on domestic abuse perpetrators, with the most recent meeting focusing on quality standards for perpetrator programmes. The LGA has also been invited to be a representative of the National Steering Group, which will oversee the new statutory duty in the Domestic Abuse Act, to deliver domestic abuse accommodation-based support and services.
- The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill continues in Committee Stage in the House of Lords and the LGA continues to lobby on the serious violence duty and wider

issues.

Decision:

Councillors' Forum **noted** the LGA Board Chair reports.

6 Update on Cyber Security

The Chairman invited Owen Pritchard, Programme Manager Cyber-Security, to introduce his update.

Owen gave a confidential presentation on the current cyber threats faced by councils, including recent 'testing' results from councils on their preparedness for rebuffing cyber attacks. Owen ran through the LGA's support offer to councils and finished by highlighting a list of 10 key questions that councillors should be asking their council officers in relation to cyber-preparedness.

Members' comments and questions:

- Councils hold a large amount of confidential information on vulnerable residents. How can this best be isolated from other non-confidential information? Owen introduced the concept of 'segmentation' as a way of increasing data security and said that councils should have systems in place to ensure this happens. He added that it was important that councils tightly manage the amount of privileges granted in relation to confidential data.
- Members felt that the proliferation of partnership working in recent years and the need to share data with these partners, made systems more vulnerable. Similarly, it was considered that the wider transfer of data systems online increased the risk of breaches enormously. Owen acknowledged that both of these factors increased risks for all organisations and emphasised the crucial need for ever greater vigilance on the part of councils and for having the appropriate systems in place to counter the threat.
- There was generally a 'monoculture' of operating systems and software within councils – was this likely to increase their vulnerability to attack and should they therefore try and diversify the products used? Owen said that there was always a tension between resilience and efficiency in IT systems which councils needed to assess objectively.

Owen concluded the session by highlighting the information on the LGA website and said that he would be more than happy to talk to councillors or council officers individually to provide further guidance. He agreed to circulate the 10 questions for a councillor to ask in the next Chairman's bulletin.

Decision:

Councillors' Forum **noted** the update.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr James Jamieson	Central Bedfordshire Council
Senior Vice-Chair	Cllr Nick Forbes	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE	Warwickshire County Council
Vice-Chair	Cllr Joe Harris	Cotswold District Council
Vice-Chair	Cllr Marianne Overton MBE	North Kesteven District Council
Members	Cllr John Fuller OBE	South Norfolk District Council
	Cllr Robert Alden	Birmingham City Council
	Cllr Philip Atkins OBE	Staffordshire County Council
	Cllr David Fothergill	Somerset County Council
	Cllr Linda Robinson	Wychavon District Council
	Cllr Nicholas Jones	Bury Metropolitan Borough
	Cllr Rory Love OBE	Kent County Council
	Cllr Teresa Heritage	Hertfordshire County Council
	Cllr Mohan Iyengar	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
	Cllr Alan White	Staffordshire County Council
	Cllr Michael Wilcox	Lichfield District Council
	Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
	Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
	Cllr Tim Oliver	Surrey County Council
	Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire Council
	Cllr Antony Mullen	Sunderland City
	Cllr Martin Hill OBE	Lincolnshire County Council
	Cllr Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
	Cllr Jas Athwal	Redbridge London Borough
	Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Tudor Evans OBE	Plymouth City Council
	Cllr Shabir Pandor	Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Andrew Western	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
	Mayor Marvin Rees	Bristol City Council
	Cllr Judi Billing MBE	Hertfordshire County Council
	Cllr Shaun Davies	Telford and Wrekin Council
	Cllr Simon Henig CBE	Durham County Council
	Cllr Carl Johnson	North Tyneside Council
	Cllr Richard Henry	Stevenage Borough Council
	Cllr Rachel Sutton	Exeter City Council
	Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz	Islington London Borough
	Cllr Dhanisha Patel	Bridgend County Borough Council
	Cllr Amy Cross	Blackpool Council
	Cllr Shama Tatler	Brent Council
	Cllr Amanda Serjeant	Chesterfield Borough Council
	Cllr Louise Gittins	Cheshire West and Chester Council
	Cllr Hannah Dalton	Epsom and Ewell District Council
	Cllr Paul Woodhead	Cannock Chase District Council
	Cllr Sue Baxter	Bromsgrove District Council
	Cllr Colin Mann	Caerphilly County Borough Council
	Cllr Andrew Cooper	Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Mike Haines	Teignbridge District Council
	Cllr Jon Ball	Ealing Council
	Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire County Council

Cllr Jonathan Canty	Rushmoor Borough Council
Cllr Isobel Darby	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Richard Cox	Lichfield District Council
Cllr Adrian Hardman	Worcestershire County Council
Cllr David Leytham	Lichfield District Council
Cllr Martin Whelton	Merton Council
Cllr Vikki Slade	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council
Cllr Gareth Williams	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Vanessa Churchman	Isle of Wight Council
Cllr Phil Hewitt	Cannock Chase Council
Cllr Helen Holland	Bristol City Council
Cllr Julia Lepoidevin	Coventry City Council
Cllr Deborah Taylor	Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Jo Beavis	Braintree District Council

Apologies

Cllr Paul Bettison OBE	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
Cllr Peter Golds CBE	Tower Hamlets Council
Cllr Peter Fleming OBE	Sevenoaks District Council
Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen	Breckland District Council
Cllr Olivia Lyons	Cannock Chase District Council
Cllr Anntoinette Bramble	Hackney London Borough Council
Cllr Georgia Gould	Camden Council
Cllr Paulette Hamilton	Birmingham City Council
Cllr Nesil Caliskan	Enfield Council
Sir Stephen Houghton CBE	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE	Stevenage Borough Council
Cllr Brigid Jones	Birmingham City Council
Cllr Bridget Smith	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Ian Stephens	Isle of Wight Council
Cllr Linda Haysey	East Hertfordshire District Council
Cllr Gerald Vernon- Jackson	Portsmouth City Council

LGA location map

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 Website: www.local.gov.uk

Public transport

18 Smith Square is well served by public transport. The nearest mainline stations are: Victoria and Waterloo: the local underground stations are **St James's Park** (Circle and District Lines), **Westminster** (Circle, District and Jubilee Lines), and **Pimlico** (Victoria Line) - all about 10 minutes walk away.

Buses 3 and 87 travel along Millbank, and the 507 between Victoria and Waterloo stops in Horseferry Road close to Dean Bradley Street.

Bus routes – Horseferry Road

- 507** Waterloo - Victoria
- C10** Canada Water - Pimlico - Victoria
- 88** Camden Town - Whitehall - Westminster - Pimlico - Clapham Common

Bus routes – Millbank

- 87** Wandsworth - Aldwych
- 3** Crystal Palace - Brixton - Oxford Circus

For further information, visit the Transport for London website at www.tfl.gov.uk

Cycling facilities

The nearest Barclays cycle hire racks are in Smith Square. Cycle racks are also available at 18 Smith Square. Please telephone the LGA on 020 7664 3131.

Central London Congestion Charging Zone

18 Smith Square is located within the congestion charging zone.

For further details, please call 0845 900 1234 or visit the website at www.cclondon.com

Car parks

Abingdon Street Car Park (off Great College Street)

Horseferry Road Car Park
 Horseferry Road/Arneway Street. Visit the website at www.westminster.gov.uk/parking

