



Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board

Agenda

Tuesday, 24 January 2023
2.00 pm

Beecham Room, 18 Smith Square, London,
SW1P 3HZ

There will be a meeting of the Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board at **2.00 pm on Tuesday, 24 January 2023** 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.

LGA Hybrid Meetings

All of our meetings are available to join in person at [18 Smith Square](#) or remotely via videoconference as part of our hybrid approach. We will ask you to confirm in advance if you will be joining each meeting in person or remotely so we can plan accordingly, if you wish to attend the meeting in person, please also remember to confirm whether you have any dietary/accessibility requirements. 18 Smith Square is a Covid-19 secure venue and measures are in place to keep you safe when you attend a meeting or visit the building in person.

[Please see guidance for Members and Visitors to 18 Smith Square here](#)

Catering and Refreshments:

If the meeting is scheduled to take place at lunchtime, a sandwich lunch will be available.

Political Group meetings and pre-meetings for Lead Members:

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: labgp@lga.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

Attendance:

Your attendance, whether it be in person or virtual, will be noted by the clerk at the meeting.

LGA Contact:

Emilia Peters
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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.

Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board – Membership

[Click here for accessible information on membership](#)

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (7)	
Cllr David Renard (Chairman)	Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Kelham Cooke	South Kesteven District Council
Cllr Mark Crane	Selby District Council
Cllr Jonathan Ash-Edwards	Mid Sussex District Council
Cllr Paul Marshall	West Sussex County Council
Cllr Carl Les	North Yorkshire County Council
Cllr Linda Taylor	Cornwall Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Tony Ball	Essex County Council
Cllr Graham Burgess	Gosport Borough Council
Cllr Imogen Payter	Havant Borough Council
Labour (7)	
Cllr Darren Rodwell (Vice-Chair)	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council
Cllr Martin Gannon	Gateshead Council
Mayor Philip Glanville	Hackney London Borough Council
Mayor Paul Dennett	Salford City Council
Cllr Claire Holland	Lambeth London Borough Council
Cllr Philip Bialyk	Exeter City Council
Cllr Emily Darlington	Milton Keynes Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Anthony Okereke	Royal Borough of Greenwich
Cllr Sharon Thompson	Birmingham City Council
Cllr Thomas Renhard	Bristol City Council
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Cllr Pippa Heylings (Deputy Chair)	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Vikki Slade	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Stewart Golton	Leeds City Council
Independent (2)	
Cllr Loic Rich (Deputy Chair)	Cornwall Council
Cllr Diana Moore	Exeter City Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Jamie Osborn	Norwich City Council
Cllr Ed Gemmell	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Paul Hilliard	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
Cllr Phil Jordan	Isle of Wight Council

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Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 21 March 2023, 11.00 am, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Meeting: Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board

Date: 24 January 2023



Adapting to climate change, local government and the third National Adaptation Programme

Purpose of report

For information

Summary

The Government is now developing its third National Adaptation Plan (NAP3) for 2024 – 29 to respond to the updated Climate Change Risk Assessment, which presents 61 key risk areas. The new NAP3 will set out the actions the Government is, and will be, taking to address the risks and opportunities posed by a changing climate. The LGA is engaging with Government to promote the wide range of critical place-leadership roles for councils in adapting communities, and has begun a project with Local Partnerships to further explore what councils need from the NAP3 and beyond to play their full role. The LGA is also working with Defra and Local Partnerships to capture, understand and present the evidence from councils on how to maximise their role in climate adaptation.

At this meeting we will be joined by a Deputy Direct at Defra leading progress on NAP3 to discuss the work and how local government can work with central government on delivery.

Recommendation/s

That the Board discuss and provide steer for the LGA project and the wider collaboration between local and central government on climate change adaptation following a presentation from Deputy Director for Adaptation, Defra.

Contact details

Contact officer: Nick Porter

Position: Senior Adviser

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Local Government Association company number 11177145

Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government company number 0367557

Chairman: Councillor James Jamieson OBE **Chief Executive:** Mark Lloyd CBE **President:** Baroness Grey-Thompson

Adapting to climate change, local government and the third National Adaptation Programme



Background

1. The third Climate Change Risk Assessment published by the UK Government in January 2022 identifies sixty-one climate risks cutting across multiple sectors of our society. It identifies a wide range of potential costly impacts of climate change including on health and productivity, affecting many of our households, businesses and public services. The latest Climate Change Committee report found that the gap between the level of risk we face and the level of adaptation underway has widened. Adaptation action has failed to keep pace with the worsening reality of climate risk.
2. As place leaders delivering a wide range of services, local government is central to the effort of mitigating and adapting to climate change through its own activities, and through leadership and support to local businesses, partners, and people. Councils have an interest in every identified risk and are directly impacted on by a significant number of these risks – on heat, flooding, drought and so on. They can leverage their influence as community leaders and conveners, with responsibilities across housing, planning, transport, infrastructure, environment, environmental health, public health, welfare, emergency response, community safety and more.
3. Currently, Government is developing its third National Adaptation Plan to respond to the updated Climate Change Risk Assessment. The new NAP will set out the actions the Government is, and will be, taking to address the risks and opportunities posed by a changing climate. It will be published next Summer and aim to mark a step change in the adaptation effort.
4. A range of Government departments will lead on responding to different risks, engaging with multiple actors in councils and the private and voluntary sectors. It is important all Departments and policy-makers fully consider the role of local authorities, and engage with them to shape a policy, delivery and investment framework that enables place-based action on adaptation.
5. The LGA is working with Local Partnerships and Defra to undertake a project to engage councils to investigate, capture, understand and present what local government needs from the update to the National Adaptation Programme. It will also consider and make recommendations on how the wider policy, regulatory and funding environment across Government can best enable councils to lead place based climate adaptation.
6. Local Partnerships have considerable experience working with councils, the LGA and government on climate change adaptation, including developing the [climate change adaptation toolkit](#). The project is due to complete February / March 2023 and officers will continue to work with Defra officials throughout the project to ensure project findings feed into the development of the NAP3 in a timely manner.

Implications for Wales

7. Environment and climate change adaptation are devolved functions and therefore there are no implications for Welsh local authorities

Financial Implications

8. There are no new financial implications for the LGA

Equalities implications

9. Climate risks impact all communities, but it is often those socially vulnerable that feel the impacts more greatlyⁱ.
10. The LGA will continue to consider EDI in its environment programme and particularly in relation to climate change adaptation where impacts can be greater for some communities

Next steps

11. That the board note this item and provide comments on specific issues and officers will ensure they are taken forward in the work programme

ⁱ <https://www.climatejust.org.uk/socially-vulnerable-groups-sensitive-climate-impacts>

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Workforce capacity in local government

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

This report summarises the LGA's policy and improvement activity to address workforce capacity challenges in local government and seeks the Board's feedback on priorities for future activity.

Is this report confidential? No

Recommendation

That the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board feed back their views of the priority issues for future policy and improvement activity to address workforce capacity challenges and how the LGA delivers those priorities.

Contact details

Contact officer: Naomi Cooke

Position: Head of Workforce

Phone no: 0207 664 3299

Email: naomi.cooke@local.gov.uk

Workforce capacity in local government



Executive summary

1. Councils are experiencing workforce capacity challenges across many services. To enable policy boards to consider specific challenges relating to their terms of reference in the context of the challenges affecting the sector as a whole, all the policy boards will consider substantively the same report, prior to consideration of the issue in the round by Resources Board and Executive Advisory Board.
2. This report includes evidence of recruitment and retention challenges being experienced in planning, waste, environment and climate change services. Low pay is a factor in all service areas: additional factors are also identified. Impacts are identified both on service delivery and on delivery of new climate change policies. In addition to sector-wide interventions, the need for long-term policy and funding certainty to invest in resources and skills for planning and place-shaping, climate change response, work to grow skills to deliver the Environment Act and the removal of barriers to the recruitment and retention of HGV drivers are identified.
3. The board is asked to consider progress to date, support and policy offers and asks and to advise on priorities for action, while noting that it may be necessary to identify or reprioritise resources accordingly.

Background

4. Core government funding for councils was reduced by £15 billion in cash terms between 2010/11 and 2019/20. Overall, spending by local authorities in England has decreased by £3.4 billion (in real terms at 2020/21 prices). Most services have seen cuts in expenditure, such as planning (reduced by 35 per cent). The only exceptions were children's social care (increased by 28 per cent in real terms), and 'other services' (which in many cases is where councils accounted for the grants they received to deal with the pandemic response).
5. Against these reductions in spending, there have been increases in demand for most services. For example:
 - The number of looked after children increased by 25 per cent¹, those being assessed because they are believed to be at risk of significant harm increased by 99 per cent², and Ofsted noted that the complexity of cases has increased since

¹ www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children#looked-after-children

² https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/lgastandard?mod-metric=8915&mod-period=12&mod-area=E92000001&mod-group=AllRegions_England&mod-type=namedComparisonGroup

the pandemic began, meaning rising workloads even where the number of children on the caseloads has remained stable³;

- The number of requests for adult social care from new working age clients increased by 11 per cent⁴;
- The number of fly tipping incidents increased by 20 per cent⁵.

It has also been estimated that, due to demographic changes, an estimated 490,000 more people will need to be working across all providers of adult social care in England by 2035⁶.

6. As demands have increased, the size of the local government workforce has decreased. Between 2009 and 2022 the English local government staff headcount fell from 2,254,700 to 1,346,400 (full-time equivalent totals for the same periods falling from 1,584,200 to 1,022,000)⁷. This is only partly explained by academisation, as individual services have been demonstrably reduced: for example, the number of local government adult social services jobs in September 2021 was 115,100, a decrease from 159,400 in September 2011⁸.
7. The only area where staffing has clearly grown over the period is in children and families social workers, where staff levels were 25,515 in December 2011, increasing to 32,502 by September 2021⁹.
8. The picture of reducing staff numbers is worsened by problems with recruitment and retention for those posts which remain. The LGA's most recent research shows that 92 per cent of councils were experiencing recruitment difficulties in at least one occupation and 83 per cent were experiencing retention difficulties in at least one¹⁰. Recruitment problems have affected all types of authority and all types of service. Figure 1 shows, as a proportion of all councils, the most difficult to recruit occupations/ roles:

³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-2022-recovering-from-the-covid-19-pandemic/childrens-social-care-2022-recovering-from-the-covid-19-pandemic

⁴ <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/adult-social-care-activity-and-finance-report/2021-22>

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/env24-fly-tipping-incidents-and-actions-taken-in-england

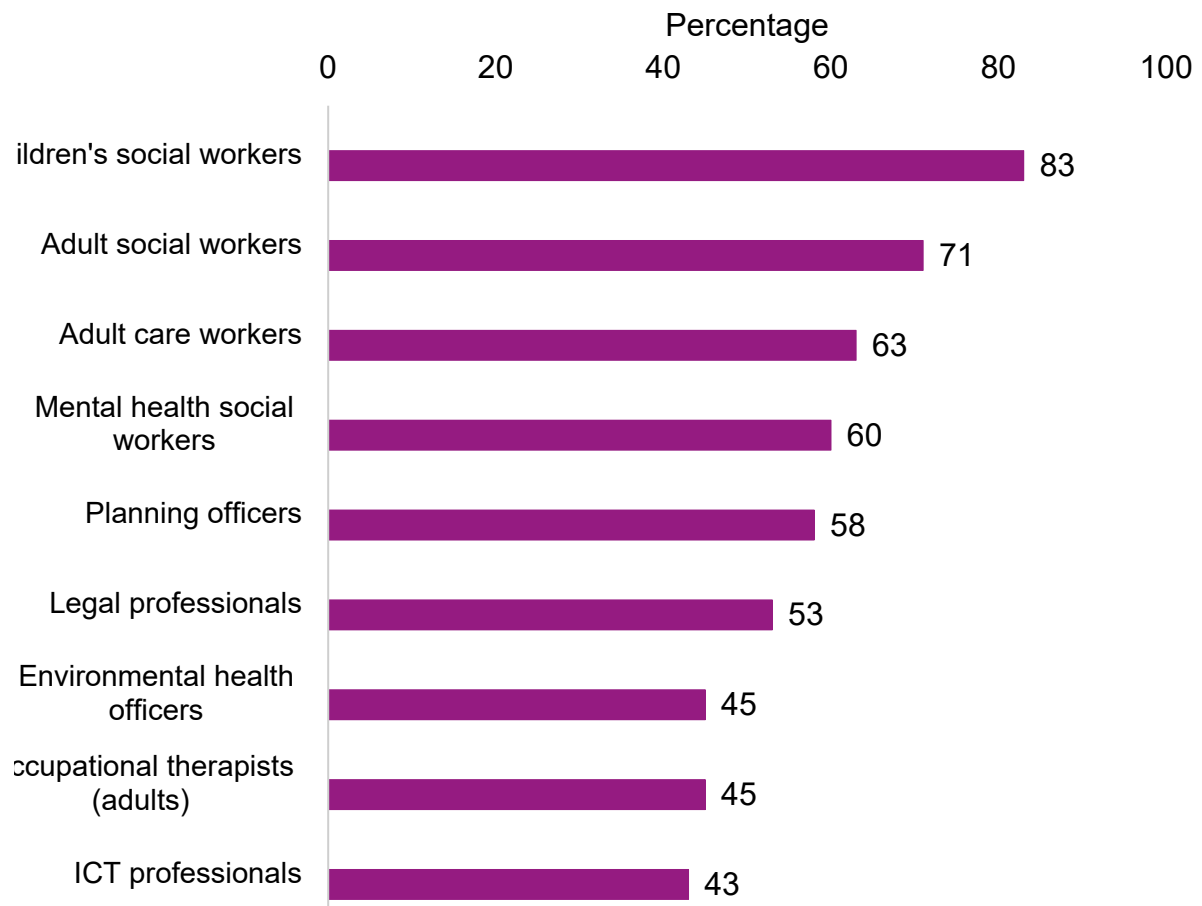
⁶ www.local.gov.uk/our-support/sector-support-offer/care-and-health-improvement/adult-social-care-workforce/asc-reform

⁷ www.local.gov.uk/publications/ons-quarterly-public-sector-employment-survey

⁸ www.skillsforcare.org.uk/adult-social-care-workforce-data/Workforce-intelligence/publications/Data-and-publications.aspx

⁹ <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-s-social-work-workforce>

¹⁰ LGA Workforce Survey 2021/22 (publication imminent) (2022)



Base: all councils (119 overall, but number varies by occupation/role as the results are calculated for the type of council that holds responsibility for them).

Source: LGA Workforce Survey 2022

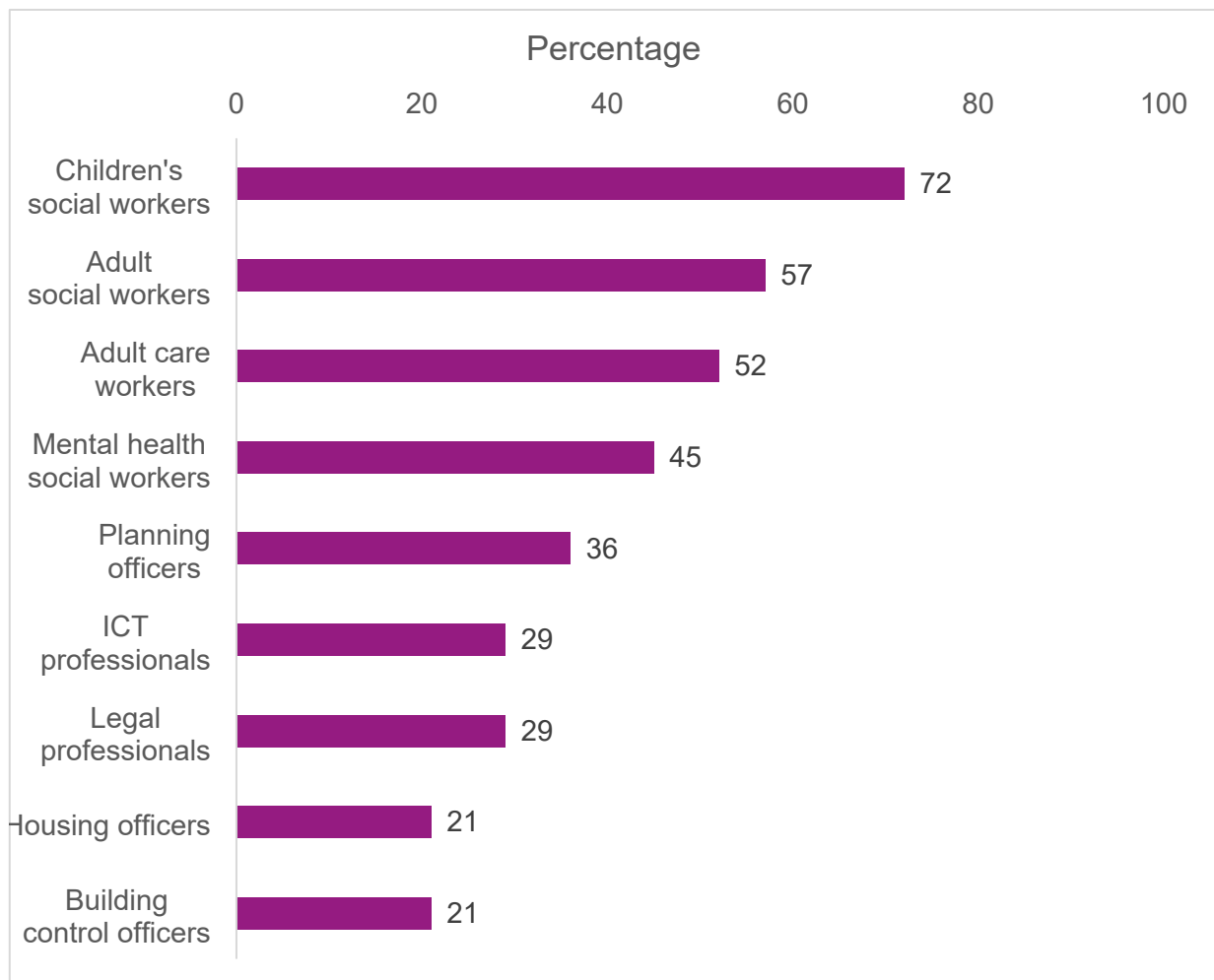
9. A further survey showed that 63 per cent of councils had experienced difficulties recruiting or retaining LGV/ HGV drivers over the past year or anticipated such difficulties¹¹. From our discussions with the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers, it is also clear that trading standards services are experiencing challenges in recruitment.
10. The vacancy rate for children and family social workers was 16.7 per cent in September 2021¹², and 94 per cent of local authorities in early 2022 found it difficult or very difficult to fill vacancies for experienced children's social workers¹³. The number of vacancies across all providers of adult social care increased by 52 per cent in 2021/22, by 55,000 to 165,000¹⁴.
11. Figure 2 shows that, as a proportion of all councils which run the service, the most difficult to retain occupations/ roles are often those which are challenging to recruit:

¹¹ www.local.gov.uk/publications/local-highways-weather-resilience-survey-2022

¹² <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-s-social-work-workforce>

¹³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1123954/Childrens_services_Survey_Wave_6_Dec22.pdf

¹⁴ www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Adult-Social-Care-Workforce-Data/Workforce-intelligence/documents/State-of-the-adult-social-care-sector/The-state-of-the-adult-social-care-sector-and-workforce-2022.pdf



Base: all councils (119 overall, but number varies by occupation/role as the results are calculated for the type of council that holds responsibility for them).

Source: LGA Workforce Survey 20/22

12. Analysis of insights and research from services experiencing capacity challenges has identified the following causes (this is not a comprehensive list):

- i) **Low pay:** this is a factor in all service areas. In some areas of the country, the affordability of housing and availability of public transport impacts on the ability of councils to recruit.
- ii) **Better hours and working conditions elsewhere:** this is a motivation for social care and public health workers, for example, who have also reported feeling burnt out and stressed. There is a perception of a lack of parity of esteem compared to the NHS workforce. Post COVID-19, planners and environmental health officers are also reported to be taking early retirement and leaving the profession and can find work in the private sector. There are also recruitment and retention challenges in housing and homelessness services where officers now have increased workloads due to Homes for Ukraine and other resettlement schemes. Some planners choose to work for agencies where they feel less personally visible in the context of politically charged decision-making and children's social workers value the flexibility provided by agency work.
- iii) **Reductions in staffing and other budgets** have led to reductions in supervision, support, learning and development as well as increased workloads. While some

measures (such as moratoriums on training and recruitment freezes) were intended to be temporary in the early years of austerity, these have become permanent with long-term consequences. These can all impact on staff retention and the ability for professionals to develop additional expertise. Similarly, pressure on manager time is sometimes seen as a disincentive to taking on apprentices or other more junior roles.

- iv) **Local government is not perceived as an attractive career.** Other sectors are perceived as providing more attractive career options in light of the above, with a perceived lack of appreciation and recognition and either low public profile or negative perceptions arising from financial challenges and service failures in the sector generally. Some planners and children's social workers are exposed to significant public criticism, including via social media, without right of reply.

13. Recruitment and retention challenges are leading to the following further impacts and consequences:

- i) Because councils are seeking to recruit from an increasingly limited pool of officers, they are **using market supplement payments** (which were not necessarily budgeted for) to support recruitment and retention. Eighty-one per cent of councils pay them for some occupations¹⁵;
- ii) Councils are increasingly **relying on agency staff** to fill gaps:
 - Sixteen per cent of children's social workers are agency staff and proportions in some councils are at 48 per cent¹⁶ (this does not include where agencies provide entire 'project teams');
 - The Planning Advisory Service has found that some planning services have up to 80 per cent of their staff provided by agencies;
 - Twenty per cent of London authorities reported routinely using agency staff to meet capacity needs in place-shaping services¹⁷.

High turnover of social workers and residential workers and reliance on agency staff can lead to a lack of stability in relationships for children and their families¹⁸. Recent analysis for the DfE estimated that the additional cost of employing agency staff means that there is a loss of over £100 million per year that could be better spent on front-line activity to support children and families¹⁹.

- iii) It can be **difficult to recruit managers** with the required skills and experience; and pay restraint is acting as a disincentive for people to seek promotion to supervisory roles. The reduction in staff numbers can lead to bigger portfolios for managers, making it difficult for them to find time to use their skills effectively.

¹⁵ LGA Workforce Survey 2022 (publication imminent)

¹⁶ <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/454afee-eb35-4226-5de6-08dad5210ff4>

¹⁷ www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/advice-and-guidance/helping-london-authorities-deliver-placeshaping-capacity-survey

¹⁸ www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-202122-education-childrens-services-and-skills

¹⁹ <https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/final-report/>

Newly qualified staff now make up a greater proportion of posts in children's social care²⁰: since newly qualified staff require more oversight and support, this places additional work on managers and may introduce risk when expertise and practical experience is needed to make effective decisions about children and their families²¹.

Ninety per cent of councils reported at least one capability gap in their management team and 83 per cent reported at least one capacity issue²².

- iv) Around 40 to 50 per cent of councils have consistently reported minor **disruption to their services** as a result of not having the right staff (in numbers or skills to meet demand) to run normal services. Around 10 to 20 per cent reported moderate or severe disruption for the same reason²³.

Disruption due to staffing issues has tended to affect key services, most notably those that require professional qualifications. The most recent research showed that the most disrupted services for single tier and county councils were:

- Directly employed adult social care (74 per cent)
- Schools (70 per cent)
- Children's services (58 per cent)
- Public health (52 per cent)

For district and single tier councils, the most disrupted services were:

- Doorstep collection of household waste (45 per cent)
- Environmental health (33 per cent)
- Planning (31 per cent)

- v) There are also **direct negative consequences** both for staff as individuals and for councils' ability to deliver services and/or introduce new operating models:
- Two-fifths of Heads of Human Resources (HR) said that there was a moderate and 11 per cent said there was a high risk that workforce capacity may negatively affect their council's ability to deliver services²⁴;

²⁰ www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-2022-recovering-from-the-covid-19-pandemic/childrens-social-care-2022-recovering-from-the-covid-19-pandemic

²¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-review-into-the-murders-of-arthur-labinjo-hughes-and-star-hobson

²² LGA Workforce Survey 2022 (publication imminent). A capability gap was defined as 'the council has managers, but they require additional training and development/support to close their skills gap'. A capacity gap was defined as 'the council has managers with these skills, but they have no capacity to utilise them effectively'.

²³ www.local.gov.uk/covid-19-workforce-survey-research-reports. These regular surveys were conducted fortnightly during the pandemic in 2020, then monthly until January 2022.

²⁴ www.local.gov.uk/publications/covid-19-workforce-survey-week-ending-14-january-2022

- Two-thirds of adult and children’s social workers in January 2022 said they were experiencing deteriorating mental health because of their roles²⁵;
- Ofsted has noted that children’s social care workloads are high and the demands of an already challenging job can be unsustainable. In the year leading up to September 2021, 9 per cent of all local authority children’s social workers left local authority social work, an increase from 7 per cent the previous year²⁶;
- Thirty-one per cent of Heads of Environmental Services said that some services had been stopped in their authority over the last six years, with many reducing services to the statutory minimum²⁷;
- There is a loss of specialist expertise in a number of areas of local regulatory services, with many officers now taking on generalist roles as councils are unable to carry specialist posts within their headcounts: in some places there is concern about the predominance of food work over other areas of regulation²⁸;
- Given the responses given to the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health workforce survey²⁹, it may be expected that work currently underway to review housing conditions (particularly in the private rented sector) will place further pressure on already-strained capacity in environmental health, with both environmental health and trading standards facing challenges to effectively deliver their broad range of responsibilities, and concern about the future pipeline of officers in each service;
- The King’s Fund argues that COVID-19 has made enormous demands on Directors of Public Health and their (usually small) teams and many are exhausted³⁰. This has implications for the full range of public health systems and functions, including emergency planning³¹;
- Seventy per cent of local planning authorities surveyed by the Royal Town Planning Institute said that they had had difficulty recruiting enforcement officers over the past five years³²;
- Thirty-eight per cent of local planning authorities reported that they could not administer and deliver new ‘No Net Loss/ Net Gain’ and Biodiversity Offsetting policies and, of these, 62 per cent identified lack of staffing resource as the reason³³. A lack of in-house ecological expertise is cited as a major obstacle.
- Heads of library services at a Libraries Connected basecamp reported that libraries have limited ability to respond to corporate priorities such as climate

²⁵ <https://campaigncollective.org/2022/01/25/social-workers-case-loads-putting-vulnerable-at-risk/>

²⁶ www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-202122-education-childrens-services-and-skills

²⁷ www.cieh.org/policy/campaigns/workforce-survey-england/

²⁸ Identified by a cross-government task and finish group convened by DLUHC post-pandemic looking at issues in local regulatory services

²⁹ www.cieh.org/policy/campaigns/workforce-survey-england/

³⁰ www.kingsfund.org.uk/blog/2021/08/public-health-workforce

³¹ www.fph.org.uk/media/3031/fph_systems_and_function-final-v2.pdf

³² www.rtpi.org.uk/research/2022/november/planning-enforcement-resourcing/

³³ <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/LPA-Survey-Full-Report-Aug-23-2021-FINAL.pdf>

change and the cost of living, despite councils increasingly seeing libraries as a trusted core delivery vehicle for providing community support and engagement.

- The Chief Culture and Leisure Officers Association advises that leisure centres have typically covered their own running costs and generated a surplus for councils, but staff shortages, particularly for lifeguards (reported by 73 per cent of employers), are forcing them to move to shorter opening hours or close (50 per cent of employers with shortages)³⁴. This is compromising a business model that is already under pressure from reduced footfall post-COVID-19. Libraries are similarly affected: individual staff sickness now often leads to branch closures as there is no replacement pool of staff to redeploy. This is affecting public opinion of the stability and reliability of these universal and very visible council services.
- The Grenfell Tower disaster and subsequent revelations about the state of the built environment dramatically illustrated the important role of effective building control regulation. Local Authority Building Control (LABC) reports that there are very few council building control departments which have a full complement of staff. Those who do are likely to be operating a reduced establishment than in previous years because of pressure on budgets. As a result, councils regularly have to resort to agency staff: LABC estimate that 50 per cent of London Boroughs have used an agency surveyor at some point over the last twelve months³⁵. LABC and Government funding has provided training to improve competence, but the advent of the new post-Grenfell regulatory system will put additional – as yet unquantified – stress on council teams with oversight from what will in effect be a new inspectorate (HSE). HSE has noted under-resourcing of teams as a key risk to good practice, and therefore good outcomes, following research into current operation and practices of the profession³⁶.
- Revenues and Benefits services have faced considerable change and uncertainty throughout the implementation of wide-ranging welfare reforms and the administration of vital support throughout the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis – often and very short notice and with evolving funding, policy and partnership arrangements. The LGA has heard, through attendance at DWP engagement forums with Revenues and Benefits practitioners, that this has impacted on recruitment, retention, morale and capacity and placed considerable pressure on these services.

14. The cost of living crisis is increasing the scale of the challenge. Nearly all (95 per cent) of the respondents to a Homecare Association Survey said that their staff had expressed anxiety about the rising cost of living and 21 per cent reported that staff were looking for work elsewhere because they cannot afford fuel and other costs: this may impact on councils' ability to commission services from social care providers.

³⁴ Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity Employer Pulse Check 2021 (unpublished)

³⁵ Views supplied to the LGA by LABC

³⁶ www.hse.gov.uk/research/insight/building-control-pubn-summary.pdf

Increasing pay rates for tradespeople lead to consequences not only for councils' ability to let contracts for maintenance and construction work but also contracts being handed back prior to completion.

15. This in turn will put pressure on national negotiations for the annual pay awards for local government workers, compounding a pre-existing issue for the sector from a rapidly escalating National Living Wage (NLW). Last year the NLW increased by 9.7 per cent to take effect on 1 April 2023: forecasts from the Low Pay Commission (who recommend the NLW level to Government) suggest that for April 2024 the NLW could increase a further 8.8 per cent to £11.35. The high proportion of local government staff who are at or near this point means that a significant proportion of any pay award has and will continue to be consumed by legal compliance with the NLW. Without additional funding to meet this cost there will be no capacity to meet the pay-related challenges of those further up the pay scale – the specialists and professionals referenced in this paper. In fact, their pay position is likely to worsen in comparison with the wider public sector and private sector.

Progress to date

16. The LGA and our partners have had some success in highlighting the scale and nature of workforce capacity issues in the sector. For example:
 - i) The National Employers for local government took the unprecedented step in 2022 of writing to the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) when they made their final pay offer to the trade unions, highlighting the need for additional funding to meet the NLW cost. Government declined to recognise the issue and the particular position of local government within the public sector in relation to the NLW. The additional funding made available from 2023/24 may assist with the challenge of meeting the NLW cost in 2023/4 but leaves the cumulative cost highlighted in 2022 unmet: it is therefore unlikely that this will provide much support for councils in meeting their workforce capacity challenges. While the 9.2 per cent increase in local government core spending power announced in the 2023/24 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement will help councils deal with inflationary and other cost pressures, the LGA will continue to make the case for the underlying and existing pressures that remain. Many councils will also see much lower increases in Core Spending Power in the next financial year;
 - ii) In its December 2021 white paper on adult social care, the Government announced £500 million for measures to support the adult social care workforce. The LGA continues to make the case that more detail is needed on this funding to ensure that the Government joins up its various workforce commitments and is keen to work with Government and partners to achieve this;
 - iii) In the November 2022 Autumn Statement, the Government announced its intention to publish a comprehensive workforce plan for the NHS. In response, the LGA has stressed the need to expand the scope of the plan to include the adult social care workforce;

- iv) In the Autumn Statement, the Government also announced it would delay the rollout of adult social care charging reform in light of concerns from the sector that underfunded reforms would have exacerbated significant ongoing financial and workforce pressures;
 - v) The Government has announced its intention to consult on increases to planning fees to improve capacity in the local planning system;
 - vi) In its August 2020 'Planning for the Future' white paper the Government announced its commitment to developing a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the sector;
 - vii) New Government strategies on libraries and sport are being developed. The Government has committed that these will include actions on workforce issues, while the LGA has been commissioned to deliver a workforce mapping survey on the library, archives, records, information and knowledge sector to inform these.
17. The experience of the regulatory services task and finish group, in 2021, however, offers some indication of the possible challenges. The LGA was successful during COVID-19 in highlighting the demands on regulatory services and implications for the future pipeline of officers, leading to the creation of the task and finish group and cross-Whitehall engagement with a proposal for a £15 million regulatory services apprenticeship fund, which achieved some support. The proposal was not subsequently approved and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has subsequently stepped back from the role it was playing on regulatory services. While the Food Standards Agency is continuing to look at this issue, there are challenges linked to the split interest in environmental health and trading standards across different Government departments.
18. The LGA continues to work with professional and regional bodies and to meet with relevant Government departments, to discuss relevant issues and possible solutions.
19. However, in comparison to significant Government investment in recruitment campaigns for professions such as teaching and defence, there has been minimal investment in local government as a 'brand'. Successive years of reductions in Government funding and significant challenges have diminished the attractiveness of the sector as an employer. Given the wide variety of professions employed in local government, the potential to make a difference to local communities and places, and the pride experienced by many working in the sector, there is potential to promote the value and benefits of a career in local government sector, with the aim of appealing both to those entering their professions and to those seeking a career change.

Policy offers and asks

20. Local government has a number of workforce capacity policy offers and asks, which are relevant to the priorities in the [LGA business plan 2022-25](#), as set out below.

A sustainable financial future – continue to highlight the cost pressures on all council services and press for longer term funding that reflects current and future demand for services.

Councils need more resources to undertake workforce planning so they can make better use of public resources and engage effectively with the skills system in the UK in the future

21. The reduction in funding to local government for over a decade has prevented long-term investment in the workforce, with funds reprioritised to solve immediate challenges. Due to high attrition rates and scarcity of skills in key occupational areas councils are now facing a perfect storm of a lack of supply (from the UK skills system) and a lack of long-term investment. Working with further and higher education sectors, learning and training routes can be built back in skill shortage areas for local government. This can only be done effectively if councils can project their workforce needs through effective workforce planning over a one to five year period.
22. As large employers covering the entire country, councils are strategically placed to create local employment opportunities where they have skills needs: targeted investment would enable councils to help level up skills gaps through their own employment and training pathways, boosting their local economy and therefore building back capacity. This starts with better workforce planning across each place, working in partnership with employers and training providers.

Councils need extra funding to enable provision of placements, supervision, apprenticeships and training for professions and service areas experiencing capacity challenges

23. In light of the challenge to recruit specialist and technical roles, many councils are looking to develop their existing staff to close their immediate skills gaps, i.e. to 'grow their own' talent. In the context of significant budget reductions, there is little funding or capacity to support this. The LGA is pressing Government to provide similar investment in training and development programmes to that provided in other parts of the public sector, to address specific skill shortages now in children's services, regulatory services and waste management.

Councils need funding for professional bursary schemes to boost capacity in skill shortage areas and to attract and retain professional talent

24. Many of the local government skill shortage areas (including those in statutory services) require graduate or professional qualifications to enter and progress in that career. Investment in bursary schemes such as [the NHS](#) and those for schools ([Teach First](#)) delivers much needed skills to those sectors. The LGA is working with the Government and professional bodies to identify the key success factors and support required and press for short term targeted funding in the system to boost supply of much needed undergraduate, postgraduate and professional bursary schemes designed specifically for local government.

Councils can improve the responsiveness of the national employment and skills system

25. [Work Local](#) is the LGA's longstanding, ambitious yet realistic vision for progressive devolution and integration of employment and skills services. The campaign sets out:
 - how a centrally driven and fragmented approach is suboptimal and costly;

- how a place-based system, coordinated by local government has the potential to support more people into work and result in increases in residents' skills and employment outcomes at less cost.

Councils need flexibilities in implementing apprenticeships

26. Councils employ approximately 27,000 apprentices across all levels of the workforce from new starters to individuals on graduate apprentice schemes into skill shortage areas. The apprenticeship route offers councils the ability to create development and training pathways into roles at all levels but more flexibility is needed in how the apprenticeship levy can be spent. Since the introduction of the levy in 2019 (£150 million per annum for councils in England), councils have transferred £3.25 million per month unspent to HMRC and this figure is increasing. The LGA has operated an apprenticeship support programme to help councils maximise their levy spend, transfer their levy to other employers and build capacity to grow more apprentice schemes and create more apprentice standards that are needed by councils.
27. The LGA is seeking increased flexibilities in how the apprenticeship levy can be spent: currently the levy can only be used to pay for training. Councils report they would use levy to fund extra capacity in their council to better manage the levy process and to backfill wages when staff on apprenticeships attend training.
28. Council-maintained schools have been disproportionately affected by the levy as they were unable to spend it effectively since the relevant standards did not exist. The LGA has supported the development of apprenticeship standards in schools but much more needs to be done to use the levy to create new apprenticeship routes for higher teaching assistants, teachers and SEND roles.

Councils need investment to support economic development

29. Councils' economic development (ED) teams promote prosperity amongst communities, residents, and businesses, and have latterly been entrusted as 'lead authority' to work with Government to determine how multiple economic growth-related funding streams, are targeted in local areas. The Chief Economic Development Officers Society (CEDOS) published a report³⁷ earlier this year which identified recruitment challenges and skills gaps in light of changing demands on the service.
30. The LGA has commissioned Shared Intelligence (Si) to build on CEDOS' research and engage different parts of local government through our partner organisations. Si's report, due in March 2023, will capture skills and capacity challenges ED teams face in delivering local and national priorities and suggestions for further support to enable ED teams to deliver more. Interim findings will be presented to the City Regions and People and Places Boards in January, and we will explore links with the EEHT Board. Based on the outcome of this project, more detailed support may be required.
31. We are currently also planning to commission research into capacity and priorities, and to develop recommendations for the future of revenues and benefits services, to ensure the right support and safety net underpins inclusive local economies.

³⁷ www.cedos.org/future-of-economic-development-research/

Putting people first – the reform of adult social care gives councils the resources to address their funding pressures.

Councils need a ten-year workforce strategy for health and adult social care

32. The Autumn Statement included a commitment for the publication of a comprehensive workforce plan for the NHS in 2023, including independently verified forecasts for categories of professionals required. In response, we have called for this plan to be extended to include the non-NHS health workforce commissioned or directly employed by councils, the adult social care workforce and those in the community and voluntary sector without whose support the NHS would not be able to operate. We are willing to work with the Government to achieve this, alongside ADASS and other representatives of care and support service users, employers, workers, inspectors and commissioners. This plan should include investment in training, qualifications and support; career pathways and development; effective workforce planning across the whole social care workforce and staff recognition, value and reward. This would enable a holistic view of the needs of the whole workforce, for example enabling social care workers to access resources to aid retention such as NHS Wellbeing Hubs.

Councils need an independent review of care worker pay

33. The social care workforce must be developed in a manner equivalent to the NHS as part of a stable, sustainable solution to long-term funding problems. This must involve 'parity of esteem' for social care staff with their NHS colleagues. Research and deliberation is needed on the coordination of terms and conditions and the introduction of an effective mechanism for implementation and uprating pay. To achieve those aims with a reasonable degree of consensus across the sector, we continue to urge Government to commission an independent review to promptly review the existing pay levels in the sector and the mechanism for ensuring they support the recruitment and retention of the high-quality workforce the public requires.

Councils need financial support to address significant challenges in adult social care recruitment and retention

34. The LGA argues that, although additional funding for adult social care announced in the Autumn Statement is welcome, it falls significantly short of the £13 billion we have called for to address the severity of the pressure facing the service: this includes £3 billion towards tackling significant recruitment and retention problems by increasing care worker pay. While we have produced [guidance to support social care providers to maximise opportunities from overseas recruitment](#), financial support is also required to meet additional costs associated with this route (approximately £6,000 per person).

Councils need a knowledge and skills framework for adult social care

35. The LGA welcomed the commitment in 'People at the Heart of Care', the adult social care reform white paper, to a knowledge and skills framework to support career structure and progression and now calls for its implementation. This framework should be across health and care to enable people to maximise opportunities and build knowledge and understanding of different roles (subject to the current pay differential

between health and care being addressed so that the current one-way flow of staff from social care to health is ceased).

Councils need the removal of barriers to swift ‘onboarding’ of new staff

36. Capacity gaps in adult social care are being exacerbated by lengthy Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) processes and a lack of portability of existing checks. It is proposed to seek the support of DLUHC to convene relevant Government departments and professional bodies to consider revisions to processes to reduce lengthy recruitment periods and additional costs.

Putting people first – councils have the powers and funding to meet the needs of all local children and people.

Councils can support Government to review national rules on agency usage in children’s social care

37. We are already supporting councils to reduce the use of agency social work, which is costly and works against providing stable professional relationships for children and families. We are recommending that Government takes consistent action to control the agency market and malpractice, particularly in relation to the growing prevalence of managed teams in the market which is leading to concerns about a lack of vetting assurance associated with these teams, and a reduction in the availability of agency social workers for ‘standard’ appointments.

Councils need a holistic workforce strategy for children and family services

38. The scale of the challenge, and the interrelationships across all elements of children and family services, requires a holistic strategy. We are calling on the Department for Education, in consultation with the sector, to develop a shared 10-year workforce strategy and a sustainable approach to pay with clear actions at national, system, place and provider level. This will help the sector plan for and attract the right people we need to meet demand, create new entry routes into social work, focus on prevention rather than crisis, enable us to reward people appropriately and set out explicit skills and competency frameworks.

Championing climate change and local environments – deliver a waste and resource system that meets local needs

Councils need long-term policy and funding certainty to invest in climate change response and a national technical assistance strategy

39. Councils have some influence over 80 per cent of local greenhouse gas emissions, through housing, transport and energy solutions. All private and public sector partners are learning and growing experience around climate change mitigation and adaptation. Councils are no different, but messy and uncertain funding and policy environment can make it difficult for councils to invest in the technical, financial and managerial experience to lead the local long-term effort, and support from Local Net Zero Hubs is patchy at best. Councils need clarity so they can invest in their capacity, and a strategy to pool technical assistance locally, sub-nationally and nationally which councils can draw on.

Councils need a resources and skills strategy for planning and place-making

40. The LGA welcomes the commitment in 'Planning for the Future', the planning white paper, to a comprehensive resource and skills strategy for the planning sector and now calls for its urgent implementation. As outlined earlier in this report there is considerable concern from councils about their already stretched capacity and recruitment and retention challenges. Councils will need the necessary resources to upskill officers to implement reforms to the planning system to ensure they are equipped to create great communities through community engagement and proactive place-making.

Councils want to work with government and industry to grow the environmental skills to deliver the Environment Act

41. Public concern with environmental quality will grow and the Environment Act introduces a range of ambitious policy reforms that councils want to help succeed. Councils are encountering real challenges in finding and recruiting the skills in preparing for their duties around Bio-Diversity Net Gain, the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, wider nature recovery, and wider waste and recycling policy reforms. In particular, the government, industry and councils should work together grow the number of ecologists across all partners and ensure that local government is an attractive to new ecologists.

Councils need the removal of barriers to recruitment and retention of HGV drivers

42. Forty-one per cent of councils state that allowing renewal of the certificate of professional competence (CPC) at no cost to drivers would help to alleviate HGV driver shortages³⁸. We therefore propose to call on the Department for Transport to remove CPC renewal costs to aid recruitment and retention of workers in the sector.

Improvement and support offers

43. The LGA currently provides the following advice and support to councils which can assist with recruitment and retention challenges:

- i) Resources to help local government employers to address recruitment and retention challenges, accessed via the [LGA website](#).
- ii) Information and best practice sharing (including new ways of working) with local authorities' HR professionals;
- iii) Targeted 'employee healthcheck' surveys for qualified social workers, occupational therapists and non-registered social care practitioners supporting the delivery of social care to inform workforce planning and support;
- iv) Tools and consultancy to support councils to make efficient use of staffing resources and workforce planning;

³⁸ www.local.gov.uk/publications/covid-19-workforce-survey-week-ending-14-january-2022

- v) Training to support new managers and aspiring leaders in arts, culture, libraries, sport and physical activity, funded on a rolling basis by Arts Council England and Sport England.

44. The LGA has identified a number of additional support offers that it could provide to councils, subject to the identification of funding. These could include:

- i) developing a recruitment campaign for local government
- ii) research into career pathways to inform planning of qualifications and training provision
- iii) development of apprenticeship pathways into skills shortage areas
- iv) development of returners programmes and support for early careers
- v) further collation and promotion of best practice to the sector.

LGA political governance

45. The Resources Board has the overall lead for workforce support as well as the policy lead for financial sustainability in the sector and the capacity and capability of the finance workforce. Each LGA policy board considers workforce issues as relevant to their terms of reference and in particular:

- Children and Young People Board: children's social care;
- Community Wellbeing Board: adult social care;
- Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board: waste, climate change, housing, planning;
- Safer and Stronger Communities: regulatory services such as environmental health and trading standards (these services also support the objectives of other boards);
- Culture, Tourism and Sport: Libraries, leisure centres and parks;
- City Regions Board: economic development, employment and skills;
- People and Places Board: economic development, employment and skills.

The Improvement and Innovation Board also has a role in overseeing the delivery of workforce improvement support activity funded by DLUHC.

46. All of the above boards are therefore asked to consider this report and provide feedback on priority issues related to this theme. Following the Resources Board discussion, the expectation is that Executive Advisory Board will then be asked to consider the LGA's work on the theme in the round.

Implications for Wales

47. Wales faces very similar issues with workforce capacity as are evident in England. Through the workforce team's regular engagement the WLGA feeds into discussions

and the sharing of good practice and experience. The working assumption used is that any steps to improve capacity in England would also be applicable in Wales, taking note of relevant responsibility devolution.

48. Financial implications

49. The LGA activities listed at paragraph 42 will be implemented within existing budgets. Improvement and support proposals references at paragraph 43 are subject to negotiation with DLUHC as part of the 2023/4 sector support programme.

Equalities implications

50. Capacity gaps in councils' workforce have the potential to have negative impacts on people with protected characteristics: for example, an inability to meet demand for adult social care can impact older people and people with disabilities.

51. Addressing equalities considerations is a crucial part of work to maximise the potential pool of local government workers and aid retention: support to councils to consider equalities good practice is an important part of the workforce provided by the LGA.

52. By working with councils and with relevant professional bodies, the LGA will target its policy and improvement work to address workforce capacity challenges towards those service areas where it is most needed, with particular consideration of impacts on people with protected characteristics.

Next steps

53. A report incorporating feedback from policy boards will be brought to Executive Advisory Board for consideration on 9th March 2023.

Meeting: Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board

Date: 24 January 2023



Housing standards

Purpose of report

This report summarises the LGA's policy and improvement activity in relation to housing standards in the social and private rented sectors and seeks the Board's feedback on priorities for future activity.

Summary

Following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak and the publication of the Coroners report, the Secretary of State wrote to council leaders and social housing providers in November 2022 calling for action in prioritising the improvement of housing conditions for private and social tenants. This report summarises the LGA's policy and improvement activity in relation to housing standards more broadly and seeks the Board's feedback on priorities for future activity.

Is this report confidential? No

Recommendation/s

That the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board provide their views on the priority issues for policy and improvement activity (paragraph 11 and paragraph 13) to address housing standards and how the LGA delivers those priorities.

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Housing standards



Background

1. Following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak and the [publication](#) of the Coroners report, the [Secretary of State, Michael Gove, has written to council leaders and social housing providers](#) calling for action in prioritising the improvement of housing conditions for private rented sector and social housing tenants.
2. The two separate letters sent to councils by Michael Gove (one in relation to damp and mould in councils' own social housing stock and one in relation to damp and mould in privately rented housing) have implications for councils who are:
 - a) Registered providers of social housing i.e. have their own stock
 - b) Local housing authorities who have a duty under the Housing Act 2004 to keep housing conditions in their area under review with a view to identifying any action that may need to be taken by them under the Act.
3. Following the initial letter from Michael Gove, registered providers of social housing were [written to](#) by the Regulator of Social Housing with a request for information by 19 December 2022.
 - a) Providers owning 1,000 homes or more were asked to provide evidence of:
 - i) their approach to assessing the extent of damp and mould issues in their homes
 - ii) their most recent assessment of the extent of damp and mould hazards
 - iii) the action they are taking to remedy them
 - iv) the process they have to identify and deal promptly with damp and mould cases when they are raised by tenants.
 - b) Providers with fewer than 1,000 homes have been instructed to inform the regulator immediately if they are not taking action to remedy damp and mould issues, or do not have a comprehensive understanding of the extent of potential damp and mould issues in their homes.
4. Separately, councils who are local housing authorities received a second letter from DLUHC officials with a request to provide more information on what is required in relation to their assessment of damp and mould issues (and action being taken) affecting private rented sector homes. An initial high-level response was due by the 30 November 2022 and a more detailed response is due by 27 January 2023. The government worked with local authorities and the LGA to develop the response form.
5. In October 2021, the Housing Ombudsman published its [spotlight report](#) on damp and mould which made a series of recommendations for landlords. The Housing

Ombudsman recently [wrote](#) to social landlords about complaints relating to damp and mould and asked them to renew their focus on the recommendations in its Spotlight report. The Ombudsman also continues to share findings from its [review of complaints](#), as well as sharing [good practice](#), for example how swift or timely action by landlords can impact complaint outcomes positively.

6. More broadly, the government published a [white paper](#) in June 2022, which sets out its plans to reform the private rented sector and level up housing quality. As part of this, the government has recently [consulted](#) on the introduction and enforcement of a Decent Homes Standard in the private rented sector in England (it currently only applies to the social housing sector). The LGA [response](#) to the consultation was broadly supportive of the introduction of the standard, but stressed the need for any new responsibilities on councils to be supported by upfront and adequate new burdens funding.
7. During 2021 and the early part of 2022, the government also convened a working group, including the LGA, to help review and update the Decent Homes Standard. However, this group has not met since. In its consultation on introducing the Decent Homes Standard in the private rented sector, the government reiterated its commitment to a review of the Decent Homes Standard and have said that further details will be set out in due course.
8. The Social Housing Regulation Bill also continues its way through parliament. This legislation will strengthen the powers of the Social Housing Regulator to improve standards by taking a more proactive, regulatory approach. In particular, this will enable the Regulator to undertake periodic inspection of landlords with more than 1,000 homes. The Regulator has now confirmed it is currently undertaking some [pilot inspections](#), including Eastbourne Borough Council and Folkestone and Hythe Borough Council.

Progress to date

9. The LGA and our partners have had some success in highlighting the opportunities and challenges for improving the quality of housing standards in both the social and private rented sectors. For example:
 - i) The government [recognised](#) the impact that a rent increase below CPI+1% would have on the ability of councils to invest in new and existing social housing and provide decent homes and services to tenants. The impact was robustly evidenced in the [LGA's response to the consultation](#). Whilst still going ahead with a rent ceiling below CPI+1%, it decided on a 7% ceiling, rather the government's previously preferred option of 5%.
 - ii) Recognition by the [Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee](#) of the competing financial pressures on social housing providers and the challenges relating to the age and design of stock, aggravated by the lack of funding for regeneration and the shortage of new social housing.
 - iii) The LGA has commissioned Savills to undertake research to assess the challenges to council Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA) relating to income, expenditure and the Right to Buy scheme. The income research, as mentioned

in i) was used to support our social rent cap consultation response. The findings and policy recommendations of the full set of research will support our work to secure further reforms to ensure the long-term sustainability of HRA and adequate investment in existing and future stock.

- iv) In its June 2022 [‘A fairer private rented sector’ white paper](#) the Government announced its commitment to introduce a new Property Portal for the private rented sector and strengthen local councils’ enforcement powers and ability to crack down on criminal landlords.
 - v) Providing [written evidence](#) to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee for its inquiry on reforming the private rented sector. Alongside this we are currently reviewing and updating our evidence base to make the case for additional fiscal, policy and capacity support to support councils’ role in improving quality in the private rented sector.
 - vi) The National Audit Office report on [‘Regulation of Private Renting’](#), which the LGA contributed to, highlighted the importance of the government having an overall vision and strategy for the regulation of private renting; the need for a review of the adequacy of current local authority enforcement powers and the need to improve the quality and availability of data to support decision-making.
 - vii) Councillor Renard met Richard Blakeway, the Housing Ombudsman in October 2022, where it was agreed that the LGA would continue to work with the Ombudsman to share learning across the local government sector – this will include a webinar on complaints handling in housing in March 2023.
 - viii) The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) used the LGA’s toolkit on improving the private rented sector to frame a project in the South West on local government mechanisms to improve the health of tenants in private rented housing.
 - ix) The Government has committed to a £3.8bn Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund over a 10-year period, to improve the energy performance of social rented homes. The SHDF will contribute to improving housing standards through delivering warm, energy-efficient homes, as well as reducing carbon emissions, tackling fuel poverty, and supporting green jobs.
 - x) Councillor Renard chaired a webinar on the Social Housing Regulation Bill in November 2022, where he was able to promote the work we are doing to support councils to improve their housing management services and engagement with tenants through the delivery of our [social housing management peer challenge](#) and [promotion of best practice](#).
 - xi) We have also produced guidance on [good practice in tenant engagement](#) and the crucial role of local leadership in developing a culture of tenant involvement.
10. The LGA continues to work with professional and regional bodies, as well as with relevant Government departments, to discuss relevant issues and possible solutions on housing standards – including those relating to damp and mould in tenanted properties.

Policy asks

11. The headline policy asks in relation to quality in the social housing and private rented sectors are summarised below:

- i) **There needs to be an urgent shared local and central government understanding about the current and future capacity of Housing Revenue Accounts (HRAs) to deliver on wide-ranging government priorities.**

The self-financing settlement in 2012 distributed debt to stock-holding local authorities on the assumption that anticipated rent income would be sufficient to fund works to raise all homes to the Decent Homes Standard (DHS) and maintain them there, and to pay off debt over a 30-year period. The settlement is now ten years old, and its underlying income and expenditure assumptions have both been superseded.

Additional expenditure needs, combined with the government's policies on rent setting and Right to Buy are increasingly impacting on councils' ability to deliver their responsibilities as local housing authorities, as well as their housing delivery ambitions, creating a 'perfect storm'. It is likely that trade-offs will need to be made between these competing priorities in the current financial climate. If councils are to deliver on the wide range of government agendas that impact on council housing (building safety, fire safety, decarbonisation, housing quality, new supply) additional government investment or increased flexibilities to raise additional income will be needed. For example, additional funding for estate regeneration; a long term rent deal; preferential Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) rates; reform to Right to Buy – including 100 per cent retention of receipts from sales and setting discounts locally. The LGA's ['Delivery of council housing'](#) report published in 2020 referenced these and a number of other policy and fiscal interventions that would be helpful.

- ii) **Councils need a more effective regulatory function to improve quality standards in the private rented sector**

There have been a number of reports published that have clearly highlighted the challenges and opportunities in relation to the regulation and enforcement of quality standards in the private rented sector, as highlighted in paragraph 10. The LGA has welcomed the broad direction of travel outlined in the Government's ['A fairer private rented sector' white paper](#) and now calls for its urgent implementation. This includes the introduction of a new Property Portal for the private rented sector and strengthening of local councils' enforcement and oversight powers and ability to crack down on criminal landlords. This could for example include increased Civil Penalties (currently capped at £30,000) and removing the requirement for Secretary of State approval for larger selective licensing schemes.

A resources and skills strategy will also be crucial in enabling councils to deliver on their ambitions to drive up the quality of private rented sector stock in their areas. This is particularly pertinent in light of the results of the [Chartered Institute of Environmental Health workforce survey](#), which highlighted the lack of

resources within environmental health teams, tightening budgets and difficulties with recruitment of experienced and qualified practitioners.

Improvement and support offers

12. The LGA currently provides the following advice and support to councils which can assist in support councils to address and drive up housing standards:
 - i) A social housing management peer challenge to help stock-holding councils to improve their management of social housing.
 - ii) Funding through the [Housing Advisers Programme](#) which allows the provision of bespoke expert support to councils on local housing challenges - this could include improving the quality of homes.
 - iii) Online resources accessible from the LGA website including the [toolkit](#) for improving quality in the private rented sector, [case studies](#) on previous Housing Advisers Programme projects and [guidance on engaging and empowering tenants](#).
 - iv) Information and best practice sharing through social housing and private rented sector professional networks.
 - v) Training to support councillors through our [Leadership Essentials programme](#) on housing – which covers leadership on housing quality.
 - vi) Regular webinars to update councillors and officers on key regulatory and legislative changes, as well as sharing best practice.
13. The LGA has identified a number of additional support offers that it could provide to councils, subject to the identification of funding. These could include:
 - i) development of additional best practice and knowledge sharing groups, for example on Selective Licensing
 - ii) interactive mapping of private rented sector enforcement activity to support benchmarking and sharing of practice
 - iii) updated guidance on effective tenant engagement
 - iv) expanded roll-out of the social housing management peer challenge
 - v) collaboration on potential expanded roll-out of the [housing enforcement qualification](#) to build further workforce capacity in the sector

Implications for Wales

42. Housing is a devolved policy area but any steps to improve housing conditions in England could also be relevant to Wales. We will be working with the Welsh LGA policy colleagues to share good practice and experience.

Financial implications

43. All activities listed in this report will be implemented within existing budgets, apart from those referenced at paragraph 13. These will be subject to funding negotiations with DLUHC.

Equalities implications

14. Poor quality housing has the potential to have negative impacts on people with protected characteristics: for example, damp and mould and cold homes can impact children, older people and people with disabilities.
15. The LGA will ensure that its policy and improvement work to address housing standards, takes into particular consideration the impacts on people with protected characteristics.

Next steps

16. That the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board provide their views on the priority issues for policy and improvement activity (paragraph 11 and paragraph 13) to address housing standards and how the LGA delivers those priorities.

Meeting: Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board
Date: 24 January 2023



Building Safety Update

Purpose of report

For noting.

Summary

This report updates members on the LGA's building safety-related work since the last meeting.

Is this report confidential? No

Recommendation/s

That members note and comment on the LGA's building safety related work.

Contact details

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Meeting: Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board

Date: 24 January 2023



Building Safety Update

Background

1. Since the Board's last meeting, the LGA has continued to monitor the progress of the Fire Safety Act and the Building Safety Act's implementation. The LGA has continued support remediation and to plan related improvement work.

Remediation

General Position

2. [DLUHC statistics](#) show that at the end of November 2022, 95% (463) of all identified high-rise residential and publicly owned buildings in England had either completed or started remediation work to remove and replace unsafe Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding (99% of buildings identified at 31 December 2019, 98% of buildings identified at 31 December 2020) – an increase of one since the end of October.
3. 441 buildings (91% of all identified buildings) no longer have unsafe ACM cladding systems – an increase of two since the end of October. 404 (83% of all buildings) have completed ACM remediation works – an increase of five since the end of October. This includes 351 (72% of all buildings) which have received building control sign off – an increase of one since the end of October.
4. Of those with ACM cladding remaining, 22 have started remediation. Of the 24 (5%) buildings yet to start, two are vacant, so do not represent a risk to resident safety, and 15 additional buildings were identified after 31 December 2020.
5. 100% (160) of social sector buildings have either completed or started remediation. Of these, 159 (99%) have had their ACM cladding removed.
6. 91% (211) of private sector buildings have either completed or started remediation. Of these, 195 (84%) have had their ACM cladding removed.
7. £29.8 million of funding has been approved from the Waking Watch Relief and Replacement Funds, covering 368 buildings and 26,900 leasehold dwellings.
8. [Building Safety Fund data](#) shows that as of 30 November 2022, 343 buildings have either started or completed work under the BSF, including 81 in the social sector, only 8 have completed and had building control sign off, another 75 are complete but not yet approved.

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9. As of 30 November 2022, the total amount of funding allocated for the remediation of non-ACM cladding is £1,677m (including social sector). £159m of this is for the social sector.
10. As of 30 November 2022, the Building Safety Fund's total expenditure (including Social and Private Sector spend) was £714 million. £109m of this is for the social sector

DLUHC Funding Announcement – Enforcement Teams

11. DLUHC has announced that over £8 million is being allocated to dedicated council enforcement teams which will receive greater resources to pursue freeholders who are dragging their heels and refusing to begin repairs.
12. The funding will be split among 59 councils in England and prioritised for those with the highest number of unsafe buildings, particularly focused in London, Manchester and Birmingham.
13. To allow councils to capitalise on the additional funding, the LGA is encouraging its members to consider whether private buildings in their area might benefit from a JIT inspection. Contact Brian.Castle@local.gov.uk with any suggestions or enquiries.

Cardinal Lofts & Interim Significant Decants Protocol

Background

14. On Tuesday 15th November, the upper three floors of 'Cardinal Lofts', a 9-storey building in Ipswich, were decanted as a result of Suffolk FRS's concerns that the upper three floors had only one set of stairs to be used in the case of a fire (therefore a single point of failure).
15. Ipswich Borough Council assisted those residents requiring immediate temporary accommodation.
16. The decant attracted the interest of the Building Safety Minister, Lee Rowley MP. The minister was interested in what the eventual housing solutions for displaced residents were and what were the next steps in assessing the risk to the remaining residents (the building had other outstanding fire safety and structural issues).
17. DLUHC officials have begun work on a protocol around the managing of decants in response to this incident and with LGA encouragement, in order to ensure that expectations around the information supplied to DLUHC on these topics are made clear and best practice advertised before any more any further decants take place.
18. An interim draft protocol is being informally consulted upon and has had an unplanned road-test following a decant in Manchester over the Christmas period. In this case, it appears to have worked well.

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19. Separately efforts are under way to ensure the Minister's office understands how decant decisions arise for the various relevant statutes.

Building Safety Act & Building Safety Regulator

20. In its response to the HSE consultation on the BSR's Operational Standards Rules, the LGA expressed concern at the statement that under the new regime building control officers 'must not give advice on design and construction aspects for specific building projects'. Following discussions with HSE we are now optimistic that the HSE does not intend to take this course.
21. The role of local authority building control in supporting the BSR during the 'in-occupation phase' has not yet been settled but the LGA anticipates that it will be announced in the first quarter of 2023.
22. The LGA has raised concerns with the HSE over the cost and resources implications of HSE's oversight of the building control profession and has received assurances that the BSR's regulatory activities will minimise costs and resources.
23. The HSE plans further engagement with duty holders under the Building Safety Act in 2023 focused on what they need to do to register their building(s). The LGA will continue to support this engagement.
24. The first Building Safety Conference is being hosted by the BSR on Wednesday 22nd March at the Methodist Central Hall, Whitehall. We encourage anyone with responsibilities for building safety to attend. Attendees will hear directly from BSR about the important changes that will come into effect from April 2023 and how to prepare for them. The link to register should be available by the time of the meeting and will be circulated.

Approved Document B: Open Consultation

25. On 23rd December 2022, the DLUHC launched a consultation on proposed changes to Approved Document B (Fire Safety Guidance). The consultation will close on 17th March 2023 and including:
 - Consulting on the appropriate height threshold for the provision of a second staircases in new residential buildings, with a proposal to set a threshold for single stair residential buildings at 30m
 - Making provisions for all new care homes to include sprinklers
 - Recommending the removal of the national classification system (BS 476) for reaction to fire and fire resistance of construction products, ending the dual system currently in place
 - Calling for evidence on the clarity of guidance, focusing on the use of materials on external walls.
26. Please find the link to the consultation [here](#).

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Improvement

27. The state of the current year's improvement work is as follows:

- 27.1. We have held three webinars on the developing new regime to date, with around 150 attending the most recent and very positive feedback. A further webinar is planned for Thursday 9th March 2023 and we plan to continue the series next year.
- 27.2. We are running a Building Safety Leadership Essentials for two days on 1st and 2nd February 2023 at Warwick Conferences, Coventry. The course is designed to prepare leaders and portfolio holders for the new building safety regime. Please contact Grace.Collins@local.gov.uk to sign up.
- 27.3. The E-learning tool on Building Control has been submitted to us by the contractor in draft form and should be ready to launch in February. The tool aims to raise the awareness of councillors, in particular the relevant portfolio holders, of the building control function of local authorities and changes to how it works under the Building Safety Act. This is an important issue as the old building control regime was na important factor in the Grenfell Tower fire and because the new regime may have financial implications for councils and will leave the HSE as effectively a regulator of all council building control functions.
- 27.4. We are commissioning some studies on dealing with Large Panel System buildings. In recent years several social housing landlords have discovered that they own LPS buildings and in many cases, have demolished them. WE anticipate further cases and see the introduction of a new safety case regime for high rise buildings as a good time to share best practice.

Implications for Wales

- 28. The Fire Safety Act came into force in Wales in October 2021. The new regulations passed under the FSO only apply in England. Building regulations and fire and rescue services are devolved responsibilities of the Welsh Assembly Government, and the main implications arising from the recommendations of the Hackitt Review and the government's response to it are on building regulations and fire safety in England. However, the Welsh government has announced that it will be making the changes recommended in the report to the regulatory system in Wales, and the LGA has been keeping in contact to ensure the WLGA is kept informed of the latest developments in England.

Financial Implications

- 29. Although the LGA has set up the Joint Inspection Team, the cost of doing so is being met by DLUHC. The Joint Inspection Team has secured funding for the next two years which will see it expand significantly. In effect, it will triple in capacity by the end of this financial year.

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30. Other work arising from this report will continue to be delivered within the planned staffing budget, which includes an additional fixed term post in the safer community's team to support the LGA's building safety work..

Equalities implications

31. EEIS+ and PEEPs are directly related to councils' duties under the Equality Act 2010. The group of people affected by building safety issues will be broad and include a wide variety of potential equalities issues.
32. The Evacuation and Fire Safety Working Group includes representatives of disabled residents and communities and the LGA will continue to promote their contribution – we have already done so in the LGA EEIS+ Consultation Response in which we recommended the Home Office should seek advice from those with lived experience on their proposals

Next steps

33. Officer to proceed as directed.

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Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board Updates

Purpose of report

For information

Summary

This paper provides updates on a range of issues within the remit of the Board that have not already been covered in other Board agenda items.

Recommendation

That the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board note the update

Contact details

Contact officer: Eamon Lally

Position: Principal Adviser

Phone no: 02076 643132

Email: eamon.lally@local.gov.uk

Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Update Paper



Housing, planning and homelessness

Nutrient and water neutrality (please can this be moved to the environment section?)

1. We are currently writing the report to summarise the policy enquiry on nutrient and water neutrality launched in 2022. Both issues relate to river catchment areas and advice to local planning authorities to stop housing development immediately in order to protect weakened natural environments. We have previously published research on the impact of this on local housebuilding objectives. The enquiry has brought together councils with a range of partners to explore solutions in the short-term and find long-term resolutions to protect the environment.
2. Government has proposed amendments to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill that would require water companies to improve water treatment infrastructure. The LGA is [briefing the House of Lords on the draft Bill](#), highlighting the need to involve local authorities.

Homes for Ukraine Delivery Board

3. LGA has been invited by the Ukraine Humanitarian Taskforce to sit on the Homes for Ukraine delivery board which looks in depth at statistics relating to homelessness and housing outcomes for households in England under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. In its first meeting LGA was given the action to consider how best to share best practice on accessing the PRS and thank you payments. We are looking to do some joint work with DLUHC to set up a knowledge hub with examples of best practice and launch this with a webinar.

Investment in Homelessness Prevention

4. We will be hosting a joint webinar with Local Partnerships on 18th January to launch the work on Investment in Homelessness Prevention. The full report looks at what approaches have worked in homelessness prevention, how much they cost, costs that can have been avoided, and some of the benefits accrued by their implementation. A tool has also been developed that councils can use to calculate their own savings. Full report and event details are available [here](#).

CAS-2 / LGA Protocol

5. The protocol which forms the basis of a partnership approach between offender accommodation providers and local authorities has been refreshed due to the service being recommissioned in October 2022. Formerly known as BASS, the service accommodates people subject to a Bail Order or Home Detention Curfew and who would be either bailed or released if not for a lack of a suitable address.

6. The new protocol puts more onus on CAS2 service to ensure appropriateness of location in collaboration with councils and ensures properties are not too close together or in areas where the police and the local authority are concerned about the over-use of accommodation for similar purposes. There is also the inclusion of a Single Point of Access within councils to ensure a speedy response when identifying the appropriateness of accommodation.

Housing Improvement

7. The 2022/23 Housing Advisers Programme (cohort 6) closed to applications on 24 November 2022 and 55 applications were received. 21 successful projects from across all regions were notified on 12 December with more than 90 councils and other partners benefiting this year. [Brief summaries of this year's successful projects](#) are available to view on the LGA website along with [case studies from previous cohorts](#)
8. The 2023 Leadership Essentials: Housing course, aimed at helping council leaders, deputy leaders and housing portfolio holders to develop their leading role in shaping their local housing markets, took place on 19th and 20th January at Warwick Business School. This year the theme was "Leading through challenge" and, in addition to green homes and housing delivery, there was a focus on councils' role in raising housing quality and tackling inequality, both in the social and private rented sectors.

Exempt Accommodation

9. The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Bill had its second reading in parliament on 18th November 2022. The LGA published our view on the proposed clauses [here](#). We are broadly supportive of the bill but have expressed concern around resourcing issues which will need to be adequately funded in order for the bill to be successfully implemented. Some further amendments were tabled last week which we were also [generally supportive of](#).

Local Authority Housing Fund

10. Government announced a new £500m Local Authority Housing Fund which will run over financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24. The capital fund is aimed at supporting the local authorities who will be facing the greatest challenges in providing move on and settled accommodation for people from Ukraine through the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine Scheme, and the Afghans who worked alongside the British Government.
11. The fund prospectus, setting out more detail on what it is for and how it works, can be [found here](#). Councils have been asked to complete a validation form which provides basic details on their proposal by 25th January.

Building Safety Levy Consultation

12. DLUHC has launched a technical [consultation](#) on the implementation of the Building Safety Levy, and the LGA will be responding. We are currently in the process of engaging stakeholders that have an interest in the levy to enhance our lobbying on

this issue. There will also be LGA representation at the Delivery Working Group on the levy, hosted by DLUHC. The levy was announced under the Building Safety Bill 2022. The key proposals that DLUHC are seeking views on relate to the scope of the levy; exemptions; the basis for calculating the levy; protection for small and medium enterprises; and the collection agency. It is also worth highlighting that DLUHC previously consulted on the levy in 2021, and the LGA submitted a [response](#). Since that consultation, the scope of the levy has expanded to apply to all new residential developments that require building control approval.

Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill

13. The bill has now reached the House of Lords and is in its Second Reading. The LGA's Second reading briefing has been updated and cleared. DLUHC has forecasted the bill to become an act by June 2023, with a number of further consultations being published in that time. The Secretary of State for Levelling Up published a [Written Ministerial Statement](#) on the direction of travel of the reforms in December 2022. Peers have been contacted regarding our amendments. We have so far met with Baroness Thornhill and Lord Best to talk through LGA lines and proposed amendments, as an opportunity to gain traction on the views and concerns of local government on the reforms.

National Planning Policy Framework Consultation

14. DLUHC has launched a [consultation](#) on its proposed approach to updating the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and the LGA will be responding. The intention to revise the NPPF was announced under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. The NPPF was introduced in 2012 and its purpose is to provide guidance for local planning authorities on national policy priorities and a framework for implementing planning powers.

Housing Revenue Account Research - Savills

15. The HRA research is approaching the tail-end of the project, and the income report has been circulated to EEHT Lead Members for clearance before publication. Both the expenditure and right to buy research will be circulated for clearance shortly. In December 2022, the LGA hosted a meeting with Savills to discuss the draft findings from the expenditure research with civil servants from DLUHC and BEIS. Following clearance of all three reports, we will present key findings and asks with support from media and public affairs colleagues.

Economy

Identifying and promoting green growth opportunities

16. The LGA has commissioned Green Economy to produce a report highlighting the social and economic benefits of having businesses located in a local authority area that provide low carbon and environmental goods and services. The report will be evidence based with case studies and the provider will suggest measures councils can take to make their area more attractive for these businesses to locate in. Focus

will be on the supply of goods and services required for the Net Zero transition. Work is due to complete in February.

Identifying local authority best practice in repurposing shopping centres

17. The LGA has commissioned The Retail Group to produce a report highlighting the social and economic opportunities and benefits of repurposing shopping centres to reflect the needs of the town centre, the community, the local authority, and the businesses located within their area. The report will be evidence based with case studies and the provider will suggest measures and approaches councils can take to repurpose shopping centres or support the repurpose of shopping centres where their ownership lies solely in the private sector. The project is due to complete February/March with a pre-launch [webinar](#) booked in for 22 February 2023.

Environment

Waste

Incineration of domestic seating containing harmful chemicals (POPs)

18. The Environment Agency (EA) published [new guidance](#) at the end of December on the collection, storage and disposal of fabric covered soft furnishings containing chemicals classed as POPs (persistent organic pollutants), which should not be disposed of in landfill. Following feedback from the LGA and representatives of the waste industry and professional networks the Environment Agency has issued a set of regulatory position statements to support interim solutions for handling and storage of POPs material. The three regulatory positions statements cover [shredding](#), [temporary storage](#) and [separation at HWRCs](#). New Environment Agency advice also covers the [re-use of soft furnishings](#) containing POPs.
19. Due to the delay in the publication of the guidance and regulatory positions statements the Environment Agency has extended the deadline for councils to supply information on compliance with the new guidance until 31 January 2023.
20. Finding compliant disposal routes remains a challenge for many councils and it will take time for the waste industry to install new equipment such as shredding facilities to meet EA standards for safe handling of POPs material. In the short term there is a steep rise in disposal costs, as well as additional infrastructure costs for councils in adapting HWRCs to handle POPs material. The impact on bulky waste collection services is different, but they may also need to adapt for POPs material.
21. Discussions to date have largely focused on local authority activity. The Environment Agency is starting to engage with private waste businesses and others involved in furniture re-use and they will also have to comply with POPs regulations. This will place further pressure on limited disposal infrastructure and the full picture is yet to emerge. The LGA is continuing to work with councils, Defra and the Environment Agency to ensure that the costs are fully understood and that there is a pragmatic approach to the transition period and a plan for addressing the shortfall in disposal infrastructure.

Implementation of the resources and waste strategy

22. The [last spending review](#) provided Defra with additional capital money to fund the introduction of mandatory food waste collections from households by councils (where they are waste collection authorities). Defra are engaging with stakeholders including the LGA on the allocation of the funding. The additional funding is intended to cover transitional costs such as the purchase of additional vehicles
23. Defra is expecting to publish the outcome of two consultations imminently: proposals for consistency of collection of materials for recycling (England only), and the implementation of a deposit return scheme for drinks containers (England and Wales). The outcome of consultation on recycling collections will confirm timetables for implementation and key decisions, for example on whether councils will be required to introduce mandatory, free garden waste collections.
24. Defra has set out proposals to ban some single use plastic items, including cutlery, plates and some types of takeaway container, from October 2023. Further detail is awaited, but it is likely that local authorities will be responsible for enforcing the ban with retailers and businesses.

Electricity Generators Levy

25. HM Treasury has published [draft legislation](#) for the Electricity Generators Levy which confirms its intention to include Energy from Waste (EfW) within scope of the Levy, the LGA had made representations to exclude EfW. The legislation will be introduced with the Finance Bill early this year. The draft legislation does make some concessions, deducting from the Levy cases for exceptional fuel costs and revenue sharing, and we're seeking further clarification that this applies to EfW. The Levy's impact on individual councils is uncertain, because it will apply to companies at the Group level, and so it is unclear whether and how this will be passed down to individual EfW plants and onto councils using those plants. We will continue to engage with the Government and in the parliamentary process.

Environment

Biodiversity net gain and nature recovery

26. Natural England, the Berkeley Group and the LGA are hosting a [Biodiversity net gain conference](#) in London on 2 March 2023. The conference, which is free to attend, will help prepare the housebuilding and local authority sectors for the requirement for all new development to deliver a minimum 10% net increase in biodiversity, from November 2023, and share experiences from current projects. Councillor Pippa Heylings from the EEHT is speaking at the event. In the meantime, we are waiting for Defra to clarify the details of implementation, for example in regulation and new burdens funding for local authorities.
27. Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) will become mandatory and are closely linked to biodiversity net gain. We are working with Defra to understand the timetable for implementation and support for councils, including new burdens funding

Flooding and water quality (the text on nutrients would be better if placed in this section)

28. On 18 January 2023 an LGA webinar will focus on the unpredictable risk of surface water flooding. The webinar is chaired by Councillor David Renard and speakers include the Environment Agency, Severn Trent and the Greater London Authority. This is a popular event with 200 delegates registered to attend.
29. In January Defra [published details of the Government's intention](#) to make sustainable drainage systems mandatory to new developments in England. The review into [the benefits and impacts of making sustainable drainage systems \(SuDS\) a legal requirement for new developments](#) aims to reduce the risk of surface water flooding, pollution and help alleviate the pressures on traditional drainage and sewerage systems. Defra will carry out a consultation in order to collect views on the impact assessment, national standards and statutory instruments later this year and we will be working with government to understand the implications for councils and any new burdens arising from the implementation.

Coastal landfill

30. The LGA's Coastal SIG (special interest group) published new research in November 2022 into the [extent of closed landfill sites threatened by coastal erosion and flood risk](#). The survey revealed that many councils have sites that are already spilling waste onto cliffs and beaches. The report findings were shared in a webinar hosted by the LGA and the LGA Coastal SIG on Thursday 12 January 2023, chaired by Councillor Ernest Gibson from the Coastal SIG.

Climate Change

Net Zero Review

31. [Mission Zero, the independent review of net zero](#) led by Chris Skidmore MP was published on 13 January 2023. The LGA engaged with the review team, including holding a roundtable between LGA members and Chris Skidmore MP. The report recognised the critical role of councils and that there must be more place-based, locally led action on net zero. The LGA and our positions were referenced throughout. The review recommended funding consolidation and simplification, reform of planning and the viability system, supporting a range of 'trailblazer' places, support for council capacity building, a political element to the Local Net Zero Forum, and much more that is positive for the sector. The review could have gone further in pushing for place-based funding allocations to all places and could have talked more specifically about the role of councils in decarbonising heat, buildings, transport, energy and land. The review also recommended there be a new general net zero duty on councils, the LGA is clear that councils do not need to be told net zero is important, they need backing from the government in funding and policy. We will engage with the government on the progress in responding to the Review, including through the Local Net Zero Forum.

Advancing local and central government collaboration in climate change adaptation

32. We have commissioned Local Partnerships to undertake a project to investigate, capture, understand and present what local government needs from the update to the National Adaptation Programme. It will also consider and make recommendations on how the wider policy, regulatory and funding environment across Government can best enable councils to lead place-based climate adaptation. Local Partnerships have considerable experience working with councils, the LGA and government on climate change adaptation, including developing the [climate change adaptation toolkit](#). The project is due to complete February / March 2023 and officers will continue to work with Defra officials throughout the project to ensure project findings feed into the development of the NAP3 in a timely manner.

Green Streets

33. In November we published [our report](#) on Neighbourhood approach to decarbonisation and held a webinar to present the findings chaired by Councillor David Renard, Chair of Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board and Leader of Swindon Borough Council. The event was well attended with approximately 100 delegates who heard from the report authors, [DG Cities](#), Cllr Geoff Harvey, Vice-Chair of Climate Change and Environment Committee, South Cambridgeshire District Council and officers from South Cambridgeshire District Council, and Doncaster City Council presenting their case studies.

Energy Company Obligation Plus (ECO+) consultation

34. Last month the consultation on introducing the [Energy Company Obligation PLUS \(ECO+\)](#) concluded. ECO+ will be an addition to the current ECO4 scheme aimed at delivering the rapid installation of energy efficiency measures to households, including those on the lowest income and those in the least energy efficient homes in the lower council tax bands. In [our response letter](#) to the Government's consultation, we welcomed the provision of new money and the expansion of the ECO to include households struggling to pay their bills and unavoidably wasting energy when living in poorly insulated properties that would not have received support through ECO4. We also highlighted that Councils are extremely resource-constrained, and any investment in council resources would significantly increase the ability of councils to work with health and emergency services to identify a more significant number of householders in need of support.

Energy UK Parliamentary event

35. On 10 January the LGA joined Energy UK, Federation of Master Builders and the National Housing Federation at an Energy Efficiency Parliamentary drop in event at Portcullis house. Ahead of the event, we wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as a coalition of four leading associations representing energy, construction, social housing and local government welcoming the steps that the government has taken so far to support households in reducing their energy consumption and highlighting further interventions from government that match our members ambition to ensure energy efficiency remains at the core of the UK's response to the rising cost of living. The LGA Chairman Councillor James Jamieson OBE attended the event and 18+ MPs or representatives dropped in for a conversation.

Government energy efficiency investment and awareness campaign

36. In December, government launched its [‘It All Adds Up’](#) energy saving campaign providing advice on quick and easy no cost actions, low-cost home improvements and spend to save home improvements that households and homeowners can take to reduce their energy consumption. The £18 million campaign aims to raise public awareness of straightforward actions people can take to reduce their energy consumption, stay warm and save money.

Energy

Energy Bills Discount Scheme

37. The Energy Bills Discount Scheme confirms that public sector including councils will be eligible for support, a reversal from the indication at Autumn Statement and so a positive step responding to LGA concerns. However, the scheme is not as generous, and alongside forecast falling energy costs it is not clear the extent to which the new support will help. Further, key areas such as leisure are not identified as a priority sector to receive higher levels of support. The LGA published a [press release](#) highlighting this point widely covered in the media.

Update on board discussion with National Grid

38. Following the November EEHT board meeting at which Paul Jewell from National Grid DNO presented, officers have been speaking with National Grid ESO, Energy UK, BEIS Local Net Zero Hubs, Ofgem, Local Partnerships and One Public Estate about running an energy systems hybrid seminar in spring/early summer focusing on energy system plans to achieve net zero the engagement opportunities and future relationship necessary between local government, the energy systems operators and regulators. The Climate Change Task Group will be asked to provide a steer on the content of the event and further details and timings will be shared with members nearer to time.

Transport

Car clubs and shared micromobility

39. The LGA’s work on [car clubs](#) and [shared micromobility](#) has now been published. The work was undertaken by Steer on our behalf and follows a special session with EEHT Board members. The findings were also shared in two webinars that took place in November 2022.
40. On the issue of scooters, a popular form of micromobility, the Government has now confirmed that there will not be any new legislation introduced on this issue during this session of Parliament.

Active Travel

41. The Government announced that Active Travel England (ATE) has [allocated £32.9 million](#) of revenue funding to local authorities via the Capability Fund. The LGA has

long called for revenue funding to be provided to get the most out of capital investments. The types of activities supported include:

- bespoke training for local authority officers and local councillors
- development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)
- network design and planning
- feasibility studies
- public engagement/consultation and co-design
- data and evidence collection

42. Whilst councils have been notified of their allocation at the time of writing there is no published table of allocations. LGA officers are meeting with the new chief executive of ATE and hope to get a more detailed understanding of their work programme for the year ahead.

Meeting with local transport minister

43. Following a letter to the new minister for local transport, the Chair of the EEHT Board will meet with Richard Holden MP to discuss a number of priority issues raised by LGA members, including funding for buses, highlighting cost inflation and fixed penalty notices for non-motoring related highways' obstruction.

£2 bus tickets

44. £60 million of Government funding is being used to [cap the majority of bus fares at £2](#) from January 2023 until the end of March 2023. Over 130 bus operators outside of London will charge no more than £2 for their single tickets across over 4,600 routes. While the temporary reduction in bus fares will help individuals with the cost of living, the LGA has called for the Government to fulfil its longer-term commitments as set out in its National Bus Strategy.

Fixed Penalty Notices

45. The LGA has now published [findings](#) from its survey on non-motor related highways obstructions and calls for councils outside London to be able to issue fixed penalty notices – this will bring all areas into line with the capital. The survey revealed overwhelming support for this change. This information has recently been shared with the relevant minister.

Highways extreme weather survey

46. The LGA reinstated its annual survey on highways extreme weather preparedness and the results from the Autumn 2022 survey are now [available](#). Findings were shared in our [media release](#). For the first time there were questions on preparedness for extreme hot weather, cost inflation and gritter driver shortages.

Minutes of last Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board meeting

Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board

Thursday, 17 November 2022

18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A**

Item	Decisions and actions
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1 Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest

The Chairman welcomed and introduced members to Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board meeting.

Apologies were received Cllr Pippa Heylings, Cllr Paul Marshall and Cllr Darren Rodwell.

Cllr Stewart Golton and Cllr Sharon Thompson were in attendance as substitutes.

No declarations of interest were made.

2 National Grid Capacity

The Chairman introduced Paul Jewell, System Development Manager, who gave a [presentation](#) on the work of National Grid Electricity Distribution as well as context for low carbon technologies such as electric vehicle (EV) charging. There were plans to make future capacity available. The drive to Net Zero was one of the biggest changes to the electricity networks.

Members made the following comments:

- It was raised that limited grid capacity had prevented houses from being built in some parts of the UK
- It was queried how a more joined up partnership approach between Distribution Network Operators and councils could work together for detailed energy planning
- There was lots of enthusiasm within communities to set up solar panels which had been stalled due to limits with battery storage or grid capacity
- It was suggested that the behaviour of EV users would change as it becomes standard

In response, Paul Jewell advised that collaboration with councils had

varied but would like to have a more joined up approach to energy planning. It was anticipated there would be an increased use in EVs and this would add energy into the grid, but this would be considered in modelling.

Decision:

Members **noted** the update.

3 LGA Plan 2022-25

The Chairman invited Eamon Lally to introduce the LGA Plan 2022-25. The LGA Board signed off a new 3-year business plan which set out the direction for the LGA as a whole.

Following concerns over the changes to the economy and its unpredictability, members were advised that the plan would be reviewed when appropriate.

Members suggested one priority should read “government and councils work together to meet the country’s net zero carbon and climate change adaptation *commitments*”, rather than “carbon and climate change adaptation *ambitions*” with concerns “ambitions” was not as clear as in other priorities. Members were advised this would be fed back to political group leaders.

Decision:

Members **noted** the LGA Plan 2022-25 with the comments.

4 EEHT Update / Other Board Business

The Chairman invited members to comment on the report which outlined updates within the Board’s remit.

Members raised concerns over asylum seekers being housed in temporary accommodation within their local authority’s area without contact from the Home Office. As well as short term impacts, concerns were raised at the burden on councils to address long term wellbeing issues as a result of the environment of the accommodation. Members were advised that this was a widely reported issue and the LGA was engaging with the Home Office and Immigration Minister to address these issues.

The social housing rents cap was raised as a concern as it would likely result in less funding to invest in social housing stock.

Decision:

Members **noted** the update.

5 Fixed Penalty Notice for highways obstruction

The Chairman invited Simon Jeffrey, Adviser, to present the report which outlined the findings of a survey with the LGA's membership to develop the evidence base to support the case for alignment of powers to deal with highways obstructions with London.

Members welcomed the report and expressed support for the powers to Councils.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

6 Building Safety Update

The Chairman invited Eamon Lally, Principal Adviser, gave an update on the LGA's building safety work. It was announced that Bristol City Council would introduce interim measures in 38 blocks with expanded polystyrene (EPS) and rent wall cladding systems following a number of inspections.

Members made the following comments (RELISTEN):

- A workforce strategy to address building safety would be useful
- Addressing building safety regulations would impact councils differently and new burdens funding may be required
- The Cabinet Member for Housing at Bristol City Council, Cllr Tom Renhard, in attendance as an observing member expressed that there should be support for the social sector as well as the private sector.
- It was requested that updated application data for the Building Safety Fund be provided to members as the last update was in August.

Decision:

Members **noted** the update.

7 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

8 Adapting to climate change, local government and the third National Adaptation Programme

In light of the news that the guest speaker for the item was no longer able to attend the meeting, members agreed to defer the item to the next meeting of the Board.

9 Any other Business

With time left at the meeting, the Chairman invited members to raise any

topics relating to the Board.

Members raised the following:

- There were concerns raised over the Environment Agency's new requirements for the separation and disposal of soft furnishings so they are incinerated to make sure persistent organic pollutants (POPs) are destroyed safely.
- There was interest in further engagement with the National Grid or Energy Supply Organisation or Distribution Network Operators in a separate meeting.

Action:

A briefing note relating to the waste disposal regulations to be circulated to Board Members.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr David Renard	Swindon Borough Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Loic Rich	Cornwall Council
Members	Cllr Kelham Cooke	South Kesteven District Council
	Cllr Mark Crane	Selby District Council
	Cllr Jonathan Ash-Edwards	Mid Sussex District Council
	Cllr Linda Taylor	Cornwall Council
	Mayor Philip Glanville	Hackney London Borough Council
	Mayor Paul Dennett	Salford City Council
	Cllr Claire Holland	Lambeth London Borough Council
	Cllr Philip Bialyk	Exeter City Council
	Cllr Emily Darlington	Milton Keynes Council
	Cllr Vikki Slade	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
	Cllr Stewart Golton	Leeds City Council
	Cllr Diana Moore	Exeter City Council
Apologies	Cllr Paul Marshall	West Sussex County Council
	Cllr Darren Rodwell	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council
	Cllr Pippa Heylings	South Cambridgeshire District Council
In Attendance	Ed Gemmell	Buckinghamshire Council
	Paul Jewell	System Development Manager, National Grid
LGA Officers	Calum Davidson	
	Simon Jeffrey	
	Eamon Lally	
	Angela Page	
	Nick Porter	
	Andrew Richmond	
	Marshall Scott	
	Jacqui Smale	
	Hilary Tanner	

