



Executive Advisory Board

Agenda

Thursday, 20 July 2023
2.15 pm

Online via Teams

There will be a meeting of the Executive Advisory Board at **2.15 pm on Thursday, 20 July 2023**
Online via Teams.

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.group@lga.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:

Amy Haldane
07867 514938 /amy.haldane@local.gov.uk

Carers' Allowance

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

Executive Advisory Board – Membership

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

Agenda

Executive Advisory Board

Thursday, 20 July 2023

2.15 pm

Online via Teams

Item	Page
1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest	
2. Minutes of the previous meeting	1 - 4
3. Lobbying Document	To follow
4. LGA Boards: Annual Review of the Year	5 - 116
5. Local government workforce capacity update	117 - 144

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, 7 September 2023, 2.15 pm, Smith Square
1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Minutes of last Executive Advisory Board meeting

Executive Advisory Board

Thursday, 8 June 2023

Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#)

Item	Decisions and actions
------	-----------------------

1 Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

The Chairman welcomed councillors, officers and members of the press to final meeting of the 2022/23 meeting cycle and noted apologies for absence from the following councillors; David Baines, Linda Taylor, Steve Houghton, Gerald Vernon Jackson, Chris Poulter and Abi Brown.

The Chairman thanked all members for their hard work giving a special thanks to those who had stood down or were sadly not re-elected in May. In particular, he thanked the following, for their dedication to the work of the LGA:

- Lord Gary Porter CBE – Former Chairman of the LGA
- David Renard – Former Chairman of the EEHT Board
- Peter Fleming – Former Chairman of the Improvement and Innovation Board

Thanks were given to Izzi Seccombe and Shaun Davies at their last meetings as Group Leaders and Vice-Chairs as well as to Rob Alden, Anntoinette Bramble and Jon Fuller in their last meetings as Deputy Chairs.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Executive Advisory Board **agreed** the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 9 March 2023.

3 LGA Lobbying Document

Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive, introduced the report before bringing in the other members of SMT to introduce sections relating to their work areas. Jess Norman, Senior Adviser, also offered answers to questions raised by members. The main issues were asylum, waste reforms, changes to the infrastructure levy and Voter ID. During discussion, members raised the

following points:

- Concern was raised about the deadline for resettlement of asylum seekers with the end of the pipeline being a home. An estimated 100,000 homes were needed which would not be resolved by the August 2023 deadline. 'What if' conversations needed to commence and the LGA should lobby strongly for a housing solution before deadlines are imposed.
- Concern was raised following the Metropolitan Police's announcement that it would no longer attend mental health calls unless there was danger to life and the impact this would have on other parts of the system without a transitional plan in place.
- A view was expressed that people experiencing poor mental health episodes or suffering from dementia should not be dealt with by the police who are not trained to respond in such cases. Police provide security and safety and are not part of the health service. It was suggested that the health service must step up and use their emergency powers when needed.
- The proposed changes to CIL collection were concerning, upfront borrowing against future sums that may never be collected is a bad model and would mean financial and reputational risk for councils.
- The proposed waste changes were concerning, there was no standardised approach to collection and disposal of waste.
- Concern about the effect on voter turnout following the introduction of Voter ID and the burden this would continue to place on councils to deliver.
- The LGA should lobby hard on rules to allow online meetings for decision making.

Decision

The Executive Advisory Board **agreed** to note the report.

4 LGA Political Balance 2023/24

David Pealing, Member Services Manager, introduced the report which set out the definitive figures for the LGA's proportionality for 2023/24.

Following the local elections in May 2023, the Labour Group became the largest party of Local Government and would assume the Chair of the Local Government Association following formal the nomination processes at General Assembly in July 2023.

In addition, from the start of the next meeting cycle in September 2023, the Liberal Democrat Group would gain an extra seat on every Policy Board as well as the chair of an additional Policy Board.

The Conservative Group would chair one less Policy Board and lose a seat on each.

The Independent Group would retain the same number of seats on each Policy Board as the current year.

Decision

The Executive Advisory Board endorsed the proportionality figures for the 2023/24 meeting year.

Action

Political Groups to agree the allocation of places across all LGA structures.

5 Supporting councillors to handle and prevent abuse and intimidation research

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Marianne Overton, Chair of the Civility in Public Life Programme Steering Group and Jess Norman, Senior Adviser, to introduce the report which set out the context for a recently completed research project looking into the support councils and other agencies can provide to councillors to prevent and handle abuse and intimidation from the public.

Decision

The Executive Advisory **agreed** without comment to the recommendations set out in paragraphs 4, 6 and 8 and to delegate final sign off to Political Group Leaders.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr James Jamieson OBE	Central Bedfordshire Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE	Warwickshire County Council
	Cllr Joe Harris	Cotswold District Council
	Cllr Marianne Overton	North Kesteven District Council
	MBE	
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Tudor Evans OBE	Plymouth City Council
	Cllr Georgia Gould	Camden Council
	Cllr Anntoinette Bramble	Hackney London Borough Council
	Cllr Bridget Smith	South Cambridgeshire District Council
	Cllr Hannah Dalton	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Members	Cllr John Fuller OBE	South Norfolk District Council
	Cllr Robert Alden	Birmingham City Council
	Baroness Teresa O'Neill	Bexley Council
	OBE	
	Cllr David Fothergill	Somerset Council
	Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
	Cllr Shaun Davies	Telford and Wrekin Council
	Cllr Peter Marland	Milton Keynes Council
	Cllr Nesil Caliskan	Enfield Council
	Cllr Louise Gittins	Cheshire West and Chester Council
	Mayor Marvin Rees	Bristol City
	Cllr Robert Stewart	WLGA
Cllr Marc Bayliss	West Midlands	
Cllr Matthew Hicks	East of England LGA	



Cllr John Hart
Cllr Graeme Miller
Cllr Shabir Pandor
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen
Cllr Tim Oliver

South West Councils
North East of England
Yorkshire and Humber Region
District Councils Network
County Councils Network

Apologies

Cllr Abi Brown
Cllr Michael Payne
Cllr Gerald Vernon-
Jackson CBE
Cllr Christopher Poulter
Cllr David Baines
Sir Stephen Houghton
CBE

Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Gedling Borough Council
Portsmouth City Council
East Midlands Councils
North West Regional Leaders' Board
SIGOMA

In Attendance

LGA Officers

LGA Boards Annual Review of the Year

Purpose of Report

For information and discussion

Summary

Each LGA Board produces an annual report reviewing the work they have overseen during the previous meeting cycle and setting out their key achievements. The annual reports from the 2022/2023 meeting cycle are included as listed below for the Executive Advisory Board's consideration.

- a) Children & Young People
- b) City Regions
- c) Community Wellbeing
- d) Culture, Tourism & Sport
- e) Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport
- f) People and Places
- g) Resources
- h) Safer & Stronger Communities
- i) Improvement and Innovation

LGA Plan Theme: Governance and finance

Recommendation

That the Board notes the Board achievements on the 2022/23 meeting year.

Contact details

Contact officer: Ian Hughes/ Sally Burlington/ Dennis Skinner

Position: Directors of Policy and Director of Improvement

Email: ian.hughes@local.gov.uk / sally.burlington@local.gov.uk / dennis.skinner@local.gov.uk

Children and Young People

Background

1. At its meeting in September, the Board considered its priorities for 2022/23 and agreed the following overarching themes:
 - 1.1 Education and SEND
 - 1.2 Children's social care
 - 1.3 Early years
 - 1.4 Children's mental health and wellbeing
 - 1.5 Youth services
 - 1.6 Youth justice
 - 1.7 Supporting disadvantaged families and children
 - 1.8 Children's health
2. Within these themes, the following were agreed as priorities:
 - 2.1 Cost-of-living crisis (linking in with cross-LGA work)
 - 2.2 Independent review of children's social care
 - 2.3 SEND Green Paper
 - 2.4 Healthy development review
 - 2.5 Funding
3. This paper provides an overview of the achievements delivered against these themes.

SEND and Education

4. Our work in response to proposals set out in the SEND Green paper and subsequent SEND and Alternative Provision improvement plan, led by the LGA Chairman, has focussed on three broad themes; structures, including clarity on responsibility for delivering various aspects of SEND support; levers, specifically ensuring that councils, as leaders of local SEND systems, have the powers to hold partners to account for the work and; sufficiency of funding to meet the needs of children with SEND. Given that implementing the proposals set out in the improvement plan will take a number of years, we have continued to call for additional high needs funding to be made available in the interim and for the Department for Education (DfE) to bring forward proposals to manage down and eliminate Dedicated Schools Grant deficits.
5. We secured an additional £970 million (10.6 per cent) in additional high needs funding for councils for the 2023-24 financial year, as well as securing an extension of the statutory override on treatment of Dedicated Schools Grant deficits to March 2026 from March 2023.
6. We submitted a response to the Ofsted/CQC consultation on the introduction of a new SEND area inspection framework. We welcomed the new focus on the impact that local area partnership SEND support is having on the lives of children and young people with special needs. We are however concerned that neither Ofsted or the CQC have the

capacity or expertise to deliver against the proposed framework. We did however raise concerns about the timing of the introduction of a new framework in the context of the SEND Green paper and subsequent improvement plan and also questioned the limited references to the role of schools in supporting children and young people with special needs. We also called for the inspectorates to place a greater focus on how school inspection should place a greater focus on supporting pupils with SEND and inclusion and how that should feed into area SEND inspections.

7. Our work on the now-abandoned Schools Bill focussed on ensuring that powers to direct all schools to admit pupils without a place sat with councils, reflecting the fact that in many areas the majority of schools are already academies. We also worked to ensure that all councils will have the opportunity to set up their own Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs).
8. The abandonment of the Bill meant that we continue to wait for the introduction of a register for home-educated children is supported by powers for councils to check that those children are receiving a suitable education. We submitted evidence to the Education Committee inquiry on persistent absence from schools, including the rise in number of children being educated at home, highlighting the fragmented accountability arrangements in place and how these, alongside reductions in education funding, prevent councils from playing a stronger role in this space. Cllr Lucy Nethsingha subsequently gave oral evidence to the same inquiry.
9. We highlighted the cost-of-living funding pressures facing schools, specifically increasing fuel and food costs, as well as the need to fund an increase in school staff pay.
10. In our work on the move to a National Funding Formula (NFF) for schools we have continued to call for the flexibility for Multi-Academy Trusts to move away from their NFF allocations, via the General Annual Grant, to be available to all schools.
11. We have also commissioned analysis of the performance of maintained schools when compared to free schools and academies, which we expect to highlight the value of a continued strong council role in school improvement.

Children's social care

12. The LGA has engaged extensively with the Department for Education on its *Stable Homes, Built on Love* strategy, which was the formal Government response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. This has resulted in the response addressing some of the LGA's long-standing asks, including in relation to oversight of the children's social care placements 'market' and a far stronger focus on early help. The Board's policy lines were used in evidence for the House of Lords Public Services Committee inquiry into the children's social care implementation strategy, with many of

the LGA's lines including around Regional Care Cooperatives being reflected in the [Committee's final report](#).

13. This year we commissioned the Isos Partnership to conduct research into [structural change in children's social care](#) to ensure councils have access to clear advice when undergoing such change to ensure continuity of service for children and families. This research has been particularly helpful in informing our discussions with the Department for Education with regard to proposed changes to children's social care arising from its response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.
14. The Isos Partnership has also updated our popular "action research into improvement in local children's services" guidance to recognise the current landscape including recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing budget challenges. This will be published shortly and will inform our lobbying around children's social care reform.
15. We commissioned Alma Economics to carry out a literature review, supplemented by a small number of interviews, to consider how social care support for people with lifelong disabilities is working and how this could be improved, with a particular consideration around how some children transition from children to adults' services. The [resulting report](#) has enabled us to provide detailed input into the Department for Education's work around how to better support disabled children.
16. The Board set up a task and finish group to look into challenges around placement sufficiency for children in care, recognising the significant challenges this was causing for councils across the country. This group presented its findings to the final Board meeting of the year on 27 June and its recommended policy positions and further work will be taken forward in the 2023-24 Board cycle.
17. Lead Members on the Board have been closely involved in negotiations all year around support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. This has led to two rounds of additional funding (firstly an additional £6,000 per child, then an additional £15,000 per child) to support councils in providing placements for children.
18. Lobbying by the LGA on challenges with the children's social care workforce has contributed to action by the Department for Education, in particular a consultation on new rules around the use of agency social workers which reflect recommendations put forward by the LGA. We expect a response to this consultation imminently. The Board has also fed into the ongoing cross-LGA work on workforce capacity.
19. We have submitted clear evidence to the Government on the significant financial challenges facing children's services, both at "set piece" financial events and through ongoing engagement with the Government, including meetings between Councillor Louise Gittins and Claire Coutinho MP, Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing. Additional funding for children's social care was announced in the Autumn Statement. £1.3 billion in 2023-24 and £1.9 billion in 2024-25 will be distributed to councils through the Social Care Grant for adult and children's social care.

Early years

20. We were pleased to see the announcement of an expansion into early years entitlements to all eligible children of working parents from 9 months to school-aged by 2025. There is also investment into wraparound childcare to ensure families have access to childcare from 8am to 6pm. Alongside these announcements we were particularly pleased to see reforms to the universal credit element of childcare which has meant an increase in the amount paid to families and upfront payments, something the LGA has long called for. The LGA calls for increased funding were somewhat recognised in the entitlement expansion £204 million of additional funding to local authorities in 2023 to 2024, rising to £288 million in 2024 to 2025. We continue to work with government officials to ensure this funding is sufficient to deliver a high-quality early years education and childcare system.
21. We have engaged closely with the Department for Education since this announcement to ensure the implementation of the expansion can be as effective as possible. This has enabled us to outline the needs of councils in coping with this significant expansion and the need for an early year's recruitment campaign which the government has announced. However, we continue to call for a more whole-sale review of the early years workforce to fully support the expansions and make sure children have access to high quality provision.
22. We commissioned the Isos Partnership to undertake [research](#) into the nature, impact and drivers of nursery closures in England. This report surveys local authorities and explores published data to identify the trends in nursery provision closures. The report finds that while there hasn't been a significant increase in the rate of closures in the past year, this varies between local areas. This research has enabled us to outline the concerns and needs of councils to central government such as greater levers to manage early years provision locally.
23. We also commissioned a literature review to examine and evaluate [what works in relation to the delivery of good quality early years provision for all children](#). The report found that there is a majority consensus (with some degree of debate about the impact of certain structural elements) about how high, quality childcare can lead to enhanced outcomes for children. The report introduces several other factors and themes that were explored, including the need to enhance affordability of childcare and support for children with special educational needs.

Children's mental health and wellbeing

24. The LGA has [published research into children and young people's](#) mental health policy progress over the past ten years. This will enable us to be clear on what more is needed to ensure the system works for children, young people and families.

25. We worked hard to influence the now-abandoned mental health 10-year plan to highlight the needs of children and young people. We have ensured this messaging is central in the Major Conditions Strategy.
26. In light of the abandonment of the 10-year mental health plan, the LGA is conducting a range of work on children and young people's mental health to promote new policy thinking in this area. This has started with a series of think pieces on what can be done to improve and respond to children's mental health issues which will inform thinking during the 2023-24 Board cycle.
27. We have continued to raise the importance of the local authority's role in supporting good mental health and wellbeing. This is through ensuring access to green space, good quality housing, local communities, education, and reducing poverty. The LGA has long called for more community provision to support children's mental health and are pleased the government have commissioned a review into the evidence surrounding early support hubs.
28. The LGA has engaged closely with NHS England and government officials to raise concerns regarding the increasing number of children that have a mental health need but not a diagnosable mental health condition. These children often find themselves without the appropriate support and sitting between different services. We continue to engage with officials to ensure these children get the support they need.

Youth services

29. The LGA was provided grant funding to conduct three pilots of youth services peer reviews alongside the National Youth Agency, which were well received by the pilot authorities. The LGA is considering next steps for this pilot.
30. We are anticipating a refresh of the statutory guidance for local authorities on youth services to update and clarify the expectations in relation to the duty. We have worked alongside the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport regarding statutory guidance for youth services, recognising the essential role of youth services for young people locally but highlighting the additional burden this would place on councils if revised guidance enhanced expectations regarding levels of provision.
31. The anti-social behaviour action plan announced £11m investment into youth services to tackle the root causes of anti-social behaviour.

Youth justice

32. The implementation of the £60m Turnaround programme has been successful, particularly given its focus on early intervention and prevention in the youth justice system. We have called on government to continue to recognise the need for dedicated funding in this space.

33. We have [produced a range of case studies](#) on supporting young people involved in the justice system. These case studies explore preventative activities but also what good support looks like for children in the justice system and the setting up of a community provision for children on remand.

Supporting disadvantaged families and children

34. The LGA has been working closely with Government on issues surrounding the rising cost of living and the impact on children's health and wellbeing. This has included calling for the Government to urgently review the Healthy Start scheme and Free School Meals (FSM), and making long-term increases to local public health funding, which can go to support children and young people in communities who need it most.
35. As part of this, we have organised two webinars with councils and leading food campaigning organisations (Feeding Britain, the Food Foundation) showcasing ways in which councils have been addressing food insecurity affecting children and building local partnerships to improve health and wellbeing.
36. We have engaged closely with the Healthy Start scheme team at the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and continue to call for the scheme to be expanded to all families receiving Universal Credit and for the scheme to shift from an "opt in" to an "opt out" registration system through an automated process, to help remove any barriers families face when applying online.
37. We ran a plenary event at the LGA's annual Public Health conference in March 2023 where a number of experts (from the Royal College of Paediatricians and Child Health, Barnardo's, Action for Children and the Director of Public Health for Liverpool) discussed the impact of the cost-of-living crisis upon children's health.

Children's health

38. We are pleased to see the development from policy into practice of the Early Years Healthy Development Review into the Start for Life and Family Hubs programme, where 75 councils were given a share of £300m over three years to establish and develop a network of family hubs in their local areas.
39. We have engaged closely with government officials throughout the policy development and implementation of the Start for Life and Family Hubs programme. We have worked with councils to understand the challenges and benefits they are experiencing on the programme and worked with officials to address these, while also emphasising to the Government the challenges around providing funding to only half of councils.
40. We commissioned a series of case studies exploring various elements of Family Hubs delivery within councils. Three of the councils featured have received additional funding

as part of the Family Hubs programme, whilst three councils have not. The case studies will be published in July.

41. We have extensively made the case that funding and capacity are mission critical issues affecting local public health teams' ability to deliver essential health promoting services for children and young people in their local areas.
42. In March, DHSC wrote to councils to explain that they would be expected to use existing budgets to pay for NHS pay increases for commissioned community services (e.g. health visiting, school nursing). We argued that this could push stretched budgets to the limit and put services at risk. In response to our lobbying, it was agreed that councils should not expect additional in-year costs related to the NHS pay award to be passed on to them. This is a win for the LGA, but clarity on non-NHS staff commissioned to deliver public health activity needs to be resolved.
43. We have successfully called for more enforcement to halt the rise of youth vaping, including government announcing fines for shops selling illicit vapes and £3m funding for Trading Standards to support enforcement. This follows successful LGA lobbying for government to close a loophole that allows the vaping industry to give free samples to children. Through a cross-board approach, the LGA is currently considering several options on its future policy direction on youth vaping and disposable vapes.
44. We were disappointed that the Government announced that they would be abandoning the long-awaited Health Disparities White Paper. We have continued to push for much-needed action to tackle entrenched and growing child health inequalities, particularly within the upcoming Major Conditions Strategy.
45. In our response to the call for evidence for the Major Conditions Strategy, we emphasised that the strategy should have an equal focus on children and adults, calling for a greater focus on prevention than treatment.
46. We have continued to work with partners across the system to strengthen the position of children's health in Integrated Care Boards/Partnerships. This has included jointly inputting on the [recently published guidance around executive lead roles](#) within integrated care boards, including the executive lead role for children and young people.
47. On 16 February, the government announced that councils across England will receive an additional £421 million funding through to 2025 to improve drug and alcohol addiction treatment and recovery. This includes support for children and young people affected by substance misuse. This additional funding was announced as part of the Government's drug strategy, '[From harm to hope: a 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives](#)' (2022).

City Regions

Background

1. The City Regions Board provides a clear voice and resource for non-metropolitan authorities within the LGA. This year the Board has had a particular focus on building a coalition to identify and address the future needs and opportunities of cities, exploring three key questions: what are cities; what do we need them to be; how do we get there? Alongside this, the Board has also continued to develop work in relation to employment and skills, growth funding, levelling up and devolution.
2. Members are asked to consider the achievements of the board over the last year and the proposed priorities for next year.

Priorities and Achievements

Future of Cities

3. The LGA's second urban summit was held in March 2023, with over a hundred people attending in person. Attendees heard from Andy Haldane, Chief Executive of the RSA who set out the initial findings of the RSA's UK Urban Futures Commission, including how UK cities lag behind their global competitors on productivity and growth, and highlighted the links between income and health disparities.
4. The summit was supported by an open letter to Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities signed by the leaders of Core Cities, Key Cities and London Councils. This set out our ambitious offer to government: that, with the right policies, finances, and space to deliver, cities can produce better outcomes, not just for urban areas, but also for the whole country.
5. The City Regions Board will be hosting a reception at the LGA's Annual Conference to hear more from the RSA on their work and to begin the process of shaping these emerging findings ahead of Party Conferences in the Autumn.
6. As part of the LGA's wider work in this area the Board also commissioned six videos from city residents, describing their experience of living in urban communities and setting out their hopes for the future. The videos were launched at the summit and form part of a wider collection of essays, data and analysis on the LGA's [Future of Cities Hub](#).

Levelling Up

7. The LGA's [Levelling Up Locally Inquiry report](#) was published in March 2023, broadening the conversation around levelling up through five roundtable discussions, commissioned research and analysis of demographic trends. The inquiry explored how the Government's levelling up agenda might better strengthen local areas by looking beyond the Levelling Up White Paper to explore the role local leadership can play in shaping a recovery that reduced inequality for all. The report was launched at a hybrid event with over 100 attendees and speakers included Sarah Longlands from CLES, Professor Francesca Gains from Policy at Manchester and Professor Michael Kenny from the Bennett Institute.
8. The Board approved the creation and co-sponsorship of a health devolution working group with the NHS Confederation. This working group has met once and provides an opportunity to ensure that learning can be shared between local government, the NHS and Integrated Care Systems (ICSs). The three boards with an interest in health devolution (the City Regions Board, the People and Places Board, and the Community Wellbeing Board) all have a nominated representative on the working group, with Cllr Gillian Ford representing the City Regions Board on the group. Sarah Pickup, Deputy Chief Executive of the LGA is also a member of the working group.

Employment and skills

9. Since last summer's publication of our employment and skills devolution proposals '[Work Local: Unlocking talent to level up](#)', we have engaged a wide range of parliamentarians and stakeholders on how it could improve services. To build on the growing support for the Board's proposals, over the coming months, we plan to develop further methods to communicate our proposals to decision makers and stakeholders as well as to look at ways it can be implemented.
10. We continue to promote the role of local government in employment and skills and our Work Local objectives through select committees. For instance, in January, Cllr Toby Savage gave oral evidence on behalf of the LGA at the Work and Pensions Select Committee's inquiry on the DWP's Plan for Jobs and employment support. Our [written submission](#) was cited widely by committee members. Alongside this we [responded](#) to the [APPG for Youth Employment Committee](#) inquiry into how young peoples' mental health is affecting labour market outcomes. More recently in May 2023, the Boards responded to the APPG for Youth Employment Committee inquiry into [Place-based approaches to youth employment](#) with Cllr Gillian Ford representing the LGA at an evidence session.

11. Work in ongoing to influence the outcomes of the [Commission on the Future of Employment Support](#) which is looking at ways in which employment support and services could be more effective. This include an LGA evidence session from Cllr Toby Savage.
12. Building more strategic relationships with Government departments including the Departments for Work and Pensions and Education (DWP and DfE) are important for both the LGA and councils to improve policy making at national level and create stronger ties locally. Devolution areas already have a relationship with these departments, so the LGA has proactively sought to develop links with councils not currently in a devolution area. In the last year, working with our local government partners, we have set up an LGA/DWP advisory group for councils to discuss issues related to labour market policy. The group last met in February and discussed youth hubs, contracted employment programmes and economic inactivity. It will next meet in June. We have also had positive discussion with DfE to establish a similar grouping.
13. With LEP transition under a year away and an increasing focus on the role of councils in growth, the councils' economic development (ED) functions will change. Working with councils, we have developed a guide to economic development teams – their role and skills needs. The report shows how ED services are delivered across England, shares learning across the sector with examples and top tips of what works and sets out the future skills and capacity challenges they face and where they can go for support. It will be published as an online guide on our website.
14. A joint piece of work developed by People and Places, City Regions and Community Wellbeing Boards has explored the role of local government in addressing economic inactivity and what factors could be driving this locally. We aim to publish the work in the summer.
15. The People and Places and City Regions Board jointly agreed to examine how the role of councils in supporting equality, diversity, and economic inclusion could be advanced to help unlock talent and level up local areas. The work will conclude in June with a compendium of case studies and the LGA 'Economic Inclusion Principles' paper to share learning across councils to guide the advancement of economic inclusion in their communities.

Urban Resilience

16. City regions face an increasing variety of physical, political, economic and social risks. The Board took the decision to begin work to explore the nature of these risks, what it means to be resilient and understand how our city regions can become resilient. The initial focus of this work centred on the consequences of climate change for urban areas,

particularly the risks associated with higher temperatures. Members heard from Bristol regarding the creation of a heat vulnerability index and from Space Syntax as part of the urban summit. Consequently, the Board is exploring the potential of a 'local resilience act' with the think-tank Localis, to strengthen the ability of urban leaders to manage change.

Green Jobs

17. The People & Places and City Regions Boards have been supporting the local government representative on the Ministerial Green Jobs Delivery Group, securing a time limited Local Capacity and Capability sub group (LCCG). The LCCG comprises of representatives from skill providers, business, industry, national and local government, with the sector being represented by the LGA, Solace, ADEPT, MCA Network and UK100. It has explored a range of issues including a national definition of green jobs, the strategic mapping of key net zero infrastructure projects, the opportunities and barriers to developing the workforce needed to deliver net zero and local delivery mechanisms. This has been an opportunity to promote the Work Local model. The LCCG will be developing recommendations by July.
18. In tandem with the work of the LCCG, the City Regions and People & Places Board will be developing policy positions on the place-based approach needed to develop the workforce and jobs needed to deliver net zero, utilising the new partnerships the LGA has created through the LCCG. This work will be done to complement the net zero and climate change work of the EEHT Board.

Growth Funding

19. The City Regions and People and Places Boards commissioned Shared Intelligence to provide support for councils and combined authorities undertaking LEP integration and to share good practice and learning. The project saw a series of interviews and workshops carried out and the final report draws on learning from research between November 2022 and March 2023 and DLUHC officials attended the sessions. It will be used to inform the Board's response to the Government's consultation process following the Chancellor's announcement in the 2023 budget that he was 'minded to' end funding to LEPs from April 2024.
20. The Board, working with the People and Places Board, commissioned Shared Intelligence to capture learning for policymakers in central and local government from eight place-based programmes that have been delivered over the last 20 years. The final report identifies eight key lessons for policymakers to consider. The report has recently been published on the LGA's website.

21. Following the announcement of the allocation of the second round of the Levelling Up Fund, the City Regions Board and People and Places Boards sent a letter to the Secretary of State outlining experiences and asking for an open review of the process ahead of any future rounds of funding. Dehenna Davison MP has agreed to meet with both Board Chairs ahead of the third round of the Levelling Up Fund to discuss how the fund could be implemented in a way which would both be cost effective and empower local areas to level up their communities.
22. The People and Places and City Regions Board jointly commissioned WPI Economics to explore councils' future role in driving growth and prosperity. This is due for completion in June 2023 and will help inform the LGA's manifesto asks ahead of a forthcoming general election.
23. The City Regions and People & Places Boards has been active in ensuring that DHLUC continue to work with local authorities as they introduce the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). In November, the Chair [called](#) on the government to approve local authority investment plans and calling for greater flexibilities on how the fund can be used across the three years. Following the approval of the plans in December, the Chair [called](#) for there to be flexibility between year spend. In January, DHLUC confirmed that lead authorities could spend allocations between years, subject to a credible plan, with a further announcement made in March on the introduction of the flexibility to spend UKSPF on the People & Skills Priority in 2023/24.
24. The People & Places and City Regions Board commissioned Shared Intelligence to undertake action learning sets to support local authorities with the introduction of UKSPF and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) in early 2023. This has provided a space for local authorities to network and share learning. As there has been significant interest in participating, the LGA has created a wider informal officer network to share learning. The LGA will publish the learning from the action learning sets by the beginning of June and will continue to support continual officer engagement with DHLUC and DEFRA for both UKSPF and REPF.
25. Working with councils, we have developed a guide to economic development teams – their role and skills needs. The report shows how ED services are delivered across England, shares learning across the sector with examples and top tips of what works and sets out the future skills and capacity challenges they face and where they can go for support. It will be published as an online guide on our website.

Programme of work and priorities

26. The Board will look to build on its successes as it plans for the 2023/24 board cycle. Areas of focus are likely to include:
- 26.1. Making the case for investment in urban areas and city regions ahead of the upcoming general election.
 - 26.2. Influencing national policy on levelling up and devolution, including widening the scope of powers available and deepening of existing deals.
 - 26.3. Exploring the policy levers needed to improve resilience in urban areas and city regions.
 - 26.4. Embedding our Work Local proposals into national policy, including specific policy proposals to support green jobs and net zero.
 - 26.5. Streamlining local growth funding and implementing the learning from existing funding programmes.
 - 26.6. Supporting councils with the transitions of LEPs to local government and removing barriers to councils' abilities to support local inclusive growth.

Next steps

27. Officers to take forward actions as appropriate to draft a work programme for the board.

Community Wellbeing

Background

1. At its meeting in October 2021 the Board considered its priorities for 2022/23 and agreed a substantive programme covering the following areas of work:
 - 1.1 Adult social care funding and reform
 - 1.2 Integration
 - 1.3 Public Health
 - 1.4 Child Health Priorities
 - 1.5 People in vulnerable circumstances.
2. This paper provides an overview of the achievements delivered against these themes. It also seeks an initial steer from the Board on its priorities for 2023/24. Members' comments will be used to inform the development of a full paper for consideration at the first meeting of the 2023/24 Board cycle.

Adult social care funding and reform

Funding

3. We have continued to highlight the serious pressures facing adult social care and their many consequences for people, services, the workforce and communities. Our calls for additional funding to ease these pressures were acted on in the 2022 Autumn Statement, which announced new investment for adult social care totalling up to £2.8 billion in 2023/24 and up to £4.7 billion in 2024/25.
4. Whilst welcome, our response highlighted the gap between the funding announced and our well-established call for £13 billion to address all pressures and enable councils to meet all of their legal duties under the Care Act. We have also done a lot of work to counter the Government narrative that adult social care now has what it needs in terms of funding. Of particular note, we produced a thorough briefing with the NHS Confederation on the Autumn Statement monies, which set out that the total allocation: assumes councils will use all of their council tax flexibilities; includes funding for children's as well as adult services; and includes funding that is ringfenced specifically for addressing delayed discharge. This has proved a very popular briefing.

Delayed discharge

5. Delayed discharge has been a considerable focus for the Government over the last year, particularly over winter. In January, we wrote publicly to the Secretary of State, jointly with ADASS and Solace, setting out our concerns with the way Government was portraying adult social care as being to blame for delayed discharges. We also used the letter to push for greater Government engagement with local government on the issue,

as well as setting out our views on the short- and medium-term steps that should be taken to address delayed discharges. The aforementioned briefing with NHS Confederation also covered shared thinking on how best to tackle the issue.

6. We organised two (December and January) meetings for council chief executives and directors of adult services to hear from Ministers at the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on delayed discharge. These were excellent opportunities for senior council officers to share their views, including their concerns and frustrations, as well as actions that would really make a difference on the ground.

Assurance

7. We have done a significant amount of work on adult social care assurance over the last year. Through weekly meetings with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), ADASS and DHSC we have set out councils' concerns with assurance, including single word ratings, the financial context councils are operating in and the capacity challenge that assurance poses. We formally put these concerns on record through correspondence to the Minister. Some of these concerns are reflected in CQC's assurance operational framework, as well as the draft framework for intervention and support.
8. Due to the troubling lack of communication from the Department and the regulator to councils on the subject, we have held a series of webinars where senior figures from DHSC, CQC and the Government have given updates to council colleagues. These have been extremely well-attended, with around 1,000 Members and officers attending.
9. Officers from the Community Wellbeing Team and Partners In Care And Health (PCH) have also worked closely on a number of products to help support councils in their preparations for assurance. This includes a 'top tips' document and a comprehensive self-assessment workbook. Officers have also worked closely with a small group of council chief executives to test out our thinking and better understand the concerns of senior colleagues. This has been invaluable and has helped shape our policy positions.
10. With 5 pilot sites now undergoing assurance, we will be working with the Lead Members of those councils to understand how they are finding the experience. Again, this will help inform and shape our ongoing lobbying work in this area.

Reform: Government

11. Following discussions at a previous Community Wellbeing Board, we wrote to the Secretary of State calling for a short 6-month deferral to elements of the Government's charging reforms. Given the fragile state of the provider sector, we argued that work on 'fair cost of care' should continue. But to ease capacity pressures, we suggested the

Government should defer implementation of the care cost cap, changes to the financial means test thresholds and implementation of 18(3) of the Care Act, which would enable self-funders to access care at the council-funded rate. We argued this would ease capacity pressures on councils, allow more time to learn from the reform Trailblazer sites, and also allow more time to ensure appropriate and necessary systems were up and running to deal with the expected increase in assessments. In its Autumn Statement, the Government pushed the implementation of these elements of its reform agenda back to October 2025.

12. In April, the Government published its long-awaited update on its December 2021 white paper on wider system reform. This was widely perceived to be a downgrading of funding and ambition and the LGA responded by expressing its disappointment at the plan, particularly the reduction in funding for measures to support the development and wellbeing of the care workforce. The Board had an opportunity to articulate its concerns directly to Michelle Dyson, Director General for adult social care at DHSC at its May Board.

Reform: wider sector

13. There have been a number of interesting and important publications from partners on the future of adult social care over the last year. These include the Archbishops' Commission on Reimagining Care, the House of Lords inquiry on adult social care which culminated in its report, 'Gloriously Ordinary Lives', and the Fabian Society report, 'Support Guaranteed: The Roadmap To A National Care Services'. LGA officers submitted evidence to these three initiatives and had meetings with their senior leads. Many of the findings and recommendations from these projects reflect the LGA's input. Of particular note, the Fabian Society report was clear that, whilst a stronger national approach is needed on issues such as ensuring people's rights and tackling workforce recruitment and retention challenges, councils "should remain in charge [of adult social care]". Indeed, one of the report's ten principles is that a National Care Service must be "Local and place-based".
14. As part of our own work on wider reform, we ran a very well-attended Smith Square Debate on the subject in January. Chaired by the BBC's Alison Holt, and with senior speakers including Dr Anna Dixon MBE (co-chair of the aforementioned Archbishops' Commission) and Miriam Levin (programme director for Engage Britain), the debate considered what the future should hold for adult social care and how best to deliver that vision.

Flagship conferences

15. Between April and June this year, we worked closely with the Health Foundation, NHS Confederation and NHS England to develop and deliver an 'adult social care feature

zone' at NHS Confederation's annual 'Expo' conference. This was seen as an important opportunity for senior NHS leaders to learn more about the value of adult social care both in its own right and in terms of the role it plays in helping to mitigate demand pressures facing the health service. Colleagues from across the LGA and PCH worked with councils and sector partners to deliver three stands in the exhibition and five workshop sessions covering topics ranging from coproduction and involving the voice of lived experience, to collaborative working between system and place. Colleagues will be meeting in the coming weeks to reflect on the experience and consider whether to do something similar next year.

16. As ever, colleagues from LGA, PCH, ADASS and ADCS worked closely again to develop and deliver a successful National Children and Adult Services Conference in 2022. Planning is already well underway for this year's NCAS Conference. Key issues facing the sector will also be covered as part of our ongoing leadership development offer for Lead Members.

Delegations

17. Over the last year, officers from the LGA have hosted separate delegations from Norway, Sweden and Israel. These international colleagues contacted us as they were keen to learn more about different aspects of the way in which English councils support people of all ages to live independently and the structures and systems used.

Partnership working

18. Officers have continued to work closely with a range of partners from across the wider adult social care sector. Of particular note, the LGA has remained an active contributor to the National Adult Social Care Leaders Group, comprising organisations including ADASS, Skills for Care, Social Care Institute for Excellence, the Care Provider Alliance, Think Local Act Personal and Social Care Future. The group continues to be a helpful forum for sharing updates and intelligence and considering joint messaging and policy development work, particularly on the care workforce.

Priorities for 2023/24

19. Given the breadth of activity in this area of the Board's work, it is difficult to list every suggested priority and action. The following are therefore broad heading areas under which would sit a range of activity and work.

- 19.1 Continue to evidence the scale of pressures facing social care (and their consequences) and make those well-known publicly and privately to Ministers, senior officials, partners and the public as part of continued calls for additional investment.
- 19.2 Continue to represent councils' interests in adult social care assurance including

learning from the pilot sites as assurance rolls out more widely.

- 19.3 Continue to work with the full range of the LGA's national partners to identify areas of shared interest for joint lobbying and influencing.
- 19.4 Support councils, and manage public perceptions, around winter pressures and delayed discharge
- 19.5 Further push the LGA's priorities for adult social care reform, possibly to include a major new publication reflecting on the 10 year anniversary of the Care Act receiving Royal Assent.

Integration and System Reform

Integrated Care Systems

- 20. Integration continues to be a key priority for the LGA, the Government and the NHS since the Health and Care Act gained Royal Assent in April 2022. It required the development of new statutory guidance to support the establishment of integrated care boards (ICBs) and integrated care partnerships (ICPs) and significant revision of existing statutory guidance affecting the NHS, local government and Government functions. This year has seen a period of intense engagement with the Department of Health and Social Care, to ensure that new and revised guidance reflected the concerns and perspective of local government.
- 21. We have also worked closely with other national membership organisations, in particular NHS Confederation, to build a strong relationship with ICBs and ICPs to support them to embed and develop as effective and collaborative system leaders. Our colleagues in the Partnerships for Care and Health Team also work closely with the DHSC, NHS England, ADASS and the NHS Confederation to support the development of effective leadership at place, health and wellbeing and ICS level.

Commons Health and Social Care Committee review of Integrated Care Systems

- 22. Forty-two Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) covering all of England were established on a statutory footing on 1 July 2022. The Commons Health and Social Care Committee carried out an inquiry into the accountability and autonomy of ICSs between November 2022 and February 2023. It published its [Seventh report - Integrated care systems: autonomy and accountability](#) on 30 March 2023. The LGA provided written evidence to the inquiry and Cllr David Fothergill addressed the Committee at an oral evidence session in November 2022.
- 23. The final report of the Committee reflected our key messages on the need DHSC and NHS England to move away from its command and control approach and give ICSs the time and space to focus on the priorities that will have the biggest impact on health outcomes and health inequalities.

Hewitt Review of ICS autonomy and accountability

24. In November 2022, the Government commissioned the Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt to undertake a review of the autonomy and accountability of ICSs. The LGA was closely involved in the review with local government representation – a mixture of LGA officers and senior elected members – on each of the workstreams. We also submitted our own evidence: <https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/lga-response-hewitt-review-ics-accountability-and-autonomy> which broadly supported the development of ICSs but emphasised the need for them to work collaboratively with health and wellbeing boards at place level and to build on existing partnerships. We also emphasised the need for a reduction in nationally determined targets and priorities so that ICSs can focus on the priorities for their own populations.
25. The final report of the Hewitt Review, published in April 2023, reflected many of the LGA's key messages.
26. On 14 June, the Government responded to the House of Commons Committee report and the Hewitt Review with a largely positive response which restated their commitment to ICSs working collaboratively to improve population health and tackle inequalities. We were, however, disappointed that the Government has rejected the Hewitt Review suggestion to grow the proportion of funding spent on prevention by one per cent per year. That said, we broadly support the Government's response to those two significant inquiries, in particular their recognition of the importance of place based partnerships and of collaboration between the NHS and local government.

ICS national network

27. Throughout 2022/23 we have worked closely with the NHS Confederation to provide sector-led support to the new leaders in integrated care systems – in particular the Chairs of ICBs and ICPs. The ICB and ICB Chairs Forums each provide an independent space for Chairs to exchange ideas, develop solution and shape policy development. We have been particularly closely involved in the agenda setting, support and action arising from the ICP Chairs Forum, co-chaired by Cllr Tim Oliver and Cllr Tim Swift who are both ICP chairs. In June 2023, the Lead Members of the CWB agreed an MOU with NHS Confederation to formalise this joint working so that the LGA is now formally a joint sponsor of the ICP Chairs Network, with the CWB being represented at meetings.

Health and Social Care Sounding Board

28. Since it was set up by the LGA and DHSC in May 2021, the Sounding Board has continued to act as an informal advisory group to ensure that local government has early influence on the development of health and care policy. It is valued by local government, national government and national agencies such as NHS England and the Care Quality

Commission (CQC) to ensure that a local government perspective is central to current and future policy development.

Health Devolution

29. The CWB continues to co-sponsor the Health Devolution Commission (HDC), an independent cross-party and cross-sector forum to promote health devolution and integration across England, alongside other organisations, including the NHS Confederation, Mencap, Barnado's, the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, London Councils, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership and the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership.
30. In 2023, the HDC is focusing on identifying, capturing and disseminating good practice from integrated care systems on a range of issues, including the integration of health and social care and the role of ICSs in supporting social and economic development.
31. The LGA is also co-sponsor of the Health and Devolution Working Group with NHS Confederation. The working group brings together experts from local government devolution, the NHS, academia and national membership organisations to understand the priorities, opportunities and challenges for leaders in local government devolution areas and ICSs in bringing together health and local government devolution. The Working Group has been endorsed by the CWB, the City Regions Board and the People and Places Board who each have a representative at meetings of the Working Group.
32. The LGA and Confederation will be publishing a report of the findings of the Health and Devolution Working Group in the Autumn at a joint conference.

Major Conditions Strategy

33. In January, the Secretary of State for Health announced the development of a Major Conditions Strategy, covering the six conditions which contribute to the burden of disease on England. The CWB has given their views to senior DHSC officials and will be submitting evidence to the Review.

Priorities for 2023/24

34. Continue to represent local authorities in the development of ICSs – in particular advocating for local authorities to have a key role in ICBs, ICPs and place-based partnerships.
35. Support councils to make an effective contribution to integrated care boards, integrated care partnerships and place-based partnerships.

36. Work with government and national agencies such as NHS England and CQC to ensure that the views and concerns are local government are addressed in the developing policy agenda for integration.

Public health

Funding

37. In March, DHSC wrote to councils to explain that they would be expected to use existing budgets to pay for NHS pay increases for commissioned community services (e.g. health visiting, school nursing). The LGA argued that this could push stretched budgets to the limit and put services at risk. In response to our lobbying, it was agreed that councils should not expect additional in-year costs related to the NHS pay award to be passed on to them. This is a win for the LGA, but clarity on non-NHS staff commissioned to deliver public health activity needs to be resolved.
38. In February, the government announced that councils across England will receive an additional £421 million funding through to 2025 to improve drug and alcohol addiction treatment and recovery. This includes support for children and young people affected by substance misuse. This additional funding was announced as part of the Government's drug strategy, ['From harm to hope: a 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives' \(2022\)](#).

Covid Inquiry

39. In September, the Covid19 Inquiry was formally launched to examine the UK's response to and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and learn lessons for the future. The LGA and the Welsh LGA have been granted core participant status in the Inquiry, this involves co-ordinating evidence and responses on a range of issues. The LGA will be providing evidence, expert witness account and relevant supporting documentation in relation to the issues being considered by the Inquiry and will support councils to the extent that we can in doing so. We will also support the timely implementation of recommendations.

Dental Health

40. In October, we published new analysis that revealed a growing number of "dental deserts" across the country with more deprived or rural local authority areas having fewer NHS dentists than those in more affluent urban areas.

Monkeypox

41. Throughout 2022/23, the LGA worked closely with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and others to tackle a very small number of cases of Monkeypox in local communities. The outbreak has highlighted the important health protection work of local authority commissioned sexual health services. We worked with our commissioners

throughout this outbreak to ensure the best response to both monkeypox infections and minimise disruption to other important sexual health services.

Sexual Health

42. In November, we published *'Breaking point: Securing the future of sexual health services'*. The LGA and English HIV and Sexual Health Commissioners' Group (EHSCHG) produced this report focusing on demand and funding pressures. The report delves into the trends since local authorities took responsibility for sexual health services in 2013, looking at the social and economic context in which they occur.

Economic Inactivity

43. Economic Inactivity is an increasingly high-profile issue nationally. The underlying causes of economic inactivity are often multi-faceted – mixing factors such as family context, mental and physical health conditions, with compounding barriers to do with loss of confidence or self-esteem, or practical factors such as access to transport. In December, the LGA commissioned Shared Intelligence to undertake two parallel streams of work about economic inactivity 1) To research the range of national programmes available to support economically inactive people into work. 2) To review the range of action taken at a local level and understand the opportunities and challenges associated with addressing economic inactivity at place level. Our report will be published this summer.

Directors of Public Health

44. To mark the 175th anniversary of the first Medical Officer of Health (now known as a Director of Public Health), we commissioned a series of interviews with the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH), exploring the varied and invaluable role of a Director of Public Health. We wanted to mark this important milestone by recognising the rich heritage and community of which directors are an important part and acknowledge the important role they continue to play in contributing to the future of protecting and improving the public's health.

45. Over the last 12 months we have published a series of case studies covering a diverse range of subjects such as women's health hubs, stop smoking services, sexual health services and Health and Wellbeing Services. We delivered over a dozen webinars, with strong online attendance at each one.

Public health annual conference 2023

46. The eleventh LGA Annual Public Health Conference was held across three mornings on 21 – 23 March 2023. It was organised in partnership in partnership with the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) and the Faculty of Public Health (FPH). To coincide

with the conference, the LGA launched the 2023 annual public health report, along with an animation for social media celebrating all that councils have achieved in the last decade.

47. The conference included a total of nine bitesize sessions on a huge variety of key public health topics, including community development, mental health, devolution and the future of public health. The conference had a record almost 1,300 delegates register to join for the conference across the three mornings and a total of 43 speakers and chairs participated.

Children's health

Start for Life and Family Hubs

48. We are pleased to see the development from policy into practice of the Early Years Healthy Development Review into the Start for Life and Family Hubs programme, where 75 councils were given a share of £300m over three years to establish and develop a network of family hubs in their local areas.
49. We have engaged closely with government officials throughout the policy development and implementation of the Start for Life and Family Hubs programme. We have worked with councils to understand the challenges and benefits they are experiencing on the programme and worked with officials to address these, while also emphasising to the Government the challenges around providing funding to only half of councils.
50. We will continue to work with DHSC, DfE and partners to ensure "Start for Life" is a collaborative and strength-based programme which empowers councils to improve services and ensure local flexibility and leadership rather than a one-size fits all approach. We will work with DfE and the Centre for Family Hubs to ensure sector input into the continued roll out of Family Hubs.
51. We commissioned a series of case studies exploring various elements of Family Hubs delivery within councils. Three of the councils featured have received additional funding as part of the Family Hubs programme, whilst three councils have not. The case studies will be published in July.

Increases in the cost of living

52. The LGA has been working closely with Government on issues surrounding the rising cost of living and the impact on children's health and wellbeing. This has included calling for the Government to urgently review the Healthy Start scheme and Free School Meals (FSM), and making long-term increases to local public health funding, which can go to support children and young people in communities who need it most.

53. As part of this, we have organised two webinars with councils and leading food campaigning organisations (Feeding Britain, the Food Foundation) showcasing ways in which councils have been addressing food insecurity affecting children and building local partnerships to improve health and wellbeing.
54. We have engaged closely with the Healthy Start scheme team at the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and continue to call for the scheme to be expanded to all families receiving Universal Credit and for the scheme to shift from an “opt in” to an “opt out” registration system through an automated process, to help remove any barriers families face when applying online.
55. We ran a plenary event at the LGA’s annual Public Health conference in March 2023 where a number of experts (from the Royal College of Paediatricians and Child Health, Barnardo’s, Action for Children and the Director of Public Health for Liverpool) discussed the impact of the cost-of-living crisis upon children’s health.
56. We have extensively made the case that funding and capacity are mission critical issues affecting local public health teams’ ability to deliver essential health promoting services for children and young people in their local areas.

Vaping

57. We have successfully called for more enforcement to halt the rise of youth vaping, including government announcing fines for shops selling illicit vapes and £3m funding for Trading Standards to support enforcement. This follows successful LGA lobbying for government to close a loophole that allows the vaping industry to give free samples to children. Through a cross-board approach, the LGA is currently considering several options on its future policy direction on youth vaping and disposable vapes.

Health Disparities

58. We were disappointed that the Government announced that they would be abandoning the long-awaited Health Disparities White Paper. We have continued to push for much-needed action to tackle entrenched and growing child health inequalities, particularly within the upcoming Major Conditions Strategy.
59. In our response to the call for evidence for the Major Conditions Strategy, we emphasised that the strategy should have an equal focus on children and adults, calling for a greater focus on prevention than treatment.

ICBs

60. We have continued to work with partners across the system to strengthen the position of children’s health in Integrated Care Boards/Partnerships. This has included jointly

inputting on the [recently published guidance around executive lead roles](#) within integrated care boards, including the executive lead role for children and young people.

NHS Children and Young People's Transformation Board

61. We will continue to work with the NHS Children and Young People's Transformation Board to influence their actions on the elective recovery of children and young people's health services, including on waiting times.

Work with other LGA Boards

62. The Board will also work jointly with the Children and Young People's Board on cross-cutting issues such as childhood obesity, mental health, Family Hubs and support for children, such as Free School Meals and Healthy Start Vouchers. We will seek member direction on continuing the joint Lead Member CYP/CWB meetings in the new meeting cycle in September.

Adults with Care and Support Needs

Supported and Exempt Housing

63. The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Bill achieved royal assent in June following close consultation throughout the parliamentary stages with the LGA and [several public affairs responses](#). We successfully lobbied that councils should have better oversight of supported exempt accommodation in their area and are now playing a co-ordinating and convening role alongside councils and DLUHC officials to ensure successful implementation. We have so far held two roundtables with DLUHC officials and the newly formed LGA Supported Housing Network which is comprised of officers across a diverse range of teams and regions in England.

64. A priority in the coming year will be to ensure the new legislation works for councils, makes as much positive change as possible to residents, and considers service, capacity, and budget pressures.

65. The funding of non-statutory housing support also continues to be an area of concern for council officers working in homelessness and adult social care. Supported housing plays a crucial role in preventing homelessness, delayed hospital discharges and placements into care homes. With councils facing considerable budgetary pressures alongside a stricter regulatory landscape for non-commissioned services, it will be important to consider the unintended consequences.

Older People's/Adapted/Extra Care Housing

66. In September 2022 we published the report [Housing our ageing population](#). The report makes a number of recommendations to Government on how we can best meet the needs of people in later life with case studies demonstrating how councils are addressing the housing needs of an ageing population. This year, we've seen the launch of the Older People's Housing Taskforce which will create a strategy for England to create the range of housing options and opportunities required to meet the housing needs of an ageing population. This should lead to stronger local strategies that are well embedded and evidenced in local plans. We would also like the taskforce to produce guidelines that clarify the different housing models/typologies for older people with recommendations on how planning can help address local need.
67. We continue to highlight the importance of housing for people in vulnerable circumstances. In August 2022, we made a submission to the government consultation on Improving disabled people's access to let residential premises.
68. In January 2023 the LGA provided comments on the [Safe Care at Home review](#) led by the Home Office and Department of Health and Social Care. The review was published in June 2023.
69. LGA Workforce team recently examined the health and wellbeing climate experienced by non-registered social care professionals (e.g., occupational therapists) via a survey with results to be published imminently. In the coming year, we'll be working with the Workforce team, and networks such as the Principal OT National Network to help promote a better environment to attract, develop and retain professional, compassionate and engaged staff who deliver high quality social care. We will also be considering what broader work can be done around the role of councils in adapting homes to enable people to live independently and safely.
70. Our priorities in this area will be to further develop messaging on the links between health and housing, including preventative approaches that can reduce the likelihood of being admitted to long term care in future.

Suicide Prevention

71. In 2019, the Government pledged extra funding for the ADPH and LGA Sector Led Improvement programme to support local authorities to strengthen suicide prevention plans, under a range of measures aimed at improving support for mental health. This SLI work came to an end in December 2022 and identified lots of areas of innovation, challenge, and future considerations for local authority's suicide prevention plans. The final report is due to be published imminently.

72. In February 2023, Cllr David Fothergill and Professor Louis Appleby (Chair of the National Suicide Prevention Advisory Group) published a blog on [‘Breaking the link between financial difficulty and suicide’](#) to highlight the importance of prioritising suicide prevention during financially difficult times.
73. The priorities for the coming year will be to help secure continued funding for local authorities following the end of the three-year funding delivered as part of the NHS Long Term Plan. This year will also see the publication of Government’s new Suicide Prevention Strategy and subsequent guidance for council’s local plans which will likely require us to update the LGA guidance. We will also continue to attempt to highlight the important of public health and local authority teams in the prevention of suicide.

Veterans and Armed Forces Community

74. Last year we worked with government on the implementation of the Armed Forces Bill, which introduces a new statutory duty on specified local public authorities to have ‘due regard’ to the Covenant, to help ensure armed forces, personnel, veterans and their families are not disadvantaged by their service when accessing key public services. New guidance for local authorities was published in November 2022 which provided further guidance around existing partnerships and good practice and allows local flexibility to deliver Covenant pledges and supports innovative approaches.
75. In February 2023, Cllr David Fothergill chaired a LGA webinar on ‘No Homeless Veterans’. The event was to help councils identify and respond effectively to the needs of homeless veterans.
76. This year we will be focused on reinstating and utilising the Armed Forces Covenant network to further embed the covenant by identifying gaps in guidance, showcasing good practice and asking the network officers to provide direction with regards to developing policy lines.

Mental Health

77. We continue to engage with government and partners about the reform of the Mental Health Act.
78. In November 2022, at the National Children and Adults Conference we held a workshop on Mental Health Act reform.
79. In January 2023, the Community Wellbeing Board Lead members agreed publication of a LGA [‘Get in on the act’ briefing](#) on the new Mental Health Act.

Joint Inquiry Committee

80. In October 2022 the LGA and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) [submitted a response to the Joint Committee Inquiry on the Mental Health Act](#). We stated that the Act will require a clear implementation programme with funding to ensure the workforce is prepared effectively and to support development of community mental health services as alternatives to detention. The Committee published their report and made a number of recommendations to strengthen the Act. The LGA were pleased to see that the Committee say that proper resourcing of the Bill will be crucial. We are awaiting the Government response to the Committees recommendations.

Public Accounts Committee

81. In March 2023 the LGA Chair of the Community Wellbeing Board and Chair of the Children and Young People Board [wrote to Meg Hillier MP Chair of the Public Accounts Committee](#) in response to their call for evidence on Improving mental health services. We highlighted councils roles and responsibilities in mental health and that they should be considered an equal stakeholder when looking into improving mental health services. We highlighted that Local government mental health services need sufficient funding to meet current, unmet and new demand for mental health support, including preventative mental wellbeing work that may stop the escalation of mental health needs so that more costly NHS treatment is avoided. We are awaiting the Public Accounts Committee

Right Care, Right Person – National Partnership Agreement (NPA) on mental health and policing

82. DHSC are developing ‘Right Care, Right person’ a agreement on mental health and policing. This will be signed by Government, NHS England, the National Police Chiefs Council and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners. The agreement aims to clarify the role of Police in responding to mental health crises. Concerns have been raised by the LGA, ADASS and other partners including as follows:

- 82.1 Concern that this model would be rolled out too quickly, with inadequate local engagement and partnership working, meaning that other agencies are unable to pick up demand. The Metropolitan Police have announced they will introduce it in August 2023.
- 82.2 Risks that police cease engaging in cases where their involvement remained appropriate, leading to dangerous situations for patients and staff.
- 82.3 Concerns that the agreement will have financial impact on local authorities – we have raised this as a potential new burden.

83. In July 2023 we wrote a joint LGA, ADASS and ADCS signed letter to a number of government ministers outlining our concerns.

Learning Disabilities and Autistic People

84. We continue to promote the role of councils in meeting the needs of autistic people and people with learning disabilities. We are members of the national Autism Strategy implementation group, and we highlight resource needs in delivery of the strategy plan.
85. In November 2022, at the National Children and Adults Conference we held workshops on 'Flourishing environments: considering and meeting the sensory needs of autistic people' and 'Building the Right support'.
86. In December 2022, the Community Wellbeing Board Lead Members agreed publication of a joint LGA/NHSE guidance 'Quick guide on accommodation based mental health, learning disability and autism support in adult community, crisis and acute services'.
87. In July 2022, the LGA held 'Beautifully Ordinary lives' an event that was an informal and interactive opportunity to meet with people with a learning disability, autistic people and family carers to hear from them about them living ordinary lives as citizens in their local communities and their aspirations for their future.
88. In October 2022, the LGA made a [submission to the government consultation on the Down Syndrome Act Guidance](#). Key asks are that the guidance should clearly set out any specific recommendations for councils. Also, that any new requirements arising from the Act will be new burdens for councils and will need to be funded accordingly. We will continue to work with DHSC to ensure successful implementation of the Act.
89. In June 2023, we provided the Buckland review of Autism employment with Local Supported Employment examples.
90. In 2022 the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training for learning disability and autism for health and social care provider staff was introduced as part of the new Health and Care Act. The government is currently planning a consultation on the Code of Practice. The LGA will feed into the Code of Practice and identify any new financial burdens that may result.

Implications for Wales

91. Health and adult social care are devolved matters.

Financial Implications

92. None

Equalities implications

93. There are a range of Equalities Implications across the Board's work which will be taken into consideration when planning work for the 2023/24

Next steps

94. Members' comments will be used to inform the draft priorities paper brought to the first meeting of the Board in the 2023/24 cycle.

Culture, Tourism and Sport

Background

1. The Board is required to review its achievements at the last Board meeting of the 2022/23 cycle.
2. The text below provides highlights of the CTS Board and team's work over the year, but is not a comprehensive list. The CTS team responds on a daily basis to a wide range of issues facing councils and their partners, which this year has included issues between the Church of England and council archives, supporting council archaeology services on planning consultations, exploratory work on a national blue plaque scheme, Royal celebrations and commemorations, written to new Ministers, and supporting councils to respond to the cost-of-living challenges facing communities.

Culture

3. The **LGA's Independent Commission on Culture and Local Government** published its final report, [Cornerstones of Culture](#) in December 2022. 220 people signed-up to attend the launch event, with 70 of those being in-person. The launch posts on the LGA's corporate Twitter received 49,554 impressions and 977 engagements, placing them in the top 10 posts of the year. The Cornerstones of Culture report was the 6th most viewed webpage on the LGA website during the week of its launch. The work of the Culture Commission also included the publication of a case study resource of over 50 case studies, a series of four short films profiling council cultural services and a series of illustrations based on the Commission's discussions.
4. The report has received a number of Parliamentary references and was specifically mentioned by Arts and Heritage Minister Lord Parkinson in his appearance on Front Row to discuss funding for culture in March 2023. Prior to the work of the Commission, the vital role of local government in supporting cultural infrastructure was not regularly recognised at a national level: following the work of the Commission, we have seen the fact that councils are the biggest public funder of culture referenced repeatedly across Parliament, stakeholder publications and wider media.
5. The Spring 2023 Budget announced that the **temporary higher headline rates of relief for cultural taxes** including Theatres Tax relief (TTR), Orchestra Tax Relief (OTR) and Museums and Galleries Exhibition Tax Relief (MGETR) will be extended for two additional years, a recommendation of the LGA. The rates will be gradually reduced down to normal rates by 1 April 2026.

6. In January 2023, Arts Council England announced details of the next rounds of the programmes that make up the Cultural Investment Fund. These are: the **Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND)**; the **Libraries Improvement Fund (LIF)**; and the **Cultural Development Fund (CDF)**. New rounds of MEND and LIF opened in early 2023 with £22.6 million available through this round of MEND, and £10.5 million through LIF (funding amounts may be subject to DCMS business planning). This will be the final round of LIF, while further applications for MEND will take place in early 2024, alongside another round of CDF. The LGA supported sector lobbying for these funds, and has undertaken a communication and support role for the sector following the announcement.

7. **Energy Bill Relief Scheme.** In January the Government announced the outcome of the review of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme, and published guidance. The scheme comprises two elements: support for all businesses, charities, and public sector organisations, and support at a higher level for energy and trade intensive industries. Museums, libraries and archives, historical sites and buildings, and zoos are included in this latter group of eligible sectors. The LGA was part of cross-sector advocacy efforts in favour of their inclusion.

8. The LGA has signed a new [Joint Statement with Arts Council England](#), which sets out how Arts Council England and the Local Government Association (LGA) will work together over the period from 2023-2025. Its purpose is to outline our shared vision for the contribution that arts, museums and libraries make to the nation, to places, and for people and how the two partners aspire to work together to realise it. This is the third joint statement signed by Arts Council England and the Local Government Association. It not only reflects the ongoing importance of collaboration between the development body for arts and culture and the membership body for local government, but also the strengthening and deepening of the relationship, which is reflected in the Arts Council's increased focus on place and everyday creative activity in their most recent strategy Let's Create.

9. The team has worked closely with the Creative Industries Council as they develop the [Government's Creative Industries Sector Vision](#), launched on 14 June, and which includes a commitment to "strengthen our collaboration with the Local Government Association, local authorities and leaders to support them in the development of local creative industries strategies...". This will build on our November 2022 publication on [Combined Authorities and the Creative Industries](#).

10. The LGA was named as one of only three organisations to be invited to every session held by [Baroness Sanderson as she developed her recommendations for the](#)

[Government's forthcoming Libraries Strategy](#). Each session was attended by an LGA Officer or LGA councillor (drawn from the CTS Board or the Library Sounding Board), and one deep dive session was held at the LGA offices. While not yet published, it is believed that several LGA recommendations will be put forward for inclusion in the new strategy. The LGA has also been referenced in the new Defra rural strategy as a partner to develop advice and support for rural libraries.

11. The Board Libraries Champion continues to co-chair the **Library Sounding Board** with Arts Council England, bringing together portfolio holders for libraries to discuss developments and issues facing library services.

Sport and physical activity

12. The CTS Board consistently lobbied the Government to urgently provide **support for swimming pools and leisure facilities**. This included meeting with the Sports Minister, Rt Hon Stuart Andrew MP in March 2023, to press the government to recognise the pressure of rising fuel bills on council run pools, highlighting that energy costs are up 300 per cent for some leisure centres. We also encouraged councils to write to their local MP and collaborated with key local government and sport sector stakeholders on joint letters to the Chancellor and Ministers.
13. As a result of our collective lobbying, the **£63 million Swimming Pool Support Fund** was announced in the Spring Budget to help publicly-owned swimming pools manage the increasing cost pressures. Of this, £23 million is for revenue costs and £40 million is for capital funding for energy efficiency improvements. This is a significant achievement given that public swimming pools and leisure centres were only one of two sectors to receive emergency support in the budget. Although this will not fully cover additional energy costs, the support is welcomed by the sector. We are now supporting Sport England to design and launch the fund which is due to go live at the end of June.
14. On behalf of the CTS Board, officers sit on the **Moving Communities Board** and contribute to strategic plans to promote the value of and increase the visibility of Moving Communities, which was acknowledged as critical to securing funding for the sector. The data provided by councils and leisure providers to [Moving Communities](#) was crucial to proving the importance of swimming pools to local communities and was instrumental in demonstrating the challenging financial position facing the sector and the potential loss in participation and social value, helping to facilitate the £63 million swimming pool support fund announced in the Spring Budget. The data also supports councils, providers and policymakers to take informed decisions to keep communities active and the recovery of public leisure services.

15. We produced [a briefing note with ukactive on the impact of utilities on leisure services](#) for councils and for operators running council-owned facilities.
16. We published the [LGA guide: Harnessing culture and sport to deliver social prescribing and improve health outcomes](#) it shares ideas and case studies to support councils to harness innovation in culture and leisure related services to deliver social prescribing initiatives.
17. We published the [LGA guide: Identifying additional financing options for public sport and leisure services](#) it highlights additional financing options to help sustain the sport and leisure sector and showcases learning from councils who are already doing this. A further guide on Supporting community ownership is due to be launched at the LGA Annual conference to coincide with the policy session '[Leisure centres: fit for the future](#)' on 5 June 2023.

Visitor economy

18. The LGA fed into the consultation on **reforming destination management organisations (DMOs)** – a long-standing call for action from the LGA. The resulting report adopted many of the LGA recommendations, placing DMOs on a more strategic footing (and now to be called Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs)), and providing a £4 million pilot in the North East. We are continuing to work with VisitEngland and tourism partners on the rollout, including hosting a [webinar with VisitEngland](#) to update councils on the rollout.
19. Following LGA lobbying, Government consulted on **introducing a tourist accommodation scheme in England to regulate the increase in short-term lets**. The [LGA responded to this](#) making several recommendations for regulation, which in turn led to two further consultations – on [introducing a registration scheme for short-term lets](#), and [introducing a use class for short term lets](#). Government will now consider the responses before taking further action, although the registration scheme is now a commitment in the Levelling Up Bill.
20. The LGA's senior adviser has been reappointed to the **Government's Tourism Industry Council**, providing advice to Government on management and support of the visitor economy, and ensuring local government views and capabilities are considered.

CTS Annual conference 2023

21. The annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference 2023 was held on 15th March 2023. Keynotes speeches were given by LGA President and Paralympian Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson and Baroness Lola Young, Chair of the LGA's Commission on Culture and Local Government. Talks from across the day demonstrated the huge contribution culture, tourism and sport can make to delivering on levelling up, and providing cost of living support, and colleagues ended the day with a walking tour of the impressively renovated London Coliseum.
22. 85 delegates registered to attend the 2023 conference – this is on par with the last in-person conference in 2020. The final net profit for the conference was £12,014.
23. The LGA Board and team also continue to offer free webinars to members throughout the year on various relevant topics and in support of Board objectives. Please see Annex D for details on events supported this year.

Improvement

24. The LGA continues to deliver an improvement programme for Arts Council England and one for Sport England. Cllr Michael Graham has helped to design programmes, while Cllr Peter Golds and Cllr Julie Jones-Evans have presented at them.
25. The [Arts Council England offer](#) includes leadership training for councillors, and for the first year has piloted training for officers, which has been oversubscribed. The programme also includes 3 culture peer challenges, and 10 library peer challenges, which continue to be well regarded and featured in several of Baroness Sanderson's deep dive session as good practice.
26. The [Sport England offer](#) continues to focus on leadership training and systems thinking, offering training for councillors and a separate programme for officers, including those based in trusts and Active Partnerships.
27. Discussions are underway with both partners over contracts for 2023/4 and both programmes are expected to continue in some form.
28. A pilot leadership session for officers has been commissioned on the **visitor economy**, using the LGA policy budget and is expected to start in September 2023. It will bring together 20 officers in an action learning format and cover key topics, such as strategies, data and evidence, sustainability, and inclusive tourism.

Media

29. The CTS Board shares the services of a Senior Media Relations Officer and a Digital Campaigns Marketing Adviser, who undertake a range of proactive and reactive items. Over the Board cycle, the team have engaged with most of the national media outlets, including the Guardian, Telegraph, Daily Mail, BBC, Sky News, and the Sun, with both reactive responses and proactive stories, including contributing to editorial items. The teams work also appears in sector press such as the Local Government Chronicle and Municipal Journal, particularly around the Culture Commission.
30. This year has included significant reputational management around council's contribution to holding street parties for the Coronation, as well as articulating the pressures on budgets that are leading to some service reductions, and the choices councils have to consider when hosting events in public spaces.
31. Most proactive media work this year has focused the issues facing leisure services, with most national papers including coverage of our partnership work with sports sector organisations at some point. A selection of key messages and articles are set out in Annex B to illustrate the Board's reach and impact.
32. In addition to supporting the leisure stories, the social media focus was on promoting the work of the Culture Commission and the contribution of councils to culture. Details of the impact and reach of these activities, as well as download figures for this year's publications, are included in Annex C.
33. The team have also communicated regularly with member councils through the weekly bulletins from Cllr James Jamieson to Leaders and Portfolio Holders, and from Mark Lloyd to Chief Executives and Directors. The monthly CTS e-bulletin has been delivered each month and reaches over 13 000 subscribers. The team has also secured seven articles in First magazine from Board members and partner organisations (see paragraphs 6-12 in Annex B).

Outside Bodies

34. The Board's work continues to be supported by members undertaking a liaison role with key stakeholders or acting as a point of contact on specialist subjects. During this Board cycle, the following members undertook these roles:
- 34.1. Tourism Alliance – Cllr Chris White (LibDem)
 - 34.2. London Marathon Charitable Trust – Cllr Richard Henry (LAB)
 - 34.3. Coastal SIG – Cllr David Jeffels (CON)

- 34.4. Creative Industries Council – Cllr Phil Seeva (CON)
- 34.5. Library champion – Cllr Julie Jones-Evans (IND)
- 34.6. Improvement Champion – Cllr Michael Graham (LAB)
- 34.7. Chair, Chiles, Webster, Batson Commission working group – Cllr Shabir Pandor (LAB)

Implications for Wales

- 35. Most culture, tourism and sport powers, funding streams, and activities are fully devolved. However, the LGA engages regularly with Culture and Leisure Officers Wales (CLOW) and the WLGA, through quarterly CLOA meetings. Most publications include a Welsh case study, and practical delivery points are usually applicable across boundaries.

Financial Implications

- 36. This year's work has been delivered within budget.

Equalities implications

- 37. The team has ensured that all events and training programmes have featured a representative group of speakers, drawn from different backgrounds and lived experiences, as well as the usual urban/rural, political colour, and type of council considerations.
- 38. The Culture Commission explicitly considered equality and diversity across all of its themes, and there are recommendations for how councils can enhance their reach and engagement, removing barriers to access.
- 39. Inclusion was also a key lobbying issue when discussing the impact of closing leisure facilities on communities. As part of this work, we were able to ensure that the new Moving Communities platform captured demographic data and was able to inform national policy decisions.

Next steps

- 40. Members are invited to:
 - 40.1. Note the significant achievements over the past year
 - 40.2. Identify areas of work that will continue to be a priority for members over the Summer
 - 40.3. Any new areas of work that should be put forward for consideration to the new Board convening in September for the 2023/24 cycle.



Executive Advisory Board

20 July 2023

ANNEX A**Parliamentary engagement:**

1. The team regularly engages with Select Committee inquiries, either through briefings or oral evidence. The public affairs officer covering this portfolio regularly meets with the clerks of relevant committees to ensure local government expertise is considered when inquiries are established, and Cllr Vernon-Jackson has written to Dame Caroline Dinenage as the new Chair of the Culture, Media, and Sport Select Committee.

2.

Parliamentary committee/ APPG/ other	Inquiry/ event	Type of engagement	Date
Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee	Parks follow-up one-off evidence session	Written evidence	28/06/2022
Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee	Parks follow-up one-off evidence session	Oral evidence (Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson)	20/07/2022
Lords Communications & Digital Select Committee	The future of the creative industries	Oral evidence (Cllr Phil Seeva)	08/11/2022
Lords Communications & Digital Select Committee	The future of the creative industries	Written evidence	November 2022

Parliamentary briefings web views:

3. [Developing a tourist accommodation scheme in England](#) - 11 Oct 22

Total page views: 301

Unique page views: 151

4. [Mitigating the impact of rising utility costs on leisure services](#) - 23 Nov 22

Total page views: 834

Unique page views: 408

5. [Government support for leisure centres](#) – 15 Dec 22

Total page views: 598

Unique page views: 305

6. [Debate on Report from the National Plan for Sport and Recreation Committee: 'A national plan for sport, health and wellbeing', House of Lords, 9 February 2023](#) – 9 Feb 2023

Total page views: 462

Unique page views: 223

ANNEX B**Culture, tourism and sport board news coverage****Overall council cost pressures**

1. During the month of October, we put spokespeople up for a number of interviews to discuss overall council cost pressures in the run up to the Autumn Statement. The interviews focused on pressures more broadly, but our interview briefings included lines on libraries and leisure centres.
 - 1.1. Cllr James Jamieson was interviewed on **BBC News** and **BBC Radio 4 World at One**, and had an article featured in **Politics Home**.
 - 1.2. Cllr Shaun Davies was interviewed on **BBC News**.
 - 1.3. Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson quote included in a **BBC News Online** piece looking at the risk of cuts to libraries despite a rise in users.

Warm spaces

2. In November, as winter drew closer, we received a notable number of enquiries and interview requests to discuss the use of warm spaces. Our lines crossed over into housing and public health portfolios, but also included a focus on the use of libraries.
 - 2.1. Cllr Shaun Davies spoke to **BBC News**.
 - 2.2. Cllr David Renard was interviewed on **BBC Radio 4's Today programme**, **BBC Breakfast**, **BBC News** and **BBC regional radio news**.

Cornerstones of Culture

3. Earlier in the year, the LGA's commission on culture and local government launched, with Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson interviewing with **Arts Professional**. After nine months of round tables and the publication of a final report, we secured further trade coverage.
 - 3.1. A comment piece from Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson was published by **Arts Professional** in January.

Leisure centres and rising energy bills

4. The topic that attracted the most media attention during November and into the new year was concerns around the impact of rising energy costs of leisure centres.
 - 4.1. **The Telegraph** ran a piece on the state of swimming pools, referencing the LGA's repeated calls for investment in public sport and leisure facilities.
 - 4.2. Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson had a quote included in a **Telegraph** piece on swimming pools potentially closing this winter due to energy bills.

- 4.3. Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson took part in a discussion on **BBC Radio 4's Front Row** about museums and leisure centres being impacted by rising costs.
- 4.4. **In the second week of January, we issued a response to the Government's Energy Bill Support Scheme which omitted swimming pools from the extra support. Our lines were covered by BBC Sport, The Independent, Mirror and Sun.**
- 4.5. **In the second week of January, our joint letter with UK Active and others that was sent to Government was reported on, as well as our lines, by BBC Sport, The Guardian and BBC Radio 4's Today programme.**
- 4.6. **Local Government Chronicle reported our letter to Jeremy Hunt and Michael Gove signed by local government organisations.**

Coronation of King Charles

5. In the months leading up to the coronation in May, we received a notable number of media enquiries relating to council preparations. These included a focus on street party applications and fees; rules around bunting and other decorations; and the process for applying for a road closure for the event.
 - 5.1. **The Telegraph, Daily Mail and Sun** were all sent comments regarding the above topics on a number of occasions.

First magazine articles

6. [Vital role of culture highlighted](#) – Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, 18 October 2022
7. [Cornerstones of culture](#) – Baroness Lola young, 6 January 2023
8. [Cultural services key to recovery](#) – Editorial team, 6 January 2023
9. ['Complacency' on creative industries](#) – Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, 31 January 2023
10. [Joining the nation in celebration](#) – Kate Groves, Eden Project, 28 February 2023
11. [A better quality of life](#) – Cllr Julie Jones-Evans, 28 February 2023
12. [The local value of the screen sector](#) – Hayley Armstrong, Creative England, 23 May 2023

Web media releases

13. [LGA statement on Budget funding for swimming pools](#)
Total page views: 1,021
Unique page views: 481
14. [Investment in public sports facilities also vital – LGA on sports in schools announcement](#)
Total page views: 224
Unique page views: 120
15. ['Cross-government support needed to address skills shortage in culture and creativity' – LGA statement on Communications and Digital Committee Report on our creative future](#)

Total page views: 195

Unique page views: 110

16. ['Leisure centres and public pools still at risk': LGA statement on energy bills support announcement](#)

Total page views: 777

Unique page views: 385

17. [Culture key to recovery and prosperity: Cornerstones of Culture Report](#)

Total page views: 1,013

Unique page views: 478

18. [Adult activity levels bouncing back: LGA statement on Sport England report](#)

Total page views: 252

Unique page views: 127

ANNEX C**Publications and social media****LGA publications**

1. [Cornerstones of culture](#)
Total page views: 8,649
Unique page views: 3,617
2. [Combined authorities and creative industries](#)
Total page views: 655
Unique page views: 323
3. [Harnessing culture and sport to deliver social prescribing and improve health outcomes](#)
Total page views: 1,691
Unique page views: 765

Case studies

4. Sixty-six case studies covering culture, sport and physical activity, and heritage have been collated and added to the [LGA case study bank](#). They gained a combined 6675 page views.

Social media

The LGA's CTS work on social media focused on the two priorities of 2022-23.

5. **Leisure work** - We amplified proactive and reactive work on Twitter and LinkedIn, contributing to **two of our top 5 posts of 2023** so far on the LGA corporate Twitter and LinkedIn. Of these two posts alone, we received a (combined) 100+ RTs, 100+ Likes and 30k impressions.
 - 5.1. <https://twitter.com/LGAcomms/status/1628334247336353795>
 - 5.2. <https://twitter.com/LGAcomms/status/1619990068952956929>
6. **Culture Commission** - We continued to promote the work of the Commission on Culture and Local Government, including the report launch in December 2022.
 - 6.1. In the lead up to the report launch, our **four short films received 4k video views** on Twitter.
 - 6.2. Our [Twitter post on the 'Cornerstones of Culture' report launch](#) reigned in the top 10 tweets of 2022 for the corporate LGA account highlighting our followers' interest in cultural services. The animation received 3.5k views. The posts received a combined 50k impressions and 1k engagements.

Podcast

7. The LGA launched a [podcast episode on cultural services](#) as part of our 'Forget What You Think You Know' series, featuring speakers Bobby Seagull, Baroness Lola Young and Chenine Bhathena. So far, the podcast has received 500 listens.

ANNEX D

Conferences and webinars

LGA events

1. 8 December 2022 - [Culture Commission launch](#).
2. 12 December 2022 - [Learning from Summer Reading Challenge](#), with the Reading Agency.
3. 9 February 2023 - [Implementing the review of destination management organisations](#), with VisitEngland.

Partner events

4. 10 November – [Meeting the challenge of the rising costs of leisure](#), with CLOA.

ANNEX E**Speakers at the Board**

1. The Board, including Lead member meetings, has heard from a number of keynote speakers and organisations over the 2022/23 board cycle, including:
 - 1.1. Stuart Andrew MP, Minister for Sport
 - 1.2. Tracey Crouch MP
 - 1.3. Baroness Lola Young
 - 1.4. Sport England
 - 1.5. UKActive
 - 1.6. Street Games
 - 1.7. Lawn Tennis Association
 - 1.8. Football Supporters Association
 - 1.9. VisitEngland
 - 1.10. Arts Council England
 - 1.11. English National Opera
 - 1.12. Libraries Connected
 - 1.13. DCMS Libraries Team
 - 1.14. Chief Culture and Leisure Officers Association
 - 1.15. Community Leisure UK
 - 1.16. Chief Archivists in Local Government (CALG)
 - 1.17. Cllr Tudor Evans, Leader, Plymouth City Council
 - 1.18. Plymouth National Portfolio Organisations, including the Box and the Theatre Royal
 - 1.19. LGA Workforce team

Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport

Climate Change and Environment

1. **Local Net Zero Forum.** The Board has worked hard on encouraging the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to lead an impactful Local Net Zero Forum. There has been some progress over the year, including further meetings and agreements to focus on certain elements of the net zero agenda, and in having the first political level Forum meeting co-chaired by the Minister and the LGA Chair, and including Lead Members of the Board.
2. **Fuel poverty and energy efficiency.** The Board led calls for greater support for people in fuel poverty because of the energy crisis. In particular calling for new investments in energy efficiency measures and advice to households on how to reduce their energy costs, as well as promoting the work of councils, and supporting them through the cost of living hub. Our research was widely covered in the media, including the [Guardian](#).
3. **Climate change adaptation.** We worked with Local Partnerships and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on a project to determine what local government needs from the update to the Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3). The final report [Accelerating Adaptation Action](#) was launched on 8 June with a range of recommendations we hope to see reflected in the NAP published later this year. The [press release](#) of the report was widely covered by the media, including the [Mail](#), Express, and Independent newspapers. The project builds on LPs [climate change adaptation toolkit](#) and engagement with the Government via the Local Adaptation Advisory Panel.
4. **Neighbourhood net zero.** In November we published [our report](#) on Neighbourhood approach to decarbonisation and held a webinar to present the findings. The report is central to evidencing the critical role of local government in engaging and building trust in communities to support them to lead local climate action, which can often be overlooked in Whitehall.
5. **Partnership building.** The Board has focused on building wider and deeper partnerships on the climate agenda, in particular with the energy sector. This has led to a range of new opportunities for influence. For instance, on 10 January the LGA joined Energy UK, Federation of Master Builders and the National Housing Federation at a Parliamentary event engaging with dozens of MPs on the importance of local energy efficiency.
6. **Independent Net Zero Review.** On 13 January Chris Skidmore MP published his final report [Mission Zero, Independent Review of Net Zero](#), it is a comprehensive and detailed report. The LGA [submitted evidence](#) in October 2022, followed by a meeting between the

Climate Change Task Group and Chris Skidmore MP, and officer meetings with the review team. The final report references the LGA on multiple points, including around the need for funding reform.

7. **Green heat project.** The LGA worked with the Energy Systems Catapult to design an approach whereby local and central government would work together to further enable decarbonisation of heat and buildings. [Green Heat: heat and buildings decarbonisation up to 2050](#) outlines a new approach to enabling councils to lead on retrofit and fuel poverty. The report was launched with a [press release](#), widely covered in the national media such as the [Independent](#) and local media such as [Evening Standard](#).
8. **Renewable energy.** We are working with Local Partnerships to review and update the LGAs [Renewable Energy Good Practice Guidance](#), which supports councils to explore options for taking forward renewable energy projects. The final report will be launched at LGA Annual Conference alongside research examining the number of renewable energy projects with planning permission and waiting to be built.
9. **Local government and the future of the electricity system.** The Board has spearheaded the sectors engagement on this critical issue for the economy and net zero. This includes working with Ofgem and partners on the potential reforms to governance to give councils a greater role in shaping grid investments, responding to [consultations](#) on this issue, and bringing [electricity partners and councils together](#) to discuss a way forward.
10. **Climate Change Task Group.** The Board has participated in meeting of the CCTG, including with Minister Lord Callanan and Minister Rowley.
11. **Events.** The Board has led several events across the year. Including a Smith Square Debate on climate change, webinars on adaptation, on energy efficiency and fuel poverty, an in-person event on the future of the grid, and others.

Environment and waste

12. **Waste and recycling reforms.** The Board has continued to engage in the detail of the proposed waste and recycling reforms, including the Extended Producer Responsibility and collection consistency. There have been some successes, for instance that the EPR scheme administrator will be a public body and involve local government. However, we continue to press for progress. Our representations to emphasise the importance of local flexibility in waste services are frequently covered in the media, for instance the [Daily Mail](#), as well as some of our concerns around the delays to reforms, such as the [Guardian](#). The board has also led work on proposals to prevent councils from charging for [DIY waste](#) at Waste and Recycling centres, and [fly tipping](#).
13. **Chemicals in the waste stream.** The Board continues to be involved around the issues relating to the implementation of new regulations on the disposal of fabric covered seating

containing harmful chemicals (persistent organic pollutants). The LGA [responded to consultation on changes to the POPs regulations](#) recommending that Defra, the Environment Agency and the LGA work together on a long-term strategy to deal with a conveyor belt of new chemicals being added to the list of POPs. The previous Board Chair met with Minister Pow to discuss this issue.

14. **Nutrient and water neutrality.** The LGA's Inquiry into nutrient and water neutrality concluded in March with the publication of the [final report and recommendations](#). A press release accompanied the publication of the report setting out the need for urgent action and funding so that 20,000 homes on hold due to nutrient and water neutrality can be built. It was welcome to see that the Government has recognised the need for upfront funding and has invited councils impacted by nutrient neutrality to submit evidence and put forward an [expression of interest for additional funding for projects](#) to unlock housing.
15. **Coastal landfill.** An LGA press release and webinar on 12 January highlighted the need for urgent action on the coastal landfill timebomb, featuring research from the LGA's Coastal Special Interest Group (SIG) into the extent of the problem, which affects 26 coastal authorities. The project was widely covered across the media, including [BBC](#) and the [Guardian](#).
16. **Bio-diversity Net Gain.** The Board continues to engage Defra officials on the implementation of BNG, including raising several issues around the detail and on funding. The Board will likely write to Ministers on this issue as BNG is due to come in November 2023 for large sites. In promoting the policy, the LGA joined forces with Natural England and the Berkely Group to host a conference on the issue.
17. **Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs).** The Board has continued to engage with Defra on the development of LNRSs, including on details of new burdens, guidance, and regulations. The LNRS process is also experiencing delays causing councils a number of challenges and is still unclear in a number of ways including the link with the planning system.
18. **Environmental targets.** Following the introduction of the Environment Act, Defra has set out more details of the Environment targets introduced by the Act. The LGA [responded to consultation on environment targets](#) and the [draft air quality control programme](#), which also follows on from the air quality chapter of the Environment Act.
19. **Flooding.** The Board ran a webinar on the unpredictable risk of surface water flooding, with presentations from the Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water in partnership with Mansfield Council and the Greater London Authority.

Economic Growth

20. We 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 is evidence based with case studies and suggests 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.
21. We 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.
22. LGA officials took part in discussions with DLUHC officials in shaping Government proposals to introduce high street rental auction powers. The Government is currently consulting on this. Our view is that such powers could be a useful additional tool in the 'high streets toolbox' to protect, revive and repurpose our town centres if the powers are simple and cost effective for councils to use.

Housing, planning and homelessness

23. **Planning reforms and the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill** – We responded to a number of Government consultations including the infrastructure levy, increases to planning fees, reforms to the national planning policy framework and Environmental Outcomes Reports. We briefed Cllr Jamieson to present oral evidence on the proposed reforms to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee.
24. **Permitted Development Rights** – We responded to the Government's consultation on introducing a new use class and associated permitted development rights for short-term lets. We also submitted evidence to the APPG for Ending Homelessness and Housing Market & Delivery inquiry into Housing Solutions for Homeless Households – Rethinking Conversions.
25. **Social rent cap.** 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%.

26. **Renters Reform.** The Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee launched a written inquiry and an oral evidence inquiry into reforming the private rented sector, in August and September respectively. The purpose of the inquiry was to examine the Government's proposals set out in its White Paper, published in June 2022. We submitted [written evidence](#) and Councillor Darren Rodwell (Vice-chair for the LGA's EEHT Board) gave evidence at the oral evidence session on behalf of the LGA.
27. **Decent Homes Standard in the private rented sector.** The LGA [responded](#) to the Government's consultation to extend the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector. Our response broadly welcomed the introduction of the standard, but councils need to be provided with adequate and upfront new burdens funding to regulate the standard.
28. **Exempt accommodation.** We have [briefed](#) parliamentarians throughout the passage of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Bill. We have been 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.
29. **Building Safety Levy (BSL)** - We responded to the Government consultation on the design and the implementation of the BSL. We also wrote to Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities urgently asking the department to reconsider their proposed approach. Officers continue to work with DLUHC on the design and implementation of the levy.
30. **Local Authority Housing Fund.** We worked with DLUHC on the design of the £500 million Local Authority Housing Fund which will run over financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24. The capital fund is aimed at supporting local authorities to provide 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. The Government has recently confirmed an additional £250 million fund with the majority of the additional funding used to house those on Afghan resettlement schemes (ARAP/ACRS) currently in bridging accommodation and the rest used to ease wider homelessness pressures. The LGA has created an [online forum](#) to facilitate discussion and shared learning between local authorities participating in LAHF.
31. **Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA).** Working with the Association of Retained Council Housing and the National Federation of ALMOs, we jointly commissioned Savills to undertake a [research project](#) to assess the recent and emerging pressures to HRAs. The overarching project objective was to understand and assess how effectively the HRA self-financing model is operating in relation to meeting expenditure needs. We also supported DLUHC to host a Ministerial roundtable with Rachel Maclean MP, Minister for Housing and Planning, and Baroness Scott to discuss financial pressures on local authority HRAs.

32. **Right to Buy.** The LGA has long called for councils to be able to retain 100% of their right to buy receipts. The Government announced that councils would be able to do so for the years 2022-23 and 2023-24 in March 2023. We continue to call on the Government to make these changes permanent and to allow councils to set discount rates locally.
33. **Compulsory purchase – compensation reforms.** We [responded](#) to the Government consultation on amending the compensation provisions in relation to the assessment of prospective planning permission where land is acquired by compulsion.
34. **Social housing regulation bill.** We have [briefed](#) on the Social Housing Regulation Bill as it goes through the House of Lords and House of Commons, emphasising our key messages. The LGA has also supported a number of key amendments – a list of which can be found [here](#). We secured an amendment that specifies that the Regulator must give consideration to appointing representatives from a variety of councils when making appointments to the Advisory Panel. We have also run two webinars to update councils on the upcoming regulatory changes to social housing and one on improving tenant experience.
35. **Other parliamentary activity.** We have briefed for debates on: the future of social housing; homelessness among Ukrainian refugees in the UK; planning policy; and the Government's white paper (a fairer private rented sector).
36. **Housing Sector Professionalisation.** The Government has tabled an amendment in the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill, which aims to professionalise housing management, by requiring relevant staff to complete qualifications up to a certain level. In advance of a Government consultation and stakeholder roundtables, the LGA surveyed councils to form a snapshot of how this amendment might affect the sector.
37. **Consequential Changes to Homelessness Legislation** - The [LGA responded to the Government's technical consultation on consequential changes to the homelessness legislation](#) in January 2023. We highlighted that councils were most supportive of Option 1 in the consultation, meaning councils must consider that someone is threatened with homelessness if they will become homeless within 56 days, as required under the prevention duty in Section 4 of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The Government agreed with Option 1, setting out its [response](#) on 17 May and through the [Renters Reform Bill](#).
38. **Out of Area Placement Guidance.** The LGA published the [Out of Area Placement Guidance](#) in January 2023. It sets out best practice and procedure on out of area placements in another local authority area within England. This applies to accommodation used to meet the duties set out in homelessness legislation, as well as when a local authority is supporting a child under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, where this support includes provision of accommodation.

39. **Homelessness Prevention Grant Consultation Submission.** We [responded to the Government's technical consultation](#) on changing the funding formula for the Homelessness Prevention Grant. We submitted our response at the end of August which was generally supportive of a move towards simplified, multi-year funding but was critical of certain elements such as the use of Area Cost Adjustments and data such as population, which didn't necessarily reflect housing pressures.
40. **Rough Sleeping Strategy.** The Government published its [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) in September 2022. It included longstanding LGA policy asks, including: better access to mental health, drug and alcohol support; a commitment that no one leaving a public institution will end up on the street; more supported housing and Housing First nationally; and embedding the voices of lived experience into policymaking.
41. **Making the Case for Investing in Homelessness Prevention.** The LGA worked with Local Partnerships, Leeds City Council and Cornwall Council to produce a report, [Making the Case for Investing in Homelessness Prevention](#), that looks at what approaches have worked in homelessness prevention, how much they cost, costs that 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.
42. **Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping.** The Kerslake Commission published a [Progress Report](#) in September 2022. We submitted information on the LGA's progress and the progress of local authorities on its recommendations.
43. **Houses in Multiple Occupancy.** The Government has introduced a Statutory Instrument to temporarily exempt asylum accommodation from Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) licensing requirements. We set out our position through this [briefing](#) to Lords, which was referenced several times and picked up by media outlets. Following this, the Government committed to engage with the LGA and councils to successfully implement any changes.
44. **Media activity.** We issued proactive press releases on: [planning fees](#); [right to buy](#); [temporary accommodation](#); [social rent caps](#); [right to buy](#); [social housing management peer challenge](#).
45. **Leadership Essentials.** The 2022/23 Housing course took place at Warwick Business School from 19th – 20th January 2023. 100% of the 14 participants said that the course had improved their ability to carry out their role.
46. **Housing Advisers Programme.** The 2022/23 programme awarded grants of up to £20,000 to 94 councils across 21 projects. Project areas include homelessness, green homes, housing strategy, housing supply, planning and the private rented sector. An online survey of participants of the programme in 2020/21 and 2021/22 found that:

- 42.1 83% of participants in 2020/21 and 100% of participants in 2021/22 indicated that the HAP had enabled them to make progress towards their key goals,
- 42.2 83% of participants in 2020/21 and 100% of participants in 2021/22 would definitely recommend the programme if asked,
- 42.3 83% of participants in 2020/21 and 100% of participants in 2021/22 felt that HAP has had or will have a positive impact on their capacity to deliver housing, homelessness services provision and/or place making
- 42.4 100% of participants in both cohorts stated that the support they received through HAP has had a positive impact on their ability to meet local housing needs.

Transport

A high quality, well managed, low carbon local road network

- 47. **Dealing with highways obstruction.** Following representation by several member councils, the Board agreed for the LGA to undertake research in support of councils' ability to deal with obstructions on the highway, specifically to align powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) as is the case in London. A [survey](#) was undertaken, and the findings were also shared with DfT officials, ministers and sympathetic partners, such as Sustrans and Living Streets. Further work has been commissioned to highlight the challenges of improving accessibility on our footways to promote the case to Government for further reform.
- 48. **EV charging infrastructure.** Following extensive lobbying by the LGA, the Government committed to a step change in funding and support for local authorities to promote the planning and delivery of local EV charging infrastructure for residents without off-street parking. Subsequently, LGA officers have been involved in shaping the £450 million Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure ([LEVI](#)) fund, helping to ensure that councils have flexibility in how they can use the funding and that expert support is available. The LGA has worked in partnership with OZEV and partners to support member councils in accessing the LEVI fund via a webinar.
- 49. **Highways maintenance.** An independent DfT commissioned study reported that current levels of funding to local authorities will result in a gradual decline in the condition of local roads. The LGA further [highlighted](#) how inflation and spending pressures would risk accelerating the speed of decline; we also highlighted the wide gulf in Government spending on maintenance for local roads [compared to the strategic roads network](#).
- 50. **Freight.** Building on the report on the [future of last-mile freight](#) commissioned by the board last year, officers have been engaged in an advisory role for an ESRC project looking at

developing a framework for local drone deliveries. We have also agreed to advise on another proposed research project look at supporting local decision making to deliver Net Zero last-mile freight.

Transport - A high quality alternative to driving every journey

51. **Buses.** The LGA has continued to push Government to fully commit to its own national bus strategy following the disappointment in the levels and allocation of funding that was made available via Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs). We had written to Transport Committee's inquiry into progress of the national bus strategy and met with the chair of the committee. Many of our concerns were reflected in the final [findings](#).
52. The LGA welcomed the Government's investment in the £2 fares cap and extensions in support for protecting bus services following the pandemic, but continued to call for continued commitment to bus service reform and funding as set out in the national bus strategy, [Bus Back Better](#).
53. **Active Travel.** This year saw the establishment of Active Travel England – an arm's length government body created to meet the vision set out by national Government for half of all journeys in towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030. The LGA sought to strengthen its relationship with ATE and to develop its understanding of local government, inviting their Chief Executive, Danny Williams, to a board meeting to discuss the operational work of the new organisation and how it would work with local authorities and its role as a statutory consultee for large planning applications. The LGA were also invited to input into the National Audit Office's report into Active Travel England. We also [expressed disappointment](#) with the recent £200 million reduction in planned expenditure, calling for the decision to be urgently reversed.
54. **Shared Micromobility.** As part of the LGA's ongoing work to support local transport improvement and in particular decarbonisation, the EEHT Board commissioned a [report](#) exploring shared micromobility in the UK. The report highlighted that the current UK micromobility regulation has not caught up with the speed of development of new types of micromobility vehicles. The UK Government has delayed its plans to introduce a Transport Bill which aimed to provide greater regulatory clarity on new forms of micromobility vehicles including e-scooters and other types of light electric vehicles.
55. **Drones** – Drones and Unmanned aircraft are expected to become a common feature across public and private/ commercial services. The Government are working with industry on this agenda and it is vital that local government is involved in shaping future plans. The LGA is represented on the ministerial [Future of Flight Industry Group](#), which is chaired by the aviation minister, Baroness Vere. The Group's purpose is to support the delivery of a Future of Flight Plan to maximise the benefits of such technologies while ensuring their emergence is safe and secure, and accepted by the public.

Transport - A high quality alternative to making the journey

56. **Supporting councils to manage demand for private car use.** Officers supporting the EEHT Board worked with colleagues in the LGA's improvement arm to shape our [Decarbonising Transport Action Learning Sets programme](#). The programme enabled a small group to tackle similar transport related challenges and meet on a regular basis, with these sessions creating a safe space for relationships to be built, best practice to be shared, and challenges to be overcome. The groups included 10 councillors, split into two groups and 20 officers, split into three groups, from across England; with each session designed to increase the understanding of, introduce examples of, and appreciate the barriers and solutions to decarbonising transport.
57. **Local Transport Plans (LTP)** – LGA officers have taken part in discussions with DfT officials with regards to their planned refresh of LTP guidance. LTP is a statutory transport plan deriving from the Transport Act 2000. The guidance would include a shift in the approach for developing an LTP with a focus on a framework of priority outcomes for local transport; making existing modal plans (buses and cycling/walking plans) a part of a suite of support documents to the LTP. These would include a requirement for an EV charging strategy to be published as a detailed supporting document to the LTP itself; and incorporate decarbonisation into the planning process via Quantifiable Carbon Reduction (QCR) measures. The LGA has said this approach needs to be accompanied by reductions in competitive bidding and consolidation of funding streams with greater local flexibility to meet local priorities.
58. **Car share.** Car sharing and car clubs have the potential to reduce congestion and carbon emissions and other harmful emissions. The LGA published a [good practice report](#) and webinar to support councils who want to promote the concept in their areas.
59. **Road pricing/ future of motoring taxes.** We have used the research undertaken by Mott MacDonalds on behalf of the LGA to [push the Government](#) to make progress on identifying a replacement for the fuel duty and to involve local government when making that decision.
60. **Parking.** We have continued to call for the Government to make progress on pavement parking following its consultation in 2020 and raised this with the local transport minister. At the moment different rules continue to apply outside of London, whereas in the capital there is a default ban on pavement parking.
61. We also supported research being led by the British Parking Association (BPA) and Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London (PATROL) with regards to the current levels of parking and traffic penalty charges and how they are impacting and impeding councils in managing and enforcing their road networks. Outside of London there has been no formal review of parking penalty charges in England and Wales since 2008.

Looking Forward

62. At their meeting on 22 May 2023, Informal Group Leaders asked officers to review the portfolios of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT), Resources, City Regions and People and Places Boards with a view to
- 62.1 Potentially reshaping the portfolios in order to give greater focus to the economy, devolution and climate change/net zero
 - 62.2 Clarifying responsibilities and reducing some duplication
63. A report and recommendations will be brought to the LGA Board on 19 July. The reforms are very likely to have an impact on the relevant Boards' terms of reference and this makes it more challenging to anticipate the work programme from September 2023.
64. However, in considering future work a number of factors will come into play, including the LGA's Business Plan, the Government's policy and legislative agenda and also, where appropriate, continuity with the Board's current work programme.
65. **The LGA's business plan** for 2022 to 2025 was published in October 2022 and it sets out the vision for the organisation to be ***the national voice of local government*** with the purpose to ***promote, improve and support*** local government. The Business Plan sets out four policy and campaigning priorities
- 65.1 A sustainable financial future
 - 65.2 Stronger local economies, thriving local democracy
 - 65.3 Putting people first
 - 65.4 Championing climate change and local environments
66. The Business Plan does not include everything that the LGA does, but elements of the Board's work are prominent, particularly housing supply, housing quality and climate change. These are areas of work that will need to continue.
67. **The Government's legislative agenda** contains a number of Bills that relate directly to the work of the Board; in particular: the Energy Bill; the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill (which has a large section on planning); the Renters Reform Bill; and the Social Housing regulation Bill. The Board has been active in promoting the interests of local government in relation to these Bills. These areas of work will remain important for the Board either because they are still going through the legislative process or because they have received Royal Assent and are being implemented.
68. **The work of the Board:** as can be seen above, the Board has done a considerable amount of work over the last year and has sought to recognise the interconnectedness of its individual themes. On the environment and Net Zero the work explicitly recognises that future growth is dependent on the economy transitioning to a sustainable footing and that

there are substantial short to medium term advantages in gearing up the workforce and businesses to deliver decarbonisation of buildings and transport, and in delivering a localised and devolved energy system.

69. Without the expansion of the Grid and investment to address nutrient pollution and water neutrality, it will be much harder to deliver the homes that our communities need. Housing is one of the key pillars of our economy and building the homes of the right type, the right quality and in the right place will help to contribute directly to growth and address social and financial challenges, such as homelessness and the ever-growing housing benefit bill.
70. Our economy is also dependent on a high quality, well managed, low carbon local road network. However, this must be supported with the provision of high-quality alternatives to driving every journey, including public transport and active travel options and other measures to manage demand on the network.
71. Many of the determinants of growth are place dependant and local authorities are in the best position to understand their area's needs. The Board will draw on the knowledge of LGA members to present the case to Government for policy development and implementation across its themes.
72. A draft outline work programme will be brought to the Board at its first meeting of the new session in September 2023.

Implications for Wales

73. We will continue to work with the Welsh LGA to share good practice and information.

Financial Implications

74. There are no immediate financial implications

Equalities implications

75. The Board seeks to ensure that the equalities implications of policy developments are explored across all its themes of interest. All of the areas of policy that the Board oversees have significant impacts on individuals and communities. [The general equalities impacts were outlined in a paper to the Board in February 2021](#) and each of the Board's reports explore the equalities implications of any specific policy proposals.

Next steps

76. A draft work programme for 2023/24 will be brought to the Board in September and this will reflect any comments made by Members at the Board meeting.

People & Places

Background

1. The country's non-metropolitan areas – towns, rural and coastal places – play a crucial role in the nation's economy and delivering our shared ambition to level up the country. Many of their residents benefit from a high quality of life, the characteristics of which cannot be obtained in the cities and suburbs. However, non-metropolitan areas also have their own often-distinct challenges with their own problematic social and economic consequences.
2. The People and Places Board provides a clear voice and resource for non-metropolitan authorities within the LGA. This year the Board had successes in its leadership of digital connectivity issues, making the case for an evidence-led approach to growth funding, and ensuring local government has a seat at the table on crucial plans for green skills and jobs.
3. It maintained a focus on the importance of 'rural proofing' Government policies to ensure the important contributions of towns, rural and coastal areas to levelling up the economy and social outcomes are maximised. Working with the City Regions Board, it developed its work on devolution and levelling up; the Work Local approach to employment and skills, and better and more joined up policies and funding for local growth. It also worked with other LGA policy boards on cross-cutting issues of rural concern, such as nutrient neutrality and the growth in second homes in rural and coastal areas.

Priorities and Achievements

Levelling up and devolution

4. The Board, with the City Regions Board, continues to drive the national debate about the future of levelling up and devolution. The LGA's [Levelling Up Locally Inquiry report](#) was published in March 2023, looking beyond the Levelling Up White Paper to explore how the Government's agenda might better strengthen local areas. The report was launched by Cllr Kevin Bentley at a hybrid event with over 100 attendees, and speakers included Sarah Longlands from CLES, Professor Francesca Gains from Policy at Manchester and Professor Michael Kenny from the Bennett Institute. The

inquiry's findings will be used to inform the Board's future public affairs work and influence manifestos in the 2023/24 cycle, with a planned Devolution APPG session exploring its recommendations.

5. The Board also approved the creation and co-sponsorship of a health devolution working group with the NHS Confederation and including representatives from People and Places, City Regions and Community Wellbeing as well as the LGA's deputy chief executive. This working group has held its first meeting and provides an opportunity to ensure that learning can be shared between local government, the NHS and Integrated Care Systems (ICSs). Cllr Emily Smith represents the People and Places Board.

Local growth

6. The Board has secured an important commitment from Government following the announcement of the allocation of the second round of the Levelling Up Fund. With the City Regions Board, we ensured [councils' concerns with the process](#) were aired across national media. Dehenna Davison MP has agreed to meet with the Chairs ahead of the third round of the Levelling Up Fund to discuss how the fund could be implemented in a way which would both be cost effective and empower local areas to level up their communities.
7. The People and Places and City Regions Board have long made the case for greater local democratic oversight of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). Government is now pressing ahead with LEP reforms and the Boards are working to support the sector through these changes, commissioning Shared Intelligence to provide support for councils and combined authorities undertaking integration and to share good practice and learning. The final report draws on learning from research between November 2022 and March 2023. It will now be used to inform the Board's response to the Government's information gathering exercise following the Chancellor's announcement in the 2023 budget that he was 'minded to' end funding to LEPs from April 2024.
8. Recognising the renewed interest in place-based public services, the Board, working with City Regions Board, also commissioned Shared Intelligence to capture learning for policymakers in central and local government from eight place-based programmes that have been delivered over the last 20 years. The final report identifies eight key lessons for policymakers to consider. The report has recently been [published](#) on the LGA's website and is being used to inform further work related to the simplification of growth funding.

9. Councils and combined authorities are increasingly recognised for their role in creating the conditions within which local economies and communities can thrive. To contribute to the LGA's thought leadership in this space, the People and Places and City Regions Board have jointly commissioned WPI Economics to explore councils' future role in driving growth and prosperity. This is due for completion in June 2023 and will help inform the LGA's manifesto asks ahead of the next general election.
10. The Government has recognised the People and Places and City Regions Boards' proposals for the role of local government and local leaders in the design of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). In the announcement of the allocations of the fund in April, the Chair [welcomed](#) the fund, and said government should also provide local areas with greater flexibilities and longer term funding that provides the same quantum and longevity that European funding provided. In November, Cllr Bentley [called](#) for the approval of local investment plans, and when they were subsequently approved in December, the LGA [made the case for](#) for further flexibilities. DLUHC subsequently removed some restrictions on in-year spending in January, with a further announcement made in March on the introduction of the flexibility to spend UKSPF on the People & Skills Priority in 2023/24.
11. To support the sector with the opportunities provided by the introduction of a new fund, the Boards commissioned Shared Intelligence to undertake action learning sets to support local authorities with the introduction of UKSPF and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) in early 2023. As there has been significant interest in participating, the LGA has created a wider informal officer network to share learning. The LGA will publish the learning from the action learning sets by the beginning of June and will continue to support continual officer engagement with DLUHC and DEFRA for both UKSPF and REPF.
12. The Board noted the presence of tourist 'hot spots' in some non-metropolitan areas and the resulting pressure on local housing markets from second homes and short term lets. To explore options to address this alongside work undertaken by the EEHT and CTS Boards, the Board is supporting Localis in a project looking at Community Land Trusts.

Employment and Skills

13. Support for the Board's employment and skills devolution proposals '[Work Local: Unlocking talent to level up](#)' continues to grow, and we have engaged

a wide range of parliamentarians and stakeholders on how it could improve services. Over the coming months, we will develop further methods to communicate our proposals to decision makers and stakeholders as well as looking at ways it can be implemented.

14. In January, Cllr Toby Savage gave oral evidence on behalf of the LGA at the Work and Pensions Select Committee's inquiry on the DWP's Plan for Jobs and employment support. Our [written submission](#) was cited widely by committee members. Alongside this we [responded](#) to the [APPG for Youth Employment Committee](#) inquiry into how young peoples' mental health is affecting labour market outcomes. More recently in May 2023, the Boards responded to the APPG for Youth Employment Committee inquiry into [Place-based approaches to youth employment](#). Work is ongoing to influence the outcomes of the [Commission on the Future of Employment Support](#) which is looking at ways in which employment support and services could be more effective.
15. The Board has successfully built more strategic relationships with Government departments including the Departments for Work and Pensions and Education (DWP and DfE) in order to improve policy making at national level and create stronger ties locally. Devolution areas already have a relationship with these departments, so the LGA has proactively sought to develop links with councils not currently in a devolution area. In the last year, working with our local government partners, we have set up an LGA/DWP advisory group for councils to discuss issues related to labour market policy, which last met in June. We have also had positive discussion with DfE to establish a similar grouping.
16. With LEP transition under a year away and an increasing focus on the role of councils in growth, councils' economic development (ED) functions will change. Working with councils, we have developed a guide to economic development teams – their role and skills needs. The report shows how ED services are delivered across England, shares learning across the sector with examples and top tips of what works and sets out the future skills and capacity challenges they face and where they can go for support. It will be published as an online guide on our website.
17. Recognising the increasing prominence of the issue of economic inactivity, the Board, with the City Regions and Community Wellbeing Boards has commissioned work to explore the role of local government in addressing economic inactivity and what factors could be driving this locally. We aim to publish the work in the summer.

18. The People and Places and City Regions Board jointly agreed to examine how the role of councils in supporting equality, diversity, and economic inclusion could be advanced to help unlock talent and level up local areas. The work will conclude in June with a compendium of case studies and economic inclusion principles paper to share learning across councils to guide the advancement of economic inclusion in their communities.

Green Jobs and Skills

19. Delivering on net zero ambitions depends on the right pipeline of training, skills and jobs being in place. The Board has played a leadership role in influencing government policy to enable local government to bring together skill providers, businesses and industry through the Ministerial Green Jobs Delivery Group, successfully securing a time limited Local Capacity and Capability sub group (LCCG). The LCCG comprises representatives from skill providers, business, industry, national and local government, with the sector being represented by the LGA, Solace, ADEPT, Mayoral Combined Authority Network and UK100. It has explored a range of issues including a national definition of green jobs, the strategic mapping of key net zero infrastructure projects, the opportunities and barriers to developing the workforce needed to deliver net zero and local delivery mechanisms. This has been an opportunity to promote the Work Local model. The LCCG will be developing recommendations by July.
20. In tandem with the work of the LCCG, the City Regions and People & Places Boards are developing policy positions on the place-based approach to enable local places to develop the workforce and jobs needed to deliver net zero. This has included utilising the new partnerships the LGA has created through the LCCG. This work will be done to complement the net zero and climate change work of the EEHT Board.

Digital Connectivity

21. Continuing to highlight the importance of improved digital connectivity and addressing the particular challenges experienced by non-metropolitan areas has remained at the forefront of the Board's work programme. The Board's longstanding call for Government to recognise the importance of local authority digital champions was recognised in Government's recently published [UK Wireless Infrastructure Strategy](#). Councillor Mark Hawthorne, the LGA's Digital Connectivity Champion, has been invited to represent the LGA on the newly formed National Connectivity Alliance to discuss the importance of delivering world class connectivity for all. Cllr Hawthorne also

sits on the Digital Connectivity Forum's Digital Infrastructure Working Group representing the LGA's People and Places Board.

22. The Board has continued influence the national debate as it expands its work around digital connectivity and inclusion in the 22/23 cycle. It has supported councils with the digital switchover publishing a [digital switch readiness survey](#) to understand councils' position on awareness, planning and implementation to inform the LGA's support offer to councils and the Board's lobbying position. Our popular [digital switchover hub](#) has been updated in collaboration with key partners and a [communications toolkit](#) has been developed for councils to raise awareness of the switchover locally. Officers continue to meet with DSIT officials on behalf of the Board to raise areas of concern.
23. Members raised their concerns about the impact on councils, residents and businesses of the 2G and 3G switch off. The LGA is developing a survey for councils exploring potential implications for the sector and the results will be used to inform the Board's lobbying position in the 23/24 board cycle.
24. The Board has taken a leadership role promoting councils' role in tackling digital exclusion and commissioned DMS Research and Consulting to produce a report. This has recently been [published](#) with local, trade and [national press coverage](#) and a letter has been written to the Minister highlighting recommendations for Government and inviting a meeting to discuss the findings with the LGA's Digital Champion, Cllr Mark Hawthorne. The Chief Executive of Good Things Foundation, Helen Milner, has written a [think piece](#) in support of the report's recommendations.

Draft priorities for 2023/24

25. The Board will look to build on its successes as it plans for the 2023/24 board cycle. Areas of focus are likely to include:
 - 25.1. Making the case for investment in rural areas ahead of the upcoming general election.
 - 25.2. Rural-proofing emerging government policy including on connectivity and transport.
 - 25.3. Influencing national policy on levelling up and devolution, including a focus on non-metropolitan areas and widening the scope of powers available.
 - 25.4. Embedding our Work Local proposals into national policy, including specific policy proposals to support green jobs and net zero, including opportunities for roles in food, farming, forestry and nature restoration; and exploring attainment disparities in rural and non-metropolitan areas.
 - 25.5. Streamlining local growth funding and implementing the learning from existing funding programmes.

- 25.6. Supporting councils with the transitions of LEPs to local government and removing barriers to councils' abilities to support local inclusive growth.
- 25.7. Aligning digital infrastructure and digital inclusion policy through joined-up national policy development and support for local leadership.

Next steps

- 26. Officers to take forward actions as appropriate to draft a work programme for the board.

Resources

Background

1. The LGA's Resources Board shapes and develops the Association's policies and programmes in relation to Local Government Finance; Support for Low Income Households; Workforce and Pension issues.
2. Members are asked to consider the achievements of the Board over the last year against the priorities that were set at its meeting September 2022 and consider possible areas of work for 2023/24.

Achievements against priorities for 2022/23: Local Government Finance

Council Funding

3. We continued to lobby on the impacts of high levels of inflation on councils in the run up to the [2022 Autumn statement](#). LGA's lobbying included [a submission](#), [letter to the Chancellor](#), and [media](#) and parliamentary activity. We also published a series of explainers on [cost pressures](#), [reserves](#), and how [council funding is spent](#). The 2022 Autumn Budget contained several wins for local government as outlined in our [on-the-day briefing](#). Notable amongst these was a substantial increase in adult social care funding, and a higher than anticipated social rent cap.
4. The outcome of the Autumn Statement fed through into the Local Government Finance Settlement. The final settlement included an above inflation increase in Core Spending Power of 9.4%, the largest increase in spending power since the creation of this metric in 2011/12. We [welcomed](#) this but recognised it fell short of addressing the sector's underlying problems.
5. The LGA has long argued that councils need greater certainty on future funding. In recognition of this, prior to the provisional settlement the Government published a [local government finance policy statement](#) settlement which provided information on the 2023/24 settlement and provided certainty on a number of key elements of Core Spending Power for 2024/25. The LGA continues to push for certainty on other elements of the 2024/25 settlement including the New Homes Bonus.
6. The LGA hosted a successful [annual conference on local government finance](#) on 10 January. The sold-out in-person event, chaired by the Chair of Resource Board, was attended by senior politicians and officers and received positive feedback from delegates.

7. The Chairman and Group Leaders [wrote](#) to the Chancellor ahead of the [2023 Spring Budget](#). Given the substantial new funding provided in the Settlement it was not surprising that the Budget did not include any additional core funding for councils. However, as set out in our [on the day briefing](#), there were other finance wins on borrowing and business rates. There was also evidence in the Budget of the Government's growing recognition of the need for further financial certainty and devolution. This included the announcement of single, multi-year settlements for two combined authorities, and a commitment to expand the local retention of business rates to more areas in the next Parliament and to work closely with interested councils to achieve this.
8. The LGA [published its cost pressures work in June](#), and lobbying on this will continue in 2023/24 considering the continued high inflation environment and continuing pressures facing councils.

Local Taxation

9. Following a consultation in 2022, the government introduced the [Non-Domestic Rating Bill](#) on 29 March. This contains numerous provisions the LGA has called for, including more frequent revaluations and improved information sharing between councils and the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). The LGA issued a [briefing](#) ahead of the Bill's Second Reading in the House of Commons on 24 April and its [Second Reading in the House of Lords](#) on 19 June..
10. The [business rate revaluation](#) went ahead from 1 April 2023, with a transitional relief scheme funded by the Government. This was welcome as something in LGA had called for in its [consultation response](#).
11. The LGA responded to a number of consultations into ongoing elements of local taxation, including on [disclosure of business rate valuations](#), [digitalising business rates](#), and [council tax valuation of houses in multiple occupation](#) (HMOs).
12. The Government promised at the 2023 Spring Budget to consult on measures to reduce business rates avoidance and evasion, which is something the LGA has long pushed for. This consultation is expected shortly.

Capital and Audit

13. The LGA has continued discussions with DLUHC and CIPFA and has responded to consultations on changes to capital framework, including:
 - 13.1. [Response to Future of the IFRS 9 statutory override: mitigating the impact of fair value movements of pooled investment funds](#). This resulted in an extension of the statutory override until 2025.

14. Local audit is a complex area. The continuing crisis in local audit is creating problems for councils and finding solutions to address audit delays remains a priority. There has been some progress – for example with a temporary solution being put in place to the problems of accounting for infrastructure assets, and the appointment of the Director of Local Audit at the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) as system leader. In April, following a proposal from the LGA, two roundtables took place hosted by the Local Government Minister. These discussed long-term solutions to the problems with local audit. There was broad agreement amongst attendees on the urgent need to address the audit backlog and following this the Director of Local Audit at the FRC has been working with stakeholders across the local audit system to develop proposals to address the current crisis in local audit, and particularly to address the current backlog.
15. The LGA has responded to numerous consultations around audit and accounts over the year, including:
- 15.1. [Response to Public Audit Forum consultation on Practice Note 10 2022](#)
 - 15.2. [Response to PSAA consultation on audit scale fees for 2022/23](#)
 - 15.3. [Response to DLUHC consultation on statutory override for infrastructure assets accounting](#)
 - 15.4. [Response to DLUHC request for views on deadline draft unaudited accounts](#)
 - 15.5. [Response to HM Treasury review of non-investment asset valuations](#)
 - 15.6. [Response to CIPFA Survey – “Impact of the Move to Improve the Reporting of Infrastructure Assets including a \(possible\) move to a Depreciated Replacement Cost Measurement Basis.](#)
16. The LGA has also provided written evidence to the [PAC inquiry on Timeliness of Local Auditor reporting on Local Government in England](#) and the [Levelling Up and Housing Committee enquiry into Financial Reporting and Audit in Local Authorities](#), as well as providing oral evidence to the latter enquiry.

Pensions

17. We have continued to support councils in their role as LGPS administering authorities, including in relation to new statutory requirements on climate change risk and reporting. Legislation expected in 2022/23 to implement these requirements in the LGPS was not forthcoming from DLUHC, and we continue to work with them to ensure their proposals are workable.
18. We have continued to work with CIPFA and regulatory bodies as well as actuarial and audit firms to support councils in their role as LGPS administering authorities to find

ways to ease delays signing off full council accounts which impact on and delay the publication of otherwise finalised pension fund accounts.

Local Government Finance Priorities for 2023/24

Council Funding

19. Continue to work on modelling service cost pressures and press for funding that reflects current and future demand, particularly for housing, homelessness, adult social care and children's services, lobbying Government to provide sustainable funding to meet these needs.
20. Work with local and Central Government on a system of local government funding that supports long-term planning, and is evidence-based, simpler, with fewer pots and less bid-based funding and more transparent with appropriate transition mechanisms.

Local Taxation

21. Press for freedoms that lead to greater local financial autonomy with a view to achieving local control over both council tax and business rates.
22. Lobby for improvements to business rates to help tackle business rates avoidance and develop proposals to improve the system, including valuation and the appeals process.
23. Consider potential work on new local taxes, reform of existing local taxes and control over fees and changes to fully recover cost.

Capital and Audit

24. Further develop policy on capital financing and investing and contribute to national reviews in these areas so that they support and enable prudent investment and financial management.
25. Contribute to reviews of the accounting and financial regulatory framework for councils to ensure it is appropriate, not over restrictive and balanced with local freedom and accountability.
26. Continue to work with central and local government to support councils and to urgently address the current crisis in local audit, and in the longer-term work on simplifying local audit processes, including improving and developing an audit framework appropriate for the sector.

Pensions

27. We will work to ensure that the Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill (also known as the Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions Bill), now introduced, will not interfere with the ability of administering authorities to make appropriate investment decisions in relation to their pension fund.
28. We will continue to work with DLUHC to try to implement separation of pension fund accounts from full council accounts. This would help to ease delays to the publication of otherwise finalised pension fund accounts.
29. We will also continue discussions with CIPFA, other regulatory bodies, scheme actuaries and auditors to ensure the audit process operates as smoothly as possible, acknowledging current systemic issues.

Achievements against priorities for 2022/23: Workforce

Collective Bargaining Issues

30. Pay negotiations for the local government workforces concluded in November 2022 when UNISON and GMB accepted the National Employers' pay offer of an increase of £1,925 on all NJC pay points, an increase of 4.04 per cent on all allowances (both effective from 1 April 2022), an increase of one day to all employees' annual leave entitlement and deletion of pay point 1 from the NJC pay spine (both effective from 1 April 2023).
31. Agreement was reached on 10 November 2022, backdated to 1 April 2022, for an increase of £1,925 on basic salary and 4.04 per cent on allowances for all local authority ('Red Book') Craftworkers.
32. Final offers made by the National Employers for a £1,925 increase on basic salary for both Chief Executives and Chief Officers, backdated to 1 April 2022, were accepted in November 2022.
33. Agreement was reached to deliver an increase for Youth and Community Workers of £1,925 on basic salary and 4.04 per cent on allowances (both with effect from 1 September 2022).
34. Agreement was reached within the Joint Negotiating Committee for Coroners that with effect from 1 April 2022, local salaries and day rates for individuals derived from the JNC arrangements will be increased by 1.56 per cent.
35. Agreement was reached within the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services on a two-year pay deal covering uniformed employees from firefighter to middle managers. The agreement, which provided a 7 per cent increase backdated to July 2022 and a 5

per cent increase with effect from July 2023, also ensured that strike action would not take place.

36. In Schools, DfE published its response to the STRB's 32nd Report including a 5 per cent increase for most teachers and leaders, with bigger increases for early career teachers (max 8.9 per cent outside London), which supports the government commitment to reaching a starting salary of £30k. the dispute over the 2022 award is ongoing. Despite the Government entering into negotiations with the unions outside of the established independent pay review process, their offer of an additional fully funded one off payment of £1000 (pro rata for part time teachers) for 2022, alongside an average pay increase of 4.5 per cent for teachers for 2023/24 including other non-pay elements was rejected by the unions. Industrial action followed. Discussions on teachers' pay for 2023-24 now continue through the independent pay review process (School Teachers' Review Body – STRB).
37. The National Employers on the Soulbury Committee remain in dispute with the Trade Unions on pay for 2022. A final offer of £1,925 was made in November 2022. The Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) has decided to progress to a formal ballot for industrial action. The other unions (NEU and Prospect) on the Officers' Side will decide their next steps in furtherance of this dispute. The National Employers remain in engagement and discussion with the Trade Unions to seek a resolution.
38. Pay negotiation activity in local government bargaining groups started early in 2023. The National Employers made a full and final one-year (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024) pay offer to the unions representing local government services 'Green Book' employees (UNISON, GMB and UNITE) on 23 February 2023, as follows:
- *With effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of £1,925 (pro rata for part-time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive*
 - *With effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of 3.88 per cent on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer (in accordance with Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4)*
 - *With effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of 3.88 per cent on all allowances (as listed in the 2022 NJC pay agreement circular dated 1 November 2022)*
39. The national committees of all three unions rejected the employers' final offer. All three unions are in the process of balloting for industrial action.
40. The National Employers also made full and final one-year (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024) offers to the trade unions representing local authority chief officers and local authority chief executives. Both offers were for a 3.5 per cent increase on basic salary. The offer to chief officers was accepted on 5 May 2023, however, the staff side for chief

executives responded to the National Employers in June 2023, describing the offer as 'not acceptable' and indicated that they '*will not accept any pay offer for April 2023 until the outcome for NJC staff is known*'.

41. We submitted written and oral evidence to the Low Pay Commission as part of both their 2023 and 2024 consultation processes on the level of the National Living Wage.

Workforce Improvement Support

42. We have provided targeted workforce transformation support and advice to councils, including specialist HR and employment law advice, mediation and investigation support as carried out as part of the Joint Negotiating Committee procedure.
43. We have also provided key workforce information, including FAQs, guides, and workforce bulletins delivering guidance and information. Learning and resources have also been developed and provided to support furthering equality, diversity and inclusion objectives and the application of equalities duties among councils through an expanded EDI hub, including case studies and guidance publications as well as action learning sets for councils around the co-design of policies and services.

Apprenticeships Programme

44. Our apprenticeships programme continued to provide councils with a support offer that was a mixture of encouragement, guidance and practical support designed to help councils increase their apprenticeship numbers and maximise their levy investment.
45. Across our apprenticeships programme in 2022-23, we have:
- 45.1. Conducted our annual Apprenticeship Survey of the sector. A record 172 councils took part and will, for the first time, receive individual reports during June providing them with benchmarking and comparative data.
 - 45.2. Conducted a separate Health and Wellbeing Survey of apprentices in our sector, attracting 3,229 responses from apprentices in councils across England.
 - 45.3. Delivered Apprenticeship MOT Health checks to councils and held online expert surgeries on request.
 - 45.4. Supported our apprenticeship network of practitioners across local government by issuing monthly apprenticeship newsletters and additional ad hoc updates on key issues.
 - 45.5. Held 8 webinars and one virtual online forum for councils on key topics of interest, reaching officers from 132 councils.
 - 45.6. Developed new tools for the sector, including the Apprenticeship A-Zs and Pathways for several key skills shortage areas like social work, digital and accountancy / finance.

45.7. Revised and updated our Apprenticeships Maturity Model.

45.8. Delivered the 2023 Apprentice of the Year event with partners East of England LGA and South West Councils.

45.9. Directly led or supported policy colleagues and elected members in meetings with the Apprenticeships and Skills Minister, Officials at DfE, HMT, DLUHC and the Institute for Apprenticeships to highlight challenges, fix problems and discuss our proposals for reform of the Apprenticeship Levy.

Combined Authorities' HR Network

46. We supported Combined Authorities with an HR leads network, improving capacity and capability of Combined Authorities to deliver on their devolution deal objectives. A special report on hybrid working in the pandemic recovery phase has been commissioned for the group, with a particular emphasis on equalities issues and value for money.

Wellbeing, Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

47. LGA workforce have run a series of EDI round tables this year, bringing together practitioners in interactive workshops to do deeper dives into the [Diverse by Design](#) steps. Topics have included supporting inclusive leadership, encouraging diversity in recruitment, financial wellbeing, engaging staff in workforce equalities, how to talk about equality, measuring wellbeing and mental health after COVID-19.

48. We have worked with Solace leads to gather data on ethnic diversity at senior levels in local authorities and to develop a plan of joint work (including other relevant national partners and LGA colleagues) to support greater diversity.

49. We have worked with councils and partner organisations to continue to produce EDI and wellbeing focussed blogs and case studies, for example the London Borough of Camden sharing their anti-racist work as part of Black History Month.

Social Work Health Check

50. We completed our annual Social Work Health Check report on the national Standards for Employers of Social Workers, which supports councils with the effective delivery of social work. In total we received over 16,000 responses from 140 organisations and is now available [online](#). It compared the standards with the previous year's survey (2021) and summarised some key findings that have emerged from the responses.

Employment Law Advice

51. We continued to provide individual support to councils on a wide range of subjects dealing with all aspects of workforce transformation and improvement, including

employment law support on contractual issues, advising on redundancy and reorganisations, hybrid working implications and workforce planning.

52. Our popular annual employment law conference took place on 25 April with over 200 delegates attending to hear the latest news on case law, legislation, local government pay and HR policy for local government.
53. Our employment law team have updated our [information](#) around industrial action ballots, FAQs, notice periods, and picketing. We have continued to provide specific updates on key employment law and case matters, including further updates regarding the BRAZEL consultation, a range of on-line webinars on employment law, support to councils going through LGR with advice on TUPE, various legal/policy advice direct to councils and specialist support to schools through our education employment law online events working with regional employers.

Supporting Early Careers

54. LGA Workforce Team provides a programme to help councils promote local government as a career destination. The work includes a 2-year project to provide support to councils to work with their local T level provider to provide **T level industry placements** to 16-19 years-olds. Launched in December 2021 we have supported over 50 councils to be early adopters and providers of T Level industry placements. The programme is supported by a joint partnership between Gatsby Charitable Foundation, Department of Education and the LGA.
55. The LGA is working in partnership with Youth Employment UK and provided careers information to promote the sector to schools and young people under 19. This includes virtual work experience and on-line materials. A beta site is currently in development.
56. Through our **Early Careers** work we have created information to support both councils and young people in understanding the landscape of [early careers routes into local government](#). The [early careers toolkit](#) includes guidance and resources to help engage with providers and young people.

Workforce Planning

57. The LGA provides support to councils to improve how they undertake workforce planning. We run a practitioners' network of over 100 workforce planners sharing approaches and using the LGA's workforce planning guidance and model. The programme delivers online workshops as well as direct support to councils.
58. In 2022-23 the LGA provided support to Adult Social Care teams in 9 councils helping them to better understand their workforce data so they could plan and take the most appropriate actions to address short- and long-term needs. The LGA is currently

supporting a workforce planning pilot project across Essex to address acute town planning skill shortages.

Workforce Intelligence (workforce data and surveys)

59. The LGA Workforce Team continues to collect crucial workforce data from across councils in England to help inform policy and practice to enable effective representation of the sector back to central government.

The LGA published the latest Local Government Workforce Survey in January 2023. The report provides information on key elements of the workforce within local authorities in England and demonstrates the challenge across the workforce.

Pensions

60. We have continued to support councils with the implementation of the McCloud age discrimination remedy into public service pension schemes. This has involved publishing guidance as well as liaising with DLUHC on their regulatory proposals to ensure they are workable and deliverable for councils.
61. We have continued to provide specialist support, advice and training to councils to administering the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Workforce Priorities for 2023/24

Local government workforce capacity

62. We have analysed data from across the sector to better understand the scale and nature of the significant recruitment and retention challenges which are increasingly impacting local government. We continue to provide targeted support to councils to help with their workforce planning, disseminating good recruitment and retention practice through engagement with regional networks. We are additionally working with relevant bodies to develop and implement plans to address capacity challenges in councils' most affected service areas.

Workforce Research and Data

63. Workforce research and data projects, including quantitative and qualitative data on council use of agency staff, pay, capacity and HR indicators to inform wider understanding and responses to capacity issues. The LGA will work with regional employers to maximise the usefulness of this data.
64. Additional intelligence on workforce challenges, including draft metrics, will be shared with DLUHC by the end of March 2024.

Apprenticeship Support

65. Apprenticeship support to help councils respond to the capacity challenges by supporting councils to recruit school leavers and career changers enter the sector. This includes delivering a sector-wide Apprenticeship Health Check survey and providing individual reports to all participating councils to assess where each council is based on the Apprenticeship Improvement Tool (Maturity Model) by the end of March 2024.
66. We will also deliver at least 9 Apprenticeship Pathway support events by the end of March 2024.

Skills Shortages

67. This programme of work is targeted at skill shortage areas and provides additional capacity to help local authorities to work together in their place. This support brings local authorities together to work collaboratively rather than on an individual basis and assists councils with workforce planning. This work will deliver support to councils to establish skills initiatives such as skills hubs or skills academies, produce Skills Pathway plans and join up existing solutions.
68. Through this work we will support at least 45 local authorities across all regions to develop approaches to skill shortages. This will include creating five pilot areas (working with at least 6 councils per area) to help these authorities develop Skill Pathway plans with solutions identified and the majority started by the end of March 2024.

Targeted Workforce and Transformation Support

69. Provision of targeted workforce support, including transformation support to local authorities to address workforce challenges, based on individual need.
70. Targeted workforce support or advice provided to at least 40 councils, including support for councils with the most significant challenges – by end of March 2024

HR and Employment Law Support

71. Provision of HR and employment law support, including bespoke advice and updates and guidance shared through Employment Law Advisory Bulletins and Workforce Bulletins. This offer will also deliver support and facilitation of a HR network for Combined Authorities (CA), providing opportunities to share learning and good practice relating to capacity and other workforce challenges. Updates and guidance will be shared through 11 Employment Law Advisory Bulletins and 12 Workforce Bulletins by the end of March 2024
72. 6 Combined Authority network meetings will also be held with HR professionals, informing a thematic report for DLUHC by the end of March 2024

National Collective Bargaining

73. The pay and terms and conditions negotiations support offer provides successful leadership of national collective bargaining arrangements for all bargaining units relating to councils. This role involves provision of tools and resources to support effective industrial relations and pay benchmarking support to councils, delivered through the LGA's secretariat and officer function for National Employers.
74. This offer will also provide data to support the possible redesign of the local government pay spine, including the number of people at each point of the spine and types of roles at different points.

Pensions

75. We will continue to support councils with the implementation of the McCloud age discrimination remedy into public service pension schemes, as remedy becomes legally effective from 1 October 2023.
76. We will continue to engage with HM Treasury and DLUHC to ensure that any return of exit cap legislation provides the appropriate flexibility for employers in workforce reorganisations.

Achievements against priorities for 2022/23: Support for low-income households

77. Support collaboration across the LGA, Government, councils and the wider sector to help councils to deliver fair, efficient and effective support for households affected by the significant rise in the cost of living
78. The impact of the rising cost of living on local communities, and the support that councils provide to households, has been a significant priority for the sector throughout the year. Resources Board members identified the need to integrate their work – primarily focused on the welfare system and financial inclusion – with relevant work from other Boards. They also highlighted the need for colleagues across the LGA to take an integrated approach, and to support councils – and press Government – to do the same.
79. We set up a cross-cutting member advisory group, which has an informal role in joining up work across the Boards. We have also developed a comprehensive [Cost of Living Hub](#) that includes a wide range of up-to-date examples and case studies from across the sector. We have developed a sector-wide network, a monthly bulletin and monthly webinars, which are regularly attended by around 300 participants. This enables us to promote excellent real-time learning and information sharing across councils, and has also proved invaluable in informing government policy development and contributed to a wide range of research and policy proposals.
80. We regularly engage with a wide range of stakeholders, for example in the advice and financial services sectors. This has supported good, efficient working relationships and a

better understanding between councils and the voluntary and community sector, for example on how to improve referrals to local financial support and advice. It has also enabled us to present a consistent view to Government when our views / objectives are aligned, for example on the benefits of taking a 'cash first' approach to local welfare provision or recognising the links between financial security and health.

81. The LGA helped to secure a further £1bn for Household Support Fund (HSF), for the full year 2023 – 2024, in the November 2022 Autumn Statement. This followed consistent, well-evidenced engagement from the LGA with DWP officers and ministers, as well as with a wide range of councils and partners. In April 2023 the DWP also implemented the LGA's recommended improvements to the HSF guidance. We continue to work closely with the department and the sector as we make the case for local welfare funding to be put on a sustainable footing, and for the emphasis to be shifted over time from crisis to prevention.
82. We continue to maintain and update our [financial hardship and economic vulnerability](#) report on LGInform. This resource brings together a wide range of relevant data to support councils in understanding the pressures on households in their area, and to help them to effectively target support.
83. We work closely with the DWP and councils on the day-to-day design and delivery of the benefits system, as well as policy decisions that impact on councils' revenues and benefits services, advice provision and wider support for low-income households. This includes ongoing work on Supported and Temporary accommodation and local discretionary support. We are currently working with the department to ensure that councils are appropriately supported to meet the requirements of the data-sharing MoU – which is intended to enable councils to use DWP data to support local services such as targeted financial support, advice and homelessness prevention, but which also places a number of additional requirements on councils which will take time and support to address.
84. We have commissioned Trueman Change to work with us to build a pilot 'debt maturity model' to enable councils to benchmark and identify areas for development, collaboration and improvement, with a particular emphasis on supporting households impacted by the pandemic and the rising cost of living

Support for low income households priorities for 2023/24

85. We hosted a successful workshop session at last year's annual conference on engaging people with lived experience of poverty to inform council decision-making and service design. We have also developed case studies and shared learning from councils who have used the approach to inform their cost of living (or similar) strategies locally. There is increasing interest in the sector in how to 'design out' poverty, as for example seen in recent research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and New Local, who worked with a range of councils and stakeholders – including the LGA – to explore how councils

engage and integrate with their local communities to address severe hardship. This has also emphasised the importance of linking the LGA's work on community engagement and local democracy with our work on the cost of living. We will build on this in the coming year and – taking our lead from councils – continue to share learning across the sector as local approaches develop.

86. Ensure councils can collaborate effectively and share views with the Department for Work and Pensions on the continued implementation of Universal Credit, in particular the move of housing benefit claimants via 'Move to UC', which will begin piloting with councils this year.
87. We will work with Trueman Change, councils and partners including the Money and Pensions Service, debt advice charities, government departments and the Enforcement Conduct Board to deliver a pilot Debt Maturity Model by March 2024. We will then aim to secure funding from partners to deliver a sustainable online tool that can be used by the sector to continue to benchmark and strengthen local approaches as we work towards wider integration of debt recovery and support across the public, private and voluntary sectors, and improve outcomes for low-income households.
88. We will continue to press for local welfare funding – currently delivered in the form of Household Support Fund and Discretionary Housing Payment – to be put on a permanent, sustainable footing with a greater emphasis on preventative services and the promotion of households' financial resilience. This will sit alongside work to strengthen the role of councils in promoting financial inclusion, for example through partnerships with the financial services sector, utilities companies and advice providers.
89. We will continue to work closely with councils, partners and the Money and Pensions Service on the development of the revised UK Strategy for Financial Wellbeing, which is currently due to be published in 2024. This will also include work on local debt advice commissioning.

Implications for Wales

90. We will continue to work with the Welsh LGA to share good practice and information.

Financial Implications

91. There are no immediate financial implications

Equalities implications

92. There are equalities issues arising from the policies and work presented in this paper. These are considered in more detail in the separate papers to Resources Board.

Next steps

93. A draft work programme for 2023/24 will be brought to Board in September and this will reflect any comments made by Members at the Board meeting.

Safer and Stronger Communities

Background

1. At its meeting in September the Board considered its priorities for 2022/23 and agreed five overarching themes:
 - 1.1 Community safety
 - 1.2 Prevent, counter extremism and cohesion
 - 1.3 Regulatory services and licensing
 - 1.4 Blue light services and civil resilience
 - 1.5 Crematoria, funerals, coroners and registrars.
2. The Board has also covered issues relating to the voluntary and community sector and specific aspects of building safety.
3. This paper provides an overview of the achievements delivered against these themes and seeks an initial steer from the Board on its priorities for 2023/24.
4. Feedback from members on their priorities for next year will subsequently be developed into a full paper for consideration at the first meeting of the 2023/24 Board cycle in September.

Summary of key issues and work

Community safety

5. We have [published our updated council guide on modern slavery](#) (replacing the original version from 2018), [supported by a maturity matrix](#) designed to assist councils in developing their work on this issue. The guide builds on the experience of councils in developing their work on this issue in recent years and is split into targeted sections for officers working in different council services including children's services, adult social care, housing, community and regulatory services and procurement.
6. We have also established a Council Modern Slavery Network. The network is an informal meeting of council officers leading on anti-slavery work to share good

practice and discuss any issues. Additionally, we provided written evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee's inquiry on human trafficking.

7. However, anticipated work around an expected Modern Slavery Bill and new modern slavery strategy have not advanced as neither have been forthcoming. Officers have maintained discussions with officials in the Home Office's modern slavery unit, and have also tracked the implementation of changes introduced by the Nationality and Borders Act, as well as those proposed by the Illegal Migration Bill, although the LGA has not actively lobbied on these in line with our usual approach to dealing with asylum and migration issues.
8. The team has undertaken extensive reactive and proactive work responding to various legislative developments and government initiatives on a range of different community safety issues.
9. On domestic abuse, we continued to support councils with the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act by hosting workshops bringing lead officers together, including with government lead officers, as well as public webinars showcasing best practice and speakers from different organisations in the domestic abuse sector. Councillor champions and officers have attended the Ministerial National Expert Steering Group overseeing the implementation of the Act, seeking to counter negative briefings from some sector organisations and highlighting the best practice work of councils, and officers hosted a stand at the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's conference in March.
10. Our lobbying work helped secure ongoing grant funding to support implementation of the Act, and we worked closely with the Government and LGA research leads to improve the proposed data monitoring approach to the Act to reduce burdens on councils.
11. We are now undertaking similar work in relation to the new serious violence duty, which came into effect in January. We have used our experience of what has worked well, and less well, for councils in the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act to seek to influence the approach to and guidance on the new duty. LGA officers have taken part in the national oversight board for the duty, contributed to the development of the statutory guidance and helped shape the support offer for the implementation of the duty. We spoke at the launch of the duty and have established a network of lead officers to share what is working well and any common challenges up and down the country, in order to feed this into the Home Office.

12. We have similarly sought to influence the planned Victims and Prisoner's Bill duty for councils and local partners to collaborate on commissioning support services for victims. We gave evidence to the Justice Committee at pre-legislative scrutiny stage on our recommendations to the Bill, and have met regularly with Ministry of Justice officials and others to share experience of other similar duties and insight into what will work and what will be challenging at local level. We hosted a joint workshop with the APCC and NHS England to discuss how the duty will work in practice and are providing input to the development of statutory guidance on the new duty; we are also exploring the scope for collective guidance from the APCC, NHSE and LGA on the implementation of the new duty and effective local commissioning arrangements.
13. We have maintained regular engagement with the Home Office's CSP review team while the review was delayed and reshaped, providing a full response to the consultation in May 2023. We undertook extensive work in the early months of 2023 as the Government developed its new ASB action plan, and are now working with DLUHC and Home Office officials to support various strands of the implementation plan as they relate to councils. We are also discussing with the Home Office their strand of work to develop a new serious and organised crime strategy. LGA officers attend the steering group on SOC, and have linked the Home Office up with council leads who can contribute to updating local SOC profiles. We will also support the development of updated guidance on tackling SOC for local partnerships.
14. On water safety, we have continued to support and promote world drowning prevention day. LGA officers and the LGA's Coastal Special Interest Group have also taken part in a Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) Recommendations meeting to support an inquiry into the deaths of three vulnerable people while taking part in charity-delivered waterborne activities. We are providing ongoing support to the inquiry.

Prevent, counter-extremism and cohesion

15. We have continued to raise concerns with Government about the impact of extremism on communities and the challenges this presents for councils, and of the need to retain national investment in measures to build resilience and tackle division and polarisation.

16. The long-awaited Independent Review of Prevent, and Government response, were published in February, which included a series of recommendations for the future of the strategy, themed around the refocusing of Prevent on the counter-terrorism space; reaffirming ideology as a driver for terrorism; resetting thresholds to ensure consistency across Prevent workstreams, commensurate to the national threat picture; and further rolling out of a regional model of delivery. We wrote to the Minister of State for Security setting out some concerns raised by councils in response.
17. In May, the Government published the draft Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill (also known as Martyn's Law), which proposes introducing a new duty for those responsible for certain public premises or events to take protective security measures to mitigate against terrorist attacks. We submitted written and oral evidence regarding the Bill to the Home Affairs Select Committee in June.
18. We have again provided significant support to councils to respond to ongoing extremism and cohesion issues through our work with the [Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism](#) (SIGCE), which the LGA has again supported both financially and operationally, and continues to receive excellent feedback from councils.
19. The SIGCE's work programme over the last year has included seven virtual roundtables for practitioners attracting up to 150 attendees per session, on: conspiracy theories; responding to extremist protests; building resilience to demographic change; mixed, unclear and unstable ideology in Prevent Channel cases; toxic masculinity and misogyny; the Independent Review of Prevent, and defining and tackling Islamist extremism. Each session has included a write up and resource pack which are posted on the online Knowledge Hub (KHub), whose membership has expanded over the last year to provide support to practitioners from over 120 councils and partner organisations.
20. The SIGCE has also delivered two interactive workshops featuring tabletop exercises based on a fictional scenario of anti-minority campaigns, and commissioning video resources for use at the sessions to help exemplify the scenarios and associated challenges. These sessions informed a toolkit on responding to anti-minority campaigns, which has been published on the SIGCE KHub.
21. Bespoke support on extremism and cohesion issues has also been provided for over ten councils across the year facing significant specific issues, including anti-asylum seeker campaigns; responding to criminal justice outcomes; intra-community tensions; and RSE curriculum related tensions. Work has also

included facilitating networks across councils to share learning amongst each other on specific issues.

22. A further five meetings of the Forum for tackling anti-asylum seeker activism, and a virtual conference, have also been held across the year as cohesion and extremism concerns related to asylum-seeker accommodation sites have grown, to share expertise and approaches in this field. The Forum has grown to over 100 councils, and has been supported by a dedicated KHub site, whose membership has expanded significant across the year.
23. We have produced a series of case studies on tackling extremism and hate crime, alongside an evaluation of our community dialogue pilot, which should help inform future plans.
24. We have retained our involvement in two LGA/Home Office regional elected member networks in the North East and Yorkshire and Humber regions, and in February launched a new network in the East Midlands, to explore Prevent and counter extremism related issues, how they affect councils and the role of elected members in responding to them.
25. In the autumn we organised two roundtables as part of the Government's CONTEST strategy review and over the year we have instigated and subsequently fed into a number of cross-departmental Government working groups including on the Census release, on community tensions related to housing asylum seekers, and on tackling religious hatred.
26. Over the year we have supported the LGA's wider work on the Online Safety Bill, Levelling Up Bill, and asylum. The latter included responding to a call for evidence from the Commission on Integration of Refugees in March this year and feeding back sector views to Dame Sara Khan's review on social cohesion.
27. We will also deliver sessions at the LGA Annual conference session this summer, on asylum, Martyn's Law and the wider security landscape.

Regulatory services and licensing

28. On alcohol licensing, following sustained LGA lobbying the Home Office has launched a survey to understand the costs to councils of administering the Licensing Act 2003. We are aware that many councils incur a significant fee deficit in administering the Act, so we are pleased the Home Office has taken this action. We supported the Home Office in developing the survey and have

promoted it to our members and will continue to assist the Home Office with this work once the survey is complete.

29. We have also responded to several Government consultations related to the Licensing Act, on topics including spiking, the late-night levy and regulatory easements.
30. Additionally, we have updated our Licensing Act councillor handbook to encourage councils to consider the importance of counter terror/ first aid in the licensing process and have produced a case study which highlights how Manchester Council has embedded the principles of Martyn's Law into their licensing process.
31. In May, the Government published the Gambling Act Review and officers will respond to the relevant consultations as required. We are pleased that the Government has listened to a number of our lobbying priorities, such as introducing cumulative impact assessments and a mandatory levy on gambling operators to fund research, education and treatment. We are also finalising our comprehensive update to the LGA's [guidance on taking a whole council approach to tackling gambling related harms](#).
32. We also submitted written evidence to the Culture, Media and Sport select committee's inquiry into gambling regulation. Additionally, the LGA and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) hosted a roundtable on tackling gambling harms in early February. The meeting consisted of PCCs, the National Police Chiefs Council, councillors and council officers from public health and licensing. It sought to identify good practice and collaborative working between councils and PCCs on gambling harm.
33. On taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) licensing, we have supported the Department for Transport as it commenced the information sharing provisions in the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act. We are pleased the Government chose the LGA's National Register of Licence Revocations, Refusals and Suspensions (NR3S) database for this work. We have co-badged guidance to support councils to implement their new duties under the Act.
34. We have also responded to the Welsh Government's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle White Paper, and we are continuing to engage with the DfT on the

proposals contained within the Levelling Up White Paper around transferring control of taxi/PHV licensing to combined/ upper tier authorities.

35. On pavement licensing, the LGA has worked closely with officials at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to ensure the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (which makes provision for a permanent pavement licence regime) includes measures which increase the licence fee cap, have a longer consultation and determination period, and strengthen enforcement powers for licensing authorities. We have engaged with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill as it has progressed through its parliamentary stages. We have supported an amendment to the Bill which would provide councils with alternative enforcement powers and met with the Levelling Up Minister to discuss this. We have also supported an amendment which would create smoke-free pavement licences. We will continue to monitor the Bill as it completes its parliamentary stages.
36. We have continued to make significant progress on councillor training. [We have developed a licensing committee training resources page on our website](#), which signposts members to useful training materials. This includes our recently refreshed licensing e-learning module and some scenario-based licensing training videos.
37. In October 2022 and March 2023, we hosted licensing leadership essentials courses for chairs and vice chairs of licensing committees. The course focuses on how good licensing committees are run and received excellent feedback. Based on feedback from chairs attending the course, we [produced a flyer to promote being on a licensing committee](#) to new members.
38. In February, Cllr Woodbridge, Vice-Chair of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board, chaired the LGA's annual licensing conference. The conference gave delegates an opportunity to reflect on some of the key developments that can be expected to affect councils' licensing committees and teams over the next year. This was an in-person, paid for conference, which attracted around 60 delegates, including a large number of councillors.
39. On regulatory services, we are continuing to engage with the LGA workforce team as part of wider corporate work to address local government workforce shortages, with surveys indicating challenges in recruiting trading standards officers and environmental health officers in particular. We contributed to the development of various internal LGA papers on this, briefed the LGA chairman

on challenges in environmental health; although these services have not been identified as a priority area for the LGA to focus on at this time, we will continue to engage with council heads of services to identify current trends, issues and support options (should resources become available), as well as working with partners such as the Food Standards Agency who are undertaking their own work on this issue.

40. Ahead of the latest round of local government reorganisation in April 2023, we [produced a briefing note on bringing together regulatory services teams into a newly formed unitary council](#), based on a roundtable discussion with councils. The briefing provides an overview of lessons learnt and will hopefully provide useful advice to councils going through this process in the future. We also submitted evidence to the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities consultation on youth vaping.

Blue light services and civil resilience

Fire Reform White Paper

41. Government is yet to respond following the consultation on its White Paper on reforming the Fire and Rescue Service last summer, although a response expected to be published before the summer recess. The White paper included a wide range of proposals around governance of the fire and rescue sector. There were also proposals around operational independence for chief fire officers as well as questions on changes to promotion and entry requirements, ethics and the negotiating machinery for pay and terms and conditions.
42. Home Office official's recent focus has been around the design of the future of fire professionalism, with Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) lead members sharing views and feedback on the ideas for activities that could be run centrally, for example through a College of Fire, to support the sector in areas of research, data, leadership, ethics and achieving professional standards.

Fit for the Future

43. A revised version of Fit for the Future, a joint piece of work undertaken by the LGA, the National Fire Chiefs Council and the National Employers (England) on the future of the fire and rescue service, and how we will seek to enhance and improve the service going forwards has now been published.

Equality and diversity

44. Equality and diversity has remained a key priority for FSMC following [the independent cultural review into London Fire Brigade](#), conducted by Nazir Afzal, and the [spotlight review on values and culture in fire and rescue services](#) undertaken by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) earlier this year.
45. The spotlight review found that whilst many services had invested in their attempts to improve their values and culture and some progress had been made, in many services efforts to improve values and culture have not always meant improvements in staff behaviours and bullying, harassment and discrimination were to varying degrees present in all services. The review has a total of 35 recommendations directed at a range of organisations.
46. [LGA responded in the media to the publication of the report](#) and initial discussions with the Home Office have been held on the recommendations. FSMC have agreed a number of next steps to progress work in this area and continue engagement with the NFCC, HMICFRS, the Home Office, and the Unions. A free, one-day conference for members looking at their governance and leadership role in EDI, alongside their employer role is planned for the 27 June 2023.
47. The LGA has continued to support the Fire Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Member Champions Network. We have held sessions on different issues including a training session on the role of governance and scrutiny in driving change and case studies from Gloucestershire and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Services. The Network provides a forum for discussion of EDI issues and support for members and is chaired by the Equalities Advocate for the FSMC, Cllr Jan Hugo from Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.

Climate change

48. [Climate change has been a new priority for FSMC this year following the devastating wildfires last summer. The LGA is running a one-day evidence session for a small, cross-party group of FSMC Members with an interest in this area to hear from a range of experts and explore these impacts in more detail to inform a policy position.](#)

49. [The Climate Emergency handbook for Fire and Rescue Authority Members, exploring current risks, and the leadership role FRA members have in driving this agenda forward is currently being updated and will be re-publish in the summer.](#)

[Training](#)

50. [We have also continued with our Fire Leadership Essentials Programme to support leading members on FRAs delivering session in November 2022 and March 2023 which were well attended.](#)

[Civil resilience](#)

51. [We commissioned and published a series of case studies highlighting how councillors can support local civil resilience activity, linked to the publication of the UK Government Resilience Framework, which envisages a greater role for democratically elected officials in driving local resilience work and ensuring accountability for this. We published a short briefing on the UKGRF to try to raise awareness of this with senior councillors and officers, and have been maintaining engagement with lead government officials as they develop plans to pilot various aspects of the framework. Plans to publish a short briefing on building community resilience \(in a civil resilience context\) have been postponed due to work on the Covid Inquiry.](#)

[Covid Inquiry](#)

52. [The team has played a leading role in developing the LGA's responses to modules one and two of the Covid Inquiry. Module one focused on preparedness for the pandemic, and focused on both civil resilience planning and public health work; module two focused on the Government's decision making, but officers from the safer communities team led the coordination of the LGA's response, which covered Government engagement with the LGA and local government on a range of issues during the pandemic. The Inquiry has required significant resources from the team in terms of developing our responses and, more recently, preparing for the first hearings for module one \(which began in early June\) through reviewing witness statements, evidence proposals and planning for the LGA's expected evidence session in late June/early July.](#)

Crematoria, funerals, coroners and registrars

53. [We have continued to provide support to member authorities on issues related to coroners and registrars. We have continued to provide input into the Ministry of Justice Coroner Services Committee and the Coroner Services Managers Panel.](#)

Building safety

54. We have continued our work with the Department of Education (DfE) to ensure local authority uptake of DfE's survey registering the prevalence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) across the school estate. Several previously challenging authorities have recently completed these registrations and we are now nearing the close of this project as registrations near finalisation.
55. Where it had previously focused on school buildings, central government is now looking to expand RAAC identification and remediation to the wider public estate.
56. The Office of Government Property (OGP) will be convening a working group in which there will be a designated representative from each Government department who is responsible for the identification and remediation of RAAC in buildings owned by that department. This group will also be attended by key stakeholders including the LGA.
57. On the 23 May 2023, Secretary of State for Schools Nick Gibb announced that the DfE will make its full dataset on the condition of schools- including prevalence of RAAC – publicly available by summer recess, which begins on the 20 July 2023.

Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS)

58. The LGA has worked with Locality to undertake [a study into the state of strategic relationships between local government and the voluntary and community sector \(VCS\)](#), particularly in the light of the experience of the Covid pandemic, cost of living, and various waves of refugee arrivals. The study found a national picture that is very mixed, with some councils engaging clearly and consistently across departments, some having effective relationships in pockets, while others have little engagement at all. The report identifies a range of barriers to effective

strategic working, including a lack of time and resource to invest in relationships; commercialisation of relationships reducing scope for collaboration; and a lack of shared understanding of agendas, priorities and roles.

59. To help councils overcome some of these barriers, LGA and Locality followed up on the report with [the publication of a toolkit for councils](#). The toolkit was honed through workshops with officers and councillors working in this area, to help ensure it is a practical resource for councils of all tiers and at all stages in their journey of building or re-examining their VCS relationships. It also encourages councils to undertake the mapping exercise in partnership with their local VCS, looking for honest feedback around what works and what doesn't in their local relationships. The toolkit is being promoted to councils across the country, including through the LGA's improvement channels.

Proposed areas of focus for 2023/24

60. The table below sets out proposed areas of work for 2023/24. This includes work projects that have recently been discussed/approved by lead members and/or the full Board, as well as work areas that will continue beyond the summer (notably areas of work which are driven by Government activity).

Priority area	Proposed activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counter-terrorism, counter-extremism and cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a programme of support to councils on tackling extremism through the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A series of roundtables and webinars for practitioners to share emerging challenges and facilitate support, including the dedicated Forum for tackling anti-asylum activism Develop projects on communications support and community engagement Facilitate two knowledge hub sites Facilitating academic support to councils on tackling extremism Provide training for elected members on delivering the Prevent duty, tackling extremism and building cohesion Lobby around the draft Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill (Martyn's Law) and CONTEST review to ensure they reflect sector views.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a report which explores why some council's work on modern slavery is more advanced than others, and on what makes an effective modern slavery partnership. Subject to the Board's views, update the councillor guidance on modern slavery and promote with councillors. • Undertake a piece of work on drugs and community safety issues (see separate Board paper). • Maintain engagement with government and key partners on the implementation of duties on serious violence and commissioning victim support services. • We anticipate less work on domestic abuse as the Act is becoming embedded, but host a limited number of workshops for council officers/webinars. • Influence the development of the CSP review and implementation of the ASB action plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue light services and civil resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider and respond to Government's proposals on reforming the fire service, once this is published • Continue work around key themes of people, professionalism and governance • Continue work to support Fire and Rescue Authorities around culture, equality, inclusion, and diversity. • Seek to raise awareness of and ensure senior council engagement on the UKGRF; track the selection and launch of pilot areas testing out aspects of the framework.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensing and regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to lobby around the need to localise/increase fees under the Licensing Act 2003. • Update the LGA's existing guidance on licence fees. • Respond to any relevant consultations related to the Gambling Act Review and finalise the refresh of the LGA's guidance on taking a whole council approach to gambling related harms.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with the Department for Transport and other stakeholders to lobby against proposals in the Levelling Up White Paper on transferring control of taxi/PHV licensing to combined/ upper tier authorities. Continue to enhance and promote the LGA’s training offer to members of licensing committees, including refreshing the annual licensing conference to focus on aspects of the leadership essentials in licensing course.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to raise awareness among local authorities of the risks associated with RAAC, and to shape the development of government police through our relationships with the Department of Education and the Office of Government Property.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crematoria, coroners and registrars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research into the of the provision of Public Health Funerals was last conducted by the LGA in 2011. This is an issue it would be helpful to revisit to gain a greater picture of the impact of the cost of living crisis and pandemic on public health funeral provision.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary & Community Sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research into the potential for VCS infrastructure organisations to support councils in engaging with the wider VCS eco-system, particularly those organisations operating in communities that the sector finds it hardest to engage with.

Implications for Wales

61. We will work with colleagues at the Welsh LGA to identify areas where our work will be applicable to Wales, and where WLGA may wish to use our work as a basis for Welsh specific work of its own.

Financial Implications

62. The LGA’s financial year runs from April – March, cutting across two board years. At their meeting in May, lead members agreed the allocation of the Board’s budget for the 2023/24 financial year, with resources targeted on a) those areas where external support is necessary to deliver our priorities

and b) member training courses as part of the LGA's leadership essentials programme. Around £5k remains to be allocated during the year.

Equalities implications

63. These will be considered as individual workstreams are developed.

Next steps

64. The Board are asked to reflect on the work delivered this year and consider and comment on their priorities for 2023/24. Officers will develop a more detailed work plan for consideration at the next Board meeting in September.

Improvement and Innovation

Background

1. The Improvement and Innovation Board (IIB) provides strategic oversight of the LGA's policy and improvement activity in relation to councils improving their performance and productivity - in line with the LGA's priorities and the Grant Determination Letter agreed with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).
2. At its meeting in October 2022, the Board considered its priorities for 2022/23. These priorities draw extensively on the priorities set out in the LGA Plan and it was agreed for these to be:
 - 2.1 Peer Support
 - 2.2 Regional Improvement Support, Finance, and Governance
 - 2.3 Leadership support for Councillors and Officers
 - 2.4 Supporting local people and places – Improvement programmes including climate change support
 - 2.5 Data, Digital and Technology
 - 2.6 Sharing of notable practice
 - 2.7 Innovation Zone at the LGA Annual Conference.
3. Embedded throughout the above priorities, the Board also continued to oversee delivery of the Sector Support Offer which included...
 - 3.1 Sector Support programme (DLUHC funded and covering themes of Governance, Finance, Leadership, Workforce Place-based vision and Demand)
 - 3.2 Cyber, Digital and Technology
 - 3.3 One Public Estate (OPE)
 - 3.4 Planning Advisory Service (PAS)
 - 3.5 Partners in Care and Health (PCH)
 - 3.6 Children's Services Improvement
 - 3.7 Culture and Sport Improvement
4. This paper provides an overview of the achievements delivered against these priorities and programmes, as well as the work the LGA has been doing around

the launch of the Office for Local Government (Oflog), which falls within the Board's areas of responsibility.

Activity and highlights to deliver on Board Priorities 2022/23

5. The following provides some key highlights of our improvement and support work over the last year:

Office for Local Government (Oflog)

6. We have worked with DLUHC officials to ensure that the local government perspective informs the new Office for Local Government (Oflog). LGA officers and Cllr Abi Brown, Chairman of the Board, have met regularly with DLUHC officials and have provided further feedback as a member of the Oflog political leaders group meeting, regularly with the Minister. Alongside LGA Director of Improvement, Dennis Skinner, Cllr Brown has met with the Interim Chair of Oflog, Lord Amyas Morse and Interim Chief Executive, Josh Goodman several times.
7. Given local government already has a very strong record of data transparency, supported by our freely available, award-winning data platform, LG Inform, we have questioned the need for the Local Authority Data Explorer. We underlined the importance of co-production with the sector and the need for clarity around how this platform fits together with wider dashboards proposed by the Department for Education and other work on indicators being undertaken by the Department for Health and Social Care.
8. We have also urged Government to deepen its engagement with councils to identify and define future sets of metrics and that the dashboard should include a wider set of metrics, not just about council performance, including the need for data about the rest of the public sector (including central government) that is happening in their local authority area.
9. Oflog was formally launched this month by Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP at the LGA Annual Conference. It will remain an ongoing project however and so we will continue to work with Government to ensure the sector voice informs the next stages of development and future iterations of the tool.

Peer Support Review

10. An internal review of the LGA's use of peers in its improvement support offers was undertaken in the Summer of 2022. The review found that member and officer peers make a vital contribution to these offers and are, on the whole,

highly regarded. Findings also suggested that more work was needed to ensure a consistently high quality of delivery and providing appropriate support to peers.

11. A priority shared by all Lead Members, work to implement the recommendations from the peer support review is continuing with notable progress having been made in the last few months.
12. An approach has been agreed for delivery of member peer training for 2023/24 with a focus on peer challenge. Dates are being scheduled for these events throughout the year with further development offered at our annual Member Peer Conference.
13. At LGA Conference, an event in the Innovation Zone celebrated the work of our peers. The event helped to raise awareness about the important work that peers do and the opportunities that being a peer provides, including to bring back that learning to their local authority.
14. We continue to progress actions to improve our peer data including the equalities information we hold. Solutions have been drafted to support peers to periodically update their data and ensure we have richer information to enhance our processes by better capturing and targeting peer skills and ensuring peer teams are more representative.

Improvement and Assurance Framework for Local Government

15. As part of the new sector support programme, the LGA is convening discussions with the sector, professional associations, and others to map the different [elements which provide assurance of council performance](#) and are used to hold the sector to account, in the interests of clarity and transparency.
16. A session was held at the LGA conference to explore with Chief Executives what 'assurance' mean and ask how well councils are able to use current mechanisms of internal and external accountability to assure themselves they are continuously improving. This session was facilitated by Barry Quirk (Adviser to the LGA, former Chief Executive of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the London Borough of Lewisham), with anonymised feedback being fed into map the mapping exercise for the improvement and assurance framework.
17. [In our media release, LGA starts discussions on assurance framework for local government](#), 24 May 2023, [we invited the](#) sector views on the mapping exercise for the improvement assurance framework for local government.

Innovation Zone at the LGA Annual Conference

18. The LGA's Annual Conference took place on the 4 – 6 July 2023 at the Bournemouth International Centre. [The Innovation Zone \(IZ\)](#) is a significant part of the LGA's Annual Conference and offers a vibrant and creative space within the wider conference and involved a series of open, walk-in, sessions highlighting exciting ideas within the local government sector.
19. This year's theme was 'Challenge and Change' and all sessions featured in this year's programme were delivered either by councils themselves, or councils in collaboration with other public sector and private sector organisations.
20. Over 1600 delegates (not including speakers) were registered to attend this year's LGA Annual Conference, and the 2023 IZ successfully delivered over 50 presentations, from more than 100 speakers, from councils of all types and close partners from across the country. The IZ produced a huge amount of interest amongst delegates, with the majority of sessions being standing room only for attendance and upwards of 200 attendees present during certain intervals.
21. The conference featured a series of IZ parallel sessions, "Spotlight On...", and Celebrating Success Events, a new addition to the IZ programme. Many of these sessions were supported and facilitated by Improvement and Innovation Board Lead Members and Board Members who volunteered to contribute through the Innovation Zone Member-led Working Group.

Sector support programme

22. The funding period for the £18m agreement between the IDeA and DLUHC for 2022/23 concluded on 31 March 2023. This agreement was to fund a number of programmes spanning themes of Governance, Leadership, Finance, Workforce, Place-based vision and Demand.
23. An £18m agreement for 2023/24 has since been agreed, providing an updated sector support programme. While all of our support continues to be shaped through direct engagement with the sector, DLUHC were clear that this year's programme should focus on providing support across the following areas: Governance, Leadership, Finance and Workforce, as well as a new offer on Transformation. The new sector support programme, covering these five themes, has now been launched and is available to read on the LGA website: <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/sector-support-offer-local-authorities-202324>
24. The new offer on Transformation will provide direct support and advice, as well as varied learning and development opportunities, to help local authorities

deliver on their transformation priorities, including to achieve efficiencies and improvements within service delivery.

25. There are also a number of new workstreams with in the continuing themes. This includes an expanded suite of leadership development offers which will such as a dedicated curriculum for chief executive development (co-produced with SOLACE) and a new recruitment campaign to market local government as a career of choice, attracting new talent into the sector to increasing capacity.
26. The following highlights demonstrate the positive impact of the sector support programme for 2022/23 and that the LGA's strong track record of delivery has been well maintained during the 2022/23 financial year:
27. Governance:
 - 27.1 188 instances of peer challenge support were delivered including 55 Corporate Peer Challenges (CPCs)/Finance Peer Challenges, 48 progress reviews and 85 other instances of peer challenges/remote peer support.
 - 27.2 100% of councils found that the process of preparing for and participating in a CPC had a positive impact on their council and would recommend the process to other councils.
 - 27.3 94% of councils receiving post elections support said that it has helped the council.
 - 27.4 LG Inform received more than 700,000 page views during 2022/23 alone.
28. Leadership:
 - 28.1 Over 2,500 councillor attendees on training and development opportunities.
 - 28.2 Our coaching programme provided bespoke support to 22 disabled councillors and 100% of respondents said the coaching offer has had a positive impact on their development.
 - 28.3 99% of councillors that attended Leadership Essentials and 100% of councillors attending Leadership Academy said these programmes had helped them to improve the way they carry out their role.
29. Finance:
 - **Direct finance support** was provided to 41 councils facing significant financial challenges, with 91% of councils receiving this support saying it had a positive impact for their council.
 - 100% of councillor and officer respondents taking part in **financial learning and development opportunities** said that this support had improved their ability to carry out their role.

30. Workforce:

- **Targeted support was provided to over 50 councils** to address workforce challenges.
- Our **sector-wide Apprenticeship Health Check surveys** received a record number of responses from 172 councils.

31. Place based vision and Demand:

- 94% of councillors and senior officers receiving **direct communications support** said that this had a positive impact.
- 90% of councils receiving support through the **Economic Growth Advisors Programme** said that the programme had provided them with skills to address local economic challenges.
- 100% of respondents from cohort 5 of the **Housing Advisers Programme** said the support has had a positive impact on their capacity to deliver housing, homelessness provision and/or placemaking
- 99% of respondents receiving direct support from the **Climate Change programme**, said that the support has had a positive impact.
- The **Behavioural Insights (BI) Conference was attended by 429 delegates**, with 621 delegates in total attending BI events during the course of the financial year.

Children's Services Improvement

32. The [children's services improvement programme](#), which receives funding from the Department of Education, provides leadership support, diagnostic activity and range of training, development and mentoring. Recent highlights include:

- A series of webinars for specific corporate specialisms to further their understanding of their role in supporting children's services improvement, and to launch 'corporate core' toolkits developed to support this, including HR and finance.
- Facilitated conversations with the senior corporate leadership team on embedding a corporate parenting across all directorates of the council.
- An evaluation of the Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliances on behalf of the Children's Improvement Board has been carried out. An action plan has been developed to take forward recommendations on how the sector can continue to support the RIAs to drive improvement.

- Early Years Strategy reviews have been completed with 10 Local Authorities and a further three challenges focusing on speech and language.

Culture and Sport Improvement

33. The [LGA's partnership with Arts Council England](#) has provided critical support to developing the knowledge and skills of councillors and officers to champion cultural activity in their local areas, particularly in the context of cost of living, with the [LGA's partnership with Sport England](#) providing critical support to champion physical activity. Recent highlights include:
- In May 2023, the senior officer leadership programme began with a full cohort. The programme was oversubscribed, and a waiting list is being held for future programmes. Sessions delivered to date have covered current contexts, co-creation with local communities and health and wellbeing, with further sessions to be delivered by the end of July.
 - The peer culture and library online peer challenge programme launched with 6 peer challenges scheduled between the end of June 2023 and September and the LGA has delivered an online leadership strengths session to alumni of the senior officer leadership programme.

Cyber, Digital and Technology

34. In recent months the [Cyber, Digital and Technology](#) programme delivered two Cyber 360s to both Plymouth and Merton and also facilitated a Cyber Reaction Exercise with RB Kensington and Chelsea and Central Bedfordshire.
35. Two new publications were published: [a Local Government Digitalisation Almanac](#), containing simple steps and practical examples to support councils realise the full benefits of digitalisation, and a '[10 Questions on Cyber Security](#)' guide, produced with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny.
36. Four half day masterclasses for councillors on digitalisation were delivered, as well as three cyber security skills training for Chief Executives, delivered in partnership with Solace.
37. In conjunction with Solace and Socitm, [a joint response to draft legislation to support identity verification](#) was submitted.

One Public Estate (OPE)

38. Working with Cabinet Office, the OPE programme is currently [administering the Brownfield Land Release Fund 2](#) on behalf of DLUHC. The application window

closed on 31 March 2023, and bids submitted by councils are currently being assessed.

39. OPE exhibited at UKREIIF in May, promoting public estate collaboration and the brownfield land release fund, connecting with many local authorities, and celebrating the 10th anniversary of the OPE initiative.
40. OPE also recognised their [10 year anniversary](#) with a celebrating success event in the Innovation Zone at this year's Annual Conference.

Partners in Care and Health (PCH)

41. In our partnership with ADASS [the PCH programme](#) continues to deliver a range of contracts and provide for a broad range of adult social care sector led improvement including enhanced data analysis and support to respond to the outcomes of CQC interventions. Recent highlights include:
 - Tools and resources to support councils with the new Care Quality Commission assurance including our [Unpaid carers and Care Quality Assurance](#) toolkit which is designed to help councils with the process as it relates to unpaid carers.
 - Contributed to developing the [Digital working in adult social care: What Good Looks Like](#) guidance - co-developed with the adult social care sector through a series of workshops and in-depth interviews, drawing on expert support from the LGA and ADASS.
 - Simon Williams OBE, PCH's Director of Adult Social Care Improvement, [gave oral evidence](#) in June to the House of Lords Integration of Primary and Community Care Committee.

Planning Advisory Service (PAS)

42. [PAS](#) receive funding from a variety of income sources, including DLUHC, Defra and Natural England, to support councils on challenges with planning, local plans and implications of the planning reform agenda. Recent highlights include:
 - Developing the new [Pathways to Planning](#) graduate programme, launching in September 2023 and aiming to widen the pool of graduates entering planning roles in local authorities.
 - Supporting council engagement with a series of policy consultations and updates. PAS visited councils across the country to explain the proposed national planning policy framework and supported virtual events on the infrastructure levy, environmental outcome reports and design codes.

- PAS has also been helping councils prepare for the introduction of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in November, both with the BNG directly but also the framework of nature recovery more generally.

Financial Implications

43. There are no financial implications resulting directly from this paper.

Equalities implications

44. The LGA is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) standards. EDI considerations are embedded across our programmes with key examples in addition to those above including programmes such as the NGDP, Be a Councillor and our coaching offer for disabled councillors.

Next steps

45. Much of this information will be captured in the Annual Sector Support Publication. This will be published in the coming months and will be circulated to members of the Executive Advisory Board before its September meeting.

Local Government Workforce Capacity Update

Purpose of Report

For direction.

Summary

This report sets out the latest draft of a prioritised plan of LGA action in relation to local government workforce capacity, seen in light of the relevant issues for service areas experiencing the greatest challenges, latest progress and actions underway and planned by other bodies. Members are asked to comment on the draft plan and the approach to prioritised action in relation to activity which is currently unfunded.

LGA Plan Theme: Support to the LG Workforce

Recommendation

The Executive Advisory Board is asked to review and comment on the draft plan and approach to prioritised action set out in the report, considering the full range of actions by councils, other bodies and the LGA in the round.

Contact details

Contact officer: Naomi Cooke/ Heather Wills

Position: Head of Workforce/ Principal Adviser (Improvement)

Phone no: 020 7664 3299 / 07770 710188

Email: naomi.cooke@local.gov.uk / heather.wills@local.gov.uk

Local Government Workforce Capacity Update

Background

1. The March meeting of the Board considered a report setting out the workforce capacity challenges which are impacting councils across a wide range of professions and services. Following feedback from the Board, officers have been identifying actions that the LGA can take, alongside activity already in train in councils and by professional bodies, to address these challenges.

Proposal

2. Both demand and supply pressures in many services mean there are insufficient resources to adequately fund staffing establishments. This paper sets out a proposed approach to prioritise activity in the context of limited resources both in councils and in the LGA.
3. The [Local Government Workforce Survey 2022](#) provides the most recent overview of workforce capacity challenges (including recruitment and retention difficulties) being experienced by the sector. Respondents stated their councils were experiencing the greatest difficulties in relation to the following occupations:

	Counties, districts and single tiers		Counties and single tiers		Districts and single tiers	
	Recruitment	Retention	Recruitment	Retention	Recruitment	Retention
Children's social workers			83%	72%		
Adult social workers			71%	57%		
Adult care workers			63%	52%		
Mental health social workers			60%	45%		
Planning officers	58%	36%				
Legal professionals	53%	29%				
Environmental health officers					45%	18%
ICT professionals	43%	29%				
Building control officers					43%	21%

These responses are consistent with other published research.

4. The plan which appears at Appendix A therefore focuses on activities to address the workforce capacity challenge in the following priority areas:

- a) Children's social workers
- b) Adult and mental health social workers
- c) Adult care workers
- d) Planning officers
- e) Legal professionals
- f) Environmental health officers
- g) ICT professionals
- h) Building control officers

There are also activities to be taken on a system-wide basis.

5. In many instances, councils can – and do - themselves (either individually or working together) take action to address the workforce capacity challenge, some of which are consistent across all service areas and so are not repeated in each case (such as use of apprenticeships, continuing professional development and other retention good practice). The LGA can also provide support and share best practice to support councils to take appropriate action. In other cases, there are professional bodies and other stakeholders who are best placed to act, sometimes with the LGA in a supporting role. In a few cases, the LGA will lobby for change on behalf of the sector alongside ongoing lobbying to press for longer term funding that reflects current and future demand for services.

6. This plan identifies for each priority occupation:

- the relevant issues leading to the capacity challenge
- activity which has been identified as appropriate to address the issues:
 - what can councils do for themselves (individually and working together)
 - what can relevant bodies do
 - the LGA's role:
 - providing support
 - lobbying for change

7. The plan also identifies actions the LGA will take on a sector-wide basis, to:

- provide support
- lobby for change.

These actions can be delivered within existing resources (through various sources of improvement grant funding).

8. Given the scale of the challenge, officers have considered any further actions which could be funded through alternative sources, for example:

8.1. testing with the sector the market for any support offers which could be provided on a commercial basis;

- 8.2. approaching other government departments for funding for support relevant to their remit;
 - 8.3. use of LGA reserves to fund support offers;
 - 8.4. a mixture of the above.
9. It is proposed that further, prioritised action will focus in the first instance on workforce capacity challenges related to children's social workers. Work is underway to develop costed proposals to resource the following actions:
- 9.1. commission research to identify local authorities' requirements for children's social workers into the medium term and quantify the current and projected gap;
 - 9.2. conducting the Employer Healthcheck survey to improve children's social worker retention (discussions are underway with potential co-funders).
10. The LGA is also discussing plans for the promotion of children's social work as a career with Social Work England and other partners and will consider if any additional activity is required on this or any related joint projects. A verbal update will be given at the meeting.
11. Additionally, the LGA is being funded as part of the sector support programme to work with CIPFA to develop a workforce plan for finance teams within local authorities.
12. Resources Board considered this report at its meeting on 12th July, and was asked to agree proposed additional content to be included in submissions for Autumn/ Spring statements/ budgets in relation to workforce resourcing, set out in para 9.32 of Appendix A. A verbal update on feedback from the Resources Board will be given at the meeting.

Implications for Wales

13. Wales faces very similar issues with workforce capacity as are evident in England. Through the LGA 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.

Financial Implications

14. LGA actions to address the workforce challenge listed in Appendix A are funded through existing improvement support grant funding. As set out in para 9 above, costed proposals for member consideration will be developed for prioritised activity to support workforce issues: this may include commercial offers to councils and/or use of LGA reserves.

Equalities implications

15. 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.
16. Job seekers are looking for diverse workplaces: 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. This is important in terms of culture and career aspirations, but also means consideration of flexible working and doing more to support the health and wellbeing of staff.
17. 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, being mindful of equality, diversity and the impact on local communities.

Next steps

18. Officers will implement the plan set out in Appendix A and develop costed proposals for further action in relation to children's social workers, informed by feedback from the Board.

Appendix A - Local government workforce capacity plan

1. Children's social workers

What are the issues?

- 1.1 58 per cent of social workers say that their caseloads are unmanageable and are experiencing deteriorating mental health because of their roles. Some children's social workers are exposed to significant public criticism, including via social media, without right of reply. The top factors which influence social workers' desire to stay in roles are:
- (i) feeling positive/ able to cope with work most of the time;
 - (ii) satisfactory one to one supervision;
 - (iii) access to professional development and training.
- 1.2 Sufficiency of staffing levels both at social worker and supervisory levels are therefore an issue, as well as the resourcing of training and development. Newly qualified staff make up a greater proportion of posts in children's social care: 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 families.
- 1.3 23 per cent of children's social workers leaving the profession in 2020/21 went to agency roles, which have been identified as offering competitive incentives as well as providing flexibility, which is valued. High use of agency workers comes at a financial cost to councils as well as impacting on stability of relationships for children and their families.
- 1.4 The number of looked after children has increased by 23 per cent in the last ten years, the number of assessments carried out because children are believed to be at risk of significant harm increased by 75 per cent and Ofsted has noted that the complexity of cases has increased since the pandemic began, meaning rising workloads even where the number of children on the caseloads has remained stable.

What can councils do?

- 1.5 Councils can:
- (i) provide flexible working options;
 - (ii) engage in regional/ sub-regional commitments to work cooperatively to manage the agency supply chain and regulate agency pay rates;
 - (iii) adhere to Employer Standards for social workers which support good

retention practices, including good quality and timely induction and ongoing professional and career development.

1.6 Subject to funding, councils can also:

- (i) increase the number of social workers entering and progressing through the profession via academies for newly qualified workers and CPD/ support for more experienced workers;
- (ii) increase their establishment to reduce caseloads;
- (iii) provide health and wellbeing support and ongoing career development
- (iv) Speed up development of new starters by structured training and support packages
- (v) work to reduce demand through early intervention/ prevention or involvement of other professions.

What can other bodies do?

1.7 The Department for Education (DfE) is consulting on draft national rules on the engagement of agency children's social workers. Its 'Stable Homes, built on Love' strategy includes a range of activities targeted towards social worker retention, including work with local authorities to identify sector-wide technical solutions to reduce time spent by social workers on case recording to maximise time available for practice. It has also announced proposals to establish an Early Career Framework. The programme of Families First Pathfinders will test the potential for a greater proportion of social work to be devolved to non-qualified social workers.

1.8 Social Work England (SWE) is working to address recruitment and retention issues in the sector in liaison with a wide range of bodies including the Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee (JUCSWEC) which supports liaison between social work and local authorities in response to employer need. The LGA will liaise with SWE and JUCSWEC to ensure that this activity addresses needs in all regions.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

1.9 The LGA will:

- (i) provide a package of guidance and best practice including actions to manage use of agency workers, workforce planning, health and wellbeing support, flexible working options and the 'London Pledge' approach, disseminated via regional networks;
- (ii) provide support and challenge through the Children's Improvement Programme to ensure the conditions for good social work are in place, including quality supervision, manageable caseloads, effective support and

- continuing professional development;
- (iii) adapt, publish and promote guidance on flexible working prepared for adult social workers, for use in the children's social work context;
 - (iv) identify current good practice in councils working with universities to develop a pipeline of children's social workers and promote through regional networks; review existing activity in the university sector to coordinate social work education and promote joint working via regional networks where appropriate;
 - (v) review a toolkit on the establishment of Social Worker Career Academies for adult social care when produced (see 2.11 below) and consider its adaptation for the children's social worker context.

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

1.10 The LGA's established policy lines call for:

- (i) a holistic 10-year workforce strategy for children and families;
- (ii) funding for administrative support, supervision capacity and training;
- (iii) Government-funded training programmes and bursaries to encourage retraining from other professions and the return of previously qualified social workers

2. Adult and mental health social workers

What are the issues?

- 2.1 58 per cent of social workers say that their caseloads are unmanageable. Two-thirds of adult social workers say they are experiencing deteriorating mental health because of their roles. The top factors which influence social workers' desire to stay in roles are:
- (i) feeling positive/ able to cope with work most of the time;
 - (ii) satisfactory one to one supervision;
 - (iii) access to professional development and training.
- 2.2 Sufficiency of staffing levels both at social worker and supervisory levels are therefore an issue, as well as the resourcing of training and development.
- 2.3 In 2021/22, employers relied on agencies for 7% of social worker roles.

- 2.4 The number of requests for adult social care from new working age clients has increased by 11 per cent, and 87 per cent of directors say that more people are seeking support for mental health issues.

What can councils do?

- 2.5 Councils can:

- (i) undertake workforce modelling and capacity planning;
- (ii) carry out targeted and/or values-based recruitment;
- (iii) adhere to Employer Standards for social workers which support good retention practices, including good quality and timely induction and ongoing professional and career development and flexible working options that aid wellbeing and retention;
- (iv) make full use of the apprenticeship levy to increase the supply of relevant professionals.

- 2.6 Subject to funding, councils can also:

- (i) provide pastoral care for overseas recruits;
- (ii) establish academies and/or other arrangements to support newly qualified social workers and CPD/ support for more experienced social workers;
- (iii) establish local 'entry into social work' initiatives, potentially piloting approaches to ascertain the most successful.

What can other bodies do?

- 2.7 The Department for Health and Social Care provides financial support to the costs of international recruitment which may be used to support the recruitment of social workers.

- 2.8 In 'Next steps to put people at the heart of care', the Government has announced that £250m (a reduction to the previous commitment) will be used to 'better recognise social care as a profession' and 'increase opportunities to develop skills and expertise and undertake learning and development'. This includes the 'Think Ahead' programme: a fast-track graduate programme to become a qualified social worker, with support through the Education Support Grant and Social Work Bursary.

- 2.9 Skills for Care, with ADASS and the LGA, has a workforce priority plan for adult social care for 2020 – 25, focused on the following themes:

- (i) strategic workforce planning, including a national workforce survey;
- (ii) growing and developing the workforce to meet future demand;

- (iii) enhancing the use of technology;
- (iv) enhancing the wellbeing of the workforce;
- (v) building and enhancing social justice in the workforce.

2.10 Skills for Care is the strategic workforce development body for adult social care, and their data set covers more than half of the people who work in social care. They propose to take a system leadership role to work with Government, local government, health partners, social care employers and people drawing on care and support to implement the Government's vision for the social care workforce, including the creation and implementation of a competency framework and career pathways, a workforce hub and investment in skills, learning and continuing professional development.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

2.11 The LGA will work with ADASS and Skills for Care to:

- (i) conduct a survey to understand the current extent of agency usage in adult social worker roles;
- (ii) work with ADASS and Skills for Care to support councils to deliver their workforce priorities;
- (iii) provide a package of guidance and best practice including actions to reduce use of agency workers and health and wellbeing support;
- (iv) conduct a national evaluation of local adult social care recruitment initiatives to identify and share 'what works', promoted via events in each region;
- (v) develop and pilot an adult social care workforce peer challenge;
- (vi) research use of digital and other technologies in social work and promote good practice to free up social worker capacity and achieve better outcomes for service users;
- (vii) provide support for the development and evaluation of Social Worker Career Academies involving providers, universities and other training providers and councils (with consideration of the business case and lessons learned), alongside the launch of an interactive toolkit with guidance on how to establish them. These products will be promoted strongly across the sector.

2.12 The LGA has already published [guidance](#) on integrated workforce planning in adult social care and resources, top tips and tools to support retention and flexible working.

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

- 2.13 The LGA's established policy lines call for Government to help promote a positive image of social care as a rewarding and fulfilling career.
- 2.14 Once the products relating to Social Worker Career Academies are launched (see 2.11 (vii) above), the LGA may wish to consider strengthening further its encouragement to councils to establish such academies either individually or in partnership with others in the region.
- 2.15 Consider, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, whether the current role and responsibilities of the social worker profession ensure the maximum effectiveness of the role

3. Adult care workers

What are the issues?

- 3.1 The top reasons for domiciliary care workers leaving their roles are better pay outside the care sector, seeking better hours and/or conditions, and feeling burnt out and/or stressed. 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.
- 3.2 There is a lack of parity of esteem compared with the NHS workforce. Around 93 per cent of the social care workforce are employed by independent providers rather than councils which limits' councils' ability to control the terms and conditions of the sector.
- 3.3 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 2035.

What can councils do?

- 3.4 Councils can work with providers and Integrated Care Boards to:
- (i) undertake workforce modelling and capacity planning;
 - (ii) carry out targeted and/or values-based recruitment;
 - (iii) offer more flexible working options that aid wellbeing and retention.
- 3.5 Subject to funding, councils can also work with providers to provide pastoral care for overseas recruits.

What can other bodies do?

- 3.6 The Department for Health and Social Care provides financial support to the costs of international recruitment of the adult social care workforce.
- 3.7 In 'Next steps to put people at the heart of care', the Government has announced that £250m (a reduction to the previous commitment) will be used to 'better recognise social care as a profession' and 'increase opportunities to develop skills and expertise and undertake learning and development'. This includes:
- (i) launching a call for evidence for behaviours, knowledge, skills and experience pathways for frontline care workers;
 - (ii) providing a new training offer including funding for a new Care Certificate level 2 qualification, training courses and digital skills training;
 - (iii) a new website to provide access to support, information and advice on careers in adult social care.
- 3.8 Skills for Care, with ADASS and the LGA, has a workforce priority plan for adult social care for 2020 – 25, described at para 2.8 above, and proposals for system leadership to address workforce challenges, at para 2.10. Skills for Care is working with Government to identify improvements which may reduce delays to care worker recruitment arising from the DBS process.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

- 3.9 The LGA will work with ADASS and Skills for Care to:
- (i) support councils to work with their providers to deliver their workforce priorities;
 - (ii) conduct a national evaluation of local adult social care recruitment initiatives to identify and share 'what works';
 - (iii) develop and pilot an adult social care workforce peer challenge;
 - (iv) provide support for the development and evaluation of Social Care Academies.
- 3.10 The LGA (with Skills for Care and ADASS) has already published [guidance](#) on integrated workforce planning in adult social care and resources, top tips and tools to support retention and flexible working.

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

- 3.11 The LGA's established policy lines call for:
- (i) funding to enable improvement in pay, conditions and career development opportunities for the frontline care workforce;

- (ii) an independent review of care worker pay;
- (iii) Government to help promote a positive image of social care as a rewarding and fulfilling career;
- (iv) parity of esteem for adult social care workers and NHS workers;
- (v) the NHS workforce plan to include adult social care (and limit the potential for 'poaching' staff);
- (vi) implementation of the knowledge and skills framework for adult social care.

4. Planning officers

What are the issues?

- 4.1 Following the pandemic, planners have been reported to be taking early retirement or finding work in the private sector: more people are retiring than are entering the sector.
- 4.2 There is a perception that public sector planning is not valued or seen as an attractive career. Local authorities are directly competing with the private sector in a relatively small pool of professionals, in addition to other public sector agencies such as PINS and Homes England. In 2019, approximately 44% of planners worked primarily in the private sector, with 56% in the public sector, with an apparent trend towards a greater proportion of planners in the private sector in recent years.
- 4.3 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 reason. A lack of in-house ecological expertise is cited as a major obstacle.
- 4.4 Some planners choose to work for agencies where they feel less personally visible in the context of politically charged decision-making: some planners are exposed to significant public criticism without right of reply. Some planning services have up to 80 per cent of their staff provided by agencies, with impacts on both cost and quality of service.

What can councils do?

- 4.5 Councils can:
 - (i) establish their own planners' academy (or join with other councils to do so): Birmingham and Central Bedfordshire are two examples;
 - (ii) provide ongoing training and development opportunities. Many councils fund or part-fund postgraduate qualifications with a contractual requirement to remain with the council for a set period following completion.

What can other bodies do?

- 4.6 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has:
- (i) committed to deliver a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the sector;
 - (ii) funded the [Public Practice Associates programme](#) to help public sector organisations recruit mid-career planners as an affordable alternative to agency recruitment;
 - (iii) launched consultation on increases to planning fees with the aim of increasing capacity in the local planning system;
 - (iv) funded pilot projects to improve digital solutions which will reduce officer time spent processing data;
 - (v) convened a capability and capacity group to identify solutions to the planning recruitment and retention challenge (on which the Planning Advisory Service is represented).
- 4.7 The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) has worked with Milton Keynes to develop their local planners' academy and is conducting a survey of planners' wellbeing.
- 4.8 Discussions involving RTPI, the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and the Planning Officers Society (POS) (with LGA, DLUHC and University training provider attendance) have commenced to identify the root causes of and potential solutions to the recruitment challenge in the public sector. A proposed action plan is expected, to be discussed further in the early Autumn. TCPA is also planning research on the scale of the resourcing gap.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

- 4.9 The LGA will:
- (i) deliver a Pathways into Planning programme to attract new graduates into local authority planning careers, funded by DLUHC;
 - (ii) conduct a skills audit of the local authority planning workforce, funded by DLUHC and leading to a gap analysis in comparison with future needs.

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

- 4.10 The LGA's established policy lines call for:
- (i) resources to deliver planning reforms and new policy commitments;

- (ii) councils to be closely involved in developing the resources and skills strategy;
- (iii) planning fees to cover the cost of processing applications;
- (iv) changes to the planning system to reduce its onerousness, for example discouraging speculative applications and easing the burden of the Local Plan process.

5. Legal professionals

What are the issues?

- 5.1 Anecdotally, a large cohort of experienced professionals are retiring or moving into more flexible interim roles or moving into the private sector for better pay for similar levels of work. A significant proportion of local government lawyers are nearing retirement in the next five to eight years, which, notwithstanding current work to bring new entrants to the profession, will lead to a loss in experience and additional roles to fill. While local government previously attracted lawyers due to opportunities for flexible working, in recent years this has also been offered by the private sector, in addition to more attractive remuneration.
- 5.2 A survey conducted in 2019 identified that recruitment and retention has become the biggest single issue facing local authority legal departments. 87 per cent of respondents to the survey described recruitment of qualified staff as 'difficult' and 39 per cent as 'very difficult'. 44 per cent expect recruitment to get harder still in the foreseeable future.
- 5.3 New work is tending to be more complex, and heads of legal services are therefore seeking to recruit more experienced senior lawyers.
- 5.4 Average local authority lawyers' pay is well behind their peers in private practice, and the relative difference between public and private sector pensions has decreased. Seven per cent of all roles advertised on the Public Law jobs website in 2022 attracted a market supplement.
- 5.5 The structure of most legal departments means that promotion – and higher pay – is only open to those prepared to take on management responsibility: there is little reward for developing technical expertise. In the more in-demand disciplines, experienced lawyers can earn significantly more by working as a locum (the imposition of IR35 has not dented the use of locums by local authorities, only made it more expensive).
- 5.6 Local authorities have cut back on training contracts in recent years: there were only 69 in 2021, for a pool of around 4,500 in-house solicitors in local government, and only ten trainee solicitor roles were advertised in councils in 2022. This supply is inadequate to compensate for those leaving or retiring. It also remains common for local authority trainees to have to find a role

elsewhere at the end of their training period. Legal apprenticeships are growing in number but do not address the problem of finding more experienced staff.

What can councils do?

- 5.7 Subject to funding, councils can provide training contracts with an associated career path.

What can other bodies do?

- 5.8 In 2019, Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) began work on a national campaign aimed at encouraging graduates to apply for training contracts. This will be supplemented by a single hub for graduate recruitment into local government legal services. LLG also run a 'National Work Experience week' to enable students to gain an insight into a career as a local government lawyer and are launching a leadership development programme for local government lawyers.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

- 5.9 The flagship recruitment campaign (see para 9.20 below) will support councils to market local government as an employer of choice, with a focus on values and wider benefits, with the aim of attracting those who may consider a move from the private sector.

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

- 5.10 The LGA will continue to argue for the reduction in the legislative burden placed on councils.

6. Environmental health officers

What are the issues?

- 6.1 A cross-government task group has identified the following issues:
- (i) an ageing workforce. Post-COVID, environmental health officers are reported to be taking early retirement;
 - (ii) a loss of officers to other sectors and agencies, exacerbated by COVID;
 - (iii) a limited pool of professional capacity;
 - (iv) limited management time to mentor new officers;
 - (v) lack of funding for training posts: 52% of councils did not have a single apprentice or trainee in environmental health. This is thought to be partly because there is insufficient management capacity to supervise them and

partly because, in small teams, councils are prioritising posts at a more experienced level;

(vi) because councils are unable to carry specialist posts within their headcounts, and many officers are taking on generalist roles, there is a loss of specialist expertise.

- 6.2 These are compounded by the uncoordinated creation of new enforcement duties, creating additional capacity issues for already stretched services. In some places there is concern about the predominance of food work over other areas of regulation. It may be expected that work to review housing conditions (particularly in the private rented sector) will bring further pressures on environmental health.
- 6.3 There has also been a reduction in the number of environmental health university courses on offer, and in the number of students accessing them.
- 6.4 There is a discussion about the potential for one qualification for overlapping roles in regulatory services (there are a number of distinct specialisms within the fields of environmental health and trading standards). However, some councils no longer have roles/ officers focusing on distinct professional specialisms, with officers more likely to cover a range of specialisms within their profession (and, likely, significantly less work taking place in some specialisms). Research commissioned by the LGA nearly ten years ago explored the scope for a generic regulatory services officer role, concluding that although there may be scope for a generic food officer role, in many other regards the two professions were moving further apart in their work profiles.

What can councils do?

- 6.5 Councils can 'grow their own' through apprenticeships and other training.

What can other bodies do?

- 6.6 The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health has produced an [apprenticeship toolkit](#) to support employers to set up apprenticeships in the field of environmental health. It has also produced a toolkit of career information resources to support councils to raise awareness of the role of environmental health in schools and colleges and runs a leadership development programme to enable graduates to gain the qualifications to become a registered practitioner.
- 6.7 The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is conducting a review of resourcing in local environmental health and trading standards services.
- 6.8 The Chartered Trading Standards Institute is developing an apprenticeship for licensing roles.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

6.9 The LGA will:

- (i) continue to engage with senior regulatory services professionals to gain a deeper understanding of the nature and scale of the recruitment and retention challenges facing the sector;
- (ii) review the findings of FSA research when published;
- (iii) undertake basic modelling of how new cost recovery mechanisms in regulatory services could inject new resources into the sector;

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

6.10 The LGA's established policy lines call for:

- (i) consideration of the cumulative impact of additional duties for regulatory services which taken on their own have not generated (sufficient) new burdens funding and of solutions to address the funding gap;
- (ii) measures to ensure that duties for regulatory services are appropriately funded, including measures for cost recovery;
- (iii) DLUHC to play a convening role in regulatory services, particularly on capacity issues, representing local government in cross-Government discussions as appropriate.
- (iv) reforms to the apprenticeship levy to enable councils to target resources at regulatory services.

6.11 In the absence of a cross-Government approach, DEFRA will be approached directly to raise awareness of the challenge and discuss potential solutions.

7 ICT professionals

What are the issues?

- 7.1 Anecdotally, a large cohort of experienced professionals are retiring or moving into more flexible interim roles. There is competition from the private sector for candidates and some councils pay market supplements to attract appropriate expertise.
- 7.2 Information management and technology professions are not codified or structured with clear professional pathways or qualifications, making it difficult for managers to identify their requirements or individuals to decide which qualifications to pursue.

What can councils do?

- 7.3 Councils can take up training and mentoring support for ICT officers provided by SOCITM to support retention rates.

What can other bodies do?

- 7.4 [SOCITM lead](#) aims to grow the pipeline of talent for public sector information management and technology.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

- 7.5 The LGA is currently developing a Capabilities Framework for the sector workforce. This will focus initially on 6 service areas (including adult social care, planning and corporate services), with the aim of supporting managers to identify the capabilities required. Once this work is completed (by September 2024) it will be possible to map career pathways and conduct gap analysis.
- 7.6 The LGA will also deliver a 'Women in Tech' event, followed by initiatives to promote the local government tech sector to women.
- 7.7 The flagship recruitment campaign (see para 9.20 below) will support councils to market local government as an employer of choice, with a focus on values and wider benefits, with the aim of appealing to those who may consider a move from the private sector.

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

- 7.8 The LGA will consider whether any lobbying is required following completion of the Capabilities Framework.

8. Building control officers

What are the issues?

- 8.1 A significant proportion of the workforce may be expected to retire in the coming years (64% are aged 45+) and the need to obtain registration to practice under the Building Safety Act may add further challenges.
- 8.2 To some building control officers, local authority work is less engaging/ rewarding, since they cannot 'cherry pick' the work they undertake. The private sector recruits people trained in public sector with attractive terms and conditions.
- 8.3 There is difficulty in finding qualified/ competent surveyors for the salary offered, and particularly for team leadership roles.
- 8.4 Because very few council building control departments have a full complement of staff, councils regularly resort to agency staff.

What can councils do?

- 8.5 Councils can support staff to gain validation at the appropriate level to gain registration

What can other bodies do?

- 8.6 Local Authority Building Control has carried out workforce modelling and is now funded by DLUHC to recruit and train officers to fill the capacity gap and support legislative change. This programme is successfully attracting and training good quality recruits for the sector. It also conducts skills analysis of the existing workforce and validation assessments to meet new requirements.
- 8.7 The Building Safety Regulator is introducing a register of professionals and will carry out awareness raising of building control services and careers.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

- 8.8 The LGA can discuss with LABC later in 2023 whether any strategies are required to ensure officers remain within the local government sector following training, in light of experience.

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

- 8.9 The LGA's established policy lines call for sustained investment in building control.

9. Sector-wide activity

Apprenticeships

What are the issues?

- 9.1 Due to the requirement that councils return levy underspends to government, often the 10 per cent top-up funding paid to councils sits unused for two years and is returned to government unspent (£3.25m per month). Being able to use this funding more flexibly to pay for the administration of programmes, cover salary or backfill costs, or help support underrepresented groups to break down barriers to apprenticeships would help the sector to create more opportunities in key areas of the workforce and ensure this funding is spent productively on apprenticeships.
- 9.2 The issue of people completing an apprenticeship and moving on is understood to be a risk for some councils, however, some councils have good retention rates, rates also vary by level of apprenticeship and in some cases people move from one council to another. Apprenticeship Levy funds belong to the Government and not to the council, and so any funds returned to the council by an apprentice if they left within a set period would have to be returned to the Government. Additionally, there would be costs to councils in administering any such arrangements.

What can councils do?

9.3 Councils can:

- (i) implement good practices in employee retention, including strategies for progression into other roles when apprenticeships are complete;
- (ii) have a policy for apprentices' pay and grading (88 per cent of councils already do);
- (iii) introduce and implement an apprenticeship strategy or action plan (66 per cent already do, a further 26 per cent are in the process of developing one). This should involve appropriate governance to support and account for delivery; plan the spending of the levy and assess the impact of the apprenticeship programme on the council's wider objectives.
- (iv) introduce mentoring schemes and network opportunities to apprentices and consider providing additional employability support for qualifying apprentices (eg 24 per cent of councils provide guaranteed interviews to support them into permanent roles).

What can other bodies do?

- 9.4 The Institute of Apprenticeships approves standards in development and oversees access to training providers. However, 33 per cent of councils reported they could not find a training provider for at least one standard: Pest Control Technician Level 2 and Town Planning Assistant Level 4 have been raised as a concern over several years. Faster approval of new standards would also assist councils to provide apprenticeships which meet their needs.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

9.5 The LGA will:

- (i) support up to 40 councils to make better use of apprenticeships at all levels, to map demand and develop new solutions (this number is predicated on the proposal for DLUHC funding, more councils could be supported if additional resources were identified through other routes);
- (ii) provide advice and guidance to councils on good retention practice;
- (iii) conduct an apprenticeship survey for the sector, to provide an overview of the sector's use of apprenticeships and to highlight key challenges and potential areas to lobby Government;
- (iv) promote the use of apprenticeships and T levels in the sector;
- (v) enable and facilitate employers to collaborate to create more apprenticeships.

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

- 9.6 The LGA is calling for councils to be allowed to use apprenticeship levy funds more flexibly, particularly for things like apprentice salary subsidy, administration costs of programmes, pre-apprenticeship training or other apprenticeship support. These changes would help us to deliver more apprenticeship opportunities for care leavers and to target skills shortage areas within our sector, such as planning, housing, environmental health and social work. We estimate that local government (including our maintained schools) receives in the region of £14m per year in top-up funds.
- 9.7 If the funds were used to provide a salary subsidy of £2,800 per apprentice, we could create 5,000 more apprenticeship starts, supporting care leavers and addressing skills shortage areas in the sector. An additional 5,000 apprentices, targeting key skills shortage areas plus some entry-level apprenticeships for care leavers could also unlock almost £100m more apprenticeship levy spending in our sector, helping us to reduce losses and push our percentage spend up around 12 percentage points (44.5 per cent to 56.8 per cent).
- 9.8 The LGA has proposed to DfE and HMT that they create a pilot project allowing councils to use the 10 per cent top-up funding councils receive from government to their Levy Accounts more flexibly to create apprenticeship opportunities in key skills shortage areas, like regulatory services, where take up is low, and to provide more apprenticeship opportunities for care leavers.
- 9.9 If flexibilities were introduced to enable councils to spend top-up funds on administration, each of the 151 upper and single tier councils could, for example, hire two full-time apprenticeship leads, allowing for greater focus on promotion and delivery of their apprenticeships programme, including to maintained schools who currently lag behind when it comes to offering apprenticeships.
- 9.10 The possibility of increasing the cap that restricts employers to transferring a maximum of 25 per cent of their levy funds per year to 35 per cent was also raised with Government (66 per cent of upper and single tier councils support an increase in the levy transfer cap to at least 35 per cent, with 40 per cent supporting an increase to 40 per cent or more). These points were also raised with the Skills Minister on 25 April who agreed to further discussions.
- 9.11 The LGA will test the extent to which apprentices leaving their employing council within a short period of completing their training is an issue across the sector, through means of a survey of heads of priority occupations. This topic was also raised in the meeting with DfE and HMT.
- 9.12 Discussions between DfE and HMT are continuing on the potential for
- (i) increasing the transfer cap from 25 per cent to 35 per cent;
 - (ii) further long-term options on use of the 10% top-up funding.
- 9.13 A further meeting with Government will be scheduled for early Summer.

9.14 The LGA will also continue to press the DfE and Institute for Apprenticeships to speed up the approval of the standards that councils want and to ensure sufficient training providers are available.

9.15 Explore mechanisms for councils to recoup training costs (outside the Apprenticeship Levy) if a trainee leaves soon after securing a qualification.

Attracting candidates to work in priority occupations

What are the issues?

9.16 Work in some local government services is not always seen as an attractive career. Other sectors are perceived as providing more attractive career options by offering some better terms and conditions and the above factors. A perceived lack of appreciation and recognition, low public profile, negative perceptions arising from public criticism of individuals, financial challenges and service failures in the sector generally all add to the challenge of being able to recruit new entrants. This is despite the sector offering over 800 different career opportunities, offering interesting challenges, good flexible working and favourable terms and conditions. The National Graduate Development Programme demonstrates what can be achieved through a targeted marketing approach providing development opportunities, attracting around 4,500 applicants per year.

9.17 In comparison with significant recent Government investment in **recruitment campaigns** for professions such as [teaching](#) and [defence](#), there has been minimal investment in local government as a 'brand'.

What can councils do?

9.18 Councils can:

- (i) invest in and demonstrate their 'Employee Value Proposition';
- (ii) engage with local schools and colleges to promote careers at the local council;
- (iii) make clear in their recruitment advertising that they welcome applications from candidates of all ages and protected characteristics and will provide appropriate training and support.

What can other bodies do?

9.19 Many professional bodies run campaigns and/ or training opportunities to encourage people to consider their roles as career opportunities. Where these exist for priority occupations, these are listed above.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

9.20 The LGA will:

- (i) continue to deliver the National Graduate Development Programme;
- (ii) launch a new flagship recruitment campaign, co-produced with Solace and the sector, to attract new talent and increase capacity in the sector. This recruitment campaign will market local government as a career of choice, highlighting the infinite variety of roles that local government has to offer, opportunities for career development and the benefits beyond pay such as flexibility and pension. The campaign will have a number of distinct – but complementary- messages to ensure a wide audience is reached, including both new entrants and those already in the sector with the potential to fulfil new roles. This will be developed over two years: in year 1 the approach will be piloted in at least one region and options identified for ongoing delivery, for example shareable template resources for councils to run their own campaigns. There would then be the potential for individual professions and councils to ‘piggy back’ their own content, building on the wider campaign.

Research

What are the issues?

- 9.21 It was previously suggested that there may be regional variation in the nature of the workforce capacity challenge. The Research team has confirmed that there is no statistically significant difference in the reported scale of the recruitment and/or retention challenge between regions.
- 9.22 There is a lack of data on the age profile of the local government workforce (although some data is held in relation to individual professions, as noted above).
- 9.23 There is a need to maintain a current understanding of council use of agency, pay, capacity and other HR indicators to inform wider understanding and responses to capacity issues.

What can councils do?

- 9.24 Councils can respond to the LGA’s surveys and engage in research projects to demonstrate the scale and nature of the capacity challenge, to inform the identification of solutions

What will the LGA do to support councils?

- 9.25 The LGA conducts the following research on behalf of the sector, to inform councils’ workforce planning:
 - (i) agency usage;
 - (ii) pay data;
 - (iii) workforce capacity risks and plans;

(iv) HR benchmarking.

9.26 The 2020 LGPS valuation data, currently being prepared, will identify the age profile data for the LGPS active and deferred membership as at March 2020. This data will inform further workforce planning on behalf of the sector.

Advice and guidance on best practice

What are the issues?

9.27 Respondents to the 2022 workforce survey identified access to examples of best practice as an important source of support to address the workforce challenge.

What can councils do?

9.28 Councils can engage with other councils on a sub-regional and regional basis to collaborate, share learning and good practice.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

9.29 Officers will continue to monitor learning from organisations piloting flexible working policies, including the four day week trial at South Cambridgeshire council, to identify learning for the sector.

9.30 The LGA will:

- (i) produce and disseminate best practice and guidance on recruitment, retention, workforce planning, apprenticeships and organisational design;
- (ii) conduct pay benchmarking and support to redesign the pay spine;
- (iii) provide bespoke support for councils with specific needs.

Addressing the financial challenge

What are the issues?

9.31 The LGA's lines relating to the need for financial sustainability for the sector overall are well-developed. These do not, at present, highlight the link between the financial challenges of the last decade and the workforce challenges now being experienced by the sector, or the risks to delivery of key priorities if the challenges are not addressed.

9.32 What has been highlighted is the need for additional funding to meet the rising National Living Wage cost, which placed more significant pressure on local government than other parts of the public sector (where the impact of the NLW affects the pay levels of far fewer employees). The additional funding made available from 2023/24 may assist in a small way 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.

What can the LGA to do lobby for change?

- 9.33 The LGA's established policy lines include raising the profile of the National Living Wage challenge with Government and flag to all parties the costs to local government relating to policies on the NLW.
- 9.34 In addition to reflecting any implications arising from local government pay negotiations, future submissions for Autumn/ Spring statements/ budgets can include a focus on the need for:
- (i) medium-term financial settlements so that effective workforce planning can take place over the medium term, and a degree of certainty is provided for jobseekers considering a role in the sector;
 - (ii) sufficient funding for councils to enable:
 - HR capacity to undertake workforce planning, in collaboration with local skills providers as part of local planning for economic development;
 - organisational development, health and wellbeing support, training and development (including digital skills) and 'grow your own' activities;
 - adequate levels of management supervision;
 - the recruitment and retention of sufficient numbers of skilled and motivated staff;
 - the accommodation of government policy on the National Living Wage.

