



Executive Advisory Board

Agenda

Thursday, 7 September 2023
2.30 pm

Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith
Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Executive Advisory Board
Thursday, 7 September 2023

There will be a meeting of the Executive Advisory Board at **2.30 pm on Thursday, 7 September 2023** Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.

LGA Hybrid Meetings

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

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

Catering and Refreshments:

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

Political Group meetings and pre-meetings for Lead Members:

Please contact your political group as outlined below for further details.

Apologies:

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

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

Attendance:

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

LGA Contact:

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 2023/24

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

Labour (13)	
Cllr Shaun Davies (Chair)	Telford and Wrekin Council
Cllr Nesil Caliskan (Vice-Chair)	Enfield Council
Cllr Bev Craig (Deputy Chair)	Manchester City Council
Cllr Michael Payne (Deputy Chair)	Gedling Borough Council
Cllr Georgia Gould (Deputy Chair)	Camden Council
Cllr Louise Gittins (Board Chair)	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Cllr Satvir Kaur (Board Chair)	Southampton City Council
Cllr Darren Rodwell (Board Chair)	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council
Cllr Peter Marland (Board Chair)	Milton Keynes Council
Cllr Robert Stewart (Regional Representative)	WLGA
Cllr Graeme Miller (Regional Representative)	North East of England
Cllr David Baines (Regional Representative)	North West Regional Leaders' Board
Sir Stephen Houghton CBE	SIGOMA
Substitutes	

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (11)	
Cllr Kevin Bentley (Senior Vice-Chairman)	Essex County Council
Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE (Deputy Chairman)	Warwickshire County Council
Cllr David Fothergill (Deputy Chairman)	Somerset Council
Cllr Morris Bright MBE (Deputy Chairman)	Hertsmere Borough Council
Cllr Abi Brown (Deputy Chairman)	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Cllr Martin Tett (Board Chairman)	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Marc Bayliss (Regional Representative)	West Midlands
Cllr Matthew Hicks (Regional Representative)	East of England LGA
Cllr John Hart (Regional Representative)	South West Councils
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen	District Councils Network
Cllr Tim Oliver	County Councils Network
Liberal Democrat (4)	

Cllr Joe Harris (Vice-Chair)	Cotswold District Council
Cllr Bridget Smith (Deputy Chair)	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Heather Kidd MBE (Board Chair)	Shropshire Council
Cllr Liz Green (Board Chair)	Kingston upon Thames Royal Borough Council
Substitutes	
Independent (4)	
Cllr Marianne Overton MBE (Vice-Chair)	North Kesteven District Council
Cllr Caroline Jackson (Deputy Chair)	Lancaster City Council
Cllr Andrew Cooper (Balancing Member)	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Cllr Tony Saffell (Balancing Member)	North West Leicestershire District Council
Substitutes	

Agenda

Executive Advisory Board

Thursday, 7 September 2023

2.15 pm

Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Item	Page
1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest	
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Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, 19 October 2023, 2.15 pm, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Minutes of last Executive Advisory Board meeting

Executive Advisory Board

Thursday, 20 July 2023

Online via Teams

Attendance

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

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

The Chair welcomed members and officers to the meeting, in particular those members who were attending their first meeting as Deputy Chairs: Councillors Bev Craig, Morris Bright, Abi Brown, David Fothergill and Caroline Jackson.

The chair also paid thanks to former members of the executive advisory Board who had resigned at the end of their term at General Assembly, Cllrs Robert Alden, Anntoinette Bramble, Hannah Dalton, Tudor Evans, John Fuller, Teresa O'Neill and especially former Chairman Cllr James Jamieson.

Apologies for absence were received from councillors Sam Chapman Allen, Graeme Miller, Izzi Seccombe, Linda Taylor and Mayor Marvin Rees.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

Decision

The Executive Advisory Board **agreed** the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 8 June 2023.

3 Lobbying Document

Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive, introduced the report before bringing in Sally Burlington, Director of Policy (People), who gave an update on asylum and resettlement issues. Louise Smith, Senior Adviser, also gave an update on Corporate Parenting.

During discussion, Members raised the following points:

- Children with lived experience of Care should be consulted in the LGA's work in this area.
- Concern was raised about continuing cost pressures for councils and local government as a sector.
- Concern was raised at the looming deadline to move asylum seekers out of hotel accommodation and the risk of homelessness the posed.
- A single point of contact in Government was needed to liaise on all asylum and resettlement matters.

Decision

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

Action

Officers to develop a Local Government white paper and bring draft to the Executive Advisory Board meeting due to be held on Thursday 7 September 2023.

4 LGA Boards: Annual Review of the Year

Following the Chairs' reports, the Chair thanked staff for their work on the Boards as well as all members who had contributed to the work of the LGA.

The Chair also highlighted the cross-board working at the LGA, and the Executive Advisory Board's role in bringing this work together noting that one, cross-party voice is most compelling.

Decision

The Executive Advisory Board agreed to note the Annual Reports for the 2022/23 meeting cycle.

5 Local government workforce capacity update

Heather Wills, Principal Adviser, introduced the report which included a high-level summary of service areas most affected by workforce capacity issues and a plan to address recruitment and retention challenges. Highlighting the need to prioritise, Heather commented that the biggest concerns were planning and children's social work. Whilst the Resources Board had supported the prioritisation outlined in the report and emphasised the importance of preventative work, Heather sought further considerations from the Executive Advisory Board.

In the discussion that followed member raised the following points

- retention was a major factor; more could be learned from those leaving the profession.
- worth investigating why those in further education do not chose to pursue a career in local government?
- Has remote working affected career satisfaction in the sector. Is professional development taking place remotely?
- Negative media coverage and public perception of public sector workers could be a contributing factor.
- Officer development programmes such as the Local Government Challenge had produced excellent alumni who could be called upon to showcase.

Decision

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

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chair	Cllr Shaun Davies	Telford and Wrekin Council
Senior Vice-Chairman	Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
Vice-Chair	Cllr Nesil Caliskan	Enfield Council
Vice-Chair	Cllr Joe Harris	Cotswold District Council
Vice-Chair	Cllr Marianne Overton	North Kesteven District Council
Deputy-chairman	MBE	
Deputy Chair	Cllr Abi Brown	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Deputy Chair	Cllr Bridget Smith	South Cambridgeshire District Council
	Cllr Caroline Jackson	Lancaster City Council
Members	Cllr Peter Marland	Milton Keynes Council
	Cllr Louise Gittins	Cheshire West and Chester Council
	Cllr David Fothergill	Somerset Council
	Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
	Cllr Matthew Hicks	East of England LGA
	Cllr Shabir Pandor	Yorkshire and Humber Region
	Cllr Tim Oliver	County Councils Network
Apologies	Cllr Bev Craig	Manchester City Council
	Cllr Georgia Gould	Camden Council
	Cllr Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
	Mayor Marvin Rees	Bristol City
	Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE	Warwickshire County Council
	Cllr Linda Taylor	Cornwall Council
	Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE	Portsmouth City Council
	Cllr Robert Stewart	WLGA
	Cllr Marc Bayliss	West Midlands
	Cllr John Hart	South West Councils
	Cllr Graeme Miller	North East of England

Cllr Christopher Poulter	East Midlands Councils
Cllr David Baines	North West Regional Leaders' Board
Sir Stephen Houghton	SIGOMA
CBE	
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen	District Councils Network

In Attendance

LGA Officers

Abigail Gallop
Alex Saul
Andrea Gillian
Angela Page
Claire Holloway
Dennis Skinner
Eamon Lally
Georgina
Brightwell
Greg Burns
Heather Wills
Ian Hughes
Iredia Oboh
Lizzie Nugent
Louise Smith
Mark Lloyd
Mark McKenzi-
Ray
Martin Ford
Mike Heiser
Naomi Cooke
Nicky Old
Nicola Morton
Sally Burlington
Sarah Pickup

Membership, Terms of Reference and Appointments to the LGA's Governance Structures for 2023/2024

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The Executive Advisory Board is asked to note its Membership and Terms of Reference for 2023/24.

The Executive Advisory Board's [Membership](#) (**Appendix A**) and Terms of Reference (**Appendix B**) are attached to this report for noting.

For information, a list of appointments to the LGA's Boards for 2023/24 is set out at [here](#).

Recommendations

That the Executive Advisory Board notes:

1. The Executive Advisory Board's membership for 2023/24.
2. The Executive Advisory Board's Terms of Reference.
3. Appointments to the LGA's governance structures for 2023/24.

Action

No further action necessary.

Contact officer: Amy Haldane
Position: Assistant Member Services Manager
Phone no: 07867 514938
E-mail: Amy.Haldane@local.gov.uk

APPENDIX A**Executive Advisory Board – Membership 2023/24**[Click here for accessible information on membership](#)

Councillor	Authority
Labour	
Cllr Shaun Davies (Chair)	Telford and Wrekin Council
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APPENDIX A

Liberal Democrat	
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Cllr Bridget Smith (Deputy Chair)	South Cambridgeshire District Council
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Cllr Andrew Cooper (Balancing Member)	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Cllr Tony Saffell (Balancing Member)	North West Leicestershire District Council

Appendix B

Executive Advisory Board Terms of Reference

The Executive Advisory Board provides strategic direction to the work of the Local Government Association and a mechanism to listen and influence national government legislation and public opinion. It supports councils and councillors to serve their communities in the best ways possible and is responsible for:

1. Ensuring that the LGA is focused on serving councils and councillors across England and Wales
2. Maintaining strong links with the sector, including through the sub-national groupings of councils, to ensure LGA priorities are based on the views of members and member councils.
3. Agreeing the LGA's vision and priorities through the LGA Business Plan, taking advice from the LGA Board.
4. Determining LGA policy for cross-cutting policy issues, including the localism agenda.
5. Holding the Boards to account and providing a steer on complex policy issues.
6. Setting the annual LGA budget and subscriptions, taking advice from the LGA Board.
7. Appointing members to relevant European and International Bodies in accordance with the LGA's Political Conventions.
8. Co-ordinating growth and transport policy on the advice of City Regions, People & Places and Local Infrastructure & Net Zero Boards.
9. Determining finance and workforce policy on the advice of the Resources Portfolio.
10. Maintaining corporate oversight of equalities issues across the LGA.

The Executive Advisory Board can allocate responsibility to one or more of its members for particular areas within its remit and/or establish member task groups.

It can invite Chairs of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to attend meetings.

Quorum

One third of the members, provided that representatives of at least 2 political groups represented on the body are present.

Political Composition

Labour group:	14 members
Conservative group:	14 members
Liberal Democrat group:	5 members
Independent group:	4 members

Substitute members from each political group may also be appointed.

Frequency per year

Seven meetings to be held per year.

Reporting Accountabilities

The Executive Advisory Board provides strategic direction to the work of the LGA, having regard to any advice from the LGA Board.

September 2023

LGA Lobbying Headlines

Purpose of Report

For discussion

Summary

As the national voice of local government and as a member-led organisation, it is crucial that the Local Government Association remains agile and responsive to councils' needs and priorities.

The attached LGA Lobbying Headlines report is informed by daily feedback from councils across the country about the most pressing issues, current and anticipated, facing member councils.

As senior councillors setting the direction of the LGA's work, Executive Advisory Board members are invited to review whether our focus is on the right issues.

Comments and advice received from members of the EAB will ensure our work aligns with the challenges that matter most to our members and inform our work with government, partners and stakeholders.

LGA Plan Theme: Promoting Local Government

Recommendation(s)

That the Executive Advisory Board notes the LGA Lobbying Headlines document.

Contact details

Contact officer: Mark Lloyd

Position: Chief Executive

Phone no: 0207 664 3213

Email: mark.lloyd@local.gov.uk

LGA Lobbying Headlines

Critical issues

Financial and service pressures – In the final 2023/24 Local Government Finance Settlement, the Government confirmed a £5.1 billion or 9.4 per cent increase in Core Spending Power for local authorities, including assumptions about increases in council tax. Despite this, our recently [published funding gap analysis](#) shows the cost to councils of delivering their services at current levels will exceed their core funding by £2 billion in 2023/24 and £900 million in 2024/25. The analysis excludes the resources needed to address existing underfunding in areas such as the adult social care provider market, children’s social care and homelessness, nor does it include funding to improve or expand council services. Concerns about growing SEND and children’s services pressures are particularly acute. We will continue to push the Government for sufficient, sustainable, multi-year settlements for local government and to provide clarity on the future of the New Homes Bonus and local government finance reforms. Following the LGA’s lobbying win, applications are now closed for the Sports England’s £20 million revenue element of the £63 million Swimming Pool Support Fund.

Workforce capacity – Workforce capacity concerns continue to dominate councils’ risk profiles as both senior leadership and front-line service delivery roles encounter challenges regarding recruitment and retention. According to our 2022 Workforce Survey, more than 9 in 10 councils are experiencing difficulties in this area.

These issues also restrict councils’ ability to support government to meet its key pledges, such as building more homes, boosting and levelling up economic growth and reforming adult social care. Councils are pulling out all the stops to tackle recruitment and retention issues; however, the local government workforce has a diverse range of skills, professions and occupations, and the workforce challenges each face are equally complex. We are working with councils and professional bodies on strategies to address the challenges for services experiencing the greatest difficulties and are pressing for flexibilities that will enable councils to invest in apprenticeships. We are calling for medium-term financial settlements and sufficient funding to enable effective workforce planning, recruitment and retention.

Asylum and resettlement – Concerns about how current programmes are being managed remain acute. We are raising councils’ concerns around housing and homelessness, cohesion and safeguarding as a result of recent policy and process changes by the Home Office, including hotel maximisation, large site use, and much shorter notice of Home Office support ending as part of the streamlined asylum process. These are exacerbated by pressures resulting from Afghan hotel closure, Ukrainian homelessness presentations and high numbers of arrivals, including of lone children. We continue to stress that the government should take account of the cumulative impact of all these pressures in existing regional plans for asylum dispersal, for more effective engagement at political level, and clarity about how the Illegal Migration Act is to be implemented.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UAS children) – The High Court has ruled that the Home Office is unlawful in using hotels to accommodate UAS children, and Kent

County Council is unlawful in not taking all children into its care. The ruling has led to significant pressure on the National Transfer Scheme to move children away from Kent and close hotels. We are pressing for a whole-system approach that tackles insufficient placements, alongside the shortfall in funding to support UAS children and care leavers, including at the cross Whitehall UAS children Task Force. The challenge of unaccompanied children being placed in adult asylum accommodation continues to place significant pressure on individual councils.

Private rented sector reform – The Government published the Renters (Reform) Bill in May, which aims to improve the system for private renters and landlords in England – we are currently awaiting a date for the second reading in the House of Commons. The social and private rented sector reforms will introduce additional burdens on councils; we will work with the Government to ensure these are fully funded. The reforms will also bring wide-ranging workforce implications that need to be fully costed and addressed.

Housebuilding – The Government set out their long-term plan for housing, including plans to extend permitted development rights. We continue to make the case that these rights should be revoked as homes created through these rights are often of poor quality that impact people's health and well-being.

We are calling for the Government to go further and faster so councils can properly resume their historic role as major builders of affordable homes by implementing [a six-point plan](#) for social housing. Our plan includes rolling out five-year local housing deals to all areas of the country that want them by 2025 – combining funding from multiple national housing programmes into a single pot; Government support to set up a new national council housebuilding delivery taskforce; continued access to preferential borrowing rates through the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB); further reform to Right to Buy; reviewing and increasing where needed the grant levels per home through the Affordable Homes Programme, as inflationary pressures have caused the cost of building new homes to rise; certainty on future rents, to enable councils to invest. The Government must commit to a minimum 10-year rent deal for council landlords to allow a longer period of annual rent increases and long-term certainty.

Homelessness – We have raised significant concerns that frozen Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, the rising cost of living, the closure of Afghan bridging hotels, wider asylum and resettlement pressures, and an insufficient supply of affordable housing will drive increases in homelessness and reduce the ability of councils to source suitable accommodation, further straining incredibly stretched homelessness services. Government data published in July shows that more than 104,000 households were in temporary accommodation at the end of March 2023 – the highest figures since records began in 1998.

As well as our aforementioned housebuilding asks, we are seeking an unfreezing of LHA rates and an explicit, national-level focus on homelessness prevention work (with an associated funding regime) that addresses the drivers and levers of homelessness, enables councils to avoid residents reaching crisis, and reduces demand for temporary accommodation and emergency homelessness responses.

Data – At the LGA Annual Conference, the Secretary of State launched the Government's new Office for Local Government (Oflog). The new body is intended to provide authoritative

and accessible data and analysis about the performance of local Government and support its improvement.

The LGA continues to focus lobbying on the importance of co-production with local Government in future iterations of the dashboard to make it more meaningful locally; the dashboard should include a broader set of metrics about the activities and performance of the rest of the public sector (including central Government) and not just those about council performance. There needs to be clarity around how the platform fits together with dashboards proposed by the Department for Education and other work on indicators being undertaken by the Department for Health and Social Care. We have queries that we continue to raise with officials around the chosen metrics in the Local Authority Data Explorer and the need for a clearer distinction between different council roles in two-tier areas.

SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) – We are engaging with the Department for Education at both Ministerial and official levels on the proposals in the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan. We welcome the proposed national standards, which will clarify the support available, who will be responsible for delivering it, and the focus on early identification of needs and support. The focus on improving levels of mainstream inclusion is also welcome and will be crucial to both improving outcomes for children with SEND and reducing pressures on high needs budgets. However, we have expressed concerns that the proposals do not fully address the fundamental demand and cost pressures that prevent councils from effectively meeting the needs of all children and young people with special needs. We are calling for councils to be given more powers to lead local SEND systems and to intervene when children are not adequately supported. A programme of sector led support to mirror what is available for children’s social care would be helpful.

As a result of our engagement, the Department has agreed to set up an elected member sounding board to allow for discussions and feedback on implementing the plan. Working with CCN, we have also commissioned independent research to ascertain whether the SEND and AP improvement plan proposals will improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND while allowing councils to manage and eliminate their high needs deficits.

Waste – The Government has confirmed that it will delay the implementation of the Extended Producer Responsibility by one year, with the first payments due to councils in October 2025. We continue to press for clarity of the detail of “consistency in collection” reforms, for detailed work on EPR to continue and for ambitions not to be diluted under pressure from industry.

We also continue to press the Government to abandon plans to ban councils charging for DIY waste to be taken to household waste recycling centres and the risks of waiving the new burdens process. Other key work areas include the treatment of Persistent Organic Pollutants, Emissions Trading Scheme application to Energy from Waste, waste prevention strategy, fly-tipping, and single-use vapes.

Children’s social care – Forthcoming changes to regulations around supported accommodation for young people will exacerbate pressure on placement capacity, especially for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. We have called on the Government to delay the implementation of these reforms or risk making outcomes for children worse. We have

responded to the [children's social work workforce consultation](#), which aims to tackle issues around the agency workforce. However, we are concerned that insufficient action is being taken to increase the overall number of social workers. The DfE is consulting on changes to statutory guidance to improve multi-agency safeguarding partnership working, reflecting concerns about how this works on the ground. Challenges around placements for children in care with the most complex needs remain critical, with the continued use of unregulated placements for some children due to a lack of regulated provision. The Government plans to establish two "Regional Care Cooperative" pathfinders involving around 20 councils to trial new approaches to commissioning provision. However, the sector has significant concerns that these will not deliver change at the scale and pace required.

Adult social care – We welcomed the Government's announcement of £600 million over the next two years to boost the capacity of the social care workforce and funding for the social care sector. The LGA specifically called for this funding to be ring-fenced for adult social care and distributed to councils to help fund frontline services. We are pleased that the Government has listened to councils and protected this money. The Government have also confirmed that this money will be distributed through an existing mechanism, ensuring no additional burdens.

We have raised concerns about the Government's plan to introduce single word gradings as part of the new adult social care assurance regime that commenced on 1 April 2023. We are continuing to work closely with DHSC and CQC on this. We have developed a [workbook](#) to support councils in preparing their self-assessments for the new assurance process. We will further update the document once the CQC pilot process is complete in the Autumn.

Other issues of importance for the sector

Devolution, Economic Growth and Levelling Up – Following a commitment in the Levelling Up White Paper, DLUHC has published a [plan to simplify aspects of the funding landscape](#) for councils, [a long-held ask of local government and the LGA](#). The plan includes the simplification of some existing levelling-up funds, and the introduction of a funding simplification doctrine that will apply to new grants. We will work with DLUHC officials on next steps in line with the Make it Local report.

Planning – We continue to lobby on the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill as it progresses through parliament. The bill is now in the House of Lords, and we continue to brief on our asks and engage peers on proposed amendments.

The LGA and 29 other bodies across the sector wrote to the government to urge them to refrain from introducing the proposed Infrastructure Levy (IL). We have significant concerns that the proposed IL will result in fewer, not more, affordable homes delivered, will expose councils to excessive levels of financial risks, and will be increasingly burdensome and complex for local authorities to implement and manage. The signatories met with Rachel Maclean MP to discuss our concerns and proposed that retention and improvement of the current developer contribution system is the most appropriate solution.

The Government has announced that it will table an amendment to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, removing the requirement for Natural England to issue advice to councils on planning decisions in areas affected by nutrient areas. Instead, Natural England will develop specific solutions in each river catchment area to tackle the causes of nutrient pollution. The Bill is in Parliament and will go through the House of Lords in its next stage. We have [responded to this announcement](#) and highlighted that short-term local solutions are still needed to address environmental concerns about river pollution.

Alongside this, there will be an expansion of Natural England's nutrient mitigation scheme and further work on the new Protected Site Strategies, also led by Natural England in partnership with local communities.

Cost of living pressures in communities – The Household Support Fund is due to end on 31 March 2024 and Government have made no commitment to its continuation. The sector have voiced serious concerns over the feasibility of maintaining welfare offers and crisis support payments if the scheme closes and the impact this will have on communities.

We are working closely with the Department of Work and Pensions and will be surveying the sector in October to build an evidence base on the impact of the grant. We are also holding an event in Parliament with the APPG on Ending the Need for Foodbanks on 13 September, where MPs and Cllr Sharma Tatler from the LGA's cost of living members advisory group will demonstrate how councils have used the grant to reduce poverty and build financial resilience.

Early education and childcare – Councils are considering the implementation of extended access to free early education and childcare. However, the early years sector is facing financial and sustainability challenges and these changes will cause further pressure. These changes are also building on a complex and difficult to navigate system and will place significant additional pressure onto council teams. We are stressing the need for LA funding to support the market and parents and carers, workforce support and capital funding, as well as pressing for assurance that early entitlements will be fully funded to ensure the financial sustainability of the sector.

Climate change – The LGA continue to work with DESNZ on the Local Net Zero Forum, which is working jointly on a business case for devolving council retrofit funding, initially through MCA trailblazer agreements. We will be meeting ministers in the autumn to press for wider devolution to all councils of measures to enable local climate action, in line with our Make it Local report.

Public health – We continue to make the case for multi-year settlements and for more long-term certainty around public health funding. We are pushing for an increased focus on prevention, achieved through an uplift to the Public Health grant. This will support the Government's wider aims by improving health outcomes, reducing health spending, and putting social care and the NHS on a better footing for the long-term.

Education – With the abandonment of the Schools Bill, we are calling for the Department for Education to bring forward alternative legislative arrangements to introduce a register of children being electively home educated, accompanied by sufficient powers for councils to check that home educated children are receiving a suitable provision, where concerns have

been raised that this is not the case. The Schools White Paper proposed that greater inclusion could be achieved by statutory regulation of the academy sector by the DfE. This proposal was also included in the Schools Bill. In the Bill's absence, we are calling for the Department to set out how similar outcomes can be achieved without the need for underpinning statutory powers.

Environment – The Environment Board has written to Ministers on the progress of Biodiversity Net Gain, raising several concerns about key actions needed before implementation begins in November 2023. We continue to work with officials on these issues. Defra has now published details of the responsible authorities for Local Nature Recovery Strategies and confirmed funding allocations to develop these. However, vital information still needs to be added, around the role of local planning authorities, including guidance on how LNRSs will regard local plans.

Integrated Care Systems – We are disappointed that the Government has not given an explicit commitment to supporting the development of a peer-led approach for ICS leaders. We will continue to work with Government and NHS England to ensure that the voice of local government, its interests and its vital contribution is reflected in the future development of ICSs.

Adults with care and support needs – We are calling for a preventative, assets-based approach to health that recognises the essential components of good health beyond NHS treatment, showing how an assets-based approach supports people to make healthy choices and enables them to live healthy, independent and productive lives.

We recently highlighted our concerns to the Government about the rollout of the 'Right Care, Right Person' (RCRP) National Partnership Agreement on Mental Health and Policing. We are asking for an increase in suicide prevention funding alongside the launch of the new Suicide Prevention Strategy.

We are calling for Government to [invest in therapeutic-led reablement](#). We are also calling for a focus on prevention and recovery services to reduce pressures in hospitals ahead of winter, including steps to support the voluntary sector to provide fast, low-level support. We are pushing for an increase in funding for home adaptations so that councils can upgrade existing stock, as well as pressing for simplification of the Disabled Facilities Grant process.

Supported housing – We are a major stakeholder in the consultation work on the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Bill, which gained Royal Assent and became an Act on 29th June. We do have some concerns about the potential capacity challenges for councils if new responsibilities are introduced due to the Bill, highlighting that significant resources will need to be given to a licensing scheme and enforcement of new National Supported Housing Standards. We are also lobbying for long term, sustainable funding for councils to commission supported housing.

Transport – The LGA will continue to call for longer-term, multi-year funding certainty to help patronage levels recover and grow and stick to commitments in the National Bus Strategy. We have called for the Government to reverse its decision to reduce active travel spending by over £200 million over the next two years, and we continue to lobby for more funding for road maintenance as 20-25 per cent cost increases in the sector have resulted in increased repair backlogs and deterioration of road quality.

Digital – We have voiced concerns over the implications of the Public Switch Telephone Network (PSTN) switchover, which will see the 1.7 million people who access technology-enabled care and support at risk of being left without a connection. We have launched a [digital switchover hub](#) with resources to support councils and their residents and led a communications campaign. While the PSTN upgrade is an industry-led process, the LGA calls on the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) to coordinate the multiple bodies involved with the switchover.

Civility in public life – We continue to press for Government to amend the existing legislation on sensitive interest, so that councillors may choose not to have their full home address on the public register in line with MPs registers and to support the sector to improve provision for the safety and security of councillors, particularly in relation to the police. In June 2022, the LGA launched the Debate Not Hate campaign to raise awareness of the issue and improve support locally. The campaign has over 550 individual signatories to our public statement and over 30 councils who have signed up to the campaign as a whole. A new report looking at what more councils can do to support councillors was published at LGA Annual Conference 2023.

Elections delivery – A full review of the May 2023 elections, including the implementation of Voter ID, is expected from the Electoral Commission in September. The Commission will also publish a report looking at the completeness and accuracy of the electoral register in September. In addition, the Commission is working with the electoral sector, including the LGA, to consider bolstering the capacity of electoral services and polling activities. The LGA continues to engage with the Government on implementing provisions in the Elections Act 2022 in the run-up to the 2024 electoral period.

Annual report of the Civility in Public Life Steering Group

Purpose of Report

For direction.

Summary

The report summarises the activities of the Civility in public life 2022/23 programme and suggests areas of focus for the programme in 2023/24.

LGA Plan Theme: Stronger local economies, thriving local democracy

Recommendation

That the Board notes the 2022/23 annual report of the Civility in Public Life programme and comments on the proposed areas of focus for the 2023/24 programme set out in paragraph 16.

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Annual report of the Civility in Public Life Steering Group

Background

1. The Civility in Public Life programme was established in September 2019 to tackle the issue of rising abuse and intimidation in public life. The purpose of the programme is to address the intimidation of local government members and officers, address standards of public and political discourse and behaviour and provide support to councils and councillors with civility issues.
2. In June 2021 the Executive Advisory Board agreed to launch the Debate Not Hate campaign to support these aims and establish a steering group for the Civility in Public Life programme (the "Steering Group"). This report sets out the work of the programme under the Steering Group for the 2022/23 year and proposes areas of focus of the 2023/24 programme.

Annual report

3. This annual report is divided into two general objectives agreed by the Steering Group for the 2022/23 work programme:
 - 3.1. Objective 1: Tackling abuse and intimidation of councillors
 - 3.2. Objective 2: Improving councillor standards of behaviour and conduct.

Objective 1: Tackling abuse and intimidation of councillors

4. The Debate Not Hate campaign was launched at the 2022 Annual Conference and has now been running for a complete year. The purpose the campaign is to detoxify public and political discourse, improve responses to unacceptable behaviour and increase the profile of the civility programme. Specific objectives were agreed by the Steering Group for the first year of the campaign. These objectives and key activities and successes this year are set out below.
5. Increasing awareness with the general public of what councillors do and what healthy debate looks like:
 - 5.1. Launched the [Debate Not Hate: The Impact of abuse on local democracy report](#) at the 2022 Annual Conference with dedicated campaign stand and plenary session including a government minister and representatives from the National Association of Local Councils, Hope Not Hate and the LGA Civility Steering Group. At the 2022 conference the #DebateNotHate was used 286 times, interacted with 1,200 times and was viewed 1.5 million times by Twitter users. Since launching, the report has received 3,161 views to date.
 - 5.2. Launched the Debate Not Hate toolkit for councillors and councils, including social media assets, virtual meeting backgrounds, posters, template press release and letters and a template motion to publicly support the campaign. 62 councils requested the toolkit and 42 councils have signed up to the [Debate Not Hate public statement](#) and/or passed a motion at their council in support of the campaign since launching and 700 councillors have signed up to the public statement. The campaign has received 2,193 views since launching.

- 5.3. Established a baseline question in the LGA residents survey to measure levels of respect of local elected people and understanding of the councillor role. In the first poll in October 2022, 84 per cent of respondents agreed that councillors should be treated with respect, a similar percentage agreed in February 2023 (85 per cent). At the same time residents' awareness of the role councillors fulfil locally fell from 53 per cent to 41 per cent. These statistics will be used to measure the impact of efforts across the campaign.
- 5.4. One hundred days before the 2023 local elections, Chair of the Civility in Public Life Steering Group, Cllr Marianne Overton promoted the campaign through six ITV regional news features, with an estimated reach of 1.6 million people. Through this coverage we highlighted the experiences of candidates during the campaign period to engender positive campaigning and public engagement.
- 5.5. Surveyed councillors about their experiences of abuse and intimidation and released a [press release](#) of the results to highlight the ongoing and progressive nature of the issue of abuse in local government in time for the first anniversary of the campaign.
6. Build understanding among councillors of the support and resources available to them:
 - 6.1. Established a new bulletin covering Democracy, elections and the voluntary and community sector, which now has over 1000 subscribers. The most recent bulletin had a 59 per cent open and 43 per cent click rate.
 - 6.2. Delivered five government-funded webinars and a series of bespoke workshops for councils on councillor safety and handling online abuse for councillors before May 2023. The webinars were attended by over 550 councillors, and 13 individual councils were provided with support through the bespoke workshops.
7. Secure improved responses to abuse and intimidation aimed at councillors from relevant agencies:
 - 7.1. Published a new report, [Debate Not Hate: Ending abuse in public life](#) for councillors at LGA Annual Conference 2023, alongside a member and officer workshop. The report aims to improve the support councils provide to councillors around abuse they may experience, including principles of prevention, incident management, and aftercare. The report has had 883 visits since July, with 388 unique user views.
 - 7.2. Submitted written evidence to the Jo Cox Civility Commission considering how to address the issue of abuse and intimidation in politics at all levels of government.
 - 7.3. Built new relationships with key partners, including the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC). The APCC have completed a parallel survey on abuse against PCCs. The NPCC have confirmed a new lead for policing elections who will also cover abuse of councillors and councillor safety outside of the electoral period.
 - 7.4. Promoted the resources of the DNH toolkit to encourage engagement with the local police force to improve preventative support and responses to incidents, implement a clear and joined up reporting mechanism for safety concerns and regularly review the safety of staff and councillors.

- 7.5. Briefed on the Online Safety Bill as it progressed through Parliament to encourage legislators to properly consider the concerns of councillors about online abuse.
8. Lobby for legislative change which puts it beyond doubt that councillors can withhold their home address and government commit to tackle this issue through a dedicated action plan:
- 8.1. Launched the campaign in Parliament as part of the LGA Parliamentary reception on 29 November 2022. Speeches from the LGA Chairman and President included promotion of the campaign and its aims. Secretary of State, Michael Gove MP, and various other ministers and shadow ministers took photos with our anti-abuse signage and promoted the campaign on their own social media channels.
- 8.2. Continued to engage with the Defending Democracy Programme and relevant colleagues in DLUHC to push for a more coordinated approach and legislative change around home addresses.

Objective 2: Improving councillor standards of behaviour and conduct

9. Officers continued to promote the Model Code resources across this period and this year developed a DLUHC funded e-learning module on Bias and predetermination to complement the existing Model Code e-learning.
10. The Steering Group commissioned a review of the uptake of the Model code of conduct. Officers completed a survey and further desktop exercise and established that 63 per cent of councils have adopted the Model Code in part or wholly and 37 per cent have not. Of those who responded to the survey, almost all said they found the Model Code useful in reviewing their code and 82 per cent of them had adopted the Model Code.
11. In addition, responses to the survey indicated that awareness of the Model Code and associated guidance is good across the sector, but fewer monitoring officers are aware of the Monitoring Officer Adaptable Model Code Training Pack and Model code e-learning modules. The full [Code of Conduct survey results](#) are available on the LGA website.
12. Just over half of non-respondent councils appeared not to have adopted the Model Code. Further consideration is needed to understand reasons for non-adoption. However, these could include not having reviewed their code since the publication of the Model Code, wanting to set a higher standard than the Model Code, or adopting elements of the Model Code which were not detected through the light-touch review conducted by officers.
13. Officers are working with legal, leadership and communications colleagues to consider how to promote the Model Code and associated resources further this year, including developing additional case studies, providing open access options on the LGA website and utilising partner bulletins.
14. The Government committed to working with the sector to determine how sanctions against poor behaviour could be strengthened in March 2022. Officers have commissioned a review of the English standards regimes against comparable jurisdictions and continuing to engage with civil servants to ensure that the LGA's view is

taken to account in this work. However, DLUHC have not progressed this commitment since September 2022.

Proposal

15. While we have made good progress on supporting councillors in councils, there is more to be done to address external and other barriers to civility in public life. 2023/24 activities will include completing the second year of the Debate Note Hate campaign following similar objectives to year one, but with more focus on influencing the public and parliament and continuing to deliver improvement and support events to councils and councillors through the DLUHC grant funding (£15,000).
16. In addition to the existing work we have already done under the programme to raise awareness of this issue, evidence the severity of abuse against councillors and provide councillors and councils with the tools to better tackle abuse in public life, the Steering Group proposes four areas of focus for the Steering Group discussed areas of focus for the 2023/24 cycle, including:
 - 16.1. Police capacity and resources to address abuse and threats of councillors
 - 16.2. Abuse on social media platforms and online and the responsibility of digital companies to address abuse on their platforms
 - 16.3. Councillor-on-councillor abuse and “Healthy debate”
 - 16.4. Support for Standards Committees and the standards process in councils.
17. Officers propose that the Executive Advisory Board note the progress made against the Civility in public life programme aims and objectives and discuss the possible areas of focus set out in paragraph 16.

Implications for Wales

18. The Welsh LGA is a key stakeholder for this project and we work to ensure our work is applicable across councils in England and Wales, subject to legislation. We will continue to offer our national support offer to Welsh councillors, alongside English councillors.

Financial Implications

19. This work will continue to be carried out within existing resources.

Equalities implications

20. Previous LGA research has highlighted the perception that abuse and intimidation impacts some groups more than others. In particular, misogyny, homophobia and racism have been mentioned in relation to the abuse candidates and councillors receive.

Next steps

21. Officers to finalise the 2023/24 work plan in line with comments from members.

Document is Restricted



LGA Forward Plan

Executive Advisory Board

LGA Board Executive Advisory Board

Councillors' Forum

LGA Board

20 October 2023	
Business Continuity	To note the updates from Corporate Services
Member/Officer Protocol and Protocol for Conduct of Political Appointees	To agree the new member/officer protocol and to agree revisions to the protocol for conduct of political appointees
LGA Members' Scheme of Allowances	To receive an update on the Independent Remuneration Panel and planned review of LGA Members' Scheme of Allowances
LGA Budget	To note a proposed budget framework prior to full and final report in January.
Chief Executive's Report	To hold the Chief Executive to account against delivery of business plan priorities and to consider the LGA's headline work and key asks for the Government.
Protective security review (defending democracy programme)	Highlighting specific security concerns for councillors

9 December 2023	
Business Continuity	To note the updates from Corporate Services
LGA Membership	to consider LGA membership subscriptions and offer for 2024/25
Performance Report	To receive the 6-monthly performance monitoring report.
Chief Executive's Report	To hold the Chief Executive to account against delivery of business plan priorities and to consider the LGA's headline work and key asks for the Government.

January 2024	
Business continuity	To note the updates from Corporate Services
Chief Executive's Report	To hold the Chief Executive to account against delivery of business plan priorities and to consider the LGA's headline work and key asks for the Government.
LGA Group Budget assumptions	In advance of LGA Board reviewing the final proposed Budget for 2024/25 at the March 2024 meeting, this report sets out the key assumptions and issues, with an early view of the potential budget for the LGA Group over the medium term.



Executive Advisory Board

19 October 2023	
Lobbying document	To hold the Chief Executive to account against delivery of business plan priorities and to consider the LGA's headline work and key asks for the Government.
2023 Autumn Statement / Budget	To sign off the LGA's Submission to the Chancellor's Autumn Statement (subject to the timing of any deadline for submissions and the Autumn Statement).

7 December 2023	
Lobbying document	To hold the Chief Executive to account against delivery of business plan priorities and to consider the LGA's headline work and key asks for the Government.
King's Speech	
2023 Autumn Statement	A summary of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement and LGA work in advance of the announcement.

25 January 2024	
Lobbying document	To hold the Chief Executive to account against delivery of business plan priorities and to consider the LGA's headline work and key asks for the Government.
Local Government white paper	
2024/25 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement	A summary of the 2024/25 Provisional Local Government finance settlement and the LGA's response to the settlement.



Councillors' Forum

There will be meetings of the Councillors' Forum in October 2023 and January 2024, agenda TBC.