



# **Executive Advisory Board**

Agenda

Thursday, 7 March 2024  
2.15 pm

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

There will be a meeting of the Executive Advisory Board at **2.15 pm on Thursday, 7 March 2024** 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.

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

### **Attendance:**

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

### **LGA Contact:**

Alexander Saul  
02076 643273 / [alexander.saul@local.gov.uk](mailto:alexander.saul@local.gov.uk)

### **Carers' Allowance**

As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme, a Carer's Allowance of National Living Wage and/or 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](#)

<b>Labour ( 13)</b>	
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 Tudor Evans OBE (Deputy Chair)	Plymouth City 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
<b>Conservative ( 13)</b>	
Cllr Kevin Bentley (Senior Vice-Chair)	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 OBE (Deputy Chair)	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Cllr Martin Tett (Board Chair)	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Matthew Hicks (Regional Representative)	East of England LGA
Cllr Jason Smithers (Regional Representative)	East Midlands Councils
Cllr Alan White (Regional Representative)	West Midlands
Cllr John Hart (Regional Representative)	South West Councils
Cllr Nick Adams-King (Regional Representative)	South East Councils
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen	District Councils Network
Cllr Tim Oliver	County Councils Network

<b>Liberal Democrat ( 4)</b>	
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
<b>Independent ( 4)</b>	
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

# Agenda

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## Executive Advisory Board

Thursday, 7 March 2024

2.15 pm

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

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**Date of Next Meeting:** Thursday, 6 June 2024, 2.15 pm, Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ



## Minutes of last Executive Advisory Board meeting

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### Executive Advisory Board

Thursday, 7 December 2023

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

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### Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions
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<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</b>
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Apologies were received from Cllr Marianne Overton, Cllr John Hart, Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen, Cllr Matthew Hicks, Cllr Satvir Kaur, Cllr David Baines and Cllr Michael Payne.

Cllr Sue Baxter attended as a substitute for Cllr Marianne Overton.

<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b>
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The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

<b>3</b>	<b>LGA Lobbying Headlines</b>
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Acting Chief Executive, Sarah Pickup to introduce the LGA Lobbying Headlines report. In particular she explained that as a follow up from the Autumn Statement the LGA had sent out a temperature check to all Councils and the answers to this had been used in recent media activity. This work had also been picked up by the LUHC Select Committee and the LGA had written to the Chair regarding issues arising for Councils. This had proven impactful and effective work which key members were all participating in. Further to this Sarah explained one of the next work strands is a push on the living wage initially through use of social media.

Sally Burlington, Director of Policy (People) & Deputy Chief Executive, shared details of the LGA work on Asylum and the long-standing request for the Home Office to take a more joined up approach with Local Government.

Sally emphasised that there had recently been more political engagement with Ministers meeting with the LGA Chair and other members to discuss these issues. This had led to some positive changes such as reassurance from the Home Office that no one would be made homeless over the Christmas week as a result of being made to leave their accommodation when their asylum agreement ends. Some Afghan families were still in hotels and more arrivals were expected so there was still a great deal of work still to be done. Sally explained that in the New Year asylum regional plans will come to an end and future arrangements of asylum dispersal needs to be explored.

In the discussion that followed, Members made the following points:

- Regarding Councils' concerns about individuals being homeless after they are moved from asylum accommodation, Cllr Kevin Bentley reassured Members that following negotiations Government has confirmed they will now have a few days before having to leave their asylum accommodation.
- A view was expressed that Asylum seekers could be given the right to work, which could have an impact on labour shortages. In response the Chair explained that the LGA does not have an agreed line on that matter.
- Views were also expressed that we could explore what more can be done to ensure warm housing, in particular in the private rented sector. The Net Zero Local Forum was highlighted as a body we could raise this through.

### **Decision**

Executive Advisory Board noted the report.

## **4 King's Speech 2023**

Colm Howard-Lloyd, Head of Public Affairs and Stakeholder Engagement, introduced the paper on the November 2023 King's Speech, seeking approval on which Bills the LGA should prioritise for the purpose of its lobbying, based on the business plan and advocacy priorities. Colm explained that this was the first King's speech in 72 years and included 21 pieces of legislation. 8 new bills were highlighted as of particular interest to the LGA.

In the discussion that followed, the following points were made:

- Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the Community Wellbeing Board, raised that at the last meeting of the Community Wellbeing Board, members had raised concerns that vaping cafes had opened in some parts of the country. Officers had agreed to explore the legislation in place regarding those cafes.
- In response to a query on issues regarding taxis on the Pedicabs Bill Colm advised Members that this issue was a national one as opposed to only impacting London and that the Government were already exploring amendments.
- A view was expressed that a number of Boards would need to be mindful of the impact of the Automated Vehicles Bill.
- The Chair emphasised that those issues which are cross-Board will be explored properly and that there had been great examples of cross-Board work at the LGA already this year.

### **Decision**

That the Executive Advisory Board discussed and agreed the recommended prioritisation of the LGA's legislative lobbying for the next parliamentary session.

## **5 2023 Autumn Statement**

Cllr Pete Marland, Chair of the Economy & Resources Board, introduced the report



providing a summary of the work by the LGA leading up to the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 22 November. It also sets out the main outcomes from the Statement that are relevant to local government. He emphasised that unfortunately when the Autumn Statement was announced Councils were not mentioned in the announcement at all and only five times in the documentation, of which two of those mentions were in reference to devolution. The Government had said they would raise Local Housing Allowance rates in Great Britain to the 30th percentile of local market rents in April 2024. Despite this rise, the intention was that it would then be frozen again. The Economy & Resources Board had discussed lobbying on this to see it uplifted in future years. Cllr Marland explained that the position of the Housing Support Fund was unclear and that the LGA would like to see it continue.

In the conversation that followed, the following points were made:

- Views were expressed that the LGA had done good work in getting the impact of the Autumn Statement front and centre as well as making the pressures on Councils very clear to the public and media.
- Members asked if there is more we can do to emphasise the importance of non-statutory services which suffer significantly due to financial pressures on Councils.
- Members raised concerns that temporary accommodation for the homeless remains an issue across the county.
- Cllr Pete Marland emphasised that work now continues into next year building towards the spring budget.
- The Chair explained that he had never seen the local government sector so pressured on finances. Further to this he raised the LGA must do all it can as a cross party organisation to ensure the Treasury understands the severe impact of these pressures.
- The Chair emphasised that as it stands even well led and well managed Councils will face severe financial situations in the very near future.
- The Chair and members expressed their thanks to the Economy & Resources Board and LGA staff for all their work on the Autumn Statement.

## **Decision**

The Executive Advisory Board:

- Noted the outcomes of the Autumn Statement; and
- Considered and endorsed the future LGA activity in the run up to the 2024/25 local government finance settlement and the 2024 Spring Budget.

## **6 Any Other Business**

Tom Chapman, Senior Adviser to the Chair, asked Members to encourage their Councils to complete the surveys on workforce capacity and agency staffing which had previously been sent to them. This would enable the LGA to analyse the data and respond fully to the DLUHC Key Performance Indicator on this.

**Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Senior-Vice Chairman in the Chair	Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
Vice-Chair Deputy-chairman	Cllr Joe Harris Cllr Bev Craig Cllr Michael Payne Cllr Tudor Evans OBE	Cotswold District Council Manchester City Council Gedling Borough Council Plymouth City Council
Members	Cllr Darren Rodwell  Cllr Peter Marland Cllr David Fothergill Cllr Morris Bright MBE Cllr Martin Tett Cllr Heather Kidd MBE Cllr Andrew Cooper Cllr Jason Smithers Cllr Tim Oliver	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council Milton Keynes Council Somerset Council Hertsmere Borough Council Buckinghamshire Council Shropshire Council Kirklees Metropolitan Council East Midlands Councils County Councils Network
Apologies	Cllr Shaun Davies Cllr Nesil Caliskan Cllr Georgia Gould Cllr Louise Gittins Cllr Satvir Kaur Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE Cllr Abi Brown OBE Cllr Bridget Smith Cllr Marianne Overton MBE Cllr Tony Saffell Cllr Robert Stewart Cllr David Baines Sir Stephen Houghton CBE Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen	Telford and Wrekin Council Enfield Council Camden Council Cheshire West and Chester Council Southampton City Council Warwickshire County Council Stoke-on-Trent City Council South Cambridgeshire District Council North Kesteven District Council  North West Leicestershire District Council WLGA North West Regional Leaders' Board SIGOMA District Councils Network
In Attendance	Joanna Killian	Surrey County Council
LGA Officers	Sarah Pickup Claire Holloway Sally Burlington Sonika Sidhu David Pealing Alexander Saul	Acting Chief Executive Head of Corporate Services Director of Policy Assistant Director of Policy Member Services Manager Assistant Member Services Manager

## LGA Lobbying Headlines – March 2024

### Critical issues

**Financial and service pressures** – We welcomed the additional £600 million in the 2024/5 Final Local Government Finance Settlement. However, this falls short of the £4 billion funding gap, in this year and next, identified in our October 2023 funding gap analysis. Our analysis excludes the resources needed to address existing underfunding in areas such as adult and children’s social care, SEND and homelessness, nor does it include funding to improve or expand council services. We will continue to make the case to the Government for sufficient funding and multi-year settlements for local government – including in the run up to the Spring Budget on 6 March - and for certainty on reforms such as the Fair Funding Review, the business rates reset and the New Homes Bonus.

**Workforce capacity** – According to our latest Workforce Survey, more than 9 in 10 councils are experiencing difficulties with senior leadership and front-line service delivery roles. We are calling for medium-term financial settlements and sufficient funding to enable effective workforce planning, recruitment and retention in addition to compliance with government’s future National Living Wage policy (which so far is unknown). The LGA is running ongoing campaigns to attract talent into the sector, such as the graduate Pathways to Planning scheme, and the first national workforce campaign for the sector, which is being piloted in the north east during 2024.

**Private rented sector reform** – The Renters (Reform) Bill - which aims to improve the system for private renters and landlords in England - has completed its Committee Stage and a date for Report Stage is awaited. While there is much in the Bill for the LGA to support, including abolishing unfair Section 21 “no fault” evictions; ending the system of assured shorthold tenancies; creating a new register of PRS landlords and establishing an Ombudsman for the PRS to help tenants and landlords to resolve disputes, further measures are required to fully realise our shared ambition for a fairer, more secure, and higher quality private rented sector. The Bill places significant new regulatory and enforcement responsibilities on councils and for the reforms to be effective, it will be vital that councils are properly resourced.

**Housebuilding** – With housing and homelessness pressures ongoing, we continue to make the case for councils to be able to resume their historic role as major builders of affordable homes through implementation of [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, and a minimum 10-year rent deal for councils landlords, to enable councils to invest.

**Homelessness** –We have commissioned research that will support our lobbying to uprate the Local Housing Allowance rate that determines the subsidy for claims in respect of people living in temporary accommodation - this currently remains capped at 90 per cent of the January 2011 rates. This work will also support our lobbying for LHA rates to continue at the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile of market rents from 2025-26. We continue to seek an explicit, national-level focus on homelessness prevention work (with an associated long-term, multi-year 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. We have expressed concern that the government's proposals to further restrict eligibility criteria for social housing and extended qualification periods could result in a rise in homelessness.

**Asylum and resettlement** – many councils will be marking the two-year anniversary of the Homes for Ukraine scheme with both guests and sponsors. We continue to stress the need for Government to take account of the cumulative impact of asylum and resettlement on local areas. Whilst it is anticipated smaller numbers are moving on from asylum accommodation, the impact of the Home Office's continuing [clearance of the asylum backlog](#), the lack of equitable approach accommodation procurement and lack of funding is being compounded by housing and support pressures from Afghan resettlement and ongoing issues with councils' support for [Ukrainians](#).

**Oflog** – The LGA is keen that Oflog succeeds in delivering real benefits to the local government sector and the wider public.

The LGA welcomes the following developments since it submitted its [evidence to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee](#):

- The first meeting of the Political Advisory Group (with other meetings for officers) has taken place
- There have been helpful discussions to inform the development of a shared narrative which will set out the respective and complementary roles and responsibilities of Oflog and the LGA, and how the two organisations will work collaboratively and minimise duplication, with a shared aim of supporting improvement in the sector.

In its written response to the committee, the LGA sought to address some apparent misconceptions which had emerged via some commentators suggesting that LG Inform was not free to access, not available to the public, not comprehensive and that somehow the data was manipulated. None of this is the case and Oflog is clear about that.

**Children's social care** – Challenges around placements for children in care, particularly those with the most complex needs, remain critical, with costs escalating rapidly amid difficulties in finding placements able or willing to provide appropriate support. We are speaking with the Department for Education about potential measures to improve sufficiency and alleviate pressure. Some councils are looking to make cuts to early help services due to ongoing budget pressures despite the additional funding announced for social care in the Local Government Funding Settlement which risks increasing demand in the longer term.

**Adult social care** – Additional funding for social care was announced in the Local Government Funding Settlement, but substantial pressures remain which we continue to highlight. In particular we are highlighting directors' concerns about meeting statutory duties

on market sustainability and prevention, the scale of the recruitment and retention challenge facing the care workforce, and persistent levels of unmet and under-met need.

We have called for adequate new burdens funding for councils to reflect the time and energy needed in the assurance process, and adequate notice of assessment for councils.

**SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)** – We are engaging with the Department for Education at both Ministerial and official levels on the testing of proposals in the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan in the nine Change programme partnership areas. 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 remain concerned 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.

## Other issues of importance for the sector

**Planning** – Legislative amendments to increase planning application fees took effect on 6 December 2023. Application fees have increased by 25% across the board, rising to 35% for major schemes.

The Government will be announcing a consultation on a new Permitted Development Right (PDR) for subdividing houses into two flats without changing the façade. It is disappointing that the Government continues to extend national permitted development rights further. We continue to call for PDRs to be urgently revoked as they undermine the plan-led system and local democracy.

**Cost of living pressures in communities** – Evidence shows that many households continue to face considerable challenges meeting their essential living costs. Councils report that demand for local welfare services remains at record levels. Despite this, the current Household Support Fund (HSF) is due to end on the 31 March. To prevent a cliff-edge in support and increased pressure on other local services, we are calling for the HSF to be extended for a minimum of year.

Alongside this, we continue to explore a clear long-term role for councils in supporting low-income households as part of their wider work to improve life chances, tackle inequalities

and improve economic prosperity, and call for local welfare funding put on a sustainable long-term footing.

**Early education and childcare** – Councils are delivering on 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 additional funding for local government to support the market and parents and carers, workforce support and capital funding, as well as highlighting the challenges facing providers financially. We have welcomed the DfE’s new recruitment campaign for early years workers to help deal with capacity issues facing providers.

**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. LGA Chair and LINZ Lead Members met with Ministers as part of the second Ministerial Local Net Zero meeting, discussing devolution and funding simplification. The LGA is working on a range of policy reforms, including building standards, retrofit skills, transport, renewable energy, nature, electricity grid.

**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.

**Smokefree Generation and single-use vapes** – We have strongly welcomed the government’s decision to ban single-use vapes, a move the LGA has campaigned for. Single use vapes are inherently unsustainable, causing issues both around litter and in the recycling process, as well as raising the risk of young people taking up vaping. As legislation progresses through Parliament, we continue to support the Government’s ambition of creating a smokefree generation.

**Education** – Since 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 DfE to set out how similar outcomes can be achieved without the need for underpinning statutory powers.

**Environment** – The LGA continue to press the case for crucial further details in the operation of Biodiversity Net Gain, government is due to publish much of this soon as part of a wider nature strategy. 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 LNRs will regard local plans.

**Waste** – The LGA continues to engage government and councils on the detail of the new Extended Producer Responsibility scheme, which transfers the costs (estimated £900m a year for England) for dealing with packaging waste from the state to producers. We are also engaging government on the detail of the ‘simpler recycling’ reforms, which while including some significant lobbying wins, present some new concerns. Government has also now published proposals for waste electricals which we are engaging with. We also continue to press the Government on the solution for treating products containing Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Emissions Trading Scheme application to Energy from Waste (we are expecting a consultation soon), waste prevention strategy and fly-tipping. The LGA is engaging with government around concerns relating to the funding formula for weekly food waste collections, including whether this adequately reflects inflationary and supply chain issues.

**Adults with care and support needs** – We remain concerned about the rollout of the ‘Right Care, Right Person’ (RCRP) National Partnership Agreement on Mental Health and Policing. Implementation should be planned in partnership with councils and other stakeholders and we need a clearer understanding of the impact on social services. We are asking for an increase in suicide prevention funding alongside the launch of the new Suicide Prevention Strategy.

We are calling for the 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 need more funding for home adaptations so that councils can upgrade existing stock and are pressing for simplification of the Disabled Facilities Grant process.

**Digital** – We have published the results of a survey of councils about the 2G/3G mobile network switch off. We have used the results of the survey to highlight concerns with the impact on technology and services from this and the transfer of analogue lines, and how the switch off will work in more rural areas.

**Civility in public life** – Through the Debate Not Hate campaign, we have continued to raise the profile of the level of harassment and intimidation faced by councillors, making the case for all councillors to be able to withhold their home addresses, and for dedicated government support and funding for councillor security. We worked with the Jo Cox Foundation to ensure local government issues were reflected in their Civility Commission’s final report, and achieved significant broadcast, print and online media coverage, with LGA spokespeople prominently represented, of councillor security concerns during February 2024.

**Access to elected office** – as part of the Cabinet Office/DWP Disability Action Plan, the government committed to introducing funding arrangements to support disabled people seeking election by 2025. We have been calling for a system to mitigate the additional costs faced by disabled candidates to replace the now-closed Access to Elected Office fund.

**Elections delivery** – The Government has published a [response to the Committee’s](#)

[enquiry on voter ID](#). The Government recommitted to continuing to review the impact of voter ID at the next two UK Parliamentary elections as per the statutory requirement. The Government also recognised that some demographic groups are more likely to be impacted by the voter identification requirement and that there is work still to be done to raise awareness of the free voter authority certificate. They did not commit to additional funding for targeted local awareness raising campaign as suggested by the Committee.



## Corporate parenting and support for care leavers

### Purpose of Report

For information.

Is this report confidential? No

### Summary

This paper provides an update on the LGA's corporate priority around corporate parenting and support for care leavers.

**LGA Plan Theme:** Putting people first

### Recommendation(s)

**That the Executive Advisory Board considers the update and makes comments and recommendations as it sees fit.**

### Contact details

Contact officer: Louise Smith

Position: Senior Adviser – Children and Young People

Phone no: 07464 652769

Email: [louise.smith@local.gov.uk](mailto:louise.smith@local.gov.uk)

## Corporate parenting and support for care leavers

### Background

1. At the LGA Conference on 4 July 2023, the Chair of the LGA Councillor Shaun Davies announced that corporate parenting, and in particular support for care leavers, would be one of his priorities for the year. At the subsequent Executive Advisory Board meeting on 20 July 2023, members of the Board commented on the proposed programme of work, which was then taken forward by officers with oversight by the Chair and Children and Young People (CYP) Board.

### Progress

2. Work is taking place across three strands, with progress on each outlined below.
3. The LGA as an employer:
  - 3.1. Work has been undertaken with the Drive Forward Foundation, a charity dedicated to enabling care-experienced young people to achieve their full potential through sustainable and fulfilling employment. Drive Forward ran a well-attended training session for all staff in December to help them to understand the experiences and potential needs of those with care experience.
  - 3.2. We are launching a trial internship programme for those with care experience this month, which is supported by Drive Forward. This scheme will draw on learning from the Civil Service Care Leavers Internship Scheme.
  - 3.3. Care leavers who apply to meet the minimum criteria for roles at the LGA will now be offered a guaranteed interview. We are also creating a special point of contact for those with care experience during the recruitment process and gathering optional data from job applicants on whether they have care experience to improve our understanding of whether we are effectively attracting applications from those with care experience.
4. The LGA as a convener:
  - 4.1. The LGA worked with the Care Leaver Covenant team to promote its work around Care Leavers' Week in October 2023. This included publishing a letter from the Chair in the Daily Express on 25 October calling on small businesses to sign up to the Covenant, and calling on councils to light up civic buildings in the Care Leaver Covenant colours to mark the start of the week.
  - 4.2. During Care Leavers' Week, the LGA launched its #StepAhead campaign, which focuses on sharing good practice and promoting positive outcomes for

and narratives about young people in care and care leavers. The campaign also provides councils with branding to promote their own offers for care leavers, providing a unified brand across local government to highlight this work.

4.3. We have worked with LAMIT (Local Authorities' Mutual Investment Trust) and CCLA (Churches, Charities and Local Authorities Investment Management) to publicise their work to support care leavers, including arranging a fringe event at the National Children and Adult Services Conference in Bournemouth in November 2023.

4.4. We are arranging a Smith Square Debate to consider "How can we take a whole-system approach to improving support for care leavers?" This is expected to take place in April 2024.

5. The LGA's work to support and improve local government:

5.1. Care-experienced graduates are now being offered dedicated support when they apply to the National Graduate Development Scheme, with some councils particularly keen to offer placements to care-experienced applicants.

5.2. The Chair of the CYP Board, Councillor Louise Gittins, joined a roundtable with Johnny Mercer MP, the Cross-Government Minister for Care Leavers, in October 2023 to highlight areas of good practice in supporting care leavers and to raise those areas of challenge where support from the government could help to improve outcomes.

5.3. We are refreshing our guidance for all councillors on corporate parenting and support for care leavers; these documents will be published in the coming months. We are also seeking updated case studies to promote good practice.

5.4. The Children's Improvement Team delivers a programme of support aimed at political and officer leadership, including peer led diagnostics, training, workshops and facilitated conversations. We have delivered support to 16 councils so far and the programme has been well received. We have developed a Must Know: Children's Services Guide to Effective Cross Council Working to strengthen the development of a whole council approach to delivering effective services for children, including those for children looked after and care leavers. We are planning to extend this to support greater joint working between top and second tier authorities, particularly in relation to housing and leisure.

- 5.5. We are planning a webinar for councillors to highlight key issues care leavers face and best practice support for care leavers. We expect this to be held in April.
- 5.6. We have been lobbying government for additional funding for children's social care to ensure that children in care and care leavers receive the best possible support, with an additional £500 million awarded through the social care grant in the Local Government Finance Settlement 2024/25 and specific reference to children's social care in the accompanying statement. We continue to call on government to address the challenge of children's services (and wider council) funding, including fully funding support for care leavers who were formerly unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, to ensure that these young people get the full support that they need.

### Voice of those with care experience

6. Both Executive Advisory Board and the Children and Young People Board were clear that the programme should be informed by those with care experience.
7. Officers have been working with a range of organisations representing those with care experience, including Become, the Care Leavers' Association and the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum. Information has also been gathered from reports developed with care leavers outlining key priority areas and experiences, while CYP Board members have attended meetings with care leavers to speak with them directly. Care leavers will attend the meeting of the CYP Board on 12 March to share their views.
8. Information gathered is informing the LGA's work programme and policy work. Some people with care experience have reported having a negative experience when engaging with councils and other organisations to share their expertise by experience, for example being the only unpaid member on a conference panel, or expectations of being asked to relive traumatic experiences in front of others. To support more positive experiences, the LGA is commissioning a short, good practice guide to support all organisations engaging with those with care experience. This will be developed by or with those with care experience.

### Feedback from policy boards

9. All of the LGA's policy boards have been asked to provide views on this programme of work, recognising that all councillors are corporate parents and that good support for care leavers is the responsibility of all council services, not only children's services. Several themes have arisen from these discussions, as outlined below.
10. **Care experience as a protected characteristic.** The Independent Review of Children's Social Care recommended that care experience be made a protected characteristic, recognising that care experienced people can face significant barriers throughout their lifetimes including direct and indirect discrimination and

inconsistent support. While the Government decided against taking this recommendation forward, at least 80 councils in the UK have now passed motions committing to treat care experience as a protected characteristic. Councillors across the LGA boards have signalled that their councils have passed this motion and recommended that the LGA considers doing so itself, or providing support to those councils which have; the CYP Board is also keen to do this. The Office of the Children's Commissioner is currently analysing responses from care experienced people to its survey on the issue, and we will use this information to inform LGA guidance. We are also planning to speak with councils that have passed this motion to understand the impact it has made and what support might be helpful, and will be doing this in discussion with the campaigner Terry Galloway who has supported many councils in this process.

11. **Good practice.** We have heard a lot of good practice from the boards, including free leisure passes for care leavers, housing support (including giving care leavers priority for social housing and developing joint housing protocols for care leavers); council tax exemptions; free prescriptions; creative skills bootcamps; paid work placements; support for care leavers post-25; support to attend further education and university; and work with partners and businesses to ensure understanding of care leavers' needs.
12. **Consistency of support.** Councillors have raised the challenge that support is not consistent across the country, with some questions around whether there should be a nationally agreed minimum offer. This is also an issue that those with care experience have highlighted as a challenge, especially where care leavers live out of area or move to a new area. To address this, a Pan-London Compact for Care Leavers has recently been launched in London to improve the consistency and standard of the care leavers offer across London, and similar work has taken place in Manchester.
13. **Councillors as corporate parents.** Concerns were raised about some district councillors being unclear on their role as corporate parents. This is being considered as part of the LGA's children's improvement offer and we are raising awareness of all councillors' corporate parenting responsibilities through communications with councils as part of the 'Step Ahead' campaign. Some Boards reported challenges in engaging all councillors in the corporate parenting offer, including low attendance at training sessions.
14. Key issues for care leavers raised across the boards include access to suitable and affordable accommodation; supporting care leavers to remain in work; the potential end of the Household Support Fund which many councils have used to support care leavers; support for care leavers who were formerly unaccompanied asylum-seeking children; the importance of sharing positive narratives about care experience to challenge negative views; and supporting care leavers with life skills.

### **Implications for Wales**

15. Children's social care is devolved in Wales however learning from the programme can be shared with the Welsh Local Government Association.

### **Financial Implications**

16. This programme is being delivered within existing budgets and prioritised within the Children & Young People work programme.

### **Equalities implications**

17. This programme is focussed on reducing inequalities for those with care experience.

18. Around one quarter of care leavers aged 19-21 are former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Specific consideration is being given as to how the specific needs of this group are recognised in the programme of work.

### **Next steps**

19. Feedback from the Board today will be taken forward by LGA officers as part of the ongoing programme of work.

## The Chancellor's 2024 Spring Budget

### Purpose of Report

**For information.**

Is this report confidential? No

### Summary

This report provides a summary of the work by the LGA ahead of the Chancellor's 2024 Spring Budget.

**LGA Plan Theme:** A sustainable financial future

### Recommendation(s)

#### Recommendation

That Members of the Executive Advisory Board note this update.

#### Action

Officers will proceed with the delivery of the LGA's work on local government finance.

### Contact details

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## The Chancellor's 2024 Spring Budget

### Background

1. This report provides a summary of work by the LGA in the lead up to the Chancellor's 2024 Spring Budget.
2. The Budget will take place on 6 March. As Executive Advisory Board (EAB) takes place the following day it is not possible to include a written summary of the announcements in the Chancellor's Budget in this paper. The LGA's on-the-day briefing will be sent to EAB members on the day of the announcement and will also be tabled at the EAB meeting.

### LGA Spring Budget Submission

3. The Chair and Group Leaders agreed that the LGA's submission to the 2024 Spring Budget would be a letter setting out:
  - 3.1.the financial challenges faced by the sector; and
  - 3.2.how local government can support the Chancellor in delivering his budget.
4. The [letter](#) was cleared by the Chair and Group Leaders. In order to meet HM Treasury's official submission deadline, the letter was submitted before the £600 million of additional funding in the Final Local Government Finance Settlement was announced.

### Financial challenges

5. The first part of the letter set out the financial challenges currently faced by the sector including the £4 billion funding gap facing local government over this year and next, and the pressures on social care, home to school transport and homelessness services. We also referred to the innovative actions such as transforming the way services are delivered through greater digitalisation and introducing shared service arrangements.
6. To address the pressures we have called on the Government to:
  - 6.1. Provide funding for councils that reflects current and future demands for services
  - 6.2. Provide multi-year and timely settlements for councils to allow them to plan and make meaningful financial decisions;
  - 6.3. Ensure that funding is sufficient for councils to recruit and retain appropriate numbers of skilled staff;
  - 6.4. Ensure that any new policy on the National Living Wage is matched by funding for councils to cover the cost; and



- 6.5. Adopt a renewed focus on prevention to address existing and future demand for services such as social care and homelessness support.

### The offer from councils

7. The second part of the submission focused on the contribution that councils can make to the delivery of key government policies while also protecting the public purse. This section drew on early thinking for the LGA's White Paper identifying three core areas where we feel there is strong evidence that investing in and empowering councils will deliver a strong return for government:
- 7.1. Driving economic growth including through skills and housing
  - 7.2. Delivering better life opportunities while protecting the public purse through sport and cultural services, and preventative public health; and
  - 7.3. Convening power and understanding place to improve public services including delivering net zero and special educational needs and disabilities.

### Lobbying activity ahead of the Spring Budget

8. There has been a continuous programme of lobbying activity on local government finance from the lead up to the 2023 Autumn Statement onwards. The Board was last given an update on this activity at its meeting on 25 January.
9. Since then, we have continued to lobby in support of our key lines. In particular, LGA engagement with DLUHC, in concert with a small number of other sector bodies, was instrumental in the sector receiving the additional £600 million ahead of the 2024/25 Final Local Government Settlement.
10. Our main **news media activity** included:
- 10.1. Briefing ITV News, Sky News and Politics Home on the funding pressures facing councils and our response to the 2024/25 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.
  - 10.2. Briefing LGA Vice-Chair Cllr Joe Harris ahead of an interview with the current affairs podcast Pod saves the UK.
  - 10.3. [BBC Online](#) reported our lines on the need for government to come up with a longer-term plan to sufficiently fund local services, following its analysis showing UK councils owe a combined £97.8 billion to lenders. Our statement was also issued to LBC News and reported across BBC local radio. LGA Vice Chair Cllr Joe Harris was interviewed live about this issue on LBC.

- 10.4. Chair Cllr Shaun Davies was interviewed live on BBC Radio 4's World at One programme to discuss the £600 million additional funding announced for councils.
- 10.5. Community Wellbeing Board Chairman, Cllr David Fothergill, was interviewed by Channel 4 News about cost pressures around adult social care.
- 10.6. Cllr Louise Gittins was interviewed on [BBC Breakfast](#) on the findings of Coram's report on the pressure on childcare places for children with SEND.
- 10.7. We have issued a statement in response to a report by the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee on the state of local government finances. The report references much of the LGA's evidence to the Committee. We briefed BBC Radio 4's Today and Good Morning Britain on our lines.
- 10.8. We issued a [press release](#) calling for the continuation of the Household Support Fund. This was in support of an LGA [survey](#) on the implications of the ending of the scheme.
- 10.9. We are currently finalising analysis of two surveys of council chief executives on the 2024/25 budget setting process and the impact of financial pressures on different service areas. Subject to members' approval there will be a range of media opportunities to use this material.
11. In terms of **Parliamentary and departmental lobbying** our main activities have included:
- 11.1. Disseminating the LGA's [Spring Budget submission](#) to MPs and Peers.
- 11.2. Briefing external stakeholders such as DHSC, London Councils and Carers UK on the LGA's Spring Budget submission
- 11.3. Briefing Marcus Fysh MP on the Local Government Finance Settlement and our Budget submission ahead of his Westminster Hall debate on [the funding and governance of Somerset Council](#).
- 11.4. LGA Chair met and discussed the final Local Government Finance Settlement with the Minister for Social Care Helen Whately MP.
- 11.5. [Briefing MPs](#) ahead of the House of Commons debate on the final LFGS
- 11.6. Briefing Steve Double MP ahead of his adjournment Debate on [funding for public services in Cornwall](#).

- 11.7. Submitting written evidence to the Public Accounts Committee inquiry on [reforming adult social care in England](#), which contained our lines on the need for extra funding.
- 11.8. Our evidence on financial distress in local authorities was referenced in the LUHC Committee's [final report](#), specifically in relation to adult social care and the funding gaps faced by councils. We were directly referenced throughout the subsequent [House of Commons debate on the report](#).
12. In terms of **marketing and social media lobbying** our main activity has included:
- 12.1. A thread promoting the [LGA's urgent call for an extension and sustainable funding to the household support fund](#) using our survey results (25k+ impressions) and reshares from a range of mayors, MPs, and relevant organisations (combined 700+ webpage views).
- 12.2. Promotion of our response on Twitter/X to the [announcement on extra £600 million in council funding for 2024/25](#) (2.2k+ impressions) with more than 690 page views on the website.
- 12.3. Dedicated post promoting the [LGA submission to the Spring Budget](#) (1.5k+ impressions), promoted in the Chair and Chief Executive weekly bulletin.
- 12.4. Other social media posts focusing on a range of topics, including calls for long-term sustainable funding following [publication of Coram-commissioned report, public health funding pressures and grant allocation](#), and the [LGA's statement on the LUHC Committee report on local government finances](#) (10.7k+ impressions in total).

### Activity on the day of the Spring Budget

13. We will publish an on the day briefing and accompanying press release on the day of the Budget.

### Implications for Wales

14. Any new funding announced in the Spring Budget 2024 will have an impact on Welsh councils through the Barnett consequential system and subsequent decisions by the Welsh government. The Welsh LGA is leading on work related to this although we are engaging regularly with the Welsh LGA and the other local government bodies in the devolved nations to exchange intelligence, ideas and consider joint work.

### **Financial Implications**

15. The work described in this paper is part of the LGA's core programme of work and is funded from core LGA 2023/24 budgets.

### **Equalities implications**

16. This paper outlines the lobbying work the LGA has undertaken ahead of the Spring Budget to support council finances. These issues affect councils and their residents as a whole and it is difficult to assess what individual impacts there are on people with protected characteristics. Improving the funding position of councils should help councils to fund work that improves services for those with protected characteristics.

### **Next steps**

17. Members are asked to note this update.

18. Officers will proceed with the delivery of the LGA's work in advance of and following the Spring Budget.

# LGA White Paper

## EAB Update

March 2024

[www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)

# Process so far

- White Paper conversations in all but 2 regions
- Sessions with political group via group offices
- Consulted via LGA Boards
- Meetings with key partners, think tanks
- Written submissions and survey
- Buy in from UK Forum

**Currently drafting content and seeking member steer on some key unresolved issues**

# Our Top 5 Asks

1. Guarantee essential services for the public by delivering funding reform
2. Help councils to plan for the future of their communities through multiyear and timely settlements
3. Be on the side of local people – a new partnership between local government and central government
4. Make money spent on local public services go further – give councils the power to convene national public services in place
5. Give all communities a chance – invest in prevention

# Key choices

- Sorting the key themes:
  - Purpose (Intro)
  - Potential (Economic growth and productivity, financial reform and prevention)
  - Partnership (Convening, place shaping, place leadership)
  - Promise (Reform: renewing total place, new constitutional settlement)
  - Priorities (Top 5 asks)
- Authorship: we / councils / local government
- Narrative and voice: how demanding do we want to be?
- “A New Local Purpose” – is this the right focus?



# Key questions

- Statutory services – can we continue with current list?
- Do some additional services need to be means tested (i.e. home to school transport)?
- What is our vision for devolution – do we continue to argue for “subsidiarity”
- What do we want to have local responsibility for?
  - Raising local taxes
  - Economic growth plans
  - Convening power over partners
- What is our offer on assurance and accountability?
- Public service reform – do we know what we don’t want?

**Recommendation: Officers to take forward steer provided by members on tone, shape and focus of white paper**





## Debate Not Hate campaign update

### Purpose of the report

For information.

Is this report confidential? No

### Summary

This report sets out the activities of the Debate Not Hate campaign since the last update members received on 7 September and sets out the plans for the campaign up until the expected UK Parliamentary election.

**LGA Plan Theme:** Stronger local economies, thriving local democracy

### Recommendation

**That the Executive Advisory Board note the progress of the 2024 Debate Not Hate campaign and that members promote the campaign through their own networks.**

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## Debate Not Hate campaign update

### Background

1. In June 2021, the Executive Advisory Board (EAB) commissioned officers to develop a new campaign to support the aims of the Civility in Public Life programme to tackle abuse and intimidation of councillors and support councillor safety.
2. The Debate Not Hate (DNH) campaign was launched at LGA Annual Conference in Harrogate, alongside [Debate Not Hate: The impact of abuse on local democracy report](#), with four main objectives:
  - 2.1. Increase awareness with the general public on what councillors do and encourage healthy debate
  - 2.2. Build understanding among councillors of the support and resources available to them
  - 2.3. Secure improved responses to abuse and intimidation aimed at councillors from relevant agencies
  - 2.4. Lobby for legislative change on councillors' home addresses and push the Government to tackle the issue of councillor abuse through a dedicated action plan.
3. The campaign is administered through the Civility in Public Life Steering Group ("Civility Steering Group"), with overall responsibility for the campaign sitting with EAB, chaired by Cllr Marianne Overton and is attended by Cllr Sue Woolley, Cllr Sharma Tatler, Cllr Cordelia Law and Cllr Peter Golds (Conservative substitute). EAB received an update on the campaign as part of the [Annual report of the Civility in Public Life Steering Group](#) on 7 September 2023. At this point, members confirmed their wish that the campaign continue into the second year. The Civility Steering Group signed off the campaign plan at their meeting on 23 January 2024. This report, specifically on the DNH campaign, was requested by members of the LGA Board at their meeting on 24 January.

### Progress since September 2023

4. From early autumn 2023 our focus has been on policy development and stakeholder engagement, along with planning for new bursts of public campaigning and communications activity in 2024. Work included:
  - 4.1. Engaging regularly with the **Home Office Defending Democracy Taskforce** to ensure councillors are included in their work around protective security for high-profile individuals. To date, this has included providing written and verbal briefings, inviting officials to present to the Civility Steering Group, organising a lived-experience roundtable between officials and councillors, and writing to Tom Tugendhat MP, as Security Minister, setting out key

priorities for councillor safety. The Minister responded in January 2024 and confirmed that he was taking specific steps to consider the safety of locally elected representatives. Additionally, on 28 February, the Home Office announced an additional [£31 million of funding to bolster security measures](#) for MPs and provide all elected politicians with a dedicated police contact to liaise with over security issues. [The LGA welcomes this announcement as we have been asking for police support to be extended to councillors for several years](#). We continue to engage with officials on this issue and have requested that the Minister attend an Executive Advisory Board meeting to discuss councillor security in due course.

- 4.2. Following the **terrorist attack in Israel** on 7 October, the LGA raised the issue of councillor security and home addresses with the Secretary of State, Michael Gove MP via a private letter. Simon Hoare MP, the Local Government Minister, responded in December, setting out the current Government advice to monitoring officers to treat requests for home addresses to be treated as sensitive interests with sympathy. However, he did not provide a timeline for the legislative change required to allow monitoring officers discretion on this point. We also worked with the **Counter-Terrorism Policing Command** to share information about new security briefings being made available to councillors. Following lobbying, these briefings are now planned to continue on an ongoing basis. In addition, we ran an additional personal safety webinar and made more funding available for safety workshops through our grant-funded improvement offer.
- 4.3. We have worked closely with the **Jo Cox Foundation Civility Commission**. The final report incorporated many of the Debate Not Hate recommendations, including that the Government should establish and resource a central unit to address abuse and intimidation of all elected politicians, greater police response and wellbeing support from relevant organisations. We supported the final report and promoted it in First magazine. Cllr Shaun Davies and Cllr Marianne Overton attended the parliamentary launch on 24 January. We will continue to work with the Commission on the implementation of their recommendations.
- 4.4. Ahead of the next set of local elections, we have worked with the **Crown Prosecution Service** to refresh their “When it goes too far” candidate guidance, which sets out when abuse or intimidation becomes criminal to ensure it is applicable to local as well as national politicians. The guidance is due to be relaunched shortly.
- 4.5. We have commissioned and published a **Safer Canvassing Guide** in advance of the local, PCC and likely general elections in 2024. The guide sets out seven principles for safe canvassing, aims to increase confidence

and preparedness for councillors who are taking part in or helping to organise canvassing session. The guide includes a range of easily adopted, practical top tips for safer canvassing, and has been widely promoted, including through bulletins and groups.

## Debate Not Hate campaign plan 2024 and evaluation

5. In January, the public campaign was relaunched with a new focus on councillor safety and the issue of councillors' home addresses being publicly available on the register of interests. The campaign plan centres around four phases running up to the UK Parliamentary General election. For the purposes of this plan, we have assumed the election will take place in the Autumn, however the plan can be adapted according to the political timetable.
6. Key activities during these periods:
  - 6.1. **Phase 1 (Jan-Feb):** Key activities:
    - 6.1.1. Updated and repromoted the Debate Not Hate toolkit with councils and councillors.
    - 6.1.2. Over the course of a few months the LGA media team worked closely with Charlie Haynes, an investigative reporter at the BBC, to highlight the impact that abuse of councillors was having on local democracy. Charlie was extensively briefed on the LGA's research in this area, put in touch with other stakeholders and spoke to councillors from across the country who had suffered the most severe abuse and intimidation.
    - 6.1.3. The campaign was featured in articles on [BBC News Online](#) and [The Telegraph](#). As well as this, a broadcast package was produced for BBC [Newsnight](#), [BBC Radio Five Live](#) as well as BBC regional TV featuring Cllr Marianne Overton. The campaign was highlighted on BBC radio stations including in; London, Sussex, Coventry, Derby, Nottingham, Sheffield, Leicester, Guernsey, Berkshire and Oxford. We estimate this reached a combined audience of 1.2 million people.
    - 6.1.4. At the time of writing, a feature article about the campaign by Chair of the Civility Streeting Group Cllr Marianne Overton is being placed in a national media outlet. This will already feature in March's edition of First magazine.
    - 6.1.5. We are planning to collaborate with Baroness Eaton in the House of Lords, as well as Rachel Hopkins MP and Layla Moran MP (both LGA Vice Presidents) in the House of Commons, to get questions tabled in both Houses on the need to clarify that councillors' home addresses should not have to be disclosed. This will utilise the context of it being

two years since the Government agreed to address the issue in their response to the Committee for Standards in Public Life in 2022.

- 6.2. Phase 2 (Pre-election period):** The aim of this period is to promote our key messages about healthy and respectful debate, educate on what councillors do for their communities and signpost relevant civility resources available. We will do this by promoting existing resources, including toolkit assets like the posters and the new safer canvassing guide and record new vox pop style videos for social media, interviewing the public as a chance to educate and challenge stereotypes.
- 6.3. Phase 3 (June-July):** This is a chance to celebrate the campaign at the LGA's annual conference and take stock at the two-year mark. We have applied for a DNH reception at LGA Annual Conference to bring together supportive councils and stakeholders. We have commissioned a new survey to refresh our DNH statistics in time for a press release highlighting the second anniversary of the campaign at conference.
- 6.4. Phase 4 (September-General election):** We will focus on the home addresses ask again in the lead-up to the next General Election and re-promote our key messages of civility and healthy debate. Officers hope to develop a series of think pieces from key stakeholders, including councillors, MPs and relevant organisations, to promote the key issues and explore the experiences of public figures.
7. Across all phases we will continue to support councils to improve the support they offer. For example, through our work with the Association of Northeast Councils to deliver a Civility Awayday for senior officers and leaders and by developing a self-assessment toolkit for councils to reflect on the support available to their members.
8. The original campaign was intended to end after two years, by July 2024, but it has been extended to take it up to the general election. Following the general election, we will reiterate our DNH lines to the new Government and commission an evaluation of the campaign against the original objectives.

### Implications for Wales

9. The Debate Not Hate campaign has primarily been run on an England-only basis. However, we engage regularly with WLGA on wider civility and democracy issues.

### **Financial Implications**

10. We have capacity within relevant teams to deliver the current plan. Any additional work requested would need to be subject to additional resourcing or deprioritising other work.

### **Equalities implications**

11. The Debate Not Hate campaign has significant equalities dimensions. Our research has found that people with certain protected characteristics may experience higher volumes of more vitriolic abuse, including women, LGBTQIA+ councillors and Black and ethnic minority councillors. We have been conscious to highlight these aspects of the research within the campaign.

### **Next steps**

12. Officers continue to implement the 2024 Debate Not Hate campaign plan.



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