



Councillors' Forum

Agenda

Thursday, 7 March 2024
12.30 pm

Hybrid Meeting - Bevin Hall, 18 Smith
Square and Online

Councillors' Forum
7 March 2024

There will be a meeting of the Councillors' Forum at **12.30 pm on Thursday, 7 March 2024** Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online.

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

11.00am	Conservative	Westminster Suite (8 th Floor)
11.00am	Labour	Beecham Room (7 th Floor)
11.00am	Independent	Eaton & Cockell Room (8 th Floor)
11.00am	Liberal Democrat	Smith Square Rooms 1 & 2 (Ground Floor)

A sandwich lunch will be available in Smith Square Rooms 3 & 4 (Ground Floor)

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:

Alexander Saul
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.

18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ www.local.gov.uk **Telephone** 020 7664 3000 **Email** info@local.gov.uk

Local Government Association company number 11177145

Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government company number 0367557

Chairman: Councillor Shaun Davies **Acting Chief Executive:** Sarah Pickup CBE **President:** Baroness Grey-Thompson

Councillors' Forum – Membership

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

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (34)	
Cllr Kevin Bentley (Senior Vice-Chair)	Essex County Council
Cllr Abi Brown OBE	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE	Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
Cllr David Fothergill	Somerset Council
Cllr Rory Love OBE	Kent County Council
Baroness O'Neill of Bexley OBE	Bexley Council
Cllr Antony Mullen	Sunderland City Council
Cllr Linda Taylor	Cornwall Council
Cllr Kelham Cooke	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Joanne Laban	London Borough of Enfield
Cllr William Nunn	Breckland Council
Cllr Colin Noble	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Philip Broadhead	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
Cllr Tim Oliver	Surrey County Council
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen	Breckland District Council
Cllr Rob Waltham MBE	North Lincolnshire Council
Cllr Michael Wilcox	Lichfield District Council
Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Patricia Bradwell OBE	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Robert Alden	Birmingham City Council
Cllr Rebecca Knox	Dorset Council
Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Louise McKinlay	Essex County Council
Cllr Sue Woolley	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Marc Bayliss	Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Matthew Hicks	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Phillip King	Harborough District Council
Cllr John Hart	Devon County Council
Cllr Mark Sutton	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Peter Golds CBE	Tower Hamlets Council
Cllr Holly Whitbread	Epping Forest District Council
Cllr Barry Lewis	Derbyshire County Council
Cllr John Fuller OBE	South Norfolk District Council
Labour (37)	
Cllr Shaun Davies (Chair)	Telford and Wrekin Council
Cllr Nesil Caliskan (Vice-Chair)	Enfield Council
Cllr Bev Craig	Manchester City Council
Cllr Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
Cllr Anntoinette Bramble	Hackney London Borough Council
Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Cllr John Merry CBE	Salford City Council
Cllr Amanda Serjeant	Chesterfield Borough Council

Cllr Vince Maple	Medway Council
Cllr Richard Henry	Stevenage Borough Council
Cllr Damien Greenhalgh	High Peak Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council
Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz	Islington London Borough
Cllr Carl Johnson	North Tyneside Council
Cllr Arooj Shah	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Naushabah Khan	Medway Council
Cllr Chris Penberthy	Plymouth City Council
Cllr Anthony Hunt	Torfaen County Borough Council
Cllr David Welsh	Coventry City Council
Cllr Jack Hemingway	Wakefield Council
Sir Stephen Houghton CBE	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Tudor Evans OBE	Plymouth City Council
Cllr Georgia Gould	Camden Council
Cllr Louise Gittins	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Cllr Satvir Kaur	Southampton City Council
Cllr Tracey Dixon	South Tyneside Council
Cllr Greg Brackenridge	City of Wolverhampton Council
Cllr David Baines	St Helens Borough Council
Cllr Darren Rodwell	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council
Cllr Peter Marland	Milton Keynes Council
Cllr Claire Holland	Lambeth London Borough Council
Cllr Bella Sankey	Brighton and Hove City Council
Cllr Tim Roca	Westminster City Council
Cllr Susan Brown	Oxford City Council
Cllr Jane Ashworth OBE	Stoke on Trent City Council
Cllr Jane Scullion	Calderdale Council
Cllr Fran Belbin	Sheffield City Council
Cllr Dr Beccy Cooper	Worthing Borough Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Andrew Morgan	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Cllr Clyde Loakes	Waltham Forest London Borough Council
Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
Cllr Eamonn O'Brien	Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Peter Mason	Ealing Council
Cllr Shama Tatler	Brent Council
Cllr John Cotton	Birmingham City Council
Cllr James Lewis	Leeds City Council
Cllr Helen Holland	Bristol City Council
Cllr Liam Robinson	Liverpool City Council
Liberal Democrat (15)	
Cllr Joe Harris (Vice-Chair)	Cotswold District Council
Cllr Bridget Smith	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Lucy Nethsingha	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Alan Connett	Devon County Council
Cllr Heather Kidd MBE	Shropshire Council
Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE	Portsmouth City Council
Cllr Gareth Roberts	Richmond upon Thames London Borough
Cllr Sarah Osborne	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Liz Green	Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

Cllr Vikki Slade	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
Cllr Carolyn Lambert	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Tim Pickstone	Cumberland Council
Cllr Caroline Leaver	North Devon District Council
Cllr Howard Sykes MBE	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Jon Ball	Ealing Council
Independent (12)	
Cllr Marianne Overton MBE (Vice-Chair)	North Kesteven District Council
Cllr Caroline Jackson	Lancaster City Council
Cllr Andrew Cooper	Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Chidi Nweke	Epping Forest District Council
Cllr Tony Saffell	North West Leicestershire District Council
Cllr Craig Browne	Cheshire East Council
Cllr Johnny Denis	Lewes District Council
Cllr Nate Higgins	Newham London Borough
Cllr Sue Baxter	Bromsgrove District Council
Cllr Colin Mann	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Cllr Caroline Topping	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Georgina Hill	Northumberland Council

Agenda

Councillors' Forum

Thursday, 7 March 2024

12.30 pm

Hybrid Meeting - Bevin Hall, 18 Smith Square and Online

Item	Page
1. Welcome, Declarations of Interest	
2. Chair's Update	1 - 2
3. LGA Board Chair Reports	
<i>Verbal update at meeting</i>	
a) Children and Young People Board - Cllr Louise Gittins	3 - 6
b) Improvement and Innovation Board - Cllr Abi Brown	7 - 12
c) Safer and Stronger Communities Board - Cllr Heather Kidd	13 - 18
<i>For noting</i>	
d) City Regions Board - Cllr Satvir Kaur	19 - 20
e) Community Wellbeing Board - Cllr David Fothergill	21 - 22
f) Culture, Tourism and Sport Board - Cllr Liz Green	23 - 24
g) Economy and Resources Board - Cllr Pete Marland	25 - 30
h) Local Infrastructure and Net Zero Board - Cllr Darren Rodwell	31 - 38

i)	People and Places Board - Cllr Martin Tett	39 - 40
4.	Digest of the last meeting held on 25 January 2024	41 - 44
5.	Lord Morse, Interim Chair, and Josh Goodman, Chief Executive - Oflog	45 - 46
6.	Donna Jones, Chair - Association of Police and Crime Commissioners	47 - 48
7.	Minister of State (Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire)	49

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, 6 June 2024, 12.30 pm, Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

Chair's update

This report covers the Chair's activities from 25 January to 7 March 2024

LGA and Ministerial/Parliamentary business

JANUARY	
26	Meeting with Communications Team on forward planning
29	Meeting with Baroness Grey-Thompson, LGA President
31	Phone call with Cllr David Mellen, Leader of Nottingham City Council
FEBRUARY	
5	Weekly call with Acting Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive
19	Meeting with Communications Team on forward planning
19	Meeting with Helen Whately MP, Minister of State for Social Care
20	Meeting with Group Leaders
20	Weekly call with Acting Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive
21	Phone Call with Incoming Chief Executive
29	Meeting with LGBTQIA+ Network
MARCH	
5	Regional roundtable with East of England on the LGA White Paper
6	Spring Budget media (TBC)
7	Councillors' Forum
7	Executive Advisory Board
7	Weekly call with Acting Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive

Meetings with organisations and individuals

JANUARY	
29	Meeting with Lord Adebawale, Chair, NHS Confederation
FEBRUARY	
26	Meeting with Sarah Calkin, Editor of Local Government Chronicle with Head of News

Events and speaking engagements

JANUARY	
29	LGA Parliamentary Reception with Minister Hoare, Jim McMahon MP, and Helen Morgan MP
FEBRUARY	
13-14	UK LGA Forum, Belfast – Meetings between LGA, WLGA, COSLA, and NILGA
27	National Care Service Summit – Unison and Fabian Society
MARCH	
7	Smith Square debate on AI

Children and Young People Board – Report from Cllr Louise Gittins (Chair)

Children's social care

1. On 31 January I chaired the Children's Improvement Board, bringing together colleagues from the LGA, Ofsted, ADCS and Department for Education to consider pressing issues in relation to children's services and where we can work together to drive improvements. This included a discussion around support for care leavers and an update on work taking place in the London region.
2. On 12 February I attended a meeting with Foundations, the What Works Centre for Children and Families, to discuss the use of Family Group Conferencing. This is part of a broader piece of work that Foundations is doing in relation to supporting councils to understand the evidence for different interventions and to make the case for using these more widely where appropriate. Other members of the Board have also met with Foundations to offer their local perspectives.
3. After dedicated lobbying across the sector, it was positive that the Government announced an additional £500 million for adult and children's social care in the final Local Government Finance Settlement. However, while this will help to stave off immediate pressures, councils will still need to raise council tax and many will need to make cuts to local services in order to plug funding gaps.
4. I was pleased to join Josh MacAlister, Chair of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, and Andy Smith, Vice-President of ADCS, on The Local Authority Podcast to discuss the crisis in children's services. This was a good opportunity to get into some of the nuances of the issue, including the respective roles of central and local government in addressing the challenge and considering what good practice was already taking place.
5. It has been very positive to hear feedback from other policy boards which have been considering the issue of support for care leavers. With all councillors having corporate parenting responsibilities, and good support for care leavers going far beyond children's services, these discussions have been an opportunity to bring forward a wide range of ideas and good practice which are now being fed into the LGA's programme of work on this issue.

SEND

6. On the 11 February I spoke at an National Education Union-led fringe event at the Labour local government conference on the challenges councils are facing in meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND, as well as the associated pressures on high needs budgets. Emma Rose, the NEU President and Ellie Costello, the director of Square Peg, a community interest company that

is seeking to reform the education system for children that have been excluded, are too anxious to attend or disengaged from school.

7. On the 13 March 5-7pm I'm chairing a webinar on positive, effective and sustainable SEND systems for leaders of councils, lead members with a SEND portfolio and children's scrutiny chairs. Topics being covered include statutory responsibilities for members, the proposals contained in the government's SEND and Alternative Provision improvement plan and learning from the new Ofsted/CQC SEND area inspection framework. I would like to encourage you to attend and you can book your place [here](#).

Early years

8. In advance of the expansion of funded entitlements, lead members signed off the [resource pack on early years education and childcare](#). This document sets out council responsibilities in relation to early years education and childcare and provides some key questions that councillors could consider in this area.
9. We [submitted a briefing](#) in advance of the debate on Nursery Provision in the South West, highlighting the challenging situation facing early years providers and councils to ensure sufficiency of childcare and support children.

Children's mental health

10. We [submitted a briefing](#) in advance of the debate on the role of schools in caring for mental health and wellbeing of pupils and their development as community and family members, highlight the importance of in and out of school interventions and how councils can support children's mental health.
11. The first meeting of the Children and Young People's Board working group on children's mental health took place, setting out the scope of the work, ensuring a shared understanding of challenges and identifying next steps.

Children's health

12. On 13 February, I co-chaired a webinar called "Measles cases on the rise: Information for local government officers and councillors with Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board. Over 500 delegates attended the webinar. Speakers included Dr Thom Waite, Deputy CMO, Dr Vanessa Saliba, Consultant Epidemiologist, UKHSA, Ruth Tennant, DPH of Solihull Council and Michelle Kane, Vaccine and Immunisation Strategy Lead at NHS England.
13. I also co-authored a new blog titled, ["Time to catch up: A joint call to action on measles and vaccination"](#) with Cllr David Fothergill on the on the importance of



increasing measles vaccination rates.

Board meeting

14. I chaired the Children and Young People Board meeting that took place on the 23 January, where discussions focussed on children's mental health, LGA and CCN-commissioned research on the shape of a reformed SEND system and the development of children's social care and early help practice guides.
15. I also chaired a follow-up SEND focussed workshop for Board members to discuss in greater detail the LGA/CCN-commissioned research, which took place on the 20 February.

Contact details:

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Improvement and Innovation Board – Report from Cllr Abi Brown OBE (Chairman)

Office for Local Government (Oflog)

1. We continue to engage with officials to ensure that the proposed work of Oflog is developed in collaboration with the sector to deliver value for Local Government and the wider public and confirm that the work complements, and does not duplicate, that which already exists.
2. In previous discussions I raised the need for a regular meeting for political leaders on Oflog. A first meeting of the Oflog Political Advisory Group took place on 6 February, chaired by Lord Morse. I was invited in my role as Chair of the Improvement and Innovation Board, alongside the LGA Chair and Group Leaders, Chairs of London Councils, DCN, CCN, SIGOMA, UCN, Key Cities Group, Core Cities Group and the M10. The advisory group will serve as a platform for regular consultation and feedback from political leaders in the sector on Oflog's development.
3. We welcomed Lord Morse (Interim Chair) and Josh Goodman (Chief Executive) of Oflog to the most recent meeting of the Improvement and Innovation Board on 21 February for a dialogue on the updated position on Oflog. The board engaged with Lord Morse and Josh Goodman in constructive discussion and provided feedback on the proposed work of the department and the potential impact on the sector.
4. 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.
5. We will also be responding to the consultation on [Oflog's draft corporate plan by 14 March](#) on behalf of the sector.

Improvement and Assurance Framework

6. The LGA is mapping the [Improvement and Assurance framework](#) for the local government sector, in response to a recommendation in the December 2022 Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) report for the LGA that the LGA should “lead the design of a reshaped sector support and assurance framework for local government, reflecting the different needs seen across the sector now.”

7. The second phase of engagement with the sector (leaders and chief executives in regions, professional bodies and other stakeholders) is currently underway, due for completion in the next couple of weeks. In addition to seeking comments on the revised draft framework, this provides an opportunity for stakeholders to consider ways in which current checks and balances can be simplified or enhanced to provide greater assurance for the sector.
8. We encourage everyone to review the [draft framework and associated materials](#) and provide comments via the [online survey](#).
9. A revised version of the framework, with associated guidance and tools for use by councils, will be considered by the Improvement and Innovation Board at its next meeting.

Peer Support Review

10. We continue our work to strengthen the Corporate Peer Challenge offer to ensure it is achieving the most positive impact, and that it meets the needs of the sector.
11. In April, we are launching our strengthened and more robust CPC offer for councils. This strengthened offer builds on the changes we've already made around stronger requirements for the publication of reports and action plans, and the requirement for councils to have a follow up CPC Progress Review and publish the follow up report no later than twelve months after the original CPC took place.
12. The planned improvements we are making include enhanced training for peers, a greater emphasis on performance, data and evidence and a stronger focus on governance and culture to reflect the current draft statutory Best Value Guidance for councils.
13. To help with the timing of CPCs, we are also introducing a detailed timetable for all councils that will highlight a timeframe window to assist them in planning for their CPC in line with the expectations set out in the draft Best Value Guidance. The expectation is for councils to have a Corporate or Finance Peer Challenge at least once every five years.

Sector Support Programme 2023/24

14. Our [sector support programme for 2023/24](#) continues to provide critical support and drive improvement across local government. Across the 5 themes of Governance, Leadership, Finance, Workforce and Transformation, all councils have been able to access a comprehensive support offer, shaped directly through engagement with councils, to meet their needs.

15. We continue to see high engagement in our programmes, and satisfaction from those supported. Highlights from Quarter Three include:

- 15.1. Our **National Recruitment Campaign** marketing local government as a career of choice has launched. Over 350 attendees have engaged in regional events, helping to shape the pilot campaign in the North East.
- 15.2. **Post elections support** has been provided to 111 councils, with 100% of respondents in receipt of this support satisfied with the support provided.
- 15.3. Over 2,200 councillor placements have already been provided on **training and development opportunities** through the leadership programme.
- 15.4. Applications for **NGDP Cohort 26** launched in October 2023, attracting high levels of interest with over 4,800 applicants.

Improvement Activity

Peer Challenge

16. Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) continues to be a critical element of the LGA's sector support offer to councils. To date the LGA has delivered 50 corporate and finance peer challenges, with further delivery scheduled during February and March 2024.

17. A key part of the enhanced corporate peer challenge offer is the Progress Review, and to date we have completed 37 progress reviews with many more confirmed or in final discussion for the remainder of the year.

18. If you would like to discuss your council having a CPC, please contact your [Principal Adviser](#).

Leadership

LG Challenge 2024

19. In December the [cohort of talented officers](#) taking part in LG Challenge 2024 were announced, and in January they completed their first challenge, hosted by Newcastle City Council. The challenge topic was "how can the council influence citizen behaviour so that residents will better follow the waste hierarchy", focusing on minimising waste production and increasing reuse and recycling. The challenge film can now be viewed on the [LG Challenge website](#).

20. The second challenge was hosted by Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council on 20-21 February and focussed on culture and local heritage. Teams were asked to create a destination marketing plan that connects three of their major

cultural sites, Dean Clough Mills, Piece Hall and Shibden Hall. The film of the second challenge is set to be released soon.

Be a Councillor campaign

21. The LGA's Be a Councillor Campaign has been working with expert partners [NALC](#), [Elect Her](#), [50:50 Parliament](#), [Shout Out UK](#) and the [Disability Policy Centre](#) on a series of events designed to encourage people from a diverse range of backgrounds to put themselves forward to be a councillor.
22. Events focus on supporting different groups of people from backgrounds who are currently under-represented in Local Government to find out more about the role of a councillor and how to go about putting yourself forward for election. We look forward to a further 7 scheduled events. For more information on the programme and upcoming events please visit the [Be a Councillor events page](#).

Councillor E-learning

23. The LGA has revised and updated its scrutiny eLearning module. The new module has been revised, taking into account changes around governance in recent years. It has been completed in advance of the 2024 elections as an opportunity for new and less experienced councillors to gain a good grounding in the principles of scrutiny when elected. It complements and reflects the workbook which was revised in the autumn of 2023.
24. To register for e-learning or to find out more, visit the [Councillor e-learning](#) webpage.

Finance

25. Following a successful bid for over £600,000 additional funding from DLUHC, the delivery of additional finance improvement support by the LGA in collaboration CIPFA is now underway. The additional funding support includes the delivery of training programmes to finance professionals and elected members and support the further development of a curriculum for s151 officers.

Publications and engagements

This section outlines the publications that have occurred since the previous Councillors' Forum including public affairs, media releases, articles in First magazine and publications on our website.

Media Releases

26. [Welcome to a Bright Future](#), 6 February 2024

I wrote an article in the MJ about our National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) and the benefits for councils on taking on an NGDP candidate, providing extra capacity and capability to better reflect the communities they serve.

Local Government First Magazine

27. [Local Government Recruitment](#), Dated February 2024

I wrote an article for First magazine on the launch of the National Recruitment Campaign, which is being piloted in the North East. I highlighted the ongoing issue of recruitment and retention across the sector and the value of a career in local government, captured in the campaign focus on “making a difference”.

Publications

28. [Seven principles for safer canvassing: A guide for councillors and candidates](#), 18 January 2024

A guide outlining seven principles for safer canvassing and some helpful, practical hints for canvassers.

29. [A councillor's workbook on effective councillor/ officer relationships](#), 18 January 2024

A workbook designed as an introduction to the basic principles of the councillor and officer relationship, including the roles and responsibilities, how and why tensions rise and practical advice for handling difficult situations.

30. [A councillor's workbook on facilitation and conflict resolution](#), 19 January 2024

A workbook to provide councillors with the key skills needed in relation to facilitation and conflict resolution to enable you to be effective in your councillor role.

31. [A councillor's workbook on handling complaints for service improvement](#), 23 January 2024

A workbook on the role of the councillor in handling complaints, including how to support your residents by directing them to appropriate resources and channels for complaints, and to provide representation where appropriate.

32. [A councillor's workbook on effective opposition in local government](#), 1 February 2024

A workbook produced in collaboration with Dr Stephanie Snape, New Leadership Foundation, examining effective opposition in Local Government and providing a learning and development aid to support opposition councillors in undertaking their key role in local democracy.

33. [A councillor's workbook on community leadership](#), 8 February 2024

A workbook providing insight into the key skills, approaches and tactics that make an effective ward councillor and community leader.

34. [The Path to Inclusive Footways](#), 10 February 2024

An independent report by Sustrans and Transport for All, commissioned by the LGA, which details the barriers faced by people accessing the footway and the challenges facing local authorities when making footways accessible.

35. [Early Education and Childcare Resource Pack](#), 16 February 2024

A helpful resource pack that outlines the responsibilities and role of councils in education and childcare, including insight into the funding entitlements and legislation around supporting our youngest residents.

Events

This covers events where Improvement and Innovation Board members have been directly involved, rather than all events delivered during this period covered by the board's remit.

Conservative Councillors Local Government Conference, 24 February 2024

36. I was pleased to take part in a panel on Local Government Finance at the Conservative Local Government conference. I also co-led a workshop with Board member Cllr William Nunn, entitled "I'm a councillor, help me stay in here", which highlighted our Leadership Development programmes.

BBC Breakfast, 25 February 2024

37. I was interviewed live on BBC Breakfast to discuss the growing funding pressures being felt across the sector as councils across the country commence the budget setting process.

Contact details

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

Licensing

1. In February, Cllr Woodbridge chaired the LGA's annual licensing conference. The conference examined the government's plans and expectations for licensing as well as the challenges facing licensing authorities. We had around 85 delegates and the event received excellent feedback.
2. We have [produced a table which seeks to map the levers local regulatory services](#) have at their disposal to help deliver councils' net zero ambitions. It is split into four broad categories of activity, which are then broken down into individual touchpoints identifying specific work areas and actions that can influence the journey to net zero. Councils can download the document and edit it to tailor it to local circumstances.
3. In preparation for the expected consultation on the Government's proposal to transfer control of taxi and private hire vehicle licensing to combined and upper tier authorities (as set out in the Levelling Up White Paper), officers surveyed licensing authorities who will be affected by this proposal. We received around 80 responses and the research team are currently analysing the responses. To support this work, we held a roundtable discussion at the end of January with county councils who would be likely to be given this responsibility to understand their views.

Modern slavery

4. Cllr Saunders and Cllr Dawson, the Safer and Stronger Communities Board's anti-slavery champions, met with the new Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC), Eleanor Lyons, to hear about her priorities and to brief her on the LGA's work to support councils to tackle modern slavery. The IASC agreed to attend a future Safer and Stronger Communities Board meeting.
5. At a recent modern slavery network meeting, officers indicated it would be helpful to have LGA support around training. LGA officers facilitated an officer led training working group meeting and we will develop some support for councils as a result of this meeting. One option discussed could be for the LGA to collate council focused training resources in one place on its website, such as the free e-learning modules Coventry and Birmingham Councils have co-produced.

XL Bully Ban

6. Officers continue to work with colleagues at Defra to secure new burdens funding for councils to support them with new responsibilities as a result of the XL Bully Ban.

7. We have also written to the Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, as well as the Policing Minister regarding the ban. Historically, councils have always relied on police dog legislation officers to 'type' suspected banned breeds so that they can be put down if councils collect them as strays. A number of police forces have withdrawn this service with no notice, and the National Police Chief Councils has written to all police forces advising them to do the same. Many councils are deeply concerned about this: whilst councils do have the powers to destroy a dog without the police typing it, most do not have staff trained to type dogs as it is not in their job description and they are worried they will soon run out of kennel space. Our letter asks for the Secretary of State's help in resolving this situation, and to encourage police forces to reconsider or at least restore the service temporarily so councils can implement some sort of contingency. Officers continue to work with officials at Defra and partners in the third sector to try and tackle this issue.

Water Safety

8. Cllr Kidd and Cllr Dawson, the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board's water safety champions, recorded a video on behalf of councils to celebrate the RNLI's 200th birthday and to thank staff and volunteers for all of their work to keep communities safe. This was shared on the LGA's social media channels.

Victims and Prisoners Bill

9. Following feedback from councils and the LGA, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) have dropped a proposal to establish a requirement for local partners to introduce a new partnership board to support victims. They will instead set some criteria by which existing partnership structures can be used. A working group will be established as the guidance on using existing structures is finalised.

Domestic Abuse

10. The LGA hosted a successful webinar on 30 January 2024, regarding how to tackle domestic abuse amongst those with no recourse to public funds. This is a complicated landscape and this was reflected in the interest of attendees (circa. 270). This was Chaired by Cllr Heather Kidd in her role as Chair of the Safer, Stronger Communities Board.
11. The second webinar will take place on 27 February 2024 and it will focus on best practice in Joint Needs Assessments. This will be chaired by Cllr Kelly Middleton in her role as the LGA's Domestic Abuse Champion.

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)

12. The LGA and The Office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner have issued a joint survey to local authorities to understand more about the challenges of undertaking Domestic Homicide Reviews. The survey's results will help articulate

the cost of DHRs, how many are taking place and the availability of independent Chairs. The LGA will be publishing the results, as will the Office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner.

13. Following publication the LGA's intention is to set up a DHR network to ensure best practice can be shared and challenges can be represented to Government with an evidence base. Initial talks with The Office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners have taken place to explore if this is a network we should establish together.

Building Safety

14. The LGA continues to support the launch of the Building Safety Regulator (BSR). This is new territory for the Government and there are concerns over whether adequate resources are available to achieve the aims of the BSR in its initial five years.
15. It is too soon to say whether resources are adequate but the LGA is commenting on monitoring and possible mitigation.
16. It is clear the first year will see a focus on buildings over 50m tall with more than 11 residential units as well as a mixture of ACM clad buildings and large panel systems that meet certain criteria.
17. Some concern has been expressed that not all building control officers will be qualified under the new regulatory regime by the time of the launch. This could provide significant bottlenecks for local authorities.
18. Cllr Kidd met the Chair of the Health and government concerns about the introduction of the new building safety regime in April created by the Building Safety Act 2022. In particular Cllr Kidd raised the registration and certification (competency) process for council building control inspectors, and the possibility there will be a shortage of registered and supervised building control inspectors, and the impact this will have on councils to deliver their building control functions. The discussion covered the numbers of staff registering and booking places on assessment courses, and Cllr Kidd subsequently wrote to Sarah Newton asking for further details on the numbers to provide reassurance about the likely position in April and the need for possible mitigation measures. During the meeting Cllr Kidd also raised concerns about the potential overlap between the work of the Regulator of Social Housing and the Building Safety Regulator (part of HSE) around fire and structural safety in social housing high rise blocks and the need for both regulators to jointly provide councils with clarity about their roles and functions. In addition the meeting covered the financial pressures on councils and the opportunities to look at different funding models for environmental health related work including moving to fee for intervention.

Community cohesion

19. We are continuing to support councils to respond to community cohesion and extremism challenges, through our work with the [Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism](#) (SIGCE). This has included a series of practitioner roundtables on current cohesion concerns and signposting guidance and resources on the SIGCE's knowledge hub platform. A further event on tension monitoring is planned for later this month.

Prevent

20. A 1½ day free residential [Leadership Essentials course for elected members on Prevent and counter extremism](#) is taking place on 14-15 March to explore local government's role in this space. The programme will explore national and local approaches to Prevent delivery, counter extremism and cohesion work, including exploring changes to the Prevent duty; national and local threats, including the online and conspiracy theory space; emerging and evolving challenges; and communications and community engagement on divisive issues. Spaces are still available; further details and booking are via grace.collins@local.gov.uk

Martyn's Law

21. In February, the Home Office launched a [consultation into the new Terrorism \(Protection of Premises\) Bill](#), also known as 'Martyn's Law', for premises that fall under the standard tier of the Bill. The Bill proposes imposing requirements in relation to certain premises and events to increase their preparedness for, and protection from, a terrorist attack. The consultation sets out revised proposals for standard-tier premises, that would have a capacity of 100-799 individuals. Officers held a roundtable that invited colleagues from across the sector (community safety, health and safety, leisure and libraries) and sought their views on the revised proposals. We will be drafting a written response to the consultation.

Fire Services Management Committee

22. The LGA hosted a Fire Leadership Essentials Programme in Warwick on 6 & 7 February 2024. The programme included sessions on scrutiny and governance, the Home Office's work on fire reform, building safety, the inspection regime, responding to inspections, climate change, the LGA's work on fire policy and reflections from an FRA Chairman. Equality, diversity and inclusion was a golden thread throughout the programme, especially given the recent concerns regarding the culture of the fire service. There were nine attendees in total and we are awaiting feedback on the programme.

23. The LGA will be hosting its Annual Fire Conference in Bristol on the 12 & 13 March 2024. We have confirmed speakers including the minister and shadow minister of crime, fire and policing and representatives from HMICFRS, NFCC, Mind, DLUHC and various fire services.



Councillors' Forum

7 March 2024

24. Councillor Biederman attended HMICFRS's Fire Performance Oversight Group in February, which provides enhanced monitoring for fire and rescue services that are not performing as expected. He highlighted the work the LGA has done to assist the services.

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City Regions Board – Report from Cllr Satvir Kaur (Chair)

Future of cities

1. Building on the success of last year's Urban Summit, and the Future of Cities drinks reception at the LGA's conference, the Board has agreed to host a third Urban Summit on 18 June 2024. Members have agreed that as we look to the next general election, the third urban summit will have a more focused agenda to give the Board and its partner Special Interest Groups a platform to engage key national decision makers and politicians, to amplify our offer: that, with the right policies, finances and space to deliver, cities can produce better outcomes, not just for urban areas, but for the whole country.

Strategic transport

2. The Board met in Manchester to discuss our new strategic transport remit, without which we cannot ensure local people benefit from local growth. We heard from Jason Prince, director of the Urban Transport Group; Henri Murison, Northern Powerhouse Partnership chief executive and Councillor Bev Craig, Leader of Manchester City Council. Councillor John Merry, Deputy Mayor of Salford then hosted us at their 100 Embankment development. The Board is clear that greater local leadership of transport planning and investment must be underpinned by a clear vision and integrated into the wider economic agenda for cities. We will now develop a work programme to progress this agenda.

Levelling Up

3. The NHS Confederation, through its Health Economic Partnerships work programme and ICS network, established a time-limited health and devolution working group. The aim of the group was to understand the priorities, opportunities, and challenges for ICS leaders, how this intersects with English devolution to date and the emerging devolution deals. The Board co-sponsored the group alongside the People and Places and Community Wellbeing Boards. Four meetings took place in April, June, July and September and officers from the LGA and NHS Confederation are finalising the report encapsulating the findings from the working group.

Employment and skills

4. The LGA has submitted written evidence to the House of Lords [Public Services Committee inquiry into the transition from education to employment for young disabled people](#). In addition, Councillor Martin Tett along with two sector colleagues gave oral evidence [to the Committee](#) highlighting the role of councils in supporting young disabled people and funding pressures, and our Work Local model for improving the system.
5. To build on the City Regions and People and Places Boards' joint work to ensure economic inclusion, Pragmatix Advisory has been commissioned to examine

7 March 2024

how the transport system impacts people and places by limiting or enabling access to skills, training, and the labour market. The project has engaged with the sector and will present its draft findings/report in March 2024.

6. The LGA continues to support discussions between councils and the Department for Work and Pensions on the design of Universal Support, a new employment support programme to be grant funded to (clusters of) councils and devolved authorities. Designed to help people back into work, including people with health conditions, the programme is set to be phased in across areas later this autumn. We have secured a meeting between LGA politicians and Mims Davies MP, the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work to ensure there is a clear understanding and joint commitment to delivering this, as well as to negotiate any outstanding issues. It is likely to take place during the next month.
7. As we move towards a General Election in 2024, all political parties are interested in ensuring investment for infrastructure, jobs and skills gets to places. Our aim is that a returning Government or new administration will adopt policies to improve public employment and skills services, so they work better for people, places and local employers, and which take us towards our Work Local employment and skills devolution ambitions. The LGA has established a working group of officers from councils, devolved authorities and local government partner bodies to develop finer detail.

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

Mental health, learning disabilities and unpaid carers

1. On 22 Jan, Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz attended a panel discussion on preventing post-custody suicides hosted by the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody (IAPDC) and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) calling for adequate public health funding and earlier clarity around grant allocations.
2. On 5 February, Cllr Victor Chamberlain gave oral evidence on disabled people in the housing sector to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee's inquiry calling for Government to fully fund the Disability Facilities Grant.
3. On 20 Feb, Cllr Rebecca Hopfensperger chaired a webinar on Health in an Ageing Society. Professor Chris Whitty presented the Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report and was joined by Directors of Public Health from Cumberland and Hampshire County Councils. There were more than 200 people in attendance.
4. On 28 Feb, I responded to Housing LIN's APPG on Sheltered Housing, calling for funding for updating, extending and improving existing sheltered housing.
5. In terms of media work, we published five suicide prevention case studies on 15 Feb and called for an extension of local suicide prevention funding: [Suicide prevention funding end could have 'life or death consequences' | Local Government Association](#)

Adult Social Care and Health

6. On 6 February 2024, Cllr Gillian Ford attended a roundtable hosted by Sue Ryder and chaired by Rachael Maskell MP, member of the Health and Social Care Committee, to discuss how ICSs can take a better approach to planning and delivering palliative and end-of-life care.

Press statements

7. The Board has made a number of media statements:
 - 7.1. [Councils need support and funding for adult social care assurance process](#)
 - 7.2. [LGA on Smokefree 2030 Consultation](#)
 - 7.3. [LGA on Lancet cancer survival study](#)
 - 7.4. [Councils warn of rise in synthetic opioid use](#)
 - 7.5. [LGA urges Family Hub extension](#)
 - 7.6. [LGA responds to Care Workforce Pathway](#)

- 7.7. [LGA responds to UKHSA HIV survey](#)
- 7.8. [STI surge: Sexual health services at breaking point due to rising demand](#)
- 7.9. [Councils urge parents to take up MMR vaccine in light of outbreaks](#)
- 7.10. [LGA responds to new Childhood obesity figures](#)
- 7.11. [Councils hail ban on single-use vapes](#)
- 7.12. [Councils ramp up the pace as the Daily Mile reaches significant milestone](#)
- 7.13. [LGA on public health grant allocations](#)
- 7.14. [LGA responds to Government dental access plan](#)
- 7.15. [Nearly 119 operations a day to remove rotten teeth in children](#)
- 7.16. [LGA on PAC drug misuse report](#)
- 7.17. [Further urgent investment needed in social care – LGA on King's Fund report](#)
- 7.18. [Suicide prevention funding end could have 'life or death consequences'](#)

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Culture, Tourism and Sport Board – Report from Cllr Liz Green (Chair)

Culture

1. Cultural funding has been in the spotlight recently as a number of councils have made announcements about reductions in funding. I wrote an article for [Arts Professional](#) to explain the funding pressures councils are facing, and also contributed to a podcast for the Association of Cultural Enterprises. Cllr Barry Lewis also appeared on BBC Front Row to talk about this.
2. In order to provide a coordinated and impactful voice on the importance of councils to the cultural ecology – as the biggest public investor in culture – the LGA has co-founded a new National Cultural Alliance to bring together local government organisations working on these issues.
3. Cllr Julie Jones-Evans chaired a webinar with UK Music on how councils can support music tourism. This explored in more detail the recommendations from the Here, There and Everywhere report, and included presentations from Liverpool and Cheltenham Councils.
4. Cllr Jones-Evans also represented the LGA at a Reading Agency roundtable, chaired by Lord Parkinson as Libraries Minister, to discuss the findings of their 3-year pilot to extend the reach and impact of the Summer Reading Challenge to disadvantaged communities and with families new to library use.
5. Cllr Darryl Smalley chaired our first leadership essentials session for new and emerging library leaders, funded by Arts Council England. This new offer for officers was significantly over-subscribed and shows the level of demand for free training support for future leaders.

Sport

6. Cllr Peter Golds attended a children's activity roundtable hosted by Dame Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner. Cllr Golds emphasised the importance of joining up the offer from schools and councils, and that this required appropriate funding to make it work.
7. Cllr Gary Ridley hosted our leadership essentials training for portfolio holders with an interest in physical activity, funded by Sport England. This introduces portfolio holders to the latest in national policies and funding, key decision making tools and effective practice from across the sector.
8. Over the next two years the LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport Board will take an in-depth look at a range of inequalities with the aim of sharing effective practice

within the sector. The first of these will focus on [supporting women and girls to be active](#) and the call for evidence now seeking insights and effective practice from members.

Tourism

9. Government has announced that it will introduce a [registration scheme](#) and a [new planning use class](#) to help councils better manage the mix of visitor accommodation in their areas. This follows sustained lobbying by the LGA and partners. LGA officers will be working with civil servants to develop the detail of the schemes.
10. Ian Leete, Senior Adviser, attended the [Tourism Industry Council](#), the joint government and industry advisory body on tourism. This discussed plans to improve skills provision, make the sector more environmentally sustainable, and boost business events.

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Economy & Resources Board – Report from Cllr Pete Marland (Chair)

Local Government Finance Settlement

1. Following the [Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement](#), which was announced on 18 December, the LGA and others highlighted the financial challenges councils are facing. On 24 January, following a campaign by the LGA and others on this, the Secretary of State issued a [written update](#) announcing an additional £600 million of funding for local government. This was confirmed in the [Final Local Government Settlement](#) which was published on 5 February and approved by Parliament on 7 February.
2. Ahead of the Parliamentary debate on 7 February, the LGA issued a [briefing](#) for parliamentarians welcoming the additional £600 million in funding for local government but noting that councils will still need to raise council tax and many will need to make cuts to local services in order to plug funding gaps. The briefing called for the Government to ensure that all councils have sufficient funding to deliver their 2023/24 budgets, set balanced budgets for 2024/25 and develop medium-term financial strategies that are not characterised by substantial funding gaps. These points were echoed by many parliamentarians during the debate, particularly by LGA Vice Presidents, including Chair of the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee Clive Betts MP, who also highlighted concerns around the number of councils that could potentially face Section 114 notices within the next year.

Levelling up, Housing and Communities Committee report

3. On 29 January, the House of Commons Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee [published a report on financial distress in local authorities](#). The report leans on much of the LGA's evidence and data, backing our call for the Government to inject £4 billion to head off the financial crisis facing all councils, and says that the next Government, regardless of their political persuasion, should embark on a fundamental review of the systems of local authority funding, local taxation, and delivery of social care services. The Vice-Chair of the Board, Cllr John Fuller (now Lord Fuller), gave oral evidence to the Committee last year.

LGA Submission to the Chancellor's 2024 Spring Budget

4. Ahead of the Chancellor's 2024 Spring Budget on 6 March 2024, the LGA has made a formal submission to HM Treasury in the form of a [letter](#) from the Chair.

5. The first part of the letter set out the financial challenges currently faced by the sector and restated our asks for sufficient funding provided through multi-year settlements. The second part provided evidence on the contribution that councils can make to support the Chancellor in delivering his budget including LGA key asks in areas such as: housing; social care; culture and leisure; and delivering net zero.

Business Rates

6. Councils have been working with the Valuation Office Agency following the passing into law of the [Non-Domestic Rating Act 2023](#) including the introduction of the one year Improvement Relief in April 2024.

Council Tax

7. A response to the DLUHC consultation on [exemptions for the empty and second homes council tax premium](#) is still awaited. As reported to your last meeting, the LGA's [response](#) says that the Government needs to assure itself that it has adequately taken account of the sector's views on whether new regulations are necessary, or whether expanding the [existing guidance on empty homes](#) is sufficient. Meanwhile councils are proceeding with planning for charging council tax premiums for homes which have been empty for one year from 1 April 2024, and for second homes from 1 April 2025.

Capital and Investments

8. Economy and Resources Board lead members approved responses to two consultations affecting capital. Firstly we [responded](#) to DLUHC's [call for views on wider flexibilities for the use of capital finance and borrowing](#). In our response, we welcomed proposed new flexibilities to use capital to finance some revenue activities, but we emphasised that the flexibilities are no substitute for a long-term plan to sufficiently fund local services through multi-year settlements. Secondly we [responded](#) to the final consultation on [changes to statutory guidance and regulation for Minimum Revenue Provision](#). These changes are due to come in in April 2024, but we have called for a deferral due to the proposals not being finalised before local authorities set their 2024/25 budgets.

Local Accounts and Audit

9. The Government and the National Audit Office are currently running consultations on [addressing the audit backlog](#) and associated [changes to the audit code of practice](#). These consultations are due to close on 7 March and draft responses from the LGA were due to be discussed at the Economy and Resources Board meeting on 29 February.

10. Economy and Resources Board lead members approved a [response](#) to a consultation from HM Treasury on [proposals](#) for the valuation of non-investment assets for financial reporting purposes, following on from the [thematic review in 2023](#).

Fire Pay 2024

NJC for Brigade Managers (Gold Book)

11. The National Joint Council for Brigade Managers, which covers senior managers in fire and rescue services across the UK, has reached agreement to apply a 3 per cent increase on basic pay with effect from 1 January 2024.

Teachers' Pay 2024

12. The [remit for the 2024 School Teachers' Review Body](#) (STRB) process, marking the commencement of the independent pay review for teachers' pay in 2024/25, was published in December. In January, over 400 members participated in a webinar launching a LGA survey. Local authorities were invited to contribute to our biannual teachers' pay and conditions survey to inform the written evidence submitted to the STRB by national employers ([NEOST](#)). Members endorsed the NEOST response, pending the inclusion of additional background evidence.
13. However, the DfE has not met the statutory deadline of 21 February for consultees to submit their evidence (including an estimate of what percentage increase in costs an 'average school' can afford for 2024/25) to the STRB. The NEOST evidence has been submitted on time as the STRB encouraged consultees to adhere to this deadline. The oral evidence session for NEOST has been scheduled for 9 April. The STRB is expected to send their recommendations to Government on the pay uplifts for teachers and school leaders by May

Minimum Service Levels during strike action

14. The LGA responded on 30 January to the [Department for Education's consultation on minimum services levels \(MSLs\)](#) in education in the case of strike action. This follows the introduction of the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels Act 2023) under which an employer in one of the defined sectors, including education, has or will have the power, should it wish, to issue a work notice to a union in the case of strike action, specifying the individuals it requires to work during the strike and the work they will be required to do, to meet MSLs. The Government's proposals seek to balance the priority of stability of education provision for children with the right of employees to take lawful industrial action. The LGA's response focuses on issues raised relating to the workability of the proposed regulations and their impact on industrial relations beyond instances of industrial action. There is also a clear concern reflected that the proposals expose

employers to considerable risk of legal challenge that does not seem to have been fully considered by the Department.

15. The LGA secretariat to the teachers' collective bargaining framework submitted a separate but substantively similar response on behalf of the collection of employer representative organisations that form NEOST.
16. Following the consultation on MSLs in fire in May 2023, the Home Office [announced](#) on 8 February 2024 the implementation of MSLs. Regrettably, the Home Office did not discuss their final proposals with either the National Employers or the LGA, leaving a number of questions around the workability of these Regulations unanswered. The Home Office has now agreed to discuss the next steps.
17. Members will have noted the experience of MSLs in the rail sector where employers have decided not to deploy the work notices that form the central provision of this legislation. One rail company indicated it was considering doing so but reversed this course of action when the relevant trade union proposed extended industrial action in response.

DfE Child and Family Social Worker Agency Workforce Consultation

18. We have worked closely with The Department for Education to shape the [consultation on draft statutory guidance](#) on the use of agency social workers in local authority children's social care. The consultation closed on 28 February, with final guidance due to be introduced from summer 2024. Councils are encouraged to comply with the new [rules on the use of agency children and family social workers](#) in advance of statutory guidance being introduced where they are able to do so. We will be responding on behalf of the LGA and will be taking part in further discussions as part of a project group with DfE to implement the resulting actions.
19. We are launching the National Social care health check survey in February 2024 and 149 councils have signed up to take part. The survey is designed to better understand the experience of social workers, occupational therapists and non-registered social care professionals and to help councils address their development, digital skills, wellbeing and workloads which can in turn help with retention and recruitment issues.

Pensions

20. The LGA Pensions Team continues to support councils who are LGPS administering authorities to implement the **McCloud** remedy, the legislation for which became effective from 1 October 2023. The team published the first part of a [guide for administrators](#), as well as [template letters](#) and a [member factsheet](#).

This complements updates to the [LGPS member website](#) which include videos and easy to understand materials about the McCloud remedy.

21. DWP has updated the regulations around the expected date that pension schemes will be ready for their members to access their data through the **pensions dashboard**. The latest connection date is now 31 October 2026, but we expect the LGPS connection date to be earlier than this, and it will be included in statutory guidance. The LGA pensions team has published a draft [dashboards connection guide](#) for LGPS administering authorities.
22. On 10 January 2024, the Pensions Regulator (TPR) published its updated [General Code of Practice](#) which is expected to be effective from 27 March 2024. The General Code brings together a number of TPR Codes (including Code 14 – which was drafted specifically for public sector pension schemes like the LGPS) and introduces some new concepts and a new structure. The Scheme Advisory Board Secretariat is planning awareness-raising sessions, as well as guidance to support LGPS funds adapting to, navigating and implementing the new Code.

DLUHC response to Constitutional Committee's report on voter ID

23. 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 campaigns as suggested by the Committee.

DLUHC consultation on Street Vote Development Orders

24. We [responded](#) to the [Government's consultation](#) on a new route to planning permission that would bypass the local planning processes led by democratically elected members. It would also require a vote process to proceed. We set out that the proposal does not appear to properly consider the impact on electoral services teams properly, or the implications for local planning and place-making.

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Local Infrastructure and Net Zero Board – Report from Cllr Darren Rodwell (Chair)

Housing, Planning and Homelessness

Government withdraws plans to remove HMO licensing requirements for asylum accommodation

1. The government has confirmed that it has withdrawn plans to introduce changes that would have temporarily exempted houses procured by Home Office contractors from Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing requirements. The draft regulations that had been laid in Parliament have now been withdrawn. The LGA provided a [briefing](#) in advance of a discussion in the [Lords](#) last year and engaged with government and councils to raise concerns about the proposed changes and potential impacts if current standards were not maintained.

Rural Rough Sleeping Guide

2. The LGA jointly published a [local authority practice guide](#) with English Rural on evidence-led approaches to tackling rough sleeping in rural communities. A webinar was held to launch the report and included speakers from the Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities, English Rural, and local authorities. More than 70 delegates attended the webinar.

Awaab's Law Consultation

3. The LGA hosted a discussion session with over 40 attendees from across local government and arms-length management organisations to inform the LGA's response to the upcoming Awaab's Law consultation. The consultation seeks views on the proposed timeframes that landlords will be required to investigate and fix reported health hazards.

Temporary Accommodation (TA) Subsidy

4. The LGA has procured and commenced a research project to review councils' TA subsidy loss for 2022/23 (and mid-year estimates for 2023/24) and compare this to the likely impact of allowing the TA rate to rise in line with rents. The project is expected to be completed in early summer.

Street Vote Development Order consultation

5. The LGA responded to the Government's [consultation on the detailed operation of street vote development orders](#), a new route to planning permission introduced in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. We are concerned that street

vote development orders will not bring material benefit to the development and delivery of the homes and infrastructure we need in this country. We also do not consider that the proposals as set out in this consultation have been properly considered with regards to elections or the role of local authority democratic services' teams, nor will they have positive implications for planning and place-making.

Government's long-term plan for housing consultations

6. Two consultations were announced as part of Secretary of State for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities Michael Gove's "build on brownfield now" statement on 13 February 2024; one on [permitted development rights](#) and one on [brownfield land development](#). The LGA will be responding to both these consultations in due course.

Right to Buy Position Statement

7. The LGA published a [position statement on the Right to Buy scheme](#) which sets out our belief that the system in its current format does not work for local communities and those in need of social housing. We call on Government to implement the asks in our statement and give councils the control, powers and flexibilities to make the scheme work for everyone whilst protecting our stock of social homes.

Social housing allocations consultation

8. The LGA along with 15 other organisations from the [housing sector wrote a joint letter](#) to the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and the Secretary of State for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities Michael Gove on the announcement of the [consultation on reforms to social housing allocations](#), setting out our concerns and calling on the Government to urgently help deliver more social homes.

Building Safety Levy consultation

9. The LGA responded to the Government's second technical consultation on the Building Safety Levy [*link to be inserted once published on website*]. We have [previously urged the Government to reconsider](#) their proposal to require more than 300 local authorities to set up separate, individual processes to act as a collection and administration agency for the BSL. This remains our view. We have suggested that a more streamlined, cost-efficient approach to raising the additional funds for building safety remediation, which would benefit both central and local government, would be to expand the scope of the Residential Property Developer Tax (RPDT).

Leasehold and Freehold Reform Bill

10. We have highlighted our concerns that the Bill does not make non-discretionary provision for new burdens funding for lead enforcement authorities required to enforce against a new redress scheme. It is vital that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities conducts a full assessment of the resources councils need to effectively administer the redress scheme and the costs of setting up a scheme, and allocate new burdens funding accordingly.

Waste

Mandatory weekly food waste collection

11. Defra has confirmed the allocation of transitional capital funding to individual waste collection authorities towards the cost of implementing mandatory, weekly food waste collections in 2026. Some councils have raised concerns over allocations and are encouraged to speak with Defra about these. Work continues to understand the on going cost of mandatory food waste services, including transitional and ongoing revenue costs.

Persistent organic pollutants in household waste

12. The LGA has written to Defra to highlight concerns about the need for a long-term solution to dealing with persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in household waste. The issue has been raised previously but remains a concern, with the burden of added cost and complexity of finding a safe disposal route falling on councils.

Producer responsibility for packaging

13. Defra has appointed an interim Steering Group to oversee the process of setting up a Scheme Administrator for extended producer responsibility for packaging. The LGA successfully lobbied for a seat on the Steering Group and represents the interests of local government, alongside representatives from the LGAs of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The LGA has co-ordinated a Local Authority Technical Advisers Board to feed into the steering group and bring frontline expertise into the process of packaging reform. The Steering Group had their initial meeting on 2 February 2024.

Climate Change and Energy

International learning on the governance of national and local collaboration on climate action

14. ARUP has submitted the final draft of the international learning on the governance of national and local collaboration on climate action report. The five

example countries they have explored are Netherlands, Norway, South Korea, New Zealand and United States. Early indications are that there are some lessons that could be learned from each of the case study countries.

Local Net Zero Forum

15. An officer level forum meeting was held on 18 January with an agenda building on the work of the task and finish groups. Since then, government has launched the following page providing some information on previous meetings [Local Net Zero Forum - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Just Transition

16. Officers have been working on a report on what a Just Transition to net zero should be which will include recommendation for government. We held a roundtable with representatives from Citizens Advice, Young Foundation, Think NPC, Women's Environmental Network, Heat Trust and member councils including Newham and Cheshire East to help inform the report which will be finalised spring 2024.

Regional Energy Strategic Planners

17. Marzia Zafar from Ofgem attended the Feb 24 LINZ board meeting to introduce the establishment of Regional Energy Strategic Planners (RESPS) that are due to be operational early 2025. There are likely to be between 8 and 10 RESPs in England and they will plan the electricity generation and transmission infrastructure required to meet net zero. Officers are now working with Ofgem to influence the geographical boundaries of the RESPs so they work for councils spatial planning functions.

Heat Network Zoning Event

18. I (Councillor Darren Rodwell) attended an in-person roundtable event on the Heat Network Zoning Consultation hosted by Lord Callanan on 21 February. I emphasised the importance of councils leading the coordination of heat network zoning as place-shapers, housing providers, convenors of communities, delivery agents, commissioners, and owners of assets but also the need for the role to be fully funded.

Heat Network Zoning Consultation

19. Lead members have approved a consultation response submission to Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) on their secondary Heat Network Zoning consultation. The response supports government's view that councils will be first choice for Heat Network Zone Coordinator, but highlights that the resources currently being suggested are unlikely to be sufficient. Officers will

continue to work with DESNZ on the detailed planning.

Local Government Roundtable

20. Officers held a local government roundtable on What next for local climate action on 14 February. Representatives from DCN, CCN, UK100, Core Cities, London Councils and Local Partnerships were in attendance and we agreed to work more closely on our shared objectives.

Data Sharing Agreement

21. LGA LINZ officers, working with LGA Legal have agreed a Data Sharing Agreement with Ofgem, that the LGA considers suitable for members to sign up to. The data sharing agreement will enable councils to use ECO Flex (money from energy suppliers) to tackle fuel poverty through the installation of insulation measures. The agreement has been sent to all Heads of Legal with the council having the final choice on whether to sign.

Environment

Flooding

22. Councillor Emily O'Brien gave evidence in the House of Commons to a one-off EFRA committee on flooding on 20 February 2024. Councillor O'Brien highlighted the LGA's call for a place-based approach to flooding and devolution of funding to councils to tackle the risk of surface water flooding.

Water quality

23. The impact of poor water quality on coastal councils was highlighted in a recent study by the LGA's Coastal SIG. The LGA issued a [press release drawing attention to inadequate testing of water quality](#), calling for more testing and better data analysis to help councils tackle poor coastal water quality and the impact it is having on tourism and local economies.

Transport

Pavement accessibility

24. The LGA published the [independent report on inclusive footways](#) that it commissioned from Sustrans and Transport for All. The report details the barriers faced by people, especially those with a disability, walking or wheeling on the footway and the challenges facing local authorities when making footways accessible. The [LGA called for powers](#) to ban pavement parking to be extended to all areas across England to save lives and make our streets safer, more than three years after a government consultation to introduce them ended.

Transport and economic inclusion

25. Pragmatix have completed their interviews and data analysis and submitted a draft of the report commissioned by the LGA looking into local transport demand and barriers to mobility. It shows how this varies across different geographies, life stages of residents and their economic resources, and how local authorities must have the powers and flexibility to vary their transport policies.

Traffic demand management policies

26. The LGA has commissioned CPCS to look at the potential tools available to councils to manage traffic demand to support the country's transition to Net Zero, as well as dealing with local issues such as congestion and poor air quality. We are keen to understand the political challenges in taking up effective available measures, any lessons from existing schemes, and to draw out any recommendations for central government to help councils who want to implement demand management measures but currently feel unable to.

Local and national powers for local transport policy

27. LGA has commissioned Riber Consulting to look into the balance of local transport powers between central and local government, and the impact this has on achieving shared national and local ambitions on decarbonisation and improving local transport accessibility.

Rail and Urban Transport Independent review

28. The LGA submitted a response to the Urban Transport Group's independent review into how a future government could accelerate connectivity within and between the UK's key urban areas. This reiterated our view that councils as leaders of place should have a much greater role deciding on changes to train services, and the use of stations and railway land. It will be published online soon.

EV chargepoint street works access reform consultation

29. Government launched the consultation '[Street works access: electric vehicle chargepoint operators](#)' on 5 February that proposes among other things to give EV charge point operators the right to carry out street works using a permit rather than a licence. The LGA will respond to this consultation.



Councillors' Forum

7 March 2024

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07 March 2024

People and Places Board – Report from Cllr Martin Tett (Chairman)

Digital

1. The Board has continued to support councils with the digital switchover. Following publication of the [digital switch readiness survey](#) to understand councils' position on awareness, planning and implementation, the [digital switchover hub](#) has been updated in collaboration with key partners and social media assets and the leaflet contained within the [communications toolkit](#) have been revised incorporating feedback from councils.
2. The issue of provider engagement and household readiness has continued to gain traction in the national press. In response we are in the process of further expanding our digital communications campaign and facilitating a round table co-chaired by Helen Morgan MP and Cllr Mark Hawthorne to understand what further steps could be taken to improve awareness and the potential impacts of the digital switchover amongst local residents and councils.

Levelling up

3. The NHS Confederation, through its Health Economic Partnerships work programme and ICS network, established a time-limited health and devolution working group. The aim of the group was to understand the priorities, opportunities, and challenges for ICS leaders, how this intersects with English devolution to date and the emerging devolution deals. The Board co-sponsored the group alongside the City Regions and Community Wellbeing Boards. Four meetings took place in April, June, July and September and officers from the LGA and NHS Confederation are finalising the report encapsulating the findings from the working group.

Employment and skills

4. The LGA has submitted written evidence to the House of Lords [Public Services Committee inquiry into the transition from education to employment for young disabled people](#). In addition, Councillor Martin Tett along with two sector colleagues gave oral evidence [to the Committee](#) highlighting the role of councils in supporting young disabled people and funding pressures, and our Work Local model for improving the system.
5. To build on the City Regions and People and Places Boards' joint work to ensure economic inclusion, Pragmatix Advisory has been commissioned to examine how the transport system impacts people and places by limiting or enabling access to skills, training, and the labour market. The project has engaged with

07 March 2024

the sector and will present its draft findings/report in March 2024.

6. The LGA continues to support discussions between councils and the Department for Work and Pensions on the design of Universal Support, a new employment support programme to be grant funded to (clusters of) councils and devolved authorities. Designed to help people back into work, including people with health conditions, the programme is set to be phased in across areas later this autumn. We have secured a meeting between LGA politicians and Mims Davies MP, the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work to ensure there is a clear understanding and joint commitment to delivering this, as well as to negotiate any outstanding issues. It is likely to take place during the next month.
7. As we move towards a General Election in 2024, all political parties are interested in ensuring investment for infrastructure, jobs and skills gets to places. Our aim is that a returning Government or new administration will adopt policies to improve public employment and skills services, so they work better for people, places and local employers, and which take us towards our Work Local employment and skills devolution ambitions. The LGA has established a working group of officers from councils, devolved authorities and local government partner bodies to develop finer detail.

Local growth

9. The Board, alongside the City Regions Board, commissioned Henham Strategy to work alongside local areas to work through the challenges and opportunities of LEP integration, with the findings published for other areas to benefit from as they plan their future economic support and leadership offer. The findings from this research will be used to support the LGA's lobbying of central government to provide further support to councils and combined authorities with the next steps following LEP integration.

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Minutes of last Councillors' Forum meeting

Councillors' Forum

Thursday, 25 January 2024

Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions
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1	Welcome, Declarations of Interest
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The Chair welcomed attendees to the Councillors Forum and introduced Joanna Killian, who would join the LGA as Chief Executive from March 2024.

2	Crown Commercial Services
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The Chair welcomed Eddie Gibson (National Senior Account Manager, Local Communities and Housing) and David Bemrose (Head of Account Strategy for Local Communities and Housing Sector) from the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) to give a presentation to the Councillors Forum. Eddie and David presented on the work of the CCS, in particular that they assist Councils to drive services that bring value. It was explained that the CCS is owned by the public sector and that it self-finances with any surplus going back into the public purse. They explained that CCS does not set policy but helps to implement policy across the public sector estate.

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

- CCS was now a business partner of SOLACE.
- A number of examples of policies CCS had supported the implementation of were shared with Members including investing in an account management team dedicated to facing into the local government sector. Every Council would have a dedicated account manager.
- CCS had undertaken a new procurement and invested money in the LGA to take on this role.
- A request was made for CCS to look into work, such as peer challenges, focused on climate change.
- CCS also reminded Members that they were holding a roundtable with Councillors on 6 February 2024.

3 Chair's Update

Members noted the Chair's update. The Chair emphasised that the LGA welcomed the news of the additional £600m funding for Local Government, which had been announced since the 2024/25 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement due to lobbying from across the sector. The Chair explained it was almost unprecedented for a Government to announce additional funding at that point in the year. He also emphasised that it was not enough to address the amount of gaps and challenges facing Council budgets.

The Chair expressed his thanks to Simon Hoare MP, the Minister for Local Government, for his engagement with the sector and that he was looking forward to continuing working with the Minister.

4 LGA Board Chair Reports

The Chair invited the following Chairs to update on the work of Boards:

- Children and Young People Board – Cllr Louise Gittins
- Local Infrastructure and Net Zero Board – Cllr Darren Rodwell
- People and Places Board – Cllr Martin Tett

6 Digest of the last meeting held on 19 October 2023

The digest of the last meeting was agreed as a correct record.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman Members	Cllr Shaun Davies	Telford and Wrekin Council
	Cllr Joe Harris	Cotswold District Council
	Cllr Bev Craig	Manchester City Council
	Cllr Anntoinette Bramble	Hackney London Borough Council
	Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr John Merry CBE	Salford City Council
	Cllr Amanda Serjeant	Chesterfield Borough Council
	Cllr Vince Maple	Medway Council
	Cllr Richard Henry	Stevenage Borough Council
	Cllr Chris Penberthy	Plymouth City Council
	Cllr David Welsh	Coventry City Council
	Cllr Jack Hemingway	Wakefield Council
	Cllr Tudor Evans OBE	Plymouth City Council
	Cllr Tracey Dixon	South Tyneside Council
	Cllr Darren Rodwell	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council
	Cllr Peter Marland	Milton Keynes Council
	Cllr Bella Sankey	Brighton and Hove City Council
Cllr Susan Brown	Oxford City Council	
Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council	

Cllr David Fothergill	Somerset Council
Cllr William Nunn	Breckland Council
Cllr Colin Noble	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Tim Oliver	Surrey County Council
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen	Breckland District Council
Cllr Michael Wilcox	Lichfield District Council
Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Louise McKinlay	Essex County Council
Cllr Phillip King	Harborough District Council
Cllr Mark Sutton	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Peter Golds CBE	Tower Hamlets Council
Cllr Barry Lewis	Derbyshire County Council
Cllr John Fuller OBE	South Norfolk District Council
Cllr Bridget Smith	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Gareth Roberts	Richmond upon Thames London Borough
Cllr Jon Ball	Ealing Council
Cllr Andrew Cooper	Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Daniel Humphreys	Worthing Borough Council
Cllr Julia Lepoidevin	Coventry City Council
Cllr Paul Marshall	West Sussex County Council
Cllr Adam Brown	West Northants Council
Cllr Ian Hollidge	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Simon Oakley	West Sussex County Council
Cllr Lynette Sullivan	Hertsmere Borough Council
Cllr Heather Williams	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Harvey Cohen	Hertsmere Borough Council
Cllr Bobby Bennett	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Steve Foster	Hampshire County Council
Cllr Rowena Bass	Kingston upon Thames London Borough
Cllr Isobel Darby	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Jane MacBean	Buckinghamshire Council

Lord Amyas Morse
Chairman of the Office for Local Government's (Oflog)



Lord Morse was appointed the interim Chair of the Office for Local Government (Oflog) by the Secretary of State on 25 January 2023.

Between 2009 and 2019 he was the Controller and Auditor General of the National Audit Office, an independent Parliamentary body.

Member of the House of Lords of the United Kingdom since 2021.

He was created **Baron Morse**, of Aldeburgh in the County of Suffolk on 26 March 2021.

Josh Goodman
Chief Executive of the Office for Local Government (Oflog)



Mr Goodman has served in the interim role since the launch of Oflog and is an experienced civil servant who has worked with local government in HM Treasury, the Department for Education and No 10 Downing Street, and most recently as director for social housing in DLUHC.

Donna Jones
Chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC)



Nominated as Chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) on 12 July 2023 she is also the elected Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

She was a Magistrate in Hampshire for sixteen years and when appointed by the Lord Chancellor in October 2005, she was the youngest member of the judiciary in England and Wales.

From 2014 – 18, Donna was the first woman to be elected the Leader of Portsmouth City Council in Hampshire. She was born in Hampshire and has a professional background in banking.

The Rt Hon Chris Philp
Minister of State (Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire), Home Office



Appointed Minister of State (Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire) in the Home Office on 26 October 2022.

Previous appointments:

- Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office between 14 October 2022 and 25 October 2022.
- Chief Secretary to the Treasury from 6 September 2022 to 14 October 2022.
- Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport between 17 September 2021 and 7 July 2022.
- Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Home Office and Ministry of Justice from 13 February 2020 to 16 September 2021.
- Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice from 10 September 2019 to 18 December 2019
- Minister for London at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government from 18 December 2019 to 13 February 2020.

LGA location map

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Tel: 020 7664 3131
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Public transport

18 Smith Square is well served by public transport. The nearest mainline stations are: Victoria and Waterloo: the local underground stations are

St James's Park (Circle and District Lines), **Westminster** (Circle, District and Jubilee Lines), and **Pimlico** (Victoria Line) - all about 10 minutes walk away.

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

Bus routes – Horseferry Road

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

Bus routes – Millbank

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

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

Cycling facilities

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

Central London Congestion Charging Zone

18 Smith Square is located within the congestion charging zone.

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

Car parks

Abingdon Street Car Park (off Great College Street)

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

