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Build back local

e had a wonderful three days at the LGA's virtual annual conference in early July and heard from a range of great speakers (p9-10).

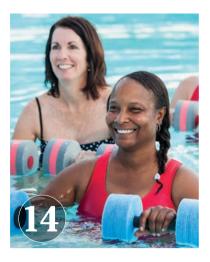
You can still access all the main plenary discussions – on everything from climate change to a child-centred recovery and council housebuilding to planning reform – via the conference website at www.local.gov.uk/lga-virtual-annual-conference-2021.

We also launched our new conference report and campaign, 'Build back local' (p12, see www.local.gov. uk/build-back-local), which calls for local government to be trusted and empowered to deliver recovery locally to ensure it has the greatest impact on our communities.

A key focus of this campaign is adult social care (p16), where in addition to calling for sustainable, long-term reform, we have also been focusing on the need for a care workforce strategy (p15).

Elsewhere in this month's first, we celebrate the 200th programme of the LGA's flagship Leadership Academy (p18); look at how young people can make a difference in their communities by becoming councillors (p20); and hear from Camden's Cllr Rishi Madlani about what local government can do to support LGBT+ colleagues and residents from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities (p22).

Cllr James Jamieson is LGA Chairman



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NEWS

Residents 'want a say on new homes'

New polling by the LGA has found that eight in 10 residents want to be able to have a say on all new homes built in their local community.

It found 82 per cent of respondents felt it was "very" (49 per cent) or "fairly" important to be able to comment on individual plans for all housing developments in their local area.

The polling comes ahead of wideranging proposals for planning reforms expected in a Planning Bill later this year, which would see larger areas 'zoned' for development.

The LGA has said it is vital that a local, democratically led planning system remains in place so local communities can continue

to have their say on individual developments, and ensure the right homes are built in the right places, supported by the right infrastructure.

The LGA would also like to see the removal of permitted development rights, which, for example, allow offices to be converted to flats without planning permission.

The Government has moved to allay the negative impact on communities of permitted development rights by introducing space standards for new homes.

However, this does not address the standards of housing already delivered under permitted development, and concerns

remain about the quality, design, safety and location of this type of housing.

Cllr David Renard, the LGA's Housing and Planning Spokesperson, said: "Councils want to work with government to address the national housing shortage and develop the detail of its Planning Bill.

"However, as our polling shows, the overwhelming majority of local residents say it is important for them to be able to comment on all housing developments in their local area.

"People are rightly proud of where they live and so it is vital their voice can be heard whenever, for example, a developer wants to build homes in a neighbouring field or in their street.

"This is why it is critical that the Planning Bill ensures a locally led planning system remains in place, where communities have the power to shape and define the area they live in, street by street, and not just place by place."



CQC data on care home covid deaths

ore than 39,000 care home residents died with coronavirus in England in the year from 10 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, new figures suggest.

Data from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) also shows the highest number of deaths involving COVID-19 in a single care home was 44, while 21 homes had more than 30 Covid-related deaths.

The CQC said it has not found a link between standards of care in a home and the number of deaths, and that many factors are involved – including the levels of coronavirus in the local community and the age and health of residents.

The CQC data is based on notifications from care home managers, who have a duty to inform the regulator when one of their residents dies.

Cllr David Fothergill, the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board Chairman, said every life lost to COVID-19 is a tragedy and that it was a "solemn reminder" of the number of deaths in care homes across the country involving coronavirus.

He also praised the "incredible dedication and commitment" of

the care workforce who put themselves at risk, and said it was important for care providers and their employees to continue to receive all support necessary in what is still a volatile and difficult period.

Cllr Fothergill added: "It is vital that this data and everything else we have learnt during the pandemic is used to improve our response and understanding about how best to support people's safety and wellbeing, as we look to build back better."

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'Epidemic of violence' against women

The LGA has warned that girls and young women are being deliberately and increasingly recruited into drug-dealing 'county lines' gangs and subjected to horrific sexual violence.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services has also warned that women and girls are being subject to an 'epidemic of violence' that requires a 'radical and bold' shift in how authorities in England and Wales tackle crimes that disproportionately affect female victims.

Although those involved in county lines are predominantly male, the involvement of females is said to be underestimated and growing because they are considered less likely to arouse suspicion.

The gangs use violence, intimidation, sexual exploitation and the offer of money or drugs to threaten people to stay in the group. Young women have been raped, passed around dealers as 'gift girls' as reward for making profits, and even shot at.

The LGA says the focus should be on

multi-agency working to address the root causes of serious violence, with greater emphasis and investment on early intervention and prevention.

The Government has published its new 'Tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG)' strategy, which includes a national communications campaign aimed at creating behaviour change, better support for teachers delivering the relationships, sex and health education curriculum, and the introduction of a national policing lead.

Cllr Nesil Caliskan, Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, said: "Councils are determined to help tackle VAWG in our local communities, and work alongside police, the NHS, and charities to make sure we do all we can to protect women and girls from all forms of abuse.

"To embed change across all communities, a cross-government approach is crucial moving forward... [and] the strategy must be matched with adequate resources and long-term funding."



ully vaccinated critical workers – including in local government – will be able to leave covid-related self-isolation to go to work in exceptional circumstances, under new plans to prevent serious disruption to vital public services.

As **first** was going to press, the Government published a list of 16 sectors in which fully vaccinated staff may be exempt from self-isolation if they are 'pinged' as a close contact of someone confirmed to have COVID-19.

Such workers will have to take daily tests



and return to quarantine for 10 days if a test is positive.

Cllr James Jamieson, LGA Chairman, said: "Councils continue to work hard to try and keep services running as best as possible, while protecting the health and wellbeing of our workforce.

"However, the large numbers of close contacts being required to self-isolate is having an impact on some council services due to staff shortages.

"Directors of public health, working in councils, are already under huge pressure as a result of the need to sign off on self-isolation exemptions for social care staff as well as many daily enquiries from other employers in their local area who believe their staff should be exempt.

"Clarity is urgently needed about what their role will be with regards to the application of exemptions locally while messaging from government must be crystal clear to avoid raising unrealistic expectations. The exemption approval process must also be quick and clear to understand."



Social care reforms delayed

As first was going to press, it was reported that a Government announcement on adult social care would be delayed until the autumn, despite ministers apparently reaching an agreement to fund reforms by raising national insurance.

Sajid Javid, Health and Social Care Secretary, had told delegates at the LGA's annual conference in July that the Government would set out "the general sense of direction" of its social care reform plans "quite soon". The LGA had been lobbying for an announcement ahead of the parliamentary summer recess. But national media reported that details of the funding mechanism could not be agreed in time.

Meanwhile, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services has found that almost 75,000 disabled and older people and carers are waiting for an initial assessment of their health and care support needs, as social services struggle to cope with an avalanche of requests for help arising from the pandemic.

Its annual budget survey also found that, despite the worsening delays in meeting people's needs, councils are having to plan for savings of £600 million this year.

Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "COVID-19 has reinforced the urgent need for long-term reform of adult social care, including sustainable funding that grows in line with demand and investment to tackle the funding gap between the cost of providing care and what councils pay.

"We also face a huge recruitment and retention crisis in the care workforce, with more than 100,000 vacancies. Action is urgently needed on pay, conditions, professionalisation, skills and training.

"The Government's proposals should set out a positive vision for what the future of care and support should be and be brought forward as soon as possible."

See p12-13, p15, p16-17.

In brief Coastal health

national strategy is needed to tackle poor health and lower life expectancy in seaside towns, a report from England's chief medical officer says. Professor Chris Whitty's report calls for cross-government action to address overlapping issues such as bad housing and poor health. LGA Community Wellbeing Board Chairman Cllr David Fothergill said: "Port cities, seaside towns and coastal villages should have access to the same opportunities as everywhere else if we are to level up the country. Councils would be able to better plan how to provide services and meet the needs of people if there was greater collated information by government on the health of local populations."

New unitary bids approved

lans to create three new unitary authorities in England have been approved by Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. North Yorkshire and Somerset are set to become single unitary authorities. Cumbria will be split into an 'east' council covering Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland, and a 'west' authority covering Allerdale, Carlisle and Copeland. The plans will now be subject to Parliamentary approval.

Autism strategy

he Government has published its latest autism strategy – the first to cover children and young people as well as adults. Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "This new strategy rightly focuses on supporting autistic people to live their lives in their communities, widening the focus beyond social care and health services. People with autism and their experiences deserve to be at the heart of this strategy, and councils are doing what they can to support them locally. To cope with rising demand and ensure the right support is available for all who need it, the upcoming Spending Review is an opportunity for government to fully fund support in the long term."



The LGA has called for an "honest debate" about the impact of long Covid, not just on the NHS, but also on demand for social care, at its recent annual conference.

Professor Chris Whitty, the UK Government's Chief Medical Officer, told delegates that, given the current prevalence of the virus, the amount of long Covid will increase "significantly... particularly in the younger ages, where the vaccination rates are currently much lower".

He identified two ways to prevent long Covid – keeping virus rates down and making sure everyone is vaccinated – and urged everyone to "push hell for leather" for them.

Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "Coronavirus will be with us in some form for many months and years ahead, and councils, with their public health and social care responsibilities, want to play their full part in keeping our communities safe, healthy and protected.

"We are only beginning to learn more about the long-term effects of this disease, and we need to start planning now for what could be a potential increase in requests for care and support, and other council services, due to Covid-related conditions.

"All of us involved in the response to the pandemic – central and local government, the medical and scientific community – need to have an honest debate about the potential implications of long Covid on resources and capacity, and on our overstretched and underpressure social care system and other vital council services."

After conference, the Department of Health and Social Care announced that 15 new studies across the UK will expand research into long Covid, backed by £19.6 million of funding through the National Institute for Health Research, to help better understand the condition, improve diagnosis and find new treatments.

Levelling up the next generation

A cross-Whitehall strategy is needed to put children and young people at the heart of the pandemic recovery and ensure every child can regain lost learning and life experiences, the LGA has said.

It says a child-centred recovery shouldn't focus solely on education and children's services, but also on good-quality, affordable homes, space to play, access to libraries, clean air and safe streets.

The LGA is calling for the Government's £500 million Youth Investment Fund – first promised in September 2019 – to be made available as soon as possible

Council-run youth services, which are a vital social outlet for many young people, have seen funding reduced by more than two-thirds in real terms since 2010/11, from £1.4 billion to £429 million.

The LGA also wants £1.7 billion in lost Early Intervention Grant funding to be restored to councils.

Its calls for a cross-government strategy were raised in Parliament in July, in a Westminster Hall debate secured by David Simmonds MP, an LGA Vice-President (see p11).

Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, said: "We want to work with government to 'Build back local' and help give all children a great childhood, and help families to thrive, rather than struggle.

"This means developing a strategy that will focus on how we can level up for the next generation and ensure young people get the best opportunities, no matter where they are from."

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County devo deals to help level up

New 'county deals' will help devolve power to local communities beyond England's biggest cities, the Prime Minister has said in a keynote speech on the Government's 'levelling up' agenda.

Non-metropolitan areas will be offered the same powers as combined authority mayors over things such as transport, skills and economic support, to help create jobs, drive growth and improve public services.

Boris Johnson said there would not be a one-size-fits-all template; individual counties could have directly elected mayors, or powers could be devolved for a specific local purpose, such as improving bus services.

Further details are expected in the autumn, in a Levelling Up White Paper.

Cllr James Jamieson, LGA Chairman, said: "Over the past decade, England has taken steps towards greater devolution, but areas

outside the city regions have remained stuck in the 'devolution slow lane' and the UK remains one of the most centralised countries in the democratic world.

"The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the strength of councils' local leadership and the benefits that come from national and local government working together in partnership.

"As we look towards securing a recovery that works for all, now is the right time to bring forward an ambitious new devolution settlement that gives councils the powers and funding they need to address regional inequality, tackle concentrations of deprivation and make towns and communities across England attractive places to live, work and visit.

"We support the Prime Minister's refreshed commitment to turbo-charge this agenda, and we look forward to working with councils and government to make this ambition a reality."



'Piecemeal' funding for decarbonising

here are serious weaknesses in central government's approach to working with local authorities on decarbonisation, according to the National Audit Office.

Its report, 'Local government and net zero in England', says that while the exact scale and nature of local authorities' roles and responsibilities in reaching the UK's national net-zero target are to be decided, it is clear that they have an important part to play because of their powers and responsibilities for waste, local transport and social housing, and through their influence in local communities.

Government departments have supported councils' net-zero work through targeted support and funding. But weaknesses stemming from a lack of clarity over local authorities' overall roles, piecemeal funding, and diffuse accountabilities hamper local authorities' ability to plan effectively for the long term, build skills and capacity, and prioritise effort.

Cllr Darren Rodwell, the LGA's Environment Spokesperson, said the report includes some key recommendations about achieving net zero by 2050.

"Councils are uniquely placed to shape their local areas and translate national climate ambitions into transformative action on the ground," he said.

"We have previously called for a national fiscal and policy framework to address the climate emergency, which should outline responsibilities for national and local government, with a commitment from national government to work closely with local public sector bodies.

"Net zero can only be achieved if decarbonisation happens in every place, community and household. Long-term funding for councils would mean they can plan ahead properly on the needs of their local communities to support this."

See p9, p27.

'Increase spending on drug addiction services'

he Government has been urged to increase spending on recovery services and treatment for drug addicts by an independent review led by Dame Carol Black.

Her report says cuts have left services "on their knees" and urges an extra £552 million investment over five years in England, and a £15 million boost towards jobs support for those in treatment.

Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said investing now in public health drug prevention, treatment and recovery services will "reap benefits for everyone" in the longer term, including the

"Councils are absolutely determined to ensure drug users get the right support and treatment as part of their public health and other wider responsibilities, and look forward to working with the Joint Combating Drugs Unit on this shared ambition," he said.

"This includes helping vulnerable people

to be given another chance to find

and mental health, and find safe and secure

"For many drug users, especially the most entrenched, engaging in treatment is the catalyst for getting the help they need physical and mental

recognises that clinical services alone cannot lead to recovery, but also extra support and opportunities for drug users to gain employment, housing, mental health care and help from other agencies."



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In brief Beautiful places

he Government is establishing a new Office for Place to help make it easier for councils and communities to "embrace beautiful, practical design while rejecting the ugly, unsustainable or poor quality". An updated planning policy framework and a National Model Design Code are also being published. The latter sets an expectation that all councils should develop a local design code – an illustrated design guide setting the standard for a local area – with input from local people. Cllr David Renard, LGA Housing Spokesperson, said: "Design tools can be helpful, but decisions about the design of local developments need to be locally led and are best made by local councils together with their communities."

Digital change

| f government is to improve its track record on delivering digital business change, it must learn the hard-won lessons of experience and equip its leaders to act effectively, the National Audit Office has said. Cllr Peter Fleming, Chair of the LGA's Improvement and Innovation Board, said: "All public bodies are adapting to, and accelerating digital change. Over the past year, councils have been at the forefront of this change, with the pandemic driving a rapid digital expansion to match the growing need to engage with and inform local people. The Government should continue to fund, encourage and stimulate the potential held by local authorities to influence digital change across the UK as it builds back local and builds back better."

Council finances

The Government should urgently reform the funding of social care in England, implement the Fair Funding Review and business rates reset, ensure a multi-year financial settlement for councils and reform council tax, MPs have said. A report on local authority financial sustainability from the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee recognises that councils have faced a variety of budget pressures in recent years, including increased demand for services, especially social care, and that these financial challenges have been exacerbated by the pandemic. The report references LGA evidence to the committee and its recommendations largely reflect what the LGA has been calling for.

Five-fold increase in councils' B&B spend

ew analysis by the LGA has revealed that councils are being forced to spend more than five times as much on housing people who are homeless in bed and breakfast accommodation as they were a decade ago.

It comes as rising numbers are being placed in B&Bs because of a severe shortage of housing.

Latest figures show that councils in England spent £142 million placing homeless households in B&Bs in 2019/20, compared with £26.7 million in 2010/11 – a 430 per cent increase.

Currently, there are 10,510 households in B&Bs, according to provisional data, compared with 2,310 a decade ago – an increase of more than 350 per cent.

The LGA says this underlines the desperate need to build more social housing.

It wants to work even more closely with government to tackle the current housing

shortage and is calling for councils to be given further powers and resources to build 100,000 social homes for rent each year.

Cllr David Renard, LGA Housing Spokesperson, said: "Sadly, these figures reflect the scale of the housing challenges that our country faces. Councils will only use bed and breakfasts as a last resort, but the severe lack of suitable housing means they now have no choice.

"This is hugely disruptive to families with children, and the rising demand for support has come with soaring costs for councils.

"Throughout the pandemic, government has trusted councils to get on with the job of protecting the nation, supporting people and putting infrastructure in place to help with recovery.

"We want to continue this momentum and work with government to tackle the shortage of housing and build the homes the country desperately needs."

Younger people more susceptible to being scammed

People between the ages of 16 and 34 are more susceptible to being scammed and account for more than half of the scams experienced in the UK.

Studies show one in five of those aged 16 to 34 had been scammed in recent years, compared with just 4 per cent of those aged 55 and over.

Common text-based scams include messages claiming you are to be fined for not filling in the 2021 census; you owe money for a parcel from Royal Mail or other delivery firm; or you are due a council tax refund.

Tell-tale signs that something could be a scam include the contact being unexpected; an offer that seems too good to be true; a request to provide personal information; or a demand for payment of any kind.

Cllr Nesil Caliskan, Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, said: "People tend to assume that most victims of scams are older, and while anyone can be subject to fraudulent activity, what we are seeing is a huge percentage of young people falling for scams."

If you get sent a message that you believe to be fraudulent, you can report it to your mobile phone provider or by forwarding the message to 7726, a free reporting service provided by phone operators.





LGA call to 'build back local'

Councils face average extra annual cost pressures of £2.5 billion to maintain services at current levels, LGA analysis has found.

Almost half of this total is related to adult social care demand and cost pressures.

The figures were published alongside the LGA's vision for a locally led post-pandemic recovery at its annual conference in early July.

The 'Build back local' campaign highlights the local leadership demonstrated by councils in response to the pandemic and how crucial this will be to social and economic recovery.

By working together as equal partners, local and central government can level up communities that feel left behind, it says.

While the Government has provided significant additional funding for councils to meet extra costs and some of the income losses arising from the pandemic, long-term investment in local services will be vital to the recovery, according to the LGA.

However, it is not just about money devolving and empowering local government in areas such as education, special educational needs and disabilities, skills and planning can deliver more for residents and communities.

Cllr James Jamieson, LGA Chairman, said: "The past 18 months have been incredibly difficult. In this time, the value of local leadership has been evident.

"The COVID-19 crisis has shown what we can achieve when government enables councils to innovate and create new services locally. As we look towards the next phase, it is vital that councils are backed to lead the recovery and support our communities as we learn to live with the virus.

"Levelling up cannot just be a political slogan. It has to mean a radical reset of the relationship between central and local that leads to real change for people's lives."

• See www.local.gov.uk/build-back-local, p12, p16.

Mental health is 'biggest issue' for children

 ↑ ental health is the "biggest issue" facing children during the pandemic, the Children's Commissioner for England has said.

Speaking at the LGA's annual conference, Dame Rachel De Souza said councils had "played a huge role in identifying and supporting vulnerable children through the pandemic", but that better integration with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services, children's social care and health was needed.

Referring to her Big Ask children's survey, she noted: "If there's one thing that's clear with the Big Ask, it's that mental health is the big issue facing this generation of children now – more children are unhappy about their mental health than any other issue [such as] schools, exams, issues at home, issues online."

Dame Rachel said that "fewer than four in 10 children with a mental health condition currently benefit from treatment" and wants to see mental health teams rolled out in schools more quickly.

She added that she was working on the Government's SEND Review, Care Review and Integrated Care System White Paper, noting: "Three reviews, three civil service teams, three different service lenses, often the same group of children. It becomes much simpler at child level if we design the system around the child."

Tia Carmichael, a member of the youth parliament for Plymouth, told delegates that young people have been written off as a "lost generation" and that there was a need to stop using this term.

Dame Rachel agreed, and asked younger people to reflect on how resilient they have become amid the pandemic's "huge" challenges. See p29.

Day for councils at COP26

ocal government will be able to showcase its _work on climate change during a dedicated cities, regions and built environment day at the UN Climate Conference (COP26) in Glasgow in November.

The day was announced by Allegra Stratton, the Prime Minister's COP26 Spokesperson, at the LGA's annual conference.

Delegates had earlier agreed a motion at the LGA's AGM, calling for "adequate representation of local government" at the event "to champion the innovative and rapid progress being

made at a local level to tackle climate change".

Around 300 councils have declared a climate emergency and are taking action to reduce carbon emissions.

Cllr Phélim Mac Cafferty, Leader of Brighton & Hove City Council, who proposed the motion, said councils and their communities, not ministers, were the "leaders" of action on the climate emergency.

"Local government deserves a seat at the table at COP26," he told delegates.

The motion also encouraged councils to

continue their work in this area by signing and promoting the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration on sustainable food policy, and by taking part in UK100, the network for UK locally elected leaders who have pledged to avoid the worst impacts of climate change (see p24).

Meanwhile, the LGA has launched its 'Pass the planet' campaign (see www.local.gov.uk/ pass-the-planet), showcasing local government good practice in the lead up to COP26. Email climate@local.gov.uk with case studies of your council's work on climate change.

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Planning proposals under fire

pposition leaders have criticised the Government's proposed planning reforms, calling them a "developers' charter" and "wrong-headed".

Speaking at the LGA's virtual annual conference, Shadow Communities Secretary Steve Reed OBE said: "There is no doubt we need to build more housing, particularly good-quality homes that people can afford to rent or buy, including more social housing.

"But the blockage clearly isn't the planning system, as the Government claims. It is developers who don't go on to build the homes they are given consent for."

Citing LGA figures that more than one million homes have been approved by council planning departments in the past decade, but never built, he said the problem was "how to incentivise developers to get on and develop rather than sitting on rising land values with a view to selling it on in the future".

Labour has since brought forward a Planning and Local Representation Bill, which would require developers to 'use it or lose it' when it comes to planning permissions.

Liberal Democrat Leader Sir Ed Davey was also critical of the planning reforms, saying concern about them had contributed to his party's recent victory in the Chesham and Amersham by-election.

He made the case for more communityled 'local neighbourhood' plans, citing a government report that concluded they increased housing supply, improved design, improved local engagement with planning, and contributed to place-making way beyond land-use planning.

"Decisions on what homes should be built and where they should be built should not be left to developers or ministers in Whitehall; they should be made by local communities in local communities, making sure that local voices are heard," he told delegates.

Jenrick calls for 10-year plans

three-year spending review is "long overdue" and something local government "desperately needs", according to Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick.

Mr Jenrick told the LGA's annual conference he was "proud" to be local government's voice at the Cabinet table, "ensuring you've had the resources and tools you needed to continue delivering for your communities".

"I will continue to fight your corner through the spending review and beyond," he promised.

In a wide-ranging speech, Mr Jenrick praised councils for their resilience during the pandemic and thanked them for their close and productive relationship with central government.

He also called on them to develop 10- to 20-year plans for their areas as part of the Government's mission to build back better after the pandemic and "level up opportunity and prosperity across the country".

Councils would be empowered to play

their part through the Levelling Up White Paper, due out later this year, he said.

"We want to deliver a once-in-ageneration wave of investment in areas that have been historically underserved for too long," said Mr Jenrick.

"Your work here is crucial. It is councils who put the bids together, making farreaching decisions, and work with central government to craft projects.

"We want every local council to produce a 10- or 20-year plan for their town, their city or their communities and for government to work with you in a genuinely place-based way."

The Secretary of State also touched on several priorities for councils, including adult social care, the Government's planning reforms and council governance; hinted at plans to reform local enterprise partnerships; and said the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs will fund all new burdens arising from the Environment Bill, currently before Parliament.

Public services 'need to engage with technology'

The pandemic has triggered a rapid acceleration in the use of technology, but also highlighted pre-existing inequalities in access to IT, the co-founder of dot.com business Last Minute told the LGA's annual conference.

Baroness Martha Lane-Fox CBE, Chair of the Lords' Select Committee on COVID-19, admitted she struggled to keep up with what she was meant to know about the internet, but that it was important for managers of public services – including schools, hospitals and councils - to understand technology and keep up with innovation.

She outlined the committee's recent work on the impact of COVID-19, including key themes around inequalities, opportunities and wellbeing, and the impact of IT on public services – all of which raise "fundamental questions about how technology and society interrelate".

"I'm not a techno-utopian; I don't believe everything has to be digital... The hybrid world is complicated and I don't think there is a one size fits all," she told delegates.

People still need and want face-to-face services. But technology can help communities



take control and bring them together, and help people learn new skills and access goodquality jobs - creating an "incredible uplift" when digitisation is done well.

For the public sector, "the trick is navigating where on the spectrum you put services", from entirely digital to entirely face to face, said Baroness Lane-Fox.

"It is important that both central and local government thinks carefully about where on the spectrum the different services should sit."

Visit www.lgaconf21.com to view LGA conference sessions, including the ones featured on this page.

PARLIAMENT

A child-centred recovery

A cross-government strategy is needed to ensure children and young people can thrive, no matter where they are from



Over the past 17 months of the pandemic, children and young people have made huge sacrifices – experiencing major disruption to their education and missing out on time with their friends and wider family.

Birthday parties, proms and sports days have all been cancelled, while many teenagers have missed out on their exams, jobs and traditional rites of passage.

As a result, not only are young people having to cope with significant social and educational challenges, but they are also struggling with their mental health in increasing numbers – and some have had to live in homes where domestic abuse is taking place.

Those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) have been particularly affected by repeated lockdowns and school disruption during the pandemic.

Councils have worked hard with schools on education recovery during COVID-19, to ensure that no child is left behind. They have also helped government distribute millions of pounds of funding to support young people and families in need, from food parcels and vouchers to IT equipment to help vulnerable children learn online.

"Councils have worked hard to ensure no child is left behind"

The Government has prioritised the needs of children and young people throughout this turbulent period, by ensuring that children can access education where it has been safe to do so and by

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For the LGA's report, 'A child-centred recovery', see www.local.gov.uk/publications/child-centred-recovery. For more on the LGA's parliamentary work, please visit www.local.gov.uk/parliament

supporting the most vulnerable. However, the LGA has raised instances where Whitehall departments have not joined up their objectives and campaigns, and is calling for a cross-government strategy to improve outcomes for families and ensure children and young people are at the heart of the national recovery.

Better data sharing would also help councils ensure that more disadvantaged and disabled children are accessing their full early education entitlements, and that children are growing up in high-quality homes close to good schools, their family and friends.

In Parliament, we were able to make the case for a cross-government strategy directly to Children and Families Minister Vicky Ford, via a Westminster Hall debate secured by David Simmonds MP, an LGA Vice-President.

Mr Simmonds called for a "clear, crossgovernment strategy for children that sets out what we want to achieve for the health, education and wellbeing of our youngest constituents".

He added: "On the whole, we have a system that supports children well, but it remains inconsistent in some respects.

"From early years health and nutrition to entry to university, we still have some distance to travel before we can say that our youngest constituents are able to make the best of the opportunities that our country seeks to offer."

In reply, Ms Ford said the Government had been "clear that providing the right support for children and families is a priority across policy and decision-making, particularly for those with vulnerabilities".

"We all share an ambition to ensure the system works and delivers the best outcomes," she added.

"We know the pandemic has thrown up additional challenges, and families and children rely on policies and programmes owned across government.

"Departments must keep families front and centre of all they do, and I am proud of the progress the Government has made in joining up services for children and families."

The minister reiterated her personal commitment to working across government programmes and initiatives to "place the needs of children and families at the heart of everything the Government is striving to achieve, and to ensure that we work with our partners in local government to make sure they also can help to achieve this".





Councillor **James Jamieson** is Chairman of the LGA

hroughout the pandemic, local government has demonstrated the value of local leadership and stepped up and delivered for our communities when it mattered.

Councillors have provided local political leadership, supported by exceptional and dedicated council staff. You and they are among the true heroes of the pandemic.

As we look towards the next phase in our national story, it needs to be about communities and places.

That is why, throughout the LGA's new 'Build back local' campaign, we will be highlighting the role councils can play to lead the recovery from the pandemic – by driving improvements in public health, adult social care and children's services; boosting local economic growth; reviving town and city centres, building more homes, and improving roads; and equipping people with the skills they need to

succeed so that no-one is left behind.

Launched at our annual conference in July, 'Build back local' demonstrates how national and local government can work together to level up communities and tackle inequalities.

With the right tools, powers and long-term investment in our vital local services, councils can help rebuild their communities and address the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

Through this campaign and beyond, your LGA will continue to make the case for why your local leadership is so vital, and through our sector-led improvement programme we will also support you in innovating and delivering services.

There are some big milestones that we will be focusing on in the coming year.

Adult social care needs longterm sustainable funding that will allow us to improve the lives of our most vulnerable. The Government's Levelling Up White Paper needs to genuinely devolve power to councils and local communities.

Having a safe and secure home and the opportunity for a good job is key to so much, so it is vital that the Planning White Paper improves our current planning system. We will be making the case for infrastructure, economic growth and genuine local democratic input as the best way to meet our housing needs,

But we also need to focus on sustainability and the environment. The UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in November is a crucial opportunity to showcase councils' leadership on the environment and delivering net zero.

The great national challenges of

"Having a secure home and a good job is key to so much"

our day – living with coronavirus, building back the economy, ensuring high-quality care and protecting the environment for future generations – all have one thing in common. They can only be tackled through local leadership and local innovation.

'Build back local' sets out why now is the time for government to broaden its thinking and explore what success could look like for our communities – see right, and www.local.gov.uk/build-back-local, for more details.

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Children and young people

Wrapping services around children in myriad ways must be the approach we take to building a childcentred recovery Councils understand their communities and are perfectly placed to make sure children and their families get the joined-up support they need, both through the hundreds of services they deliver and by working with government and local partners, including schools. We need:

- to invest in preventative and early help services
- a cross-Whitehall strategy putting children and young people at the heart of recovery (see p11)
- to reform the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system, and recognise councils' role in education
- to work towards a more sustainable funding base.

Economic recovery

Councils can work with government to deliver an ambitious programme of financial stimulus, and have the knowledge and expertise to direct funds where they will have the most immediate impact to protect jobs and livelihoods and support longterm transformation of the economy, infrastructure and services.

Local economies are different and will need different things to stimulate them. Some require greater connectivity, some need to transition to new industries, and others are short of affordable housing. Understanding the exact nature of an effective and sustainable stimulus can only be carried out locally. Councils are ambitious and optimistic about local prospects, while anticipating and mitigating risks and tackling inequalities where possible.

Net zero

Councils are fundamental to transitioning our places and empowering our communities and businesses to a net zero future. They are well-placed to translate national climate ambitions into transformative action on the ground through their:

- place-shaping role
- purchasing powers and market shaping
- problem-solving and direct delivery
- use of council assets
- role as convenors and communicators.

Public health

Local government and public health should work with national and system partners to develop a new model for health protection one that does not just tackle outbreaks or incidents, but also responds to the impact on individuals, and harnesses the power of communities.

Local areas need to be given the tools and support to understand and address the economic, social and psychological impacts of the pandemic, and the serious health inequalities that have been highlighted and deepened. We can then start to build an approach that finally addresses deep-rooted issues and has a genuine chance of levelling up.

Jobs, skills, training and welfare support

Although there are significant challenges ahead, a joint endeavour between local and national government will deliver greater opportunities and the recovery that our local communities deserve.

People want more opportunities, more jobs, progress in careers and good work, locally. To make this happen, we need a renewed partnership with central government focused on:

- the co-design of jobs and skills recovery
- councils coordinating skills provision locally
- the LGA's Work Local programme and the Government's Levelling Up White Paper
- support for low-income and economically vulnerable households.

Council finance

Councils' pandemic response has shown the need for, and impressive impact of, well-resourced, efficient and effective local services. To best deliver for their residents - and, by doing so, maximise their contribution to the nation's economic and social recovery council services need certainty, together with sufficient long-term and sustainable funding.

Adult social care

If we build back local, we can put people at the heart of a new, reformed approach to social care that is locally led.

The future reform of social care and support needs to start with the most urgent priorities:

- sustainable long-term funding that is sufficient to meet the predictable additional demands on social care driven by demographic and other pressures
- honesty about how more funding is required to tackle unmet need
- a new deal for the care workforce, ensuring parity of esteem with colleagues in the NHS and action on pay, training and development, and recognition (see p15)
- a strong relationship with the NHS and other partners.

Housing, planning and building safety

The longer-term ambition has to be to deliver local areas that have high-quality affordable homes built in the right places, supported by the right infrastructure, which provide enough schools, promote greener and more active travel, and tackle climate change. This will need a national/local partnership that starts with a locally led planning approach with public participation at its heart.

If local and national government work with partners there is a greater chance of delivering the homes local communities need but with a much broader vision around place, helping level up across

planning, housing, achieving net zero, and building safety.



first | 13 August 2021

A fitter future

Local government can help communities build back fitter after the pandemic



Baroness Tanni Grey-**Thompson** is President of the IGA

his is a critical time, as national and local government will be looking to rebuild from a pandemic that has changed so much of our everyday lives.

Our communities have faced significant and, arguably, unimaginable changes in the past 17 months, but through it all one thing has remained constant - the value of local leadership from councillors and their officials.

I have seen first hand how local government is essential to delivering on the issues I am passionate about, whether it be creating the opportunities for people to get involved in sport, assisting people with their care and support needs, or providing a safety net that prevents families falling into crisis.

Local government's leadership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, your commitment to delivering high-quality services, and your work supporting local economies are but a few examples of why we achieve better outcomes when national government gives councils the freedoms and flexibilities to deliver for their local areas.

Among the many critical functions of local government is community leisure. Over the past five years, I have been privileged to chair ukactive, representing thousands of leisure centres run by local authorities, and it will come as no surprise to you that physical activity is something close to my heart.

These facilities form the backbone of community activity, ranging from

Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson is Chair of ukactive and was elected President of the LGA at its annual conference in early July. For more information about ukactive, please visit www.ukactive.com

children's swimming lessons and women's exercise classes, to post-injury physiotherapy and cancer rehabilitation.

We have seen over the past 17 months what a loss to communities the closure of these facilities has been.

In the coming years, if we are to truly realise a healthy, happy society, we must ensure a sustainable footing for these community assets. This organisation is essential in ensuring the Government doesn't just build back better, but build back fitter.

In this time of change, the LGA's role working with government and parliament to make the case for councils has never been more important.

In my previous role as an LGA vicepresident, it was very noticeable that never a day seemed to go by without the LGA being mentioned on the floor of the House or in the national media. I am determined that, in taking on the role of LGA president, I play my role as an advocate for local democracy.

A commitment to local democracy

"If we are to truly realise a healthy, happy society, we must ensure a sustainable footing for community leisure centres"

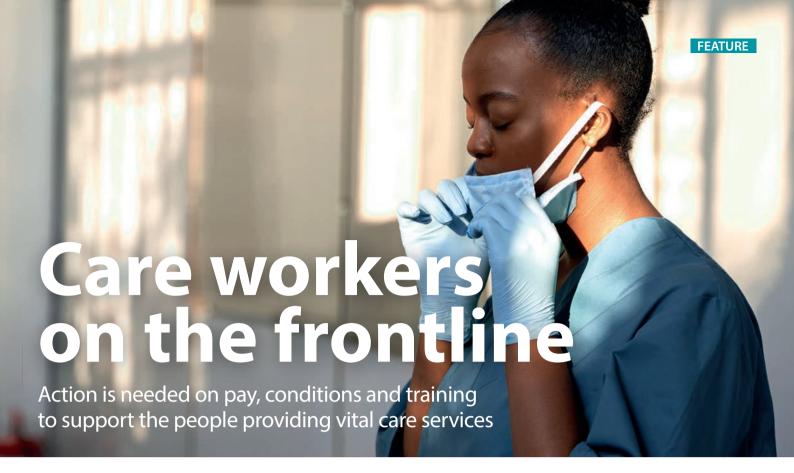
will be my guiding principle as your LGA president, because when local government speaks through the LGA with one voice it is powerful, it has impact, and it can make positive and lasting changes for councils and their communities.

I look forward to working across Parliament to make sure local leadership is backed when national leaders take decisions.

It is an honour to be elected your president, a new challenge that I relish and I hope that, by working together, we can make a difference on the national stage to help your local leadership role.



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Councillor **David Fothergill** is Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board

n his first major speech since being appointed to the role, Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid told the LGA's virtual annual conference that the in-tray he faces is the biggest of the five departments he has led in government.

He said putting social care on a sustainable footing was one of the main tasks he would be working on, with councils, in the months ahead.

Successive governments of different political colours have promised to secure the future of care and support, all while pressures have continued to increase and resources have become more stretched.

The need for reform, further exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19, is urgent.

It is also now 10 years since the publication of the Dilnot report, which recommended changes to how we fund and pay for social care, including a cap on individual care costs.

However, no reform programme can be coherent and successful without addressing the needs of the people who provide our vital services.

Our dedicated and committed 1.5 million care workers have been on the frontline throughout the pandemic and have already endured so much, including heartbreak and loss of their own.

One of the legacies of the pandemic must be action to tackle the huge recruitment and retention crisis, with more than 100,000 vacancies, as well as action on pay, conditions, professionalisation, skills and training.

The LGA, along with other social care leaders – including the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, The Care Provider Alliance, Skills for Care, Social Care Institute for Excellence, and Think Local Act Personal – have come together to offer a collective vision of what should be in a future workforce strategy as part of wider social care reforms.

"Social care can play an integral part in building back better"

Clear priorities include staff recognition, value and reward; investment in training, qualification and support, career pathways and development; and enhancing social justice, equality, diversity and inclusion.



See p16-17. Visit www.local.gov.uk/build-back-local for the LGA's key campaign messages on adult social care

This should also be aided by effective planning across the whole social care workforce and an expansion of roles designed with the help of people who draw on care and support, which enable prevention and underpin the growth of innovative models of support.

These priorities, which have been developed by representatives of those who use care and support services, employers and workers, have been based on our shared understanding of the key workforce challenges that must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Any proposals for reform need to consider what part social care should play in our society in the coming years, and what role a workforce – which is likely to be about two million strong by 2035 – should have to meet current and future demand.

It is vital that we help care staff be the best they can be as part of a valued workforce, fit for the future, by matching people's skills and ambitions with the aspirations of those who need care and support.

This vision should form a central, positive part of a long-term sustainable funding solution for care and support services.

Social care is not just valuable in its own right. It can play an integral part in building back better from the pandemic, contributing to flourishing and connected communities where people are able to live the lives they want to lead.

'Passionate about social care reform'

Sally Percival is Co-Chair of the National Co-production Advisory Group and of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Adult Social Care's Working Group. She lives in Cumbria and cares for her son Alex, who has a learning disability and autism, and for her step-daughter Hannah, who has a profound learning disability and autism.

"Some bits of the care system have been great, but when my son was given a service and they tried to fit him in a box that didn't say 'Alex', it worked really badly.

"Once we started managing our own social care budget with a direct payment, it was transformative. Alex went from being a bored, lonely, angry person to having a much more fulfilled life.

"His whole life is World War II enactments (pictured, right) – it puts a smile on his face. With a personalised budget, we were able to employ people from the re-enacting community, which was where I found two carers, so they immediately had that connection with him.

"I feel passionately about adult social care reform because it affects everybody at some point. I have seen so much money wasted, and yet social care is so badly funded. With reform, that funding could be better used to serve people and give them better lives, and that's what it's about.

"It's about making sure disabled people, carers, and people who just need that extra bit of support have the best life they can have, and the opportunities everyone else has.

"The only way reform can happen is by working with people. Codesigning the system is the only way that it will be done right. For me, good social care is all about the person who's being supported – about bringing back that absolute ethos of choice and control, rather than being very prescriptive about how social care funding is used.

"It's about giving people a menu they can choose from. I would like to see a blossoming of microproviders or bespoke providers, so you do have choice of how to spend your budget.

"It's also about commissioning properly. So many commissioned services work for the provider, not for the people accessing them."



If we build back local, we can put people at the heart of a new, reformed approach to social care

OVID-19 highlighted just how essential adult social care is in supporting people to be as independent as possible.

While the Government has acknowledged the value of social care and praised its workforce, it has yet to publish its proposals for the future funding and reform of care and support.

The issues facing social care – particularly the scale of funding pressures – are just as pressing now as they were before COVID-19, with many having been exacerbated by the pandemic.

While funding challenges do need to be addressed urgently, at its heart,

social care is first and foremost about human relationships.

It is impossible to support someone to live the life they want to lead if you do not understand what gives that person's life meaning (see case studies, left and right).

'Doing with' rather than 'doing to' is, therefore, a prerequisite for an approach to social care that is rooted in putting people first and understanding what matters to them. This is about genuine co-production and supporting people as early as possible to prevent, reduce or delay the development of higher-level needs.

As the Government develops its proposals for the future of care and support, it should ensure its accompanying vision reflects this.

We also need to put 'local' at the heart of social care reforms. Councils are best placed to convene partnerships to bring together health and care services



This is an edited version of the LGA's proposals for adult social care in its 'Build back local: building back better' campaign report, see www.local.gov.uk/build-back-local

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in a locally focused and democratically led way.

Government should work with councils and their many partners as equals in helping to build resilient communities that are geared towards prevention, wellbeing and public health.

We also need help to enable local areas to retain the positive changes they made at the height of the pandemic and build on what we know works, such as prevention, reablement, technology, and more person-centred care and support.

We believe the future reform of social care and support needs to start with the most urgent priorities: sustainable long-term funding; more funding to tackle unmet need; a personcentred approach; a new deal for the care workforce (see p15); and strong relationships with the NHS and other partners.

We recognise the value of preventing people from suffering catastrophic care costs and welcome the commitment to tackle this problem. But plans to introduce these funding reforms must also embrace the challenges above if social care is really to fulfil its potential.

'A life with meaning'

Isaac Samuels lives with mental and physical health challenges, and is Co-Chair of the National Co-production Advisory Group. They receive a direct payment, and self-direct their own care and support from their home.

"I'm really passionate about social care because it's made a massive difference in my life, but it's been a mixed experience – more negative than positive.

"Often, I feel like people don't really want to listen to me and want to provide solutions that don't make sense. I believe that people should always be included in any decision-making, because, ultimately – as a person with disabilities – I know what's best for me and what's important to me.

"It's about a good life, not a service. It's about being connected to people who are important to me, and being able to work, to connect with my local community, stay safe and well, and have good information advice and guidance.

"It's a bit of a challenge all the time; your social care is forever changing and, often, I'm excluded from conversations that are about me.

That makes me feel powerless; it has affected my self-esteem – it's affected my whole care.

"People have a lot of skills and they're able to do a lot of things by themselves. If you work with an individual to identify what they can do and what support they need, they don't become dependent on social care – they use social care to do the things that make sense, and a bit of support goes a long way.

"So, I think good social care is where every single person who has care and support needs is able to live a life with meaning – and that will be different for different groups.

"Everybody should be able to live in a place they call home, and feel they're doing the things that are important to them, including maintaining family and social connections.

"It is really important, going forward, that we try to address and minimise the inequalities resulting from COVID-19.

"Regardless of your particular characteristics – you might be someone with a learning disability, or from a black or minority ethnic background – you have the right to the same care and support, and to the same opportunities to live a good ordinary life.

"If we have social care that's responsive, supportive and, ultimately, compassionate, I think we will have a good society, where people with disabilities are fully included, and we are able to live independently, or interdependently, and be part of our communities."



An academy for local leaders

The LGA's flagship political leadership programme is celebrating its 200th course

ocal politicians face multiple challenges and opportunities, from reducing budgets and reshaping services to diverse community problems, complex political alliances and dealing with the effects of COVID-19.

Developing the skills for effective local leadership is vital to ensure councillors can rise to these challenges and make the most of the opportunities to benefit their communities - which is where the LGA's flagship political leadership programme comes in.

The Leadership Academy was

established 21 years ago and is about to celebrate its 200th programme in September. Since it started, 3,152 councillors from 330 local authorities have graduated from the academy; our alumni include five Lords, 25 MPs, more than half of the LGA's board members, 134 council leaders and 88 deputy leaders.

Running over three months, each course comprises three, twoday residential modules, covering: leadership styles and strategies; leading through relationships; managing innovation and change; and leading communities and place. The programmes are delivered for the LGA by



To find out more about the LGA's **Leadership Academy,** please visit

www.local.gov.uk/our-support/ highlighting-political-leadership/ leadership-academy or email grace. collins@local.gov.uk. See www. institutelm.com for the Institute of **Leadership & Management**



A safe

Councillor Sam Chapman-Allen (Con) is Leader of **Breckland Council**

The LGA's Leadership Academy programme is a brilliant, safe space for local government leaders wanting to continue their development and explore leadership style.

The course is delivered over three sessions, with an initial development meeting with one of the course facilitators to understand your needs and wants from the course, along with some of your local challenges and focus.

During the programme, there are no political banners; we are all councillors, from all corners of the country, learning and developing together through the facilitators and, just as importantly, each other.

As a leader in local government, we can sometimes feel and think that our challenges are unique to us. But through the academy, you can explore these challenges and understand that they are similar, if not identical, to others.

My course was some time ago now, but I still call upon what I developed, and I would encourage any leader, cabinet member or group leader to reach out and get themselves booked on a programme, if you haven't already. It's never too late!



More that unites us

Councillor Sarah Nelmes (Lib Dem) is Leader of Three Rivers District Council

As a new council leader, my attendance at Leadership Academy 198 has been an invaluable help to me.

The learning – and the opportunity, given by all the tutors and mentors, to talk and develop - has really helped me add some great ideas to my leadership toolbox.

One of the great benefits of the programme is to be able to talk in a safe place about 'live' issues and challenges, both with the course leaders and with a diverse range of councillors from different places and parties, and with different experiences.

Working through problems and issues with colleagues was enormously helpful. There really is more that unites us than divides us.

COVID-19 meant that we only got the chance to meet online, and that is a shame, missing out on the dinner-table and bar discussions - but I am sure we will rectify that when we finally get to meet each other face to face in Warwick for our graduation.

I would thoroughly recommend the programme to anyone in a leadership position on their council or, indeed, anyone seeking such a position.



Inspiration and support

Councillor Emily O'Brien (Green) is Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure at Lewes District Council

I found the Leadership Academy training a source of inspiration and support.

As a newly elected councillor going straight to a cabinet role, it was invaluable to have a structured way to look at how to do the role right - and to come out carrying a useful toolbox equipped with a range of effective leadership tools.

Our group was one of the last programmes before the COVID-19 pandemic, which meant a whole bunch of new situations and challenges were thrown at us. The programme could have been designed to equip us.

I have also appreciated the support from the group, which continued long after the training itself.

It was interesting how similar our problems and aspirations were, despite being such a mixed group of people, from opposite ends of the country and from different political parties.

We have managed to support each other since, via WhatsApp, and, especially in the darkest times, share a joke or two.

a team from Shared Services Architect.

The Leadership Academy continues to grow in strength, and the programme is now approved by the Institute of Leadership & Management, the UK's leading, award-winning body for leadership and management.

Academy graduates receive an approved Institute of Leadership and Management certificate and access to the organisation's resource materials for a year.

You can find out more using the links in the information box (left) - but the best people to listen to are our academy graduates (see below and left).





Being strategic

Councillor Jackie Taylor (Lab) is Cabinet Member for Connected and Accessible Sandwell (Transport) at Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Post-pandemic, local government faces challenges more far-reaching than ever before. We have no choice but to be creative and dynamic in our approach to serving the people we represent.

That is why I am delighted to have taken part in the LGA Leadership Academy programme in 2018.

Using the learning and toolkit, I have since become a cabinet member. Now, more than ever, I reflect on my leadership style and being strategic in reaching out to the people I serve, as well as to colleagues.

Equally as important is how I fit into the scheme of things, and the positive contribution I can make to the lives of residents throughout the whole of the West Midlands, now and in the future.

The LGA knows just how to pitch a course to ensure that, as elected members, we receive the best service for us all.

I am particularly proud of meeting people cross-party; this has enriched my practice and approach in all that I do. This reinforces not only what you can get from the programme, but also what you bring to it.

Finally, the Leadership Academy programme allows you to meet experts in their field, empowering us to be 'better than best'. I would highly recommend it.



A better councillor

Councillor Shama Tatler (Lab) is Lead Member for Regeneration, Property and Planning at Brent Council

I was appointed to the cabinet in December 2016 and immediately wanted to develop my skills so I could feel confident in doing the role well. I took part in several Leadership Essential courses, as well as the Leadership Academy.

I can honestly say those courses changed me and gave me confidence. The tutors were fantastic, the content was engaging and challenging, and I continue to use the learning today.

Furthermore, the informal learning of meeting fellow councillors from across the country was invaluable - supporting one another, facing similar challenges in our authorities and, most importantly, gaining new friendships.

Since the courses, I have gone on to be an LGA Labour Peer and sit on an LGA board. I definitely know I am a better councillor as a result. Wholeheartedly recommend!



Learn from best practice

Councillor Joe Harris (Lib Dem) is Leader of Cotswold District Council and of the LGA's Liberal Democrat Group

I attended the Leadership Academy shortly after becoming a council leader in 2019. It really helped me understand how I work best and how to get the best out of relationships with colleagues.

Meeting other councillors in similar positions was invaluable, as was the opportunity to learn from best practice elsewhere.

The skills I learned on the course have set me up well for my new role as a vicechair of the LGA.

first | 19 August 2021

Fresh talent

Young people in local government can make a real





Councillor Judi Billing MBE is Deputy Chair of the LGA's Improvement and Innovation Board and Leadership Lead Member

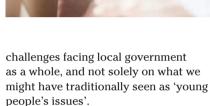
nternational Youth Day falls on 12 August. It is a day to celebrate young people's views and initiatives, and for us to reflect on how society can meaningfully engage with young people as well as enable their innovative solutions to create a positive future.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenging time, especially for young people who have faced uncertainty about education, jobs, housing and what the future will hold for them. It has also made it more difficult to engage with young people, in schools, social settings and youth councils, and at events such as Local Democracy week.

Young people are a vital part of our communities, and the LGA has resources to help councils drive inclusive participation - engaging young people on the biggest



To find out more about the LGA's National **Graduate Development Programme, please visit** www.local.gov.uk/ngdp or email ngdp@local.gov. uk. For information about the Young Councillors' Weekender, please email grace.collins@local.gov. uk. See www.local.gov.uk/our-support/equalitiesdiversity-and-inclusion-hub for the LGA's Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Hub



One of the ways young people can make a difference in their communities is by becoming a councillor. The LGA's Be A Councillor campaign (www.local.gov.uk/be-councillor) works to attract a diverse group of potential candidates, and supports councils with a toolkit to help us reach outside of our established networks to encourage new people to stand for election - particularly from underrepresented groups.

The LGA supports young councillors through events such as the highly regarded Young Councillors' Weekender, designed to provide learning and leadership development around some of the key issues and challenges for young councillors and a unique opportunity to network with colleagues from across the political spectrum.

There are also opportunities for young councillors to work and learn in their political groups through the Next Generation programmes, run by the LGA's political group offices.

For those starting their careers as officers in local government, the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) offers talented graduates an opportunity to be placed in a local authority for two years, completing three or four placements in different departments and fast-tracking the development of their managerial skills.

The NGDP has been used by councils to build a pipeline of new talent, allowing graduates to give back to local communities while furthering their own skills and careers.

The ideal would be to bring together some of our graduate officers with newly elected young councillors to creatively 'sabotage' the future. When we did this on a limited scale some years ago, the results were startlingly positive - so we have to be certain among the ranks of middleaged officers and elderly councillors, such as myself, that we are certain of what we wish for, when it might include our own demise!

The LGA has also created an Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Hub to support councils in engaging with young people and recognise the importance of working across different groups to ensure all young people are included from the LGBTOIA+ community, black, Asian and ethnic minority communities, disabled people, and women.

By working together across communities, we can make democracy even more exciting and ensure our work benefits from different perspectives and lived experience.

I encourage everyone to reflect during International Youth Day on the challenges facing young people, and how we can attract new, fresh talent to the sector to make a real difference to the ways in which we consider, design and deliver the best outcomes for our communities..

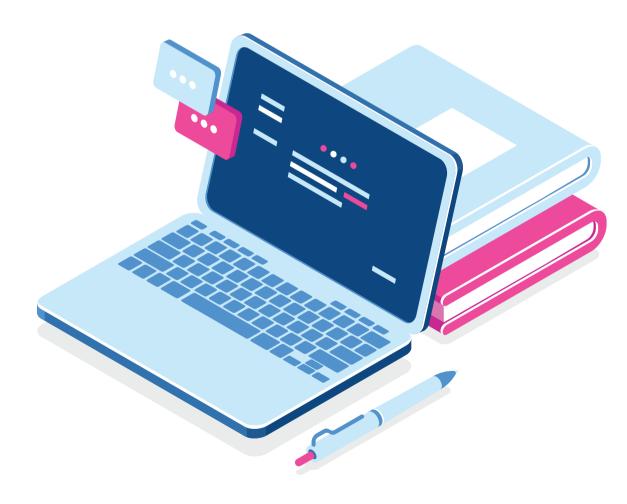


LGA virtual events programme

The LGA continues to run a full programme of virtual events. And it's never been easier to join us!

The events cover a wide range of local government issues including lessons from COVID-19, children's services, construction, climate change, cyber security, digital, funding, housing, licensing, planning, and public health.

Hosted on the Zoom platform, the events are free to attend for all councils and government departments.



To see what's coming up next and to book online, please visit the LGA's events pages www.local.gov.uk/events

COMMENT

Celebrating Pride

There are many ways councils can support LGBT+ residents and staff



Councillor **Rishi Madlani** (Lab) is
Camden Council's
LGBT+ Champion
and Chair of its
Pensions Committee

I represent a ward with a rich LGBT+ history, from the Bloomsbury Group living in its squares to the Gay's the Word bookshop.

I also serve as Camden's LGBT+ champion, helping to inform and shape the council's approach to LGBT+ residents, colleagues, and the wider community.

In June, like many other councils,

we celebrated Pride Month, and at the start of July we also marked UK Black Pride (2-4 July).

Like most LGBT+ people, I went through a journey of self-discovery and accepting myself. Growing up in a South Asian family, where being LGBT+ was a taboo subject and not understood, I have a lot of sympathy and understanding of the challenges faced by LGBT+ siblings of colour.

When you factor in the role that faith and heritage play, this creates some truly difficult situations for many LGBT+ people.

That's why, now I am a proud, openly gay, British Indian man, I feel I have a responsibility and an opportunity to try to make that experience a little less difficult for other LGBT+ people of colour.

Local government has a rich history of being at the forefront of fighting for and championing LGBT+ rights.

Being increasingly visible and openly LGBT+ presents a positive change, but there is new and further work to do – such



Local Covernment
Association

first is essential reading for councillors and chief executives in the LGA's member local authorities

and both the magazine and wrapping are fully recyclable

But did you know that we publish all the stories from the magazine online each month, at www.lgafirst.co.uk? If you're not already receiving it, you can also sign up for our fortnightly first e-bulletin, which links to key stories on the website, at www.lgafirst.co.uk/subscriptions

If you find these e-versions of **first** fulfil your need for information from the LGA, why not think about reducing our carbon footprint by unsubscribing from the magazine? Just email **first@oscar-research.co.uk** to let us know.

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as tackling the rising hate crime faced by our community, ensuring that council officers and our partners (including the police and health professionals) are trained to take action when they see it, and designing council services and pathways that actively take into consideration LGBT+ lived experiences.

For instance, I'm a trustee of a fantastic charity called Opening Doors London. It supports LGBT+ people over 50 to lead full, vibrant and respected lives, free from isolation, loneliness, discrimination and prejudice.

This requires thoughtful policy work to ensure that services and facilities open to older people actively think about the needs of LGBT+ people. We still see too many older

"Learn about the challenges facing the LGBT+ community"

LGBT+ people going back into the closet in adult social care settings.

Councils also need to ensure that their workforces are inclusive and that services think about the specific needs and challenges faced by the LGBT+ community. From pro-active licensing policies to protect LGBT+ venues – which are of even more importance to LGBT+ people of colour - to ensuring that we eradicate the long shadow of Section 28 in our schools, there needs to be active consideration of our community.

Intersectionality has become an inclusion buzzword in recent times, but, in reality, we have always had LGBT+ people of colour, diverse genders and of all the protected characteristics.

For me, intersectionality in a local government context means we simply have to better understand and give more active thought to the different actual and lived experiences of the communities we seek to represent.

Only then can we hope to tackle some of the specific challenges and difficulties faced by some of these communities.

Right now, when considering varying vaccination uptake rates, you really need to dig a bit deeper to understand that within the black, Asian and minority ethnic community there are different uptake rates, and what the factors are causing these.

Only then can you hope to tackle the different causes and reach our desired outcome of higher uptake of vaccines.

Another thought on this for me is about sponsorship. At Camden, our Executive Director of Corporate Services, Jon Rowney, acts as a sponsor for the staff-led networks.

While there is a lack of diversity in the upper echelons of local government officers, sponsorship can help ensure that the diversity of views and lived experiences of our diverse colleagues get heard and factored into thinking at the highest levels of local government.

I have three asks of all local government colleagues. First, learn about the barriers and challenges facing the LGBT+ community by engaging in Pride, LGBT+ visibility days and LGBT+ History Month, and by speaking to your LGBT+ colleagues and constituents.

Second, ensure that you factor the LGBT+ community in its entirety into your work. It's not sufficient for your council to have a staff network or change its logo at Pride – we need to cover the hard yards of thinking about what this means for policy and the services we provide.

Finally, recognise that while a huge amount of progress has been made, there are significant sections of our community –

> specifically our trans siblings and LGBT+ people of colour – who face specific and complex challenges. As leaders in local

government, it is both our job and our duty to give support and be an ally of those who need it most.



This article is an edited version of an interview Cllr Madlani undertook for the LGA's LGBTQIA+ and BAME Staff Networks

Time to go faster on hitting net zero



Councillor Nick Forbes CBF is Leader of the LGA's Labour Group

ampant wildfires in America; hundreds killed by extreme floods in Germany and China; and here, in the UK, the Met Office issued its first ever extreme heat warning.

If we needed any reminder why the Government's pathetic target of hitting net zero by 2050 lacks the necessary speed and ambition, the past few weeks have really delivered.

Local government wants to go faster: more than two-thirds of councils have said they want to hit net zero by 2030.

We need a power shift from central government to local communities to tackle climate change. Local leaders are more trusted, more accountable, and more ambitious in accelerating the path to net zero

The LGA's 'Build back local' publication sets out how councils are fundamental to transitioning our places and empowering our communities and businesses to a netzero future. A clear national climate change framework that enables local councils and their partners to deliver on the ground can help the country move forward into a greener future.

Councils are also well placed to deliver transformative action on the ground, but we need powers to lead. Cities and towns can't reach net zero alone; we need help from national and international leaders to turn climate plans into climate reality.

That's why, in July, I joined dozens of other council leaders and mayors from UK100 to call for new powers and resources to be devolved from Whitehall, so that we can lead in shaping local energy markets, decarbonising transport, and tackling emissions from homes and offices.

Time really is running out to tackle the root cause of global warming. The International Net Zero Local Leadership Summit that UK100 held in July has been compared with the Paris City Hall Declaration in 2015, which paved the way for the Paris Climate Agreement at COP21.

Let's hope that the work of the LGA and UK100 demonstrates to our national leaders that the clock is ticking, and COP26 proves a genuine step forward in meeting this global challenge.

"We need a power shift from central government to local communities to tackle climate change"



Councillor James Jamieson is Chairman of the LGA

Debate, not hate

he great national challenges of our day - living with coronavirus, building back the economy, ensuring high-quality care, and protecting the environment for future generations all have one thing in common.

They can only be tackled through local leadership and local innovation, as demonstrated in our annual conference report and new campaign, 'Build back local' (www.local.gov.uk/build-back-local, see p12-13).

But we also need to do all of this in a civil and civilised way, by working constructively and respectfully across party lines and with our communities.

Robust and lively debate in our councils and with our residents is a crucial part of the democratic process. Differences of opinion and the defence of those opinions through councillors' arguments and public debate are an essential part of the cut and thrust of political life.

Doing these things in a respectful way helps us build and maintain healthy

working relationships with fellow councillors, officers, and members of the public, and encourages others to treat us

But, too often, complicated arguments are reduced to short soundbites in the media, or accusations made without any thought given to their substance.

Civility in public life is not only a moral issue, it is also the only way we will collectively work together to deliver on the immense challenges that face us.

I have heard harrowing stories from councillors and officers about the harassment and intimidation they have faced. It is unacceptable; it damages our democracy by forcing people from

public service, and it must be stopped.

We all have a duty to stop this, and as councillors we need to be conscious of our own comments that can be seen as a green light for others.

For our part, the LGA will be taking forward a significant programme of work to help improve civility in public life (see first 661).

As a society, we cannot 'build back local' without first making sure we value all those who come forward to serve locally.

Please visit www.local.gov.uk/civilitypublic-life for the LGA's resources on civility in public life



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Councillor Izzi Seccombe OBE is Leader of the LGA's Conservative Group

Tributes paid to councils' leadership

t was great to see so many Conservative councillors attending this year's LGA annual conference, albeit once again virtually.

We were delighted to welcome Housing Minister Chris Pincher and Vaccines Minister Nadhim Zahawi to our well-attended group meetings. I know those present were pleased to hear from them on planning issues and the vaccine rollout respectively, as well as having plenty of time to pose questions.

"Councils have...a key role to play in supporting our local high streets back to life"

It was also great to be able to welcome Robert Jenrick, our Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, at the start of the conference, and to hear him pay a fulsome tribute to the leadership shown by councils and councillors during the pandemic.

In his speech, Robert also spoke about the importance of the Government's 'levelling up' agenda in driving the post-covid recovery, the key role that councils have to play in supporting our local high streets back to life, and the importance of meeting the housing aspirations of people across the country.

I was also delighted that despite only being in the job for less than a fortnight, Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, took time out of his busy schedule to address us and to confirm that adult social care is a key priority for him personally and for the department.

I would like to thank of all the speakers and delegates who contributed to an excellent conference, and I look forward to seeing you in person in Harrogate next year.



Councillor Joe Harris is Leader of the LGA's Liberal Democrat Group

Record turnout at the LGA's conference

would like to say a big thank you to all of you who joined me at the LGA's virtual annual conference.

Our lobbying for it to be free paid off, and we had a record turnout of Liberal Democrat councillors.

I was delighted to welcome newly elected Liberal Democrat MP Sarah Green and Liberal Democrat Deputy Leader Daisy Cooper MP to our group's AGM.

Sarah used the opportunity to say 'thank you' to all those councillors and campaigners who were able to get along to Chesham and Amersham and play a part in getting

It also allowed me to pay my respects and thank our outgoing LGA Liberal Democrat Group Leader Cllr Howard Sykes for all his work in leading the group over the past four years, and Cllr Ruth Dombey, who retired as our Deputy Group Leader.

"Sir Ed Davey set out our opposition to the proposed planning reforms"

I was also delighted to welcome our party Leader, Sir Ed Davey MP, to speak at the conference, where he set out our opposition to the proposed planning reforms.

We used the conference to celebrate the success of Liberal Democrat-led Eastleigh, Sutton and York in delivering housing for their communities, and to hear from our wonderful new Liberal Democrat leaders in Durham, Oxfordshire and Cambridgeshire on their stunning victories in May.

Both Bridget Smith, Deputy Leader of the LGA's Liberal Democrat Group, and I took office last month, and reconfirmed our plan to raise the profile - in the party and beyond of the work of Liberal Democrat councils and councillors.



Councillor Marianne Overton MBE is Leader of the LGA's Independent Group

Strength in our greater numbers

Tam humbled and thrilled to be continuing as the LGA's Independent Group Leader for two years – huge thanks for your support.

Congratulations to newly elected Deputy, Cllr Hannah Dalton, and returning Treasurer, Cllr Paul Woodhead, and a huge thank you to Cllr Clive Woodbridge, stepping down after brilliant support of our group as Deputy.

"The Prime Minister is talking about levelling up and reorganisation as one"

With our executive and lead members, we look forward to increasing our strength through greater engagement of all our members - and there are more of us than ever.

I hope you enjoyed the LGA's annual conference. There were many highlights, including our Green councillors presenting a motion at General Assembly to renew the LGA's focus on climate issues ahead of the UN Climate Conference (COP26) in November, passed overwhelmingly.

We welcomed Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson as our new President; a huge thanks to her predecessor, Lord Kerslake, who remains one of our valued Vice-Presidents. We also heard from the inspiring Baroness Lane-Fox in our group's political plenary.

Looking forward, the Prime Minister is talking about levelling up and reorganisation as one, still favouring mayoral models and county deals. Do make sure you've seen Professor Colin Copus' report, specially commissioned by our group, to see the impact on democracy, and that you are proactive in your area if changes are being discussed.

We are also tackling huge challenges in funding, climate change, care, planning, and creating a pandemic recovery that strengthens our economy, our environment and our communities.

Your contributions through the LGA, as we fight for local government, are vital.



For more information about the LGA's political groups, please visit www.local.gov.uk

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Lifeline: starting conversations about domestic abuse services



Councillor **Phyll Smith** (Lab) is a member of
East Lindsey
District Council

The delivery of domestic abuse services has always been a complex one.

The added complications of lockdown – in exacerbating and making inescapable dangerous, coercive and violent domestic situations, and with home working making



interventions and support more difficult – have been sources of concern for councils, third sector providers and the public alike.

Highlighting these concerns comes an extraordinary short film – Lifeline – which illustrates the problems faced by those delivering domestic abuse services from home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The film avoids voyeuristic investigation of domestic abuse itself, concentrating instead on the impact of delivering domestic abuse services on council and third sector workers providing those services from their homes while working remotely.

By taking the issues and traumas of their clients into their own homes and family spaces, those stresses and concerns have been communicated to workers' own safe spaces at home.

The film also offers some ameliorating support practices – though not quick solutions – that workers themselves have devised. Councils and support providers that have screened and engaged with the film have adapted these for their own use.

Eylem Akatav and Karoline Pelikan, the

directors of Lifeline, welcome the use of their film by councils and are happy to present it for councillors, officers and outsourcing organisations (I saw it at the University of East Anglia, where I am a postgraduate researcher, and then at a presentation to my local party).

Primarily, the film acts as a conversation starter – for councillors, policymakers, officers and staff – about the best ways in which to deliver these services, but particularly around how we might organise home and agile working to better support staff and mitigate the effects on their performance and mental health.

This clearly has wider implications for home workers across the range of council services, particularly those of a traumatic or sensitive nature, and as we redesign working for a low-travel, hybrid workplace.



Email Professor Akatav at e.atakav@uea.ac.uk about screenings of Lifeline.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline: **0808 2000 247**

A strategy for food poverty



Councillor Sarah Ruiz (Lab) is Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care and Education at Newham Council

In Newham, as across the UK, there are residents struggling to afford enough food to live a healthy and happy life.

Poverty is the primary cause of food insecurity, and during the COVID-19 pandemic many residents have been hit hard in health and economic terms, with a disproportionate impact on ethnic minority communities in our borough.

The scale of our challenge remains huge, particularly the struggle to put food on the table: half of our children are living in poverty and 32 per cent suffer from food insecurity.

In January 2021 – Newham's Year of the Young Person – Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz established the Young People and Food Security Task and Finish Group, as part of a series of interventions and actions to address poverty and inequality in the borough.

I was appointed chair of this group, which included elected members, council officers, and representatives of schools and the voluntary, community and faith sectors.

We devised our new Young People and Food Security Strategy, agreed at a cabinet meeting in July, which outlines how we will take a 'whole system' approach to improving food security.

Measures include encouraging healthy food retailers to open in food deserts, piloting healthy eating projects in secondary schools, introducing boroughwide food clubs, and a new digital food map on the council's website showing locally available food support services.

We have also mapped out all the excellent work that is happening across



For more information, please visit www.newham.gov.uk/news



Newham – including continuing to provide free school meals to all primary school pupils, improving referral pathways for residents in need, and advice and emergency assistance from Our Newham Money service.

But this isn't the end; many of these programmes will evolve with the changing needs of residents as we come out of the pandemic, and there will be gaps where we need new programmes.

So, updates will be reported into the council's Health and Wellbeing Board every six months, to ensure we continue to improve food security across Newham.

Our homes are not ready for climate change



Philip Box is Public Affairs and Policy Officer at the UK Green Building Council

The UK is already seeing more frequent and intense weather extremes because of climate change.

Researchers have suggested that the likelihood of extreme rainfall in the UK has increased significantly. Likewise, the heatwave of 2019 was reportedly made 10 times more likely – and 1.5 to 3 Celsius warmer – by climate change.

Our built environment is not prepared to cope with these conditions.

Around 1.8 million people in the UK already live in areas of significant flood risk, and roughly a fifth of homes in England already experience overheating issues, even during cooler summers.

Furthermore, the proportion of green space, which can provide a local cooling effect, has dropped from 63 to 55 per cent between 2011 and 2016.

If global emissions continue at their current rate, extreme heat events like the summer of 2018 will occur on average every other year by 2050.

So, what can be done?

As a first step, we must avoid adding to the problem, and that means looking at new build standards and planning.

At a local level, as demonstrated in the UK Green Building Council's 'New homes playbook', many local authorities have already begun to implement policies to address overheating in relation to planning.

At a national level, the UK Government's now closed consultation on tackling overheating in building regulations is welcome, if long overdue.

Where there are still significant policy gaps, however, is on water. The think tank Policy Connect has made several excellent recommendations for national government in this area, for both water conservation and tackling flood risk, in its 'Bricks & water' series (see www.policyconnect.org.uk).

In terms of translating these into practice, both the Government's planning reforms and interest in reforming energy performance certificates (EPCs) would be possible avenues to pursue.



"A focus on new buildings alone is not enough"

However, issues with adaptation cannot be solved in terms of the technical specifications of a new property alone. For example, studies have consistently shown the benefits of urban greening in addressing the urban heat island effect and creating sustainable urban drainage.

As a result, many local authorities have been developing urban greening or green infrastructure strategies, aimed not only at considering ways to reverse biodiversity decline, but also at harnessing the benefits of greenery in the face of extreme heat and flooding. Again, this is something government planning reforms must encourage.

However, with around 80 per cent of homes likely to be standing in 2050 already built, a focus on new buildings alone is not enough.

The need to retrofit our existing homes to reduce emissions also offers an opportunity to address overheating and resilience concerns.

One option is to take a 'whole house' approach, involving a retrofit coordinator who can produce a dedicated 'whole house plan'.

In the absence of central government policy, local authorities have led on the delivery of retrofit initiatives and programmes. But there is still much to do to ensure retrofit is tackled holistically, in a way that addresses adaptation as well as emissions reductions.

Adapting our built environment to cope with the impacts of climate change will require a fundamental shift in the way we approach development and integrated government policy, both locally and nationally.

With so many potential opportunities this year for these issues to start to be addressed, it is critical we do not delay any further in preparing for these changes.

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This article is from the LGA's 'Local path to net zero' series of think pieces, see www.local.gov.uk/ net-zero. The UK Green Building Council is a charity working to improve the sustainability of the built environment, see www.ukgbc.org to find out more and to read its 'New homes playbook' in full



Aviation matters to all of us – whether for domestic and international travel, jobs, freight, supply chains, tourism and the other economic benefits it generates, or the land use planning, surface access, noise and other environmental impacts it generates.

Evaluating and presenting a balanced view and helping to formulate and influence aviation policy is what the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG) is about. Our mission is to advance sustainable aviation policy on behalf of local communities.

SASIG is working on issues that already, or will, impinge substantially on the roles and responsibilities of local authorities. These include economic development and connectivity; development planning and safeguarding; noise, carbon emissions and other environmental impacts; surface access; and future modes of airborne personal transport.

And we have developed into a strategic partner that government and other stakeholders recognise as the first port of call for local authority views, research and representation.

Of course, it's not been a typical year for any of us. Everything stopped with the pandemic, including most of the aviation sector and the Government's own 'Aviation 2050' process, looking at its long-term vision for the sector. There has not been a comprehensive UK airport

policy document since 'The Future of Air Transport' in 2003, so the Government's immediate aviation recovery and longer-term strategic plans – expected around the turn of the year – will be very welcome.

"Our mission is to advance sustainable aviation policy"

SASIG has made an important contribution to aviation policy formulation by commissioning original research and liaising with Department for Transport officials to ensure the views of member authorities are heard and that the White Paper, when it comes, reflects them.

The research includes sponsoring, with the Civil Aviation Authority and the Independent Transport Commission, an analysis of the policy implications of future aviation technologies and completing a major report into the effects of COVID-19 on the local economies and budgets of councils with airport shareholdings or planning responsibilities.

The upcoming period is likely to be one of the busiest in SASIG's 21-year

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The Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG) is an LGA special interest group, see www.sasig.org.uk or email secretariat@sasig.org.uk for more information

history. It started on 14 July when Transport Secretary Grant Shapps launched the Government's 'greenprint' to decarbonise domestic transport by 2050, including a consultation on net zero aviation or 'jet zero'.

We are expecting, by the end of the year, further policy initiatives covering the post-pandemic recovery of aviation-dependent local economies, regional connectivity, air passenger duty and night noise, with work on airspace modernisation, air-freight strategy and role of new technologies in the longer term.

There has never been a more relevant time for local authorities to have a strong and well-informed voice to speak for them, and that is what SASIG provides.

We are not just for authorities with airport shareholdings, but also those directly or indirectly impacted by aviation. Our current membership covers nearly 40 councils, representing nearly 12 million people – approximately a fifth of the UK population.

We estimate more than 150 local authorities have civil, general or military aviation interests, and we expect all UK councils will need to engage with aviation over the next decade as drones, electric vertical take-off and landing aircraft, and other forms of 'advanced air mobility' become widespread.

SASIG will be at the forefront of these developments, and we would be delighted to hear from you!

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COUNCILLOR

Help for healthy young minds

Councils have a range of duties and responsibilities to promote the health and wellbeing of young people in their area.

These include the prevention of mental illness and the promotion of mental health and, as appropriate, assessment and treatment under the Mental Health Act 1983.

Councils are also responsible for providing targeted support for children and young people in care, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those supported by youth offending teams.

They can collaborate with NHS commissioners and providers, schools and colleges, and the voluntary and community sector to provide a range of mental health support for young people –

This article is based on the LGA's 'A whole household approach to young people's mental health: a 'must know' guide for councillors', see www.local.gov.uk/publications

from universal services through to specialist mental health care.

The 'whole household' approach to young people's mental health recognises the important roles that parents, carers or siblings can play, with research showing a strong link between parental mental health and young people's mental health.

Local leaders have a key role to play in championing such an approach.

Within the complex commissioning landscape, councillors can act as useful navigators for community stakeholders, young people and families. And they can hold commissioners across agencies to account for delivering services that meet local needs.

While studies demonstrate the importance of working with families and households, most mental health services still focus on treating the individual.

What councils need to do, as part of a 'whole household' approach, is to reduce known risk factors and invest in initiatives that promote protective factors.

According to Public Health England,

protective factors include family harmony and stability, positive parenting, affection, clear and consistent discipline, and support for education.

Conversely, risk factors include family disharmony or break up, inconsistent discipline style, parents/carers with mental illness, parental substance misuse, emotional abuse, parental criminality or alcoholism, death and loss.

A review by the Centre for Mental Health identified a range of family-friendly approaches to young people's mental health embedded in local areas, such as:

- a system-wide redesign of child and adolescent mental health services with a focus on community support, transition to adulthood, and involvement of parents
- parenting programmes and tailored support for parents, foster carers and adoptive parents whose children have mental health problems
- flexible, non-judgemental holistic support for young people, tailored to work around family needs and circumstances
- family mediation for young people at risk of homelessness.

Collectively, and in different ways, promising approaches shared a number of common goals and principles. They set out to offer a wider range of support, make the system easier to navigate, avoid the 'cliff-edge' of support ending at age 18, share resources

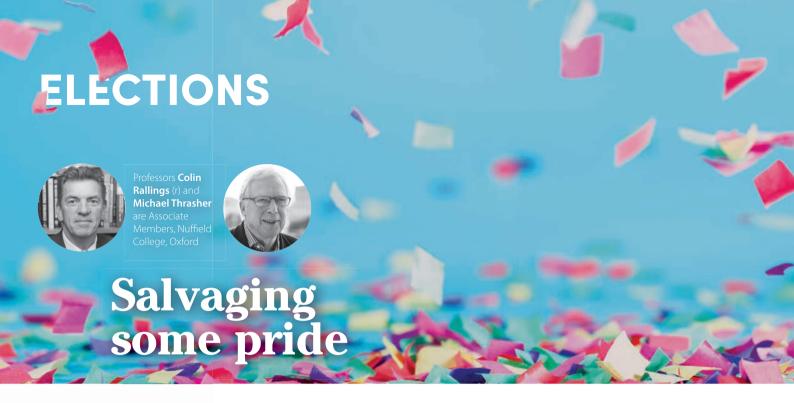


"Councils need to think about partnership working"

for young people and families, and help families to create mentally healthy homes.

To make this all work, councils need to think about partnership working, especially with NHS commissioners and with the voluntary sector.

They need to consider packaging a range of services 'under one roof', giving young people and their families flexible access to the help they need; and having a strong digital presence, where information on supporting mental health in the home and on accessing services is easily available. And they need to engage young people and families in service design and delivery.



Congratulations to Labour's Jake Bonetta, aged just 18 years, who achieved a famous victory in East Devon's Honiton St Michael's ward. In so doing, he salvaged some pride for his party.

Following its successful defence of the Batley and Spen parliamentary constituency, Leader Sir Keir Starmer declared that "Labour is back". Judged by other results, it is not.

Bonetta's victory should take centre stage, however. Before his win, Labour

last had a councillor on East Devon in 2002. The party did not contest the ward in 2019.

However, at last May's county elections, Labour won 38 per cent of the vote in the larger Honiton and Feniton division, more than doubling its previous share.

Another notable personal performance belongs to Ben Pitt, an Independent candidate who reduced three main party rivals to a combined

141 votes on his way to winning Huntingdonshire's St Neot's East ward.

Labour, whose Nik Johnson's election as the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough caused the vacancy, were reduced to 26 votes.

The Greens gained two seats after nailbiting finishes. In Mid Sussex, the party finished with a 43-vote majority in the Ardingley and Balcombe ward after early reports suggested that the Conservatives had held the seat.

Local by-elections

Chelmsford, Writtle

CON HELD

10% over Lib Dem

Turnout 35%

Chichester, Chichester East

LIB DEM GAIN FROM LAB

12% over Con Turnout 22.3%

East Devon, Feniton

CON GAIN FROM IND

25.3% over Lab Turnout 21.2%

East Devon, Honiton St Michael's

LAB GAIN FROM LIB DEM

20.5% over CON Turnout 24.8%

East Suffolk, Adleburgh and Leiston

GREEN GAIN FROM CON/CON HELD
0.1% over Con Turnout 26.6%

Elmbridge, Cobham and Downside

LIB DEM GAIN FROM CON

6.3% over Con Turnout 27.6%

Enfield, Bush Hill Park

CON HELD

26.7% over Lab Turnout 29%

Gwynedd, Harlech

PLAID CYMRU GAIN FROM IND

1.5% over Other Turnout 31.7%

Harlow, Mark Hall

CON GAIN FROM LAB

4.7% over Lab Turnout 22.3%

Huntingdonshire, St Neots East

IND GAIN FROM LAB

9% over Green Turnout 23.6%

Islington, Tollington

LAB HELD

23.4% over Green Turnout 22.2%

Mid Sussex, Ardingly and Balcombe

GREEN GAIN FROM CON

3.5% over Con Turnout 24.8%

Newark and Sherwood, Bridge

2 CON GAIN FROM IND

8.1% over IND Turnout 17.2%

North East Lincolnshire, Heneage

CON GAIN FROM LAB

13.5% over Lab Turnout 15.2%

Rugby, Wolvey and Shilton

CON HELD

64.2% over lab Turnout 24%

Sandwell, Tividale

CON GAIN FROM LAB

9.4% over Lab Turnout 20.1%

Somerset West and Taunton, North Curry and Ruishton

LIB DEM HELD

7.5% over Con Turnout 37.1%

Stoke-on-Trent, Penkhull and Stoke

CON GAIN FROM CITY IND

0.7% over Lab Turnout 30.6%

Swindon, Priory Vale

CON HELD

33.6% over Lab Turnout 22%



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30 | first August 2021



"The Greens gained two seats after nail-biting finishes in Mid Sussex and East Suffolk"

Russ Rainger, who until recently had represented the area on Suffolk County Council.

Another close finish came in Harlech, where the contest to sit on Gwynedd Council saw Plaid Cymru's Gwynfor Owen secure 161 votes, ahead of two remaining candidates with 154 and 153 votes respectively.

We return to the struggles facing Labour. It lost Chichester East to the Liberal Democrats, whose task was made much simpler when the Greens did not contest the vacancy. Labour finished in third and last place.

Three further losses were sustained at the hands of the Conservatives, with each defeat highlighting the difficulties facing Labour's recovery.

In North East Lincolnshire's Heneage ward, Labour appeared to have rebuffed the UKIP challenge after losing the seat in 2014 but winning it thereafter – until last May, that is, when the Conservative candidate polled more than half the votes.

A by-election defeat seemed likely, therefore, but Labour only narrowly avoided slipping into third place.

Harlow's Mark Hall ward shows a similar pattern, with UKIP winning in 2014 but Labour successful at the four subsequent contests. Last May, there was a remarkable turnaround as the Conservatives took 61 per cent of the vote to Labour's 32 per cent. Labour did close the gap slightly but racked up another defeat.

Since it was first established in 2004, Sandwell's Tividale ward had only once elected a non-Labour councillor, when the BNP were successful in 2006. But its majority over the Conservatives fell to just 150 votes last May and Labour lost the by-election by 176 votes.

Symptomatic of Labour's generally precarious position is that it fell 10 votes short of preventing a Conservative gain over the City Independents in Stoke-on-Trent's Penkhull and Stoke ward.

In 1997, when Tony Blair won a landslide victory, Labour held all 60 council seats. Following this win, the Conservatives are now the largest party, holding half of the council's 44 seats.

More dramatic still was the count for the double vacancy in East Suffolk's Aldeburgh and Leiston ward, where the new Sizewell C power station is proposed. Nine votes separated first from fourth place, with Tom Daly becoming the first Green councillor elected to the council.

His fellow candidate was edged out by two votes by the Conservative's

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