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# Newton is delighted to be the event partner for this year's NCAS conference

We hope you can join our panel discussion to hear leaders from across the care system sharing their personal reflections on the evolving nature of leadership in children's services.

From being an inclusive leader, to balancing a moral imperative with a business approach, to working effectively across the wider system – this session will reflect on the challenges and opportunities of being a leader in today's changing world and offer lessons learnt and practical tips. Please see the NCAS conference agenda for more details.



In today's extraordinary times, Newton is also hosting a series of virtual events which we hope will challenge and inspire public sector leaders.

At our next event, we will hear from Dame Stella Rimington on the secrets to leading in a high pressure environment. Former Director General of the Security Services (MI5), Dame Stella reached the pinnacle of a male dominated world, the first woman to hold the post.

Scan the QR code to sign up for the event and to find out more information.



## NEWTON

We deliver transformation for local authorities and the systems within which they operate which improves resident outcomes, staff engagement, and achieves significant and measurable financial savings.

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## Spending and saving

**I**t feels like a particularly busy and significant time for local government.

The Spending Review takes place on 27 October, and the LGA has been pushing for the powers and resources that councils need to enable their communities to flourish. To build back better, we need to build back local (p10, p26).

Many of you will have been marking Black History Month, and we have a range of contributions from across the political spectrum in this month's **first** (p16).

Meanwhile, the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) takes place in Glasgow from 31 October. This event provides a real opportunity to recognise councils and local government globally as key partners in tackling climate change (p12).

And we look at the key issues facing children's services (p21) and adult social care (p22) ahead of the National Children and Adult Services Conference 2021, taking place online from 24-26 November (see [www.local.gov.uk/events](http://www.local.gov.uk/events)).

Shadow Social Care Minister Liz Kendall discusses Labour's plans for adult social care (p25), Oliver Standing of Collective Voice calls for investment in drug and alcohol treatment services (p28), and Catherine Marris from Motability advises councils to think about accessibility for disabled drivers when developing electric vehicle charging points (p29).

**Cllr James Jamieson**  
is LGA Chairman



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**Government**  
Association

## More funding needed for council tax support



**The LGA is calling for the Chancellor to use this month's Spending Review to continue grant funding for council tax support schemes over the next three years.**

The Government has provided £670 million to councils in this financial year (2021/22) to help them provide discounts to households struggling to pay their council tax bills because of the pandemic.

More than 2.5 million working-age

people across England are claiming a discount on council tax – this is the highest number since records began.

The LGA warns that councils – faced with severe funding shortages and extra cost pressures in the years ahead – will be unable to provide council tax support to all those in need without an extension to that funding.

This could mean rising numbers of families on low incomes having to pay more council tax from April. Combined with the end

of the Universal Credit uplift and other covid-related support, plus rising bills, this could add to cost-of-living concerns for some of the most vulnerable.

Cllr Shaun Davies, Chair of the LGA's Resources Board, said: "Councils know how tough things are for many low-income working households who are already concerned about potential income losses and the cost of living.

"No council wants to ask those on the lowest incomes to pay more. Faced with severe funding and demand pressures that continue to stretch local services to the limit, many councils will have little choice but to reduce discounts without an extension to this government grant beyond this year.

"The Spending Review needs to provide councils with the full amount of funding required to provide council tax support to those who need it over the next few years, to avoid bills being forced up for those who can least afford to pay."

The LGA also wants the Spending Review to provide an effective long-term solution to preventing poverty and disadvantage by improving life chances and building resilience.

It is calling for the full restoration of core, separately identified funding of at least £250 million each year for wider local welfare provision, to ensure that all communities are fairly and effectively supported throughout the pandemic recovery and beyond.

## £8.1 billion to ensure safe council housing

The total cost of delivering building safety standards across the entire council housing stock is £8.1 billion over a 10-year period, a report by Savills reveals.

The LGA-commissioned research suggests that this figure would achieve full compliance with the highest possible standards, including the installation of sprinklers and compartmentation, with the majority of investment taking place in the first five years.

To achieve full compliance with current standards alone is estimated to be a total of £2 billion over the same period. These costs include the remediation of dangerous cladding.

The LGA is urging the Government to use the upcoming Spending Review to ensure that this full figure is available to local authorities so that council housing stock meets the highest possible standards of safety.

In addition, the LGA is concerned that social landlords face mounting costs arising from the Fire Safety Act and the Building Safety Bill, which government may not make allowance for in the Spending Review.

Cllr David Renard, the LGA's Housing Spokesperson, said: "Councils want residents to be safe and to feel safe in their homes, ensuring social housing meets the new standards arising

from the reform of building safety in the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire and the recommendations of the inquiry into the fire.

"Local authorities are generally being denied access to the building safety remediation funding, which was announced

last year, and this has got to change.

"Ensuring that council housing stock is as safe as can be is a top priority for councils, and a lot needs to be done across the country to get everything to the same high standards."





## Local services 'will cost £8 billion more by 2024'

Councils in England face extra cost pressures of almost £8 billion by 2024/25 just to keep vital local services running at today's levels, according to LGA analysis.

It has warned that these pressures cannot be met by council tax income alone.

Councils are particularly alarmed that the Government's solution for tackling existing pressures in social care appears to be solely through the use of council tax and the social care precept (see p22).

The LGA's detailed submission to October's Treasury Spending Review calls for councils to be given a multi-year settlement that provides sufficient additional government funding and certainty to meet growing cost pressures and existing challenges.

It would also enable councils to plan local services more efficiently and help reduce pressures on the rest of the public sector.

The LGA is also calling for an ongoing Community Investment Fund, worth £1 billion

in 2022/23, which councils could use to support individuals, strengthen communities, and tackle priorities in their local areas, including health inequalities – all of which will be vital to levelling up across the country.

Cllr James Jamieson, LGA Chairman, said: "Councils continue to face severe funding and demand pressures that will stretch the local services our communities rely on to the limit. Securing the long-term sustainability of local services must therefore be the top priority in the Spending Review.

"If we are to come out of this pandemic with a society that is truly levelled up, the vital services that councils provide must be at the heart of it.

"Councils need certainty over their medium-term finances, adequate funding to tackle day-to-day pressures, and long-term investment in people and transforming places to turn levelling up from a political slogan to a reality that leads to real change for people's lives."

● See p10, p26

## Care vacancies 'higher than pre-covid'

More social care jobs are unfilled than before the pandemic, with care providers facing acute problems in recruiting and retaining staff, according to a workforce charity.

The annual Skills for Care report, based on data from employers of England's 1.54 million care workers, shows that 8 per cent of posts were not filled before the pandemic. This rose to 8.2 per cent by August this year, equivalent to more than 100,000 vacancies.

In a separate report, Skills for Care also said adult social care contributes £50.3 billion to the economy in England and provides significant societal benefits.

During the pandemic, social care's economic activity increased by 7.7 per cent, while other sectors saw their activity stall or shrink by up to 4 per cent overall.

LGA Community Wellbeing Board Chairman Cllr David Fothergill said: "This report is the most striking evidence yet that social care still faces a huge recruitment and retention crisis, and that we urgently need to see action on staff pay, conditions, skills and training.

"It also confirms that providers who can invest in their workforce produce better care outcomes, but we also need to see greater progress on equality and diversity."

He added: "The Spending Review and forthcoming white paper must set out how immediate and short-term pressures in social care will be addressed, including on the workforce, and involve councils, care workers and those with lived experience if we are to build back better and develop a care and support system fit for the future."

## Early pandemic response was 'public health failure'

**Councils could have been given a greater role in the initial response to COVID-19, a new cross-party report by MPs has said.**

The joint report, by the Commons Science and Technology and Health and Social Care Committees, said the UK's failure to do more to stop the virus spreading early in the pandemic was one of the country's worst public health failures.

The government approach was to try to manage the situation and, in effect, achieve herd immunity by infection, it said.

The start of NHS Test and Trace was "slow, uncertain and often chaotic" and the system was too centralised – only later making use of the expertise in local public health teams run by councils.

But the report also highlighted successes, including the vaccination rollout.

Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "Councils have been leading their communities through the pandemic.

"Directors of public health and their

teams, working in councils, know their areas best and were eventually able to complement the national test and trace system by setting up their own local contact tracing partnerships and successfully tracing many hard-to-reach cases.

"Coronavirus will be with us for some time to come and challenges remain, including the need for greater data sharing with councils to help them deal with localised outbreaks, alongside the necessary resources and personnel."

## In brief

### Brownfield land

Nearly £58 million has been allocated to 53 councils under the Brownfield Land Release Fund to help regenerate local areas for building new housing. Cllr James Jamieson, LGA Chairman, said: "One Public Estate and the Brownfield Land Release Fund play a crucial role in supporting the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, and supporting councils to transform their assets, create better services, and release land for much-needed new homes and regeneration across the country. Councils are being ever more ambitious in their ideas to use this funding to kick-start transformation, regeneration and new development in their communities."

### Pools at risk

Two thousand swimming pools could be lost by the end of the decade, according to a report from national governing body Swim England. Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Chair of the LGA's Culture, Tourism and Sport Board, said: "Sixty per cent of pools are past their expected lifespans or overdue refurbishment, and account for up to 40 per cent of some councils' direct carbon emissions. Alongside high running costs and financial constraints exacerbated by the pandemic, there is a real risk that we will lose these vital community assets. Capital investment for councils to redesign, upgrade and renovate facilities is urgently needed to protect them and deliver on net-zero targets."

### Rough sleeping

The lessons learned from joint working on rough sleeping during the pandemic will be wasted without urgent action, and the number of people sleeping rough will rise again, according to the final report from the Kerslake Commission. Cllr James Jamieson, LGA Chairman, said: "Getting thousands of rough sleepers off the streets into safe accommodation at the start of the pandemic was an incredible achievement by councils. Councils stand ready to work with government to realise its ambition of ending rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament. For that to happen, the Government must announce a cross-departmental homelessness prevention strategy... [and give] councils the long-term funding required to prevent homelessness from happening in the first place."

## Council housing waiting lists 'could double'

The LGA has set out the case for building 100,000 green social homes for rent each year, in a new report 'Building post-pandemic prosperity'.

Commissioned by the LGA, the Association of Retained Council Housing, and the National Federation of ALMOs, the report reveals that one in 10 households in need of housing is stuck on council waiting lists, as a result of the chronic shortage of affordable homes. It also finds that, because of the pandemic and the ending of covid-related support schemes, a potential increase in homelessness could see council housing waiting lists almost double next year to as many as 2.1 million households.

The LGA is calling on the Chancellor to use this month's Spending Review to give councils the powers and funding to build 100,000 social homes for rent each year. This would not only achieve a third of the Government's annual

housing target, but also improve the public finances over 30 years by £24.5 billion.

This should include further reform of Right to Buy, to allow councils to retain 100 per cent of receipts, have flexibility to combine Right to Buy receipts with other government grants, and be able to set the size of discounts locally.

Cllr David Renard, LGA Housing Spokesperson, said: "There is a desperate need to build more social housing in this country, which should be a central part of the Government's ambition to level up and build back better following the pandemic."

"Now is the time to reverse the decline in council housing over the past few decades. The benefits are clear – a programme of 100,000 social homes a year would shorten council housing waiting lists, reduce homelessness and cut carbon emissions, while delivering a multi-billion long-term boost to the economy."

## 'One in 10 will have diabetes by 2030'

**Almost one in 10 people in the UK will have diabetes by 2030 amid rising levels of obesity, according to Diabetes UK.**

The charity says the country faces a public health emergency, with millions at risk of "devastating complications", including heart attacks, kidney failure, stroke, amputation and blindness.

About 90 per cent of diabetes patients have type 2, which is closely linked to excess

weight or obesity. The majority of adults in England are now an unhealthy weight and more than a quarter are officially obese, with diagnoses of diabetes having doubled in the past 15 years.

Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said councils are doing all they can to help keep people healthy throughout their lives and reduce pressure on the health service and social care.

Investment in councils' public health services, through the upcoming Spending Review, would reap benefits for everyone longer term, including for the NHS and other public services, and help level up the future health chances of local communities, he added.

"Obesity and its close association with type 2 diabetes is one of the biggest public health challenges we face and these figures are a worrying wake-up call."

"The growing ageing population means that the number of people with diabetes in social care is set to grow rapidly, placing extra pressures on councils' care budgets, which are already under strain."



# Call for school-based counselling for all

**Fully funded, school-based counselling needs to be available in all state-funded secondary schools and academies, to help support rising numbers of children and young people reporting mental health issues during COVID-19, the LGA has said.**

The number of young people in contact with mental health services in England increased by nearly a third (29 per cent), to 305,802 in February 2021, from 237,088



in March 2020, according to the latest figures.

It is estimated that 1.5 million children and young people will need support for their mental health as a direct result of the pandemic over the next three to five years.

The LGA said the Government should use the Spending Review to invest at least £100 million a year into rolling out school-based counselling to all state secondary schools and academies, which would ensure access to a school counsellor for at least two days a week for more than 90 per cent of schools. This would complement the existing rollout of mental health support teams in schools.

The LGA has also urged government to invest £900 million in the public health grant, to return it to its 2015/16 level in real terms.

It said that three-quarters of mental health problems first emerge before the age of 24, so it makes sense economically to invest in mental health support for young people.

Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Chair of the LGA's Children and Wellbeing Board, said: "With reports showing increasing numbers of young people seeking mental health support during the pandemic, it is crucial that early intervention and prevention services, such as school counselling – where pupils may feel more able to confide in trusted professionals – are able to help children avoid reaching crisis point in the first place."

## More funding needed for public health

An additional £1.4 billion a year by 2024/25 is now needed to restore the real-terms cut to the public health grant and keep pace with rising demand and costs, according to new analysis by the charity The Health Foundation.

Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "Public health services are vital to tackling the health inequalities that have been exacerbated by the pandemic and are preventing us from levelling up the country.

"As this report highlights, the public health grant for councils has been significantly reduced in real terms by nearly a quarter over the past five years, which could impact on their ability to meet demand and respond

to unforeseen outbreaks. If we are to truly level up, we must focus on reducing poor health outcomes as well as economic imbalances between regions, supported by the right resources.

"Investment now will reap benefits for everyone longer term, including for the NHS, criminal justice and other public services.

"Councils are doing all they can to help keep people healthy throughout their lives and reduce pressure on the NHS and social care.

"The upcoming Spending Review is an opportunity to realise this shared ambition with government, to level up the future health chances of our communities and build back better from the pandemic."

## In brief

### James Brokenshire

LGA Chairman Cllr James Jamieson has paid tribute to former Housing, Communities and Local Government Secretary James Brokenshire, who died on 7 October, aged 53. "Councils will remember James fondly as our Secretary of State. He stood up for the interests of councils and communities with the same integrity and passion that characterised him as a person," he said. "He was a thoroughly decent man, a real gentleman, and showed remarkable bravery in the face of his illness. He will be sadly missed."

## Care complaints

The Local Government Ombudsman found fault in 72 per cent of the complaints about adult social care that it investigated last year – up from 69 per cent the previous year – with faults "increasingly caused by the measures employed by councils and care providers to mitigate the squeeze on their resources". Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "As this report highlights, coronavirus has exacerbated pre-existing pressures in the social care system, primarily because of underfunding. The Spending Review should be used to... provide upfront, desperately needed new funding to meet immediate demands and pressures in our care system, so that people can live their best life."

## Product safety

Weaknesses in the UK's overall product safety regulatory regime mean "it is not fit to address the challenges it faces" in protecting consumers from unsafe products, according to a Public Accounts Committee report. There are gaps in respect of regulating goods sold online, and local trading standards services have seen a 39 per cent real-term funding reduction in the past 10 years. Cllr Nesil Caliskan, Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, called for more resources and for the existing regulatory framework to be updated. "We would also like to see funding for a programme of regulatory apprenticeships, and steps taken to enable councils to recover a greater proportion of the costs of running regulatory services from the businesses that benefit from them," she added.

## Leadership of care and health under review

A Government review of health and social care leadership must work closely with local government to utilise councils' expertise and help inform its recommendations, the LGA has said.

The health and social care leadership review, led by retired General Sir Gordon Messenger, is due to report back to Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid in early 2022.

It will consider how to foster and replicate the best examples of leadership, and to reduce regional disparities in efficiency and health outcomes across the country.

Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said social care is complex, spanning multiple partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors, and faces significant financial and workforce challenges, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

"As rewarding as they can be, leadership positions in social care are therefore demanding, challenging, and can be draining, and we are asking more of leaders at a time of significant challenge," he said.

"There are excellent leaders throughout social care, demonstrating the right culture of compassionate, inclusive and collaborative leadership that is needed for today's challenges. The right culture is vital to good-quality care and must not be sidelined by a sole focus on efficiency."

The LGA is calling on the Government to commit a greater share of the new health and social care levy to frontline social care from the outset. It also wants to see new investment in the upcoming Spending Review to stabilise social care and allow local leaders to deliver on efficiency and innovation.



## 'Lost' funding for almost 10 million potholes

More than 9.5 million potholes could be repaired or prevented by councils with the funding lost from local road maintenance budgets this year, the LGA has warned.

Overall capital funding allocated to councils by the Department for Transport for local road maintenance in 2021/22 is £1.39 billion – a reduction of £400 million (22 per cent) from the previous year.

There is currently a £10 billion backlog of local road repairs. The LGA says that the Government should use the Spending Review to plug this year's £400 million gap and commit an additional £500 million per year to councils for road repairs.

Fixing roads is a top priority for councils, with a pothole repaired every 19 seconds despite the COVID-19 pandemic requiring teams to work hard to introduce temporary road measures.

In recent years, the Government has supported local roads maintenance, including a pothole repair fund, recognising the importance of resilient and

well-maintained highways infrastructure to all road users and businesses.

However, the cost of construction has increased significantly, reflecting global supply problems. Future capital allocations need to take into account the significant inflation rates in highways construction and maintenance costs.

Cllr David Renard, LGA Transport Spokesperson, said: "The ability of councils to improve local transport connectivity and infrastructure, including upgrades to local bus, road and cycle infrastructure, is critical to government ambitions to level up the country, reduce carbon emissions from transport, and support our long-term economic recovery from the pandemic."

"With long-term and consistent investment in local road maintenance in the Spending Review, councils can embark on the widespread improvement of our roads that is desperately needed, to the benefit of all road users up and down the country, including cyclists."

## Press ahead with rural and urban devolution, say MPs

**The Government should press ahead with further devolution in England and examine the case for devolving greater powers over services, including health, housing, planning and education, MPs have said.**

'Progress on devolution in England', a report from the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, calls on devolution to be extended not only to combined authorities, but also local government more widely, and to both rural and urban areas.

It recommends the Government bring forward a devolution framework that emphasises that devolution should be the default option, and that financial devolution is necessary to ensure the success of devolution.

To help boost the financial resilience of councils and reduce the reliance on

council tax and business rates, the report recommends that the Government explores alternative revenue-raising options for councils.

It also urges the Government to accelerate proposals for how the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will work.

Cllr James Jamieson, LGA Chairman, said that the forthcoming levelling up white paper "provides a real opportunity to turbo-charge the devolution agenda".

He added: "As we focus on the task of national recovery, now is the right time to strengthen this partnership and bring forward an ambitious new devolution settlement that gives councils the powers and funding they need to address regional inequality, tackle local pockets of deprivation, and make towns and communities across England attractive places to live, work and visit."

## Spreading the message

The LGA took its 'Build back local' campaign to the autumn party conferences



It was a busy party conference season for the LGA, as we organised debates on 'harnessing the power of local government to level up' at each of the party political conferences.

Drawing on our 'Build back local' campaign (see [www.local.gov.uk/build-back-local](http://www.local.gov.uk/build-back-local)), these debates have explored how, with the right funding and freedoms, councils can

play a leading role in the recovery from the pandemic.

At the Liberal Democrats' virtual conference, debate chair Cllr Amanda Hopgood was joined by Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, LGA President; Cllr Joe Harris, Leader of the LGA's Liberal Democrat Group; Polly Mackenzie, Chief Executive of Demos; and Tim Farron MP, Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Contributions focused on the key role local councils played in supporting local communities and businesses during lockdown with references to York City Council, whose micro business grants helped keep hundreds of local businesses going.

At our Labour Party conference debate, led by Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, we heard from Baroness Grey-Thompson about the difference that councils make to the quality of residents' lives, while Professor Steve Fothergill, from the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, called on councils to engage with the Government's levelling-up agenda and existing funding mechanisms.

Anneliese Dodds MP, Party Chair and Chair of Labour Policy Review, thanked councils for their work during the pandemic, and both she and Cllr Nick Forbes, Leader of the LGA's Labour Group, highlighted the role of councils in levelling up the country.

Cllr Forbes also stressed the need for a fair funding settlement for local

government as part of the upcoming Spending Review.

Finally, at the Conservative Party conference, the panel, led by LGA Chairman Cllr James Jamieson, discussed social care funding, the role of local government in achieving net zero, planning reform, and the support councils need to meet housing demand.

Localis Chief Executive Jonathan Werran spoke about devolution and the

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*"Councils can play a leading role in the recovery"*

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need for central government to put more trust in local government to provide for their communities.

Both Cllr Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the LGA's Conservative Group, and David Simmonds MP, a former councillor, drew on their own experiences in local government to discuss how we can give councils more power to build back better.

LGA representatives spoke at a range of Labour and Conservative conference events, organised by stakeholder organisations, on topics such as levelling-up, young people, housing and net zero.

### Back from recess

Following the return of Parliament from recess, the LGA continued its engagement with Peers on the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill, which started its Report Stage in the Lords on 12 October.

We also briefed Peers ahead of a debate on the challenges facing social care in England following the pandemic, and the effect of the new health and social care levy on the Government's social care plans.

In the committee corridors, LGA Deputy Chief Executive Sarah Pickup gave evidence to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee inquiry on long-term funding for adult social care.

We used both these opportunities to highlight our concerns about the Government's plans for social care and what needs to be done to ensure the social care system can support people to live the lives they want to lead.

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**i** For more information about the LGA's parliamentary work, please visit [www.local.gov.uk/parliament](http://www.local.gov.uk/parliament)

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**i** The LGA Independent Group Annual Conference 2021 takes place in London on 29 October, see [www.local.gov.uk/events](http://www.local.gov.uk/events)

# The Spending Review 2021

Building back better means  
building back local

**T**he Chancellor is conducting the 2021 Spending Review in exceptional conditions.

We are dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people, the economy and public finances.

But this is also the time to be bold and ambitious about reshaping the direction of this country for years to come.

Councils have played a critical role throughout the past 18 months, turning rapidly changing policy into practice on the ground.

The experience of the pandemic demonstrates that local government is a trusted delivery partner for Whitehall, making sure that our joint response to this crisis recognised local needs and impacts across our diverse communities.

Throughout, councils learnt from and supported each other through sector-led improvement.

For many people, their local area matters more now than it ever did, and will continue to play a significant role as we move further into recovery.

Some groups and communities have been adversely affected by the health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic, and will need more help to recover, with some individuals needing support where they did not prior to the pandemic.

For others, the issues they faced pre-pandemic – access to fast broadband, housing that is right for them and their families – have been amplified.

This means that the role councils play will have an even greater significance in the lives of people as we all reimagine what our post-pandemic lives look like.

We need a collective effort to rebuild our economy, get people back to work, level up inequalities across the country, and create new hope in our communities.

*“We need a collective effort to level up and create new hope”*

Responding to the significant economic challenges ahead requires a renewed joint endeavour between local and national government as equal partners: building back better means building back local.

The Government has set an ambitious target to level up the entire country and improve the lives of its citizens.

The Prime Minister was clear that, to make progress on levelling up, we have to raise living standards, spread opportunity, improve our public services and restore people’s sense of pride in their community.

All of these aims need the necessary funding and for councils to be empowered to help deliver on this shared commitment.

It is clear that the starting point for this new approach to our public services needs to be a rethink of public finances, with:

- a multi-year financial settlement providing local government with certainty over its medium-term finances
- sufficiency of resources to tackle day-to-day pressures and the lasting impact of COVID-19
- recognition of the benefits of investment directed by those closest to the opportunities for shared prosperity.

To achieve this, the Spending Review will need to move away from the traditional drivers of departmental spending towards a degree of fiscal decentralisation, in line with some of the world’s most productive economies (see [www.local.gov.uk/fiscal-devolution-adopting-international-approach](https://www.local.gov.uk/fiscal-devolution-adopting-international-approach)).

The economic challenges our communities are facing require a bold response – place-based budgets that are in tune with the needs of the local economy.

This Spending Review presents an opportunity to reset public spending in a way that is fit for the future and flexible to allow for the delivery of local priorities, and that empowers councils to achieve the ambition for our communities that central and local government share.



**To read the LGA's Spending Review 2021 Submission in full**, please visit [www.local.gov.uk/publications/spending-review-2021-submission](https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/spending-review-2021-submission). The Government will publish its spending plans for the next three years alongside the Budget on 27 October

# Spending priorities

**T**he LGA's Spending Review 2021 Submission is organised into six priority themes. The proposals include a mix of revenue funding, capital funding, freedoms and flexibilities, as well as policy reform to relieve pressures on local government.



## 1 A strong and certain financial foundation

The Spending Review needs to provide councils with sufficient funding to meet cost pressures and pre-existing challenges, but it is also an opportunity to enable councils to bring together the budgets of public services across a place to eliminate duplication and drive savings to the public purse.

Our key proposal is for a multi-year 'core' local government funding settlement that provides sufficient certainty and resources.

Excluding COVID-19 and pre-existing challenges, such as the education of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), we estimate that councils face cost pressures of \$2.6 billion each year – including \$1.1 billion for adult social care alone – just to keep them at their 2019/20 level of quality and access.

## 4 Reaching net zero

Councils are leading the way in helping the Government meet its aim for the UK to become a net-zero carbon economy by 2050.

The LGA's proposals include a new policy and fiscal framework, backed by crucial investment, to allow councils to help government achieve its net-zero ambitions, and measures to make sure its ambitious waste and recycling reforms are introduced in a financially sustainable fashion.

## 2 Adult social care and public health

The Government's 'Build back better: our plan for health and social care' could be an important first step in moving toward the changes that are needed to ensure people of all ages are best supported to live the life they want to lead.

However, if the plan's potential is to be realised, the Spending Review must deliver new national funding to stabilise adult social care. Public health services have shown their value during the pandemic and are key to tackling health inequalities.

The LGA's proposals include a \$1.5 billion injection of funding to stabilise the adult social care provider market, together with annual funding needed to meet the cost pressures mentioned above, and investing \$900 million to return the public health grant to its 2015/16 level in real terms.

## 5 Education and children's social care

Councils are ambitious about maximising the life chances of all children, regardless of their background. Equality of opportunity is a critical element of enabling levelling up and building thriving local areas.

The LGA's proposals include allowing councils to build new schools in their areas, providing the financial capital funding framework needed to support this, and dealing with pressures related to the education and care of children with SEND.

## 3 Investing in communities and tackling health inequalities

The concept of levelling up is multifaceted and will require investment in social as well as physical infrastructure. It is vital that central and local government work together on these multiple issues, in a unique mix in each local area, at the same time.

The LGA is proposing an unringfenced and ongoing 'community investment fund' – worth \$1 billion in 2022/23 and increasing to \$3 billion by 2024/25 – which councils can invest in supporting individuals and strengthening communities according to local priorities, including tackling health inequalities.

## 6 Building back local economies

Councils want to work with government on the economic recovery from COVID-19 as trusted partners – in particular, through greater devolution and powers to steer resources to local economic priorities.

Key proposals include: dedicated local growth funding through the Shared Prosperity Fund and other initiatives; an innovative, devolved approach to making sure that local residents have the right skills to match the work opportunities of the future; measures to help councils secure affordable homes for all those who need one, including a housing stimulus package to deliver 100,000 homes each year; and reform of the housing revenue account system.



Councillors **Nick Forbes** CBE and **Izzi Seccombe** OBE are Co-Chairs of the LGA's cross-party Climate Change Task Group



# Creating a net-zero future

COP26 provides a real opportunity to recognise local government as a key partner in tackling climate change

**W**e are living in a time of tremendous global change. Never before have we faced a health pandemic at such a significant, worldwide scale.

And never before has it been more urgent to tackle climate change, which threatens all livelihoods and species across our planet.

The next decade will be critical for ensuring we are on the right track to transition our places, societies and

economies to a net-zero carbon future.

With the UN's 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) taking place this November, in Glasgow, there is a momentous opportunity for world leaders to be ambitious and accelerate action to create a net-zero future.

But net zero can only be achieved if decarbonisation happens in every place, community and household across the country, and this will require local leadership.

Councils are well placed to do this and can deliver transformative action on the ground. As the LGA's 'A local path to net zero' sets out, councils have many functions and responsibilities that can support national and international targets (see [www.local.gov.uk/net-zero](http://www.local.gov.uk/net-zero)).

These include their role as:

- place shapers – councils have powers or influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas

- purchasers – local government third-party spend in 2019/20 was at least \$63 billion
- delivery agents – LGA polling in February found that 71 per cent of respondents most trusted their local councils, compared with 18 per cent that most trusted government, when it came to local decision-making
- convenors of partners and communities – as much as 62 per cent of the future reduction in emissions will rely on individual choices and behaviours
- asset owners – councils are responsible for an estimated 27,000 parks and green spaces.

Councils want to work as partners with government and we have been calling for a national framework for addressing the climate emergency.

This framework should provide strategic direction and clarity on the roles

## Road to COP26

For the first time, the UK will host the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) from 1-12 November, in partnership with Italy.

The conference will bring together international delegations to agree coordinated action to tackle climate change and make progress towards meeting the international commitments in the Paris Agreement.

The UK has identified four goals to achieve at COP26. These are:

- mitigation – taking action to limit global warming; for example, curtailing deforestation and investing in renewable energy
- adaptation – helping communities adapt and prepare for climate change; for example, by investing

in resilient infrastructure

- finance – investing in clean growth and creating green jobs
- collaboration – between governments, businesses, and civil society to tackle climate change.

The LGA's Climate Change Task Group has been providing strategic oversight of our political engagement on net zero in the lead-up to the conference. We will be using COP26 to communicate our key messages that we want multi-level action and to build a partnership between central and local government to tackle climate change.

For more information about our key asks of the UK COP26 presidency, visit [www.local.gov.uk/net-zero-road-to-cop26](http://www.local.gov.uk/net-zero-road-to-cop26). Further information about COP26 and the UK's goals can be found at [ukcop26.org](http://ukcop26.org).

Bradford Council is making Horton Park more climate resilient

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*“Councils are well placed to deliver transformative action on the ground”*

Cornwall Council is increasing canopy cover – including marine seagrass

© MATT SLATER, CORNWALL WILDLIFE TRUST

and responsibilities of national and local government, along with an assessment of public and private finance to ensure councils are resourced and enabled to fulfil their roles.

COP26 provides a real opportunity to recognise local government as a key partner and step up delivery on our climate ambitions. This is why we support the international calls for COP26 to be the year of multi-level action.

The LGA, along with our domestic and international partners, is asking for

formal representation of regional and local government through a dedicated chapter in the official agreement reached at COP26.

We are also calling for a commitment to recognising and empowering local government in the UK's updated National Determined Contributions to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

As host, the UK Government can champion inclusion and collaboration with local and regional governments, and set a global example.

So we are pleased that there will be a dedicated ‘Cities, regions and built environment day’ at COP26, on 11 November. We are working to ensure that local government has a strong presence on this day and throughout the conference.

The success of COP26 will be in its legacy. The ambitions and commitments made ahead of and at the conference will have lasting impacts for setting the trajectory of change in the years to come.

It is crucial that these impacts are positive and enable councils to tackle climate change locally.

**i** **For support on climate change,** please visit the LGA's hub at [www.local.gov.uk/our-support/climate-change](http://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/climate-change). **For more on COP26,** see [www.local.gov.uk/net-zero-road-to-cop26](http://www.local.gov.uk/net-zero-road-to-cop26)

## Pass the planet

In the run-up to COP26, the LGA has been showcasing best practice on climate change from councils across England and Wales through our Pass the Planet campaign.

Every region has featured in the campaign, which promotes good practice to support universal learning and shares innovative solutions that councils can scale up or replicate.

In the North West, Lancashire County Council has invested in low-carbon street lighting, while Cumbria County Council has introduced ‘plastic’ roads, replacing some of the bitumen with recycled waste plastic.

In Yorkshire and the Humber, York City Council has implemented a clean-air zone, while North East Lincolnshire Council is providing free, ‘one-stop shop’ advice and grants to small and medium-sized businesses on renewable energy and reducing carbon emissions.

Middlesbrough Council, in the North East, was the first to trial the use of private, rented e-scooters on its highways.

In Wales, Newport City Council is working with a community organisation to install solar panels with the aim of becoming carbon neutral, and Denbighshire County Council has changed its constitution to ensure all decisions have regard for tackling climate and ecological change.

Three South West councils (Torbay, South Hams, and West Devon) have joined forces to arrange carbon literacy training for officers, senior leaders and councillors.

In the South East, Swale Borough Council has set up a fuel and water home advice service for its most vulnerable residents.

The London Borough of Waltham Forest has retrofitted sheltered housing schemes with a solar-powered system to power lifts and lighting, while Hammersmith and Fulham has developed a ‘climate implications toolkit’ to help officers assess and improve projects, procurements and commissioning.

In the East Midlands, Derbyshire County Council has launched a £2 million green entrepreneurs’ fund, while, in the West Midlands, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council is working on a low-carbon energy network for its town centre.

In the East of England, Cambridge City Council plans to grow its urban forest, increasing canopy cover from 17 to 19 per cent by the 2050s.

To find out more about these and many other projects, please visit [www.local.gov.uk/pass-the-planet](http://www.local.gov.uk/pass-the-planet).

If you would like to contribute, or if you are doing something innovative locally that you would like to share, please fill out the case study form at [bit.ly/2WOvWPH](http://bit.ly/2WOvWPH)





**Sarah Lou Hassenpflug** is Sustainable City Project Manager at Oxford City Council

# Going ultra low

Oxford City Council has been piloting local approaches to electric vehicle charging



**O**ut on the electric vehicle (EV) conference circuit, the change of tone is striking.

Two years ago, the big questions were hydrogen versus electric, and hybrids versus full battery EVs. This year, it is: how do we scale chargers fast enough to keep up with demand?

Sir John Armitt, Head of the National Infrastructure Commission, recently called for radical change in the way transport infrastructure delivery is funded, pivoting away from a competitive, project-based funding system.

With the LGA, the Competition and Markets Authority, and the influential think tank Policy Exchange all taking a similar stance, momentum appears to be building.

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*“You need to identify your local mandate. **What matters most?**”*

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Many of us are waiting for the publication of the Government’s electric vehicle infrastructure strategy this winter, to understand its plans for the role local government should play in shaping this next phase of EV infrastructure rollout.

As one of the Office for Zero Emissions’ Go Ultra Low Cities, Oxford started trialling EV charging infrastructure solutions early. Our work is underpinned by Oxford’s Zero

Emission Zone, which will go live in February 2022.

Today, our partnership projects include: Energy Superhub Oxford, looking at energy storage, EV uptake and electrification; Go Ultra Low Oxford, which trialled five charging technologies across the city; and Ox Gul-e, which is looking at using cable gullies to provide EV charging for households without off-street parking.

So, what have we learned?

First, you need to identify your local mandate. What matters most – equity, delivery speed, reduced car ownership, cost, innovation? Determine what you can leave to the market, and where you should intervene and invest to provide best value for the people you represent.

EV charging projects need dedicated internal staff, and input from legal, procurement, planning, highways and property teams. Consider partnerships with other public sector bodies to reduce pressure on resources.

Get ‘business as usual’ ready. Oxford will be piloting a dedicated contract management service with ODS, our fully council-owned service partner, to plan who will supervise the contracts, respond to residents’ requests, and monitor outcomes.

Collaboration is key. Internally, across local/regional tiers, energy network operators and landowners, you’ll need a forum to talk. Suppliers’ values matter, but consider where a company is in the acquisition cycle, and contracting options – such as special purpose vehicles – that could reduce risk.

Take a portfolio approach. Rapid charging hubs, destination charging (for example, at hotels) and alternative transport modes are necessary fallbacks for households charging on-street. A resilient charging system will require all of them.

The business case for on-street AC charging is weak, so consider scaling up or diversifying. Roughly 60 per cent of your investment is underground – your long-term asset is the connected charging site, not the unit on top.

Reduce contract performance risk, make time for lessons learned, and share your insights. We all get it wrong at times, and sharing improves the outcomes for all. Don’t let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

Not every council is ready for EV rollout, but we can all determine what electrification of transport means for us locally, and the organisational change and partnerships needed to make it happen.

This will ensure we are ready to crank up the action as the funding landscape changes.

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**i** To find out more about Oxford City Council’s work on climate change and the environment, please visit [www.oxford.gov.uk/environment](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/environment). For the LGA’s report on ‘Scoping the role of local authorities in the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure’, see [www.local.gov.uk/publications/scoping-role-local-authorities-EV](http://www.local.gov.uk/publications/scoping-role-local-authorities-EV). See p29, ‘EV charging for disabled drivers’

# Stand up to be counted

Councillors have a role to play in ensuring all our communities are better represented in local government



**Ashok Viswanathan**  
is Deputy Director  
and Co-Founder of  
Operation Black Vote

**I**f you don't do politics, politics will do you' – that's how the saying goes; and there's a reason the phrase has resonated for so long.

It's because politics pervades practically everything we do; decision-making, communication, and bargaining are part and parcel of the everyday politics of life. At some level, we're all involved, and what councils and councillors do is formalise these everyday politics for the betterment of communities.

Naturally, there will be winners and losers, but where you fall on that spectrum depends on how much you give, what interventions you make, who you choose to collaborate with, and how you communicate your ideas.

These factors and more are crucial to your success, but weaving these strands together is the agency you have to play a role in these outcomes.

You might already know people doing these things in your community, at a youth club, as an after-school football coach, or in a separate voluntary capacity. Perhaps they already have the tools they need and are unknowingly primed to transition from the sidelines of everyday politics to the world of public service as an elected councillor. Perhaps their curiosity has led them to ask who

makes the decisions that impact their life and question the process by which these changes are made.

These people are needed, and encouragement is a great motivator – encouragement that you, as existing councillors, have the unique opportunity to provide.

For all our communities to be represented with any degree of sincerity, politics requires grassroots engagement in councils across the country to maintain the integrity of local decision-making.

Operation Black Vote celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, and hundreds of people have passed through our leadership programmes to become magistrates, school governors, and public officials on NHS boards and safer neighbourhood panels.

We've committed to facilitating these journeys with unwavering zeal, resulting in verifiable success. In the realm of elected politics, it's no different: we recently held an event, supported by the LGA, for councillors and other public servants looking to take the next step in their political leadership careers.

Clive Lewis MP (Lab, Norwich South), Tan Dhesi MP (Lab, Slough), Cllr Alex Yip (Con, Birmingham), Cllr Anna Rothery (Lab, Liverpool), Cllr Eartha Pond (Queen's Park Community Council), Marsha De Cordova MP (Lab, Battersea), Helen Grant MP (Con, Maidstone and The Weald), Cllr Josh Babarinde OBE (Lib Dem, Lewes) and Mayor Marvin Rees (Lab, Bristol) are just a few of the dynamic leaders who have come through our programmes and gone on to achieve bigger and better things for black communities and society.

It makes no difference which party you represent – Operation Black Vote is vociferously non-partisan. But it does matter that you chose to make a contribution to public life, no matter how great or small.

Our only ask is that you encourage others to stand up to be counted!



**i** To find out more about Operation Black Vote visit [www.obv.org.uk](http://www.obv.org.uk). **The LGA's Be A Councillor campaign** ([www.local.gov.uk/be-councillor](http://www.local.gov.uk/be-councillor)) offers support for local campaigns encouraging people from all backgrounds to put themselves forward for election. Join the conversation on Twitter @beacouncillor. **The LGA's next weekend event for black, Asian and minority ethnic councillors is on 19-20 February.** Email [grace.collins@local.gov.uk](mailto:grace.collins@local.gov.uk)

## Be open to challenge



Councillor **Dr Tumi Hawkins** (Lib Dem) is Lead Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Delivery and Cabinet Diversity Champion at South Cambridgeshire District Council

Black History Month has taken on extra significance since the murder of George Floyd – a black, unarmed man – by a serving white Minneapolis police officer in broad daylight.

That incident resonated here in the UK, opening the eyes of many to the structural racism that permeates our society like hurdles invisible to most except black people.

It re-energised the Black Lives Matter movement, opened doors to discussions and debates, and to positive anti-racist steps being taken by many organisations from private to public sector, including many councils.

I am proud to be the first black elected district councillor in South Cambridgeshire, serving my super majority white communities since May 2010 when I was first elected.

I have encountered both subtle and blatant racism that I deal with as appropriate using the skills I learnt over the years in my professional life as a chartered engineer.

I recall canvassing a lady who told me she would rather vote for a BNP candidate.

I have learned to ignore the questioning looks designed to make me feel I don't belong in a gathering, and am assertive when I need to be, which disconcerts those trying it on. Becoming the first black cabinet member in the district in May 2018, and holding the planning policy and delivery portfolio, gives me a platform to challenge the status quo.

The veiled look of surprise on some faces when I'm introduced amuses and annoys at the same time.

I celebrate my black African heritage every day through my wardrobe and introduced Black History Month celebrations to the council in 2019.

It became an annual event when, in 2020, the council adopted a Black Lives Matter motion to implement a range of diversity policies. Cabinet subsequently adopted the council's Equality Scheme which, as the Cabinet Diversity Champion and working with officers, I hope to embed in all aspects of South Cambridgeshire's work.

Improving diversity requires those that create the structures in which we operate to take stock of their own thinking, be open to challenge about unconscious bias and willing to change.

Consider the words of the then 10-year-old younger brother of Trevor Noah, the South African comedian: "People are like chocolate, you can have white chocolate, dark chocolate or milk chocolate, but it's all Nestlé!"

In other words, we are all one race of humans whatever our skin colour. So, let's treat each other with dignity and respect.

# Proud to be

Councils around the UK are marking Black History Month by engaging with staff and holding events and exhibitions

**B**uilding cohesive communities is a vital part of local government's work. The social impact of the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement have shown the need for councils to build communities where everyone feels valued and equal.

The theme of this year's Black History Month – running throughout October – is 'proud to be', and this is reflected in some of the contributions on these pages, from councillors and councils from across the political spectrum.

Black History Month is a time to celebrate the achievements, culture

and history of African and Caribbean communities, as well as to reflect on what work still needs to be done to achieve equality. Councils across the country are marking the month with events and workshops, and by engaging with residents and staff.

It is vital that councils, candidates and councillors reflect their communities so that they are able to work together and represent everyone; understand the day-to-day lives and issues facing their communities; and bring a broad range of skills and life experiences.

Although we have seen a slight increase in the number of black and

## Proud, accessible and inclusive



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Councillor **Lorraine Francis** (Green) is a member of Bristol City Council

As a black woman, I am still excited about being elected as a Green councillor in May 2021, in an area of Bristol that has typically voted in a different way.

It is that time of the year when

'featuring black people' is upon us, as if black people only exist during the month of October!

In my workplace outside of the council, Black History Month is a secular event managed by people of colour.

For those of us who are committed to equalities and wiping out racism, every year I do experience some sadness at having to 'celebrate' this month instead



mixed heritage councillors in the past few years, it is clear we have further to go to ensure councillors better reflect the communities they serve.

The LGA, alongside councils, is working on this in a number of ways.

Our Be a Councillor campaign ([www.local.gov.uk/be-councillor](http://www.local.gov.uk/be-councillor)) helps councils run their own local campaigns and events aimed at increasing diversity and inclusion, by encouraging people from all walks of life and experience to stand in their local elections.

And in 2004, the LGA created the UK's first development programme for black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME)

councillors, designed to help elected members develop new skills and insights and prepare for leading roles in their communities and councils.

Nearly 400 councillors have completed this programme, with some going on to become committee chairs, cabinet members, deputy leaders, leaders and MPs. The next BAME weekend takes place on 19-20 February 2022 – email [grace.collins@local.gov.uk](mailto:grace.collins@local.gov.uk) to find out more.

 **For more on Black History Month,** visit [www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk](http://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk)

of just being able to be part of the fabric of an inclusive society.

As a local councillor, I aim to practise what I preach, immersing myself into the culture of the area, being visible and ensuring that my residents are able to see me as a black woman who is proud, accessible, and inclusive.

Being a Green councillor is also vitally important to me as there is a false stereotype that people of colour are not outward looking and not interested in the environment – when most of

our ancestors and parents came from countries where the land and environment was an important part of their everyday experience.

My mum often spoke about having to walk for miles to collect water and travelling to school without the benefit of public transport.

I care – we care – and as a black woman who is an elected councillor, I love the richness I can bring and share with all the residents within the ward where I sit.

## Making a difference



Councillor **Sam Adeniji** (Con) is a member of Seaford Town Council, Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council

I am grateful and honoured to have been elected as a councillor for my town across three levels of local government.

I decided to be a councillor because I wanted to make a valuable contribution to the town, even if it was in a small way. Being a councillor is an opportunity for me to carry out work on behalf of, and be highly participant in, the community.

I felt there was no use in shouting from the sidelines; if I wanted to make a difference, I had to get out there and do something, and one of the best ways of being able to do that is by being a councillor.

I have seen through my community work how you can make a real difference in people's lives. I also want to focus on some issues very close to my heart, including improving the health services in the town as well as its mental health provision.

I am determined to make a difference on these issues.

I have been able to work with a great bunch of colleagues and residents who are equally passionate about getting the best for our town, and even though it is sometimes challenging and exciting, it is a journey worth embarking on.

Over the years, I have held various positions including being Chair of the district council's licensing committee.

The colour of my skin and the way I look does not define who I am nor would I let it dictate my experiences.

I see myself as an individual out to do the best I can for the town and for everyone, regardless of who they are or where they are from.

My advice to anyone, regardless of their background, is that they can become anything they want if they set their minds to it and work hard enough. Do not let people put you down. It is important to believe in yourself, do your best, and do what you think is right at all times.

We must engage and reflect the community as a whole; it is vital for local democracy that more young people and people of diverse backgrounds come forward as councillors.



Wales's first black head teacher has been honoured with a statue in Cardiff. Black history campaigner Betty Campbell, who also served as a city councillor, was headteacher of Mount Pleasant School in Butetown, Cardiff. She died in 2017.

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## An inclusive place to work



Cllr **Bob Sleigh** OBE (Con) is Cabinet Member for Resources at Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

**E**ach year, Black History Month gives us unique insights and perspectives from individuals and our communities.

This year's theme of 'Proud to be' offers a terrific opportunity to explore the rich and varied identities and experiences of our staff to help amplify the voices of people who have historically been marginalised in the UK.

We asked colleagues to share with us 'who are you proud to be?' or 'what are you proud of?'. Encouraging these important conversations in the workplace is part of the council's continued commitment to being an inclusive, diverse and welcoming employer for all.

This is crucial if we are to better serve our communities and deliver our corporate vision of creating a place 'where everyone has an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous through growth that creates opportunities for all'.

We have heard personal stories of staff who are proud of being children of economic migrants, who arrived in the UK as child refugees, or whose parents have contributed, and continue to contribute, to the British Armed Forces, the NHS, and the national and local economy.

We are proud of the diversity of our black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) community in Solihull, which has doubled from 5.5 per cent in 2001 to 11 per cent in 2010. We are also immensely proud that 14 per cent of our workforce are BAME.

The challenges faced by BAME communities, from the impact of COVID-19 to the issues raised by the tragic death of George Floyd, are all too clear. There are barriers to career progression, leading to lower representation of BAME staff in leadership roles.

As we emerge from the pandemic, the council will continue to make progress on our Corporate Equality and Diversity Plan to address these inequalities. We are also looking at refreshing our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

We are currently consulting our staff – our biggest assets – to get their ideas and input to help set ambitious targets and deliver change that will improve us as an employer and continue to make the council a great and inclusive place to work.

## Closing the racial inequality chasm



Councillor **Dr Victoria Ashworth te Velde** (Lab) is Equalities Commissioner at the London Borough of Waltham Forest

**C**elebrating Black History Month (BHM) is a great way to celebrate our black community, and in Waltham Forest we have an extensive BHM programme of events in our wonderful local libraries.

Having lived much of my formative life in the EU, I only became aware of BHM when I moved to London 20 years ago.

As a mixed-race British woman, I had by then made my own weird and wonderful journey, trying to understand my multiple heritages: Kenyan, English and Scottish.

One thing was clear, though – I was not white and that set me apart.

I found a conceptual home in the modern Commonwealth and have published on the many benefits of our international family of nations.

Closer to home in London, I saw similar challenges around organised crime, religious tensions, racism and lack of opportunity for many, and this drew me into local politics.

London is a great place to live;

however, COVID-19 has laid bare the inequalities faced by those from poorer and ethnic minority backgrounds.

We have seen our community's collective opposition to the injustice faced by our black community. Consequently, there has been growing commitment in councils, businesses and beyond to tackle racial inequality.

It isn't only the right thing to do, but also key to growth, essential for community safety, imperative for tackling COVID-19, and, without it, we can never hope to address the climate emergency and much more.

As Equalities Commissioner in Waltham Forest, I oversaw our recent State of the Borough report and our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion strategy, both co-designed with our communities and our BHM programme.

As we learn to live with COVID-19, it is essential our black community is not left to slip further behind.

Like the Greater London Authority's Work Integration Network, which works with businesses to eradicate racial inequality in the workplace, all councils need to be rolling out ambitious long-term plans to ensure equal opportunities in schools and work.

London has a key role to play in closing the racial inequality chasm and I am proud to be part of that change. Happy Black History Month to one and all.



Cllrs **Izzi Seccombe** OBE, Cllr **Shabir Pandor**, Cllr **Bridget Smith** and Cllr **Marianne Overton** MBE are Co-Chairs of the LGA's Civility in Public Life Steering Group

# A threat to local democracy

## The LGA is calling for evidence on the abuse and intimidation councillors face

**G**ood-quality robust debate and public engagement are crucial to local democracy. However, the intimidation and abuse of councillors, in person or otherwise, can undermine democratic processes.

There are significant concerns about the impact this kind of behaviour can have on local councillors, the communities they serve, and prospective councillors.

That is why the LGA has established a significant programme of work around this issue and made a joint statement with the Welsh LGA, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Northern Ireland LGA to promote civility in public life, positive debate and support the wellbeing of elected members.

Together, we have been working to build a programme that meets the needs of our memberships, identifying and sharing good practice, and gathering the evidence of the local and national interventions required to protect councillors from abuse and intimidation.

Councillors have told us that abuse and intimidation in person and via social media are significant issues for them.

It ranges from annoying to threatening, has led to many of our councillors experiencing fear for their safety, and takes valuable time away from the vital work of representing our communities.

On rare occasions, it escalates to the physical attacks we've seen in the press recently.

We condemn these attacks in the strongest possible terms and are

determined to tackle these issues alongside the Government and the police.

To support members, we have produced a 'Guide to handling intimidation' and, more recently, online resources, research and a councillor guide to digital citizenship (see **first** 664 and [www.local.gov.uk/civility-public-life](http://www.local.gov.uk/civility-public-life)).

These assets help councillors with elements of personal safety, how to handle abuse online and setting expectations about how online communication should be conducted.

The Government plans to introduce a new electoral penalty for anyone found guilty of intimidating a candidate, campaigner or elected representative.

Anyone found guilty of this crime would have the usual criminal punishments alongside a five-year ban from standing for elected office. We welcome this new protection, but more is still needed.

Councillors have repeated time and time again that it can be hard to know where to turn when members of the public are abusive and threatening. Sometimes it isn't clear if the abuse has gone so far as to be a criminal matter or not.

We've even heard examples of clearly intimidating and threatening behaviour being dismissed by the police when a report is made.

The Online Safety Bill is a good opportunity to ensure social media

companies play their part in tackling abuse and intimidation – but we're concerned it doesn't yet address all the issues councillors are facing.

That is why we are launching a long-term 'call for evidence' on abuse and intimidation of councillors. The call aims to gather evidence about the extent, nature and impacts of abuse and intimidation through the personal experiences of councillors.

This evidence will support the long-term work of the LGA to highlight good practice that councils can learn from, call for other legislative changes, and challenge key partners such as the police to consider their role in preventing and responding to abuse and intimidation.



**To respond to the call for evidence of abuse and intimidation of councillors**, and for more information about the LGA's 'Civility in public life' programme, please visit [www.local.gov.uk/civility-public-life](http://www.local.gov.uk/civility-public-life)

# LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition

28-30 June 2022

Harrogate  
Convention Centre

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

**Early bird rate available for LGA members**

# Children at the centre of recovery

The pandemic has exacerbated pressures on families and children's services



Councillor **Anntoinette Bramble** is Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board

**P**ressures on council services have been exacerbated by COVID-19, not least demands and costs relating to children's social care and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

During the first lockdown, reports to the NSPCC of physical abuse rose by 53 per cent, while alcohol and drug misuse by a child or someone in their household were identified in 15 and 18 per cent respectively of 'children in need' assessments during 2019/20.

Currently, referral levels to children's social care remain lower than average, but those that are coming through are, anecdotally, more complex, which indicates ongoing hidden harm that may not be identified for a long time.

It's important to stress that although COVID-19 has exacerbated the strains on children's social care services, these services were already under significant financial pressure before the pandemic.

Research by the National Audit Office found that spending on preventative children's services fell from 41 to just 25 per cent of children's services budgets between 2010/11 and 2017/18 – driven by significant cuts to council budgets over the past 10 years and increasing demand for child protection services.

Meanwhile, the number and proportion of looked-after children has been rising annually for more than a decade. In 2009/10, 64,470 children were in care, or 57 in every 100,000.

In 2019/20, that figure was 80,080 or 67 in every 100,000.

Rising demand for services means that despite budgets for children's social care rising by more than £1.1 billion between 2017/18 and 2019/20, more than eight in 10 councils were still forced to overspend to ensure children were protected.

We are calling on government to fund the existing £1 billion pressures on children's social care, as well as future cost pressures estimated at £0.6 billion for each year of the Spending Review,

and to implement a cross-Whitehall strategy to support children, young people and their families.

The ongoing financial impact of SEND is also of serious concern to councils. More than 430,000 children and young people had an education, health and care plan (EHCP) in England in January 2021, a spike of 11 per cent or 60,000 over the previous 12 months alone – continuing a yearly increase in EHCPs since 2010.

Despite additional government funding, there remains an estimated funding gap of £0.6 billion by 2021. Annual increases in 'high needs block' resources also do not go far enough.

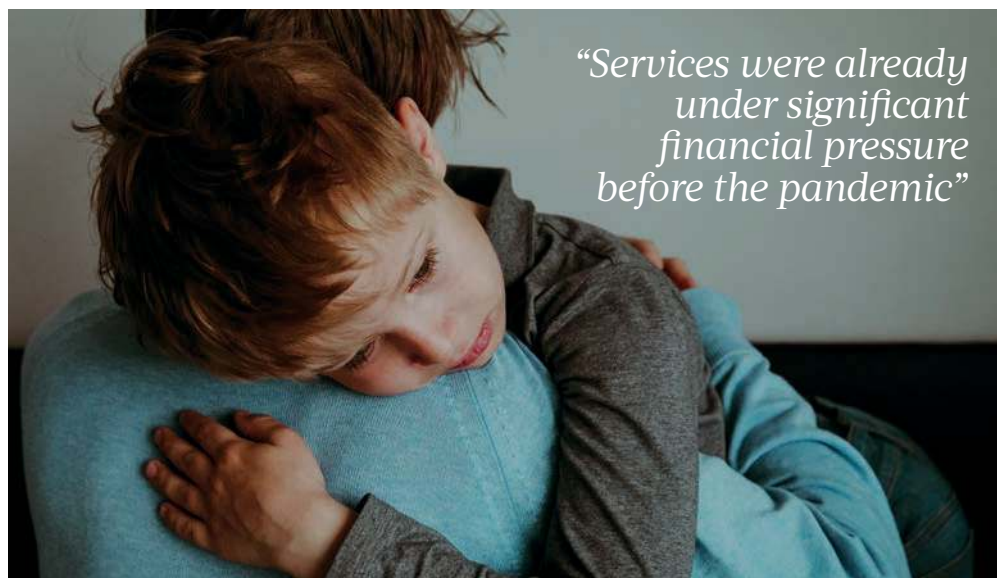
Transport for children and young people with SEND is a further rising cost pressure and now accounts for 69 per cent of all home-to-school transport expenditure.

It is good that the Government has pledged an additional £780 million for high needs budgets in 2022/23, but it is vital that the Spending Review provides councils with long-term sufficiency of, and certainty over, funding to support children with SEND, including a commitment to write off councils' existing high needs deficits.

As well as putting children at the centre of our recovery, the Government needs to urgently complete its ongoing review of the SEND system.

In addition to providing long-term funding certainty, this needs to set out reforms that increase mainstream inclusion, and give councils the power to hold education and health partners to account if their provision for identifying and supporting children with SEND is not adequate.

**i** See p10-11 **for a summary of the LGA's Spending Review 2021 Submission**, which is available in full at [www.local.gov.uk/publications/spending-review-2021-submission](http://www.local.gov.uk/publications/spending-review-2021-submission). **Shadow Education Secretary Kate Green MP** will be among the speakers at the National Children and Adult Services Conference (NCASC), taking place online from 24-26 November. To find out more and book your place, please visit [www.local.gov.uk/events](http://www.local.gov.uk/events)



*"Services were already under significant financial pressure before the pandemic"*

# Investing in health and care services

The Spending Review provides an opportunity to level up our communities and tackle health inequalities

**A**s we approach this year's National Children and Adult Services Conference (NCASC), which is being held virtually for the second year, there is much to work towards and reflect upon given recent government announcements.

Senior councillors and council officers, as well as colleagues from the voluntary, community and private sector involved in children and adult services, will be gathering online to listen to high-profile speakers including Care Minister Gillian Keegan MP, Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty, and NHS England Chief Executive Amanda Pritchard, among many others.

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*“There is much to work towards and reflect upon”*

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What is certain to be at the heart of many discussions during the three-day conference is the recent publication of the Government's highly anticipated and long-awaited health and social care plan.

Of the estimated \$36 billion the new UK-wide health and social care levy announced in the plan will raise over three years, only \$5.4 billion is to be ringfenced for social care in England.

Unlike for the NHS, none of this money appears to be allocated to help tackle the significant pressures facing social care now. The LGA says that addressing the NHS backlog and freeing up hospital beds cannot be done without also fixing social care, which will require additional support for those discharged into the community.

The lack of any itemised breakdown of how this share of the levy will be used for social care is creating concern

for councils, while we also need urgent clarity on how much will go to adult social care beyond the three-year period – and an absolute guarantee that this will be delivered.

While it is important to protect people from paying ‘catastrophic costs’ for their care, the LGA says the introduction of the care cap is an enormous undertaking and councils should receive all the support they need to implement it.

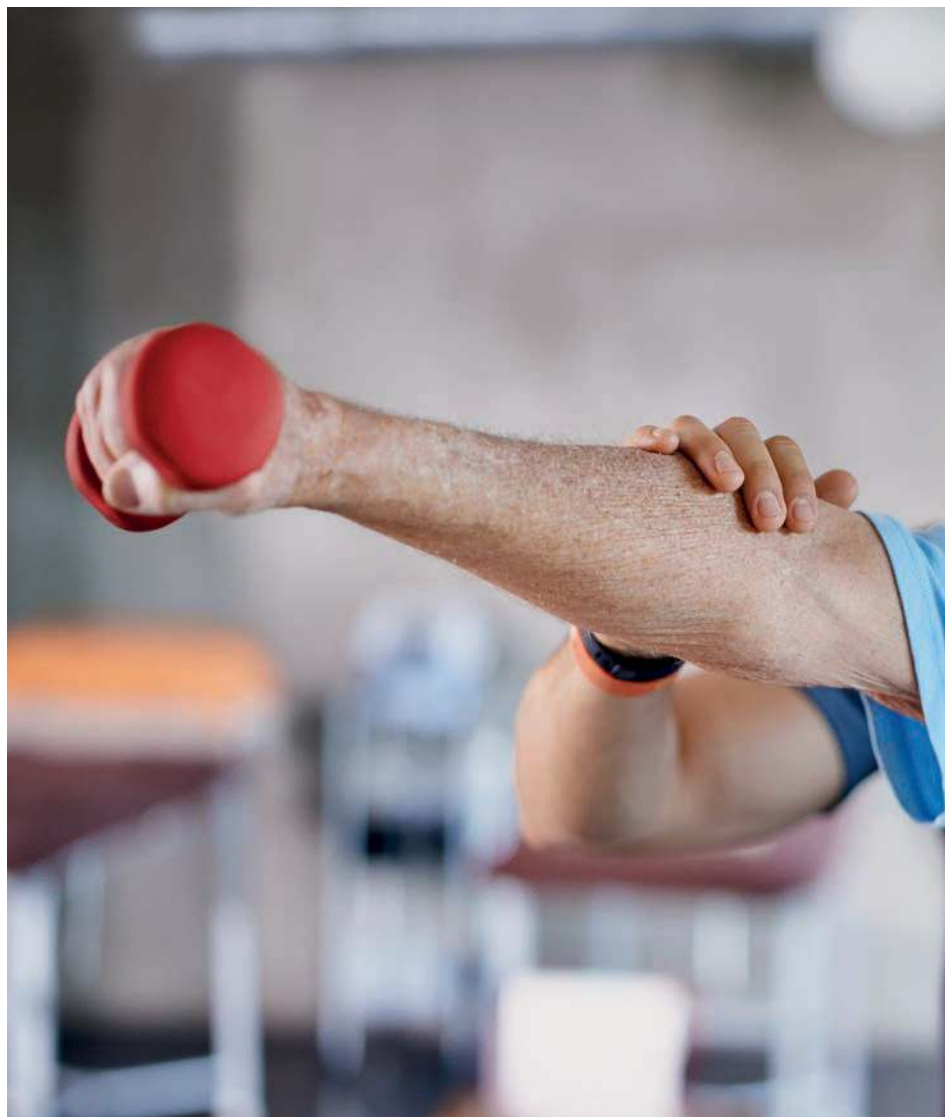
The Government's plan does have some potential promise on how

care is paid for and the contributions people themselves make, but it has left open many more questions that need answering urgently.

As it stands, it will not improve access to – or the quality of – social care services; nor will it provide an uplift on care worker pay, or better support people to live the lives they want to lead and in turn strengthen our communities.

We have called for a cast-iron commitment from government that the planned white paper on wider adult social care reform, together with the Spending Review, will result in a long-term plan and a steady stream of investment into social care.

Related to this, we are calling for sustainable funding for local government mental health services, to put them on an equal footing with NHS clinical services



and to meet current, future and new demand in the wake of COVID-19.

This will help provide appropriate support for those people who have vulnerabilities and investment in preventative mental wellbeing work at scale, including for suicide prevention.

We are also working to ensure councils have the resources they need to build on the work many are doing to implement the Government's strategy to improve the lives of autistic people in their communities.

Supported housing can extend independent and safe living for older people and working age disabled people, including those with long-term health needs, helping to reduce demand on social care and health services.

We need to increase the supply of 'extra care' housing to keep pace with demand, and ensure that the housing and care support costs of people living in all types of supported housing are fully funded.

Timely home adaptations can also support older people and disabled people, their families and carers to manage wellbeing in the home.

We need to simplify the process by which people living in their own homes or who are renting privately

can access financial support for adaptations, raise the accessibility standards for new builds, and increase the adoption of accessible design principles across the board.

When it comes to reform, the LGA broadly supports the aims of the Health and Care Bill, currently going through Parliament, to remove barriers to integrating care and support, to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities.

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*"The Government's plan has left open many more questions that need answering urgently"*

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We also support the Government's enabling approach to give local health and care leaders the flexibility to make their own arrangements for joining up services and setting their own strategies for improving the health of their communities.

There is little on the face of the bill to direct how integrated care systems and their two key components – integrated care boards and integrated care

partnerships – will be set up and operate.

The LGA is working closely with councils, government and NHS England to ensure that the new arrangements build on existing partnerships. Place-based partnerships, especially health and wellbeing boards, should have a leading role in driving health and care improvements.

The announcement of an integration white paper, to be published this autumn, came as a surprise to local government, especially as the Health and Care Bill will not come into force until April 2022 at the earliest. However, we will work with councils to ensure that their views help shape the future of integration.

COVID-19 has provided a stark reminder of the value of public health and of the deep health inequalities that exist in society.

Deprived and minority ethnic communities, and people with underlying health conditions such as obesity, have been disproportionately affected by severe illness, hospitalisations and deaths.

Councils, working with partners such as the NHS and the voluntary sector, can deliver good outcomes from frontline, cross-sector public health services like drug and alcohol treatment, sexual and reproductive health, physical activity, weight management, smoking cessation, health visiting and school nursing; and provide the necessary public health leadership to address the root causes of physical and mental ill health, such as poor housing, air quality, crime and poverty.

Councils are doing all they can to help keep people well throughout their lives and reduce pressure on the NHS and social care.

Investment in councils' public health services now will reap benefits for everyone longer-term, including helping us prepare for the next public health threat and building a more prevention-focused health and social care system.

As all these issues and more are explored in greater detail at NCASC, we call on the Government to use its imminent Spending Review to realise our shared ambition to level up our communities, by delivering the investment needed to secure both the immediate and long-term future of our vital care, health and support services, as we build back better from the pandemic.



#### **The National Children and Adult Services**

**Conference (NCASC)** takes place online from 24-26 November, see [www.local.gov.uk/events](http://www.local.gov.uk/events) to find out more and book your place. See p28

# E-learning platform for councillors

Do you know how GDPR impacts on your role as a councillor? Or do you want to find out more about your legal equality, diversity and inclusion obligations? As a councillor it is essential you stay on top of some topics.

Our new e-learning platform provides on-demand training modules to help councillors develop the essential leadership skills needed to work more effectively with their communities.

Our modules provide the information you need to know, from how to respond to issues arising from the pandemic, to neighbourhood and community engagement; local government finance; becoming an effective ward or division member, and more. The platform, part of our refocused learning offer to help councils' development, allows you to create a bespoke learning programme, choosing the modules that best fit your needs.

To find out more, register directly at  
**<https://lga.kallidus-suite.com/external>**

# COMMENT

## Delivering a high-quality care system



**Liz Kendall** MP (Lab)  
is Shadow Minister for  
Social Care

**If the Prime Minister is serious about delivering real change for social care, he should look to councils for inspiration.**

Despite £8 billion of budget cuts and growing demand, local authorities are providing the leadership and innovation this current government sadly lacks.

Labour councils have long called for a radical shift in support towards prevention to help keep older and disabled people living independently and well at home.

They know this is better for the people who use care, and provides better value for taxpayers' money.

The best councils also know real change means ensuring older and disabled people are co-producers of their own support, not just 'consumers' of care.

The Labour Party nationally backs these efforts. We understand that social care is about far more than help with getting up, washed, dressed and fed. It is about ensuring we can all live in the place we call home, with the people we love, in communities that look out for one another, doing the things that matter to us.

The brilliant group Social Care Future has pioneered this vision, and it's one a

future Labour government will deliver.

The Conservatives' NHS and social care levy, and £86,000 cap on care costs, won't fix the crisis in social care, let alone deliver this broader vision.

Their proposals won't provide any additional resources for social care now, and there's no guarantee of extra funding in future.

It won't deliver a single extra minute of care and support, or improve the quality of life for care users, tackle spiralling staff vacancies, or do anything for unpaid family carers.

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### ***"A new deal for care workers is essential to tackling vacancies"***

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The only guarantee is an unfair and punishing tax rise on frontline care workers, providers and councils, who are already stretched to the limit.

In contrast, Labour would deliver a 10-year plan of investment and reform, increasing access to care, so all older and disabled people get the right support, when and where they need it.

We will shift focus towards prevention, taking a 'Home First' approach that brings care workers, district nurses and other staff into one team, so people don't have to battle their way around the system.

This includes expanding the use of home adaptations and technology, and working with community groups to provide early help with things such as shopping, cleaning, and tackling isolation.

Half of the budget and a third of the users of social care are working-age adults with disabilities.

Labour will champion independent and fulfilling lives for disabled people, including through more effective direct payments and personal budgets, and ensuring disabled people's views drive change.

A new deal for care workers is essential to tackling soaring vacancies, meeting the aspirations of staff and improving the quality of care.

Labour will deliver the pay, training, and terms and conditions care workers deserve, and ensure they are equally as valued as their NHS colleagues.

Finally, we will transform support for England's 11 million unpaid family carers, so they get proper information, advice and breaks, and more flexibility at work so they can better balance their work and family life.

In the century of ageing, a universal, high-quality care system is central to a modernised welfare state.

Working with everyone in the sector – and side by side with the people who use care – this is what a Labour Government will deliver.

## Making connections at party conference



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

After last year's virtual Conservative Party Conference, it was great to meet so many colleagues and friends in Manchester for this year's event.

Our LGA fringe event, 'Build back better local: how do we harness the power of local government to level up across the country,' was held on the Sunday evening in front of a packed audience.

I was delighted to participate in this discussion, along with LGA Chairman Cllr James Jamieson, LGA President Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, former LGA Conservative Group Leader David Simmonds MP, and Jonathan Werran, the Chief Executive of Localis.

Many thanks to everyone who attended and contributed to the lively debate.

The following evening, James and I hosted our LGA drinks reception, where we were pleased to welcome Housing and Rough Sleeping Minister Eddie Hughes, from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), as the guest speaker.

On the Tuesday, we had a very useful briefing and question and answer session with members of the DLUHC ministerial team, organised by the Conservative Councillors' Association and sponsored by the LGA Conservative Group.

This was a great opportunity for colleagues to meet our new Secretary of State, Michael Gove, for the first time, and I would like to thank Michael, Eddie Hughes and Chris Pincher for answering questions across a range of topics.

I would also like to thank Conservative Group colleagues on LGA policy boards

who spoke at various fringe meetings and other events organised by partner organisations throughout the conference.

These events provided a great opportunity to get important LGA messages across to key audiences on a wide variety of different issues.

Finally, and on a very sad note, I was so very sorry to hear the news that our former Secretary of State, James Brokenshire, had died at the age of just 53.

As evidenced by the cross-party tributes, James was a thoroughly decent man and a dedicated public servant, who was universally liked and respected. My thoughts are with his loved ones at this very sad time.

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**"These events were a great opportunity to get important LGA messages to key audiences"**

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

## Time to reset public spending

The Spending Review 2021 takes place on 27 October, and it's safe to say that the first multi-year settlement since before the pandemic will be crucial for local government.

The LGA has been strongly making the case that levelling up requires a radical reset of the relationship between central and local government that leads to real change for people's lives.

This Spending Review presents an opportunity to reset public spending, in a way that is fit for the future and flexible to allow for the delivery of local priorities, and that empowers councils to achieve the ambition for our communities that central and local government share.

As our submission to the Treasury sets out (see p10-11), building back better needs to start with building back local, with councils given the powers and resources to deliver the changes that enable local communities to flourish.

We have called for a multi-year financial



settlement so we can plan ahead with some certainty, and more resources to tackle the ongoing impact of the pandemic on our communities and the demand and demographic pressures facing local services – not least in adult social care.

Councils have amply demonstrated their ability to work in partnership with central government to deliver local solutions and the services people need in response to COVID-19.

So, we are also calling for fiscal decentralisation – something that works well in most other countries. There needs to be a recognition that public investment

and funding is best directed by those closest to the ground – in other words, councils working with residents, local businesses, and other public sector organisations to identify and meet local needs.

The Prime Minister recently reiterated his commitment to level up all parts of the UK, and referenced key issues such as reform of the housing market, improving infrastructure, boosting broadband, tackling crime and improving transport links.

These are bread-and-butter issues for councils, and we can deliver on them if we are empowered to build back local.



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

## Council tax squeeze on poorest families

**W**ith the Budget looming, all evidence points towards Chancellor Rishi Sunak reaching for his council tax sticking plaster again.

Last year, he squeezed a whopping £1.9 billion extra from taxpayers through higher council tax bills, and it seems he's planning similar inflation-busting increases yet again.

But working families are already facing a triple winter whammy of Universal Credit cuts, record energy bills, and a National Insurance hike of 1.25 per cent to pay for the Prime Minister's social care plan.

Household incomes are reaching squeezing point, and forcing councils to hit them with another inflation-busting council tax rise could cause family finances to implode.

This would be bad enough in any other year. But just how will the Prime Minister explain to voters that he expects councils to raise extra funds for social care through council tax, when he is already putting up their National Insurance for the same purpose?

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**"Council tax is now arguably the least progressive form of taxation – hitting the poorest families hardest"**

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Either his plan is going to fix social care, in which case there is no need to hammer taxpayers twice, or it won't – and clobbering them with a second tax rise for the same service is evidence that the plan is already a failure.

After years of huge rises, council tax is now arguably the least progressive form of taxation, hitting the poorest families hardest, while also rewarding the richest areas with the biggest gains.

It can't be allowed to go on; the Government needs to find a way to fund councils fairly and to stop the council tax squeeze on working families.



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

## The food insecurity facing children

**P**olitics can be as tribal as football, or worse, sadly – take that from a Chelsea fan.

Football players are like politicians in so many ways. We have a shared focus, we are people from different cultures, nationalities, races, sexual orientations, religions and even football allegiances, but we unite to achieve great things.

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**"No child should be starting 20 yards behind because of the community they live in"**

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We all have a shared desire to change to win for our 'team', our parties, our communities.

I want to put that tribalism aside and to praise Marcus Rashford for his campaign to highlight food insecurity in our country.

We are now looking at a situation where it is 27 per cent worse than pre-pandemic. In fact, you could fill 27 Wembley Stadiums with the 2.5 million children who are struggling to know where their next meal is coming from today.

Low-income families are facing major challenges with the end of furlough and the Universal Credit cut: this government is heartless.

Regardless of the issues facing us decision-makers, our children should never be deemed secondary. Short-term solutions aren't going to cut it. We need long-term planning, executed well.

Children went back to school this autumn – a welcome step for some, a daunting prospect for others impacted by lack of social interaction and lack of access to learning during the pandemic.

So, it's time for us all to unite with the passion we saw during the Euros. No child should go hungry, no child should be starting 20 yards behind any other just because of the community they live in. It's time to level up.



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

## Meaningful change to protect our planet

**T**he UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) starts shortly and provides a significant opportunity for the UK to demonstrate its commitment to meaningful change to protect our planet.

Our councils are at the heart of our communities, essential to making the changes needed.

Working cross-party, the LGA is using the position of being in the conference's blue and green zones to demonstrate the importance of councils leading the sustainable changes needed.

We will also reiterate our calls to business to play their part, and to government to take this seriously, rather than undermine its own climate commitments through its planning or infrastructure plans.

To ensure we make the most of COP26 and its legacy, our LGA Independent Group Annual Conference has been brought forward to 29 October – free to members – allowing us to discuss the key issues and inform discussion at the international conference.

Please snap up the final places by visiting [www.local.gov.uk/events](http://www.local.gov.uk/events). You can attend in person or online. There will be a drinks reception after the conference for those able to make it in person.

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**"Councils are at the heart of communities, making the changes needed"**

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Confirmed speakers include LGA President Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, LGA Vice-President Lord Victor Adebawale, LGA Chairman Cllr James Jamieson, representatives of the Planning Advisory Service, the domestic abuse charity Standing Together, and councils leading on climate change innovation. It will be a day of information and ideas, networking, and recognition of just how much our members are achieving for their communities.



**Oliver Standing**  
is Director of  
Collective Voice

# Invest or pay the consequences



**Despite a robust evidence base and the best efforts of many skilled and passionate people, the drug and alcohol treatment and recovery system in England and Wales isn't working as well as it should.**

The realities are stark. Drug deaths are at their highest levels since records began, drug use among young people is up, and it's becoming clear that a worrying number of people have died of alcohol-related causes during the pandemic.

Years of savage disinvestment from central government have forced hard-pressed local authorities to slash their public health grants.

But ministers have now been presented with a transformational plan for change. The Government must act to implement it; and local government must be ready to play its part.

In February 2019, the then Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, appointed Dame Carol Black to conduct an Independent Review of Drugs, which focused first on drugs markets and the toxic combination of violence, poverty and exploitation that underpins both supply and demand.

It found the current approach in England and Wales to reducing harm to be ineffective – costing £19.3 billion every year, of which less than 4 per cent is invested in drug treatment and prevention despite proven cost-effectiveness across health, prisons, police and emergency services.

Readers will be unsurprised that drug harms were found to be strongly

correlated with trauma and deprivation, and to fuel social problems such as homelessness, demands on child social care, unemployment, mental ill health, and crime.

Councillors will be all too familiar with the challenges this group of constituents face, and the disproportionate demands placed on local services.

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***“The importance of the review’s timing **cannot be overstated**”***

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But we now have a set of solutions to this immense challenge. The second part of the review, published in July, makes radical recommendations for treatment, recovery and prevention, stating government must “invest in tackling the problem or keep paying for the consequences”.

It powerfully puts forward the case for renewed national and local political leadership and a significant uplift in protected investment, totalling £1.78 billion over five years.

Dame Carol also recommended the creation of a new ‘Joint Combating Drugs Unit’ bringing together six key departments; a new long-term drugs strategy published by the end of 2021; and new local outcomes frameworks and commissioning quality standards to be developed “in consultation with the local system”.

Dame Carol’s policy programme is projected to save the lives of more than 3,000 opiate users, bring 95,000 new people into recovery, prevent 2.8 million crimes and save billions of pounds for the public purse.

This would represent both substantial local wins and contribute hugely to national plans to level up poorer parts of our country.

What next?

The importance of the review’s timing cannot be overstated. Dame Carol has made clear recommendations must not be “cherry picked” and that government must commit to a long-term, whole-system approach.

While the implementation of some of the 32 recommendations has already begun, the majority require a full government response and are partly or wholly contingent on a robust settlement in the Spending Review.

Public Health Minister Jo Churchill has stated “we can do better, and we should”, with the Black review offering “an opportunity and a time for action”. I agree.

We will know soon enough whether the Government has followed these fine words with the necessary political action.



**Collective Voice is a national alliance of drug and alcohol treatment charities**, see [www.collectivevoice.org.uk](http://www.collectivevoice.org.uk) **to find out more**. Please visit [www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-drugs-phase-two-report](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-drugs-phase-two-report) to find out more about the Black review



**Catherine Marris**  
is Head of  
Innovation at the  
Motability charity

# EV charging for disabled drivers

**One in five people in the UK reports a disability, and almost one in 10 new cars in the UK is bought on behalf of a disabled person.**

The Motability Scheme, which the Motability charity oversees, has enabled millions of disabled people to lease a car and enjoy the freedom of driving.

With the 2030 ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars approaching, there is a robust commercial and social case for ensuring that the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) is inclusive for disabled people.

As more and more councils develop their strategies and local EV charge-point networks, we would encourage them to think about accessibility for disabled drivers.

Motability is working closely with the EV sector and with government to map out a pragmatic route forward, focusing initially on public charging.

Given the need to avoid expensive retrofitting of charge points that have already been installed when guidance catches up, we feel it is important for local authorities, installers and manufacturers of charging infrastructure to act early.

Our research shows that, without action, it will be difficult for millions of people to access charging.

Motability sponsored a report from the Research Institute for Disabled Consumers (RiDC), which field tested the experience of disabled drivers with electric vehicles and identified a range of challenges.

For example, those with mobility or dexterity impairments struggled with the heavy weight of cables, the force required to attach connectors and the absence of dropped kerbs around charge points.

Moreover, the scale of the problem is potentially immense. Research commissioned by Motability estimates that, by 2035, up to 1.35 million drivers or passengers with a disability will be partially or wholly reliant on public charging infrastructure, which hasn't been designed with their needs in mind.

As a result of these and other

challenges, uptake of EVs among disabled drivers has been limited. This is supported by evidence from EV app and digital platform Zap-Map's 2020 annual survey, which indicates that rates of disability among EV drivers are low compared with the proportion of disability in the UK population.

Research suggests that even countries ahead of the UK in respect of energy transition, such as the Netherlands, have not come up with standards or guidance focused on charging accessibility.

The USA has done a great deal in this space on a local level, but this intense

amount of local regulation has hampered innovation in places.

Wireless charging is expected to be a more promising solution for disabled drivers, as it may remove the need to interact with a charge point at all. But the readiness of wireless technology for the marketplace, and its commercial viability, are still unproven.

We want to make it easy to understand what 'accessible' means for EV charge points, and to develop inclusive design solutions.

Over the next year, and in partnership with the Department for Transport, Motability is sponsoring accessible charging design standards through the British Standards Institution.

In the meantime, we have completed a significant piece of user engagement work in partnership with Designability, a disability and design charity, for which we worked with disabled people to define their requirements to charge.

The comprehensive report from this work is available on the Motability website. Please get in touch at [innovation@motability.co.uk](mailto:innovation@motability.co.uk) if you have any further questions.

**i** For more information about Motability, please visit [www.motability.org.uk](http://www.motability.org.uk). See [www.ridc.org.uk/transport/going-electric](http://www.ridc.org.uk/transport/going-electric) for the RiDC's report on disabled drivers' experience of EVs



# ELECTIONS



## Some notable successes

### Local by-elections

#### Broadland, Brundall

2 GREEN GAIN FROM CON  
6.9% over Con Turnout 32.2%

#### Broadland, Old Catton & Sprowston West

CON HELD  
27% over Lab Turnout 21.9%

#### Charnwood, Shepshed West

CON HELD  
16.6% over Lab Turnout 19.4%

#### Ealing, Hobbayne

LAB HELD  
24.3% over Con Turnout 29.9%

#### East Cambridgeshire, Soham North

CON GAIN FROM LIB DEM  
12.1% over Lib Dem Turnout 19.2%

#### East Devon, Exe Valley

LIB DEM HELD  
5% over Con Turnout 26.2%

#### East Hampshire, Horndean Downs

GREEN GAIN FROM CON  
4.5% over Con Turnout 26.8%

#### East Staffordshire, Tutbury and Outwoods

CON HELD  
6.9% over Ind Turnout 22.3%

#### Eden, Penrith West

LIB DEM GAIN FROM CON  
21.6% over Con Turnout 17.2%

#### Epsom and Ewell, Cuddington

RES HELD  
36.2% over Lab Turnout 23.3%

#### Flintshire, Penyffordd

LAB GAIN FROM IND  
12.9% over Ind Turnout 21.2%

#### Hammersmith and Fulham, Wormholt and White City

LAB HELD  
49.4% over Con Turnout 22.6%

#### Malvern Hills, Tenbury

IND GAIN FROM CON  
24.7% over Con Turnout 28.3%

#### Middlesbrough, Ladgate

MIG GAIN FROM LAB  
4.5% over Con Turnout 25.8%

#### Nottingham, Sherwood

LAB HELD  
22.2% over Nott Ind Turnout 22.3%

#### Nottingham, St Ann's

LAB HELD  
52.7% over Nott Ind Turnout 14.2%

#### Rushcliffe, Musters

LIB DEM HELD  
16.6% over Lab Turnout 35.6%

#### Sheffield, Firth Park

LAB HELD  
1.5% over LIB DEM Turnout 19.1%

#### Somerset West and Taunton, Wilton and Sherford

LIB DEM HELD  
20.3% over Con Turnout 39.9%

#### Somerset, Comeytrowe and Trull

LIB DEM HELD  
29.8% over Con Turnout 33.7%

#### South Lakeland, Kendal North

LIB DEM HELD  
7.2% over Green Turnout 39.5%

#### Sunderland, Hetton

LAB HELD  
1.3% over Lib Dem Turnout 22.5%

#### Swale, Priory

LIB DEM HELD  
7.4% over Con Turnout 25.8%

#### Waverley, Cranleigh East

LIB DEM HELD  
13.7% over Con Turnout 31%

#### West Suffolk, The Rows

CON GAIN FROM IND  
46% over Lab Turnout 19.8%



Professors **Colin Rallings** (r) and **Michael Thrasher** are Associate Members, Nuffield College, Oxford



### Three Green party gains from Conservative just days apart represent a notable success.

To put that into context, between 1983 and 2020 the Green Party and its antecedent, the Ecology Party, made a net gain of just nine seats against the Conservatives.

Two of these gains were in a double vacancy in Broadland District Council's Brundall ward. One of the winners in this contest, Jan Davis, had been placed fourth in the May 2019 election with a gap of 300 votes between her and the Conservatives.

Both the Greens and Liberal Democrats squeezed the main two-party vote here.

Two days later, the Greens took another Conservative seat, this time East Hampshire District Council's Horndean Downs ward.

This was a much closer affair with Blossom Gottlieb winning by just 29 votes.

The vacancy arose following the resignation of Tony Denton after he was elected to Havant Borough Council last May. This background and the absence of a Liberal Democrat candidate may have swung the result in the Greens' favour.

The Conservatives suffered two further losses.

Lesley Bruton, the town clerk for Tenbury, standing as an Independent, took the ward of that name in Malvern Hills District Council.



For more details of these and other recent by-election results, visit [www.local.gov.uk/first](http://www.local.gov.uk/first)



# LETTERS

## Workforce issues critical to adult social care

Thank you for the LGA's response to the Government's 'Build back better: our plan for health and social care' proposals (**first 664**), which I totally support.

However, this does not capture the seriousness of our local situation on the Isle of Wight, where a crisis in the critical rented social housing sector is reducing our ability to recruit to all workforce sectors, including adult social care.

Such is the situation that we are asking our council staff if they can rent out rooms to new recruits, while it is very complex for an island like ours to recruit in the first place.

We are running out of care staff and the funding to care safely for our island people. Along with increasing hospital discharge care complexities, we are in a critical situation with all providers stretched to their limits, and I am very worried about the winter pressures ahead.

We still have to cut our council budget by £9 million over the next three years with reducing government grant. We are struggling to adapt having already had a decade of grant reductions and this adds considerable pressure to a system of adult social care that is in crisis.

We only have a population of 140,000, and it is an ageing one, with an estimated care staff shortfall of 150 to 200 in the immediate term and before any increased output from the PM's announcement of speeding up our NHS to cut waiting lists.

We are rapidly approaching an unsustainable social care future. We must have more workforce capacity and we need the funding to do this.

Please do all that you can to support small councils with geographical limitations and low spending power.

**Cllr Karl Love** (Ind), Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, Isle of Wight Council

## The great equaliser

I was surprised (**first 664**) that neither the article about 'Urban growth and recovery' nor that on 'Levelling up to revitalise rural areas' mentioned the role that public transport could play.

If you have a good train/bus network, it will encourage people to come into our towns for both work and leisure purposes.

Similarly, if a country area lacks a decent bus service then only those who can afford to drive will live there, with youngsters moving away as soon as they've completed their full-time education.

Public transport can thus be the great equaliser wherever people live.

**Cllr Tim Mickleburgh** (Lab), North East Lincolnshire Council



It was always going to be a difficult defence for the Conservatives in Eden District Council's Penrith West ward.

In May 2019, the two-member ward returned a Liberal Democrat and a Conservative, and it was unusual that each party only fielded one candidate. This is the ward's third by-election since 2000 and each time the seat has changed hands.

East Cambridgeshire's Soham North saw the Conservatives gain from the Liberal Democrats. Just 30 votes separated the parties in May 2019 but a swing towards the Conservatives here does not diminish the party's slide across the county witnessed in last May's shire contests.

Labour is currently unable to capitalise on Conservative discomfort; indeed it faces problems of its own.

The death of Cllr June Goodchild caused the by-election in Middlesbrough Council's Ladgate ward. Elected for Labour in 2019, she quit the party the following year, joining the Independent group.

Labour failed to re-capture the seat, however, with Independent Tony Grainge winning by 47 votes.

Elsewhere, Labour's urban base is less than solid in some parts. The Liberal Democrats had near successes in Sheffield's Firth Park and Sunderland's Hetton, while Labour's vote in Nottingham's Sherwood ward slipped under pressure from the city's Independents.

Finally, on a sad note, the Residents Association of Cuddington retained their seat on Epsom and Ewell following the death of councillor and former mayor, Rob Foote, killed while a volunteer marshal at a race meeting at the Brands Hatch circuit last July.



If you have a letter, please email [karen.thornton@local.gov.uk](mailto:karen.thornton@local.gov.uk). Letters may be edited and published online



**NATIONAL  
CHILDREN AND ADULT SERVICES  
CONFERENCE 2021**  
24 – 26 NOVEMBER

**The National Children and Adult Services (NCAS) Conference** is the annual opportunity for those with responsibilities in social care, children's services, education, health and related fields to hear about and respond to the very latest thinking on key policy and improvement agendas.

This year's conference will be held virtually over three days. Widely recognised as the most important annual event of its kind, the conference offers members and officers across councils and their local and national partners the opportunity to hear from high profile ministerial and keynote speakers and engage in sessions on current and future challenges.

For more information and to book your virtual space, please visit **[www.ncasc.info](http://www.ncasc.info)**

Speakers include:

**Gillian Keegan MP**

Minister of State for Care

**Kate Green MP**

Shadow Education Secretary

**Liz Kendall MP**

Shadow Minister for Social Care

**Professor Chris Whitty**

Chief Medical Officer,  
Department of Health and Social Care

**Amanda Pritchard**

Chief Executive, NHS England

**Dr Jenny Harries OBE**

Chief Executive, UK Health Security Agency

**Professor Kevin Fenton**

Regional Director – London, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities