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Is your council ready to cope with a cyber attack?

Do you have cyber security champions not only in your IT teams, but among council members and senior management too?

There's never been a more urgent need to understand and manage cyber risk.

The LGA Cyber team is working on a programme of activities to help councils protect against, and prepare for the eventuality of, becoming targets of cyber incidents. The programme seeks not just to improve the technical aspects of cyber security within local authorities, but to share knowledge and good practice right across organisations to bring about sustainable cultural change.

The LGA is currently offering:

- six new pilot 'challenges' for councils on the subject of cyber security to run between January and March 2022 (a funded opportunity to gain advice and support from experts and peers focused on good cyber principles and signposting to further support)
- the opportunity for councillors and officers to become supporting peers on the cyber challenges programme
- grant funding for councillors and non-IT senior officers ('Head of Service' level and above) to enrol in a university-led course to improve their understanding of cyber security – for example, Oxford University's Cyber Security for Business Leaders Programme.

For further information, or to apply to take part in any of the activities mentioned above, please email [**LGAcybersecurity@local.gov.uk**](mailto:LGAcybersecurity@local.gov.uk)

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Care costs and levelling up

As **first** was going to press, colleagues were attending the virtual National Children and Adult Services Conference 2021, and we were anticipating publication of a white paper on adult social care.

The LGA has highlighted that children's and adults' social care services could fail to support everyone they need to, despite making up more than 60 per cent of councils' total spending, due to rising demand, increasing costs and inadequate funding (p4).

There were welcome increases in grant funding for councils in October's Spending Review, yet cost pressures remain, particularly in adult social care (p16).

Elsewhere, we look at levelling up and devolution, ahead of another white paper, expected before Christmas (p14, p24). And we celebrate the success of councils' work with partners to reduce transmission of HIV, with World AIDS Day taking place on 1 December (p15).

We have features on how the pandemic has helped reset councils' relationships with local businesses (p20), shaping healthier places (p21) and managing cyber risk (p22).

We also hear from Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen, the new Chair of the District Councils' Network, on community empowerment (p23), and Rayhan Haque, Campaign Manager at the Community Wealth Fund Alliance, on investing in left-behind areas (p27).

Cllr James Jamieson
is LGA Chairman



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Care services dominate spending

Children's and adult social care services could fail to support everyone they need to, despite making up nearly two-thirds of councils' total spending, because of rising demand, increasing costs and inadequate funding.

New LGA analysis, released to mark last month's National Children and Adult Services Conference (NCASC), shows that social care-providing authorities are now spending more than 60 per cent of their outgoings on these essential services.

The LGA says serious questions remain about whether the £5.4 billion from the new Health and Care Levy over the next three years

will be enough to pay for recently announced adult social care reforms, including the need for immediate action on care worker pay and on staff recruitment and retention.

Spiralling demand on children's social services and future cost pressures in children's social care are also set to increase by an estimated £600 million each year until 2024/25, with many councils finding themselves having to overspend their children's services budgets.

Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "Steadily growing demand has seen councils devoting nearly two-thirds of their total spending to

both children's and adult social care, which is simply unsustainable.

"There is a very real risk that local residents will feel they are paying twice with an increased social care precept on their council tax bills, on top of the new health and care levy, yet see their experience of social care services deteriorate because of dwindling resources.

"The Government's imminent white paper on adult social care should set out precisely how money raised from the levy will address all of its reforms, while also diverting more money to the frontline to urgently meet immediate pressures, including on care worker pay and staffing."

The LGA has outlined four priorities for the white paper, including setting out full costings for all reforms and how they will be funded – see [local.gov.uk/four-priorities-adult-social-care-white-paper](https://www.local.gov.uk/four-priorities-adult-social-care-white-paper)

'Child first' approach to youth justice

Urgent action is required to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children who are in custody, with a greater focus on prevention efforts in the community.

In a joint policy position paper, the Association of Directors of Children's Services, Association of YOT Managers and the LGA call for a more localised, responsive and child-centred system to protect vulnerable youngsters.

Children in care, from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, and with special educational needs

are increasingly overrepresented in the system, while regulation, frameworks and guidance for youth justice services continue to focus heavily on risk and offences rather than children's needs and outcomes.

The position paper identifies a series of 'quick wins' to improve children's experiences and outcomes, including better information sharing between police and local authorities, changes to court arrangements, and a review of the age of criminal

responsibility (at age 10, the UK's is the lowest in Europe).

Long-term asks include adopting a public health approach to youth justice and childhood vulnerability.

Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, said: "Councils are determined to do all they can to protect young people and keep them safe but their efforts are being seriously hampered by a lack of clarity surrounding funding, policies and strategy for

young people in the justice system.

"If we are to incorporate a 'child first approach', as advocated by the Youth Justice Board, there needs to be significant changes in the existing system.

"It is essential to build on the good work of councils in preventing children from coming into the justice system, but the recent failures in the secure estate and the experience of young people during the pandemic show how the system is letting some young people down."



Councils 'can help create 700,000 green jobs'

Nearly 700,000 new 'green' jobs could be created by 2030 if councils are given a greater role in local job creation, the LGA has said.

Councils would require local control over skills and employment support, with increased investment to create and secure green jobs for young people and adults.

The LGA is calling for local government to lead on the coordination of all key partners, such as business, training providers, communities and services, to ensure green skills and

employment targets are being met in local areas.

Some of the largest increases in green and low-carbon jobs are projected to be in the North East, Devon, Cornwall, and Yorkshire and the Humber, according to an LGA report produced in collaboration with Ecuity Consulting, which predicts 1.18 million new jobs being created in low-carbon sectors by 2050 in England.

Mayor Marvin Rees, Chair of the LGA's City Regions Board, said: "As these figures show, with the right tools and funding, councils can help

drive a boom in the green economy as part of a just transition for jobs, which will be a huge boost to help the UK transition to net zero by 2050.

"The Government has rightly outlined the need to prevent skills shortages during the net-zero transition.

"To help meet national climate change targets and capitalise on the green jobs revolution potential, councils need to be given long-term funding, devolved powers and easier access to complex government funding pots, to help realise national climate ambitions and ensure that communities are greener places to live for future generations."

● See p10-11 for more on the LGA's work at last month's UN Climate Change Conference, COP26



Residents trust councils to tackle climate change

New LGA polling has found that councils are trusted the most to take action on climate change and make a difference in local areas on reducing carbon emissions.

Published to coincide with the COP26 climate change summit in Glasgow last month, the survey found 40 per cent of residents trusted their council most to address the climate emergency, followed by the Government (28 per cent) and world leaders (15 per cent).

The LGA has set out an ambitious plan for councils to deliver green infrastructure projects in local communities where, with the right investment and support, councils could retrofit more than 1,000 homes a day with low-carbon efficiency measures by 2030, reducing energy bills by nearly £700 million a year.

Cllr James Jamieson, LGA Chairman, said:

"As leaders of local communities, it will be local governments in our cities, towns and rural areas across the world who will be driving the collective action required to address the climate emergency.

"Our ambitious plan shows how councils can go further and faster tackling climate change, and, as our polling shows, councils are the ones who are trusted the most to get on and deliver for their residents.

"Councils are rooted in the places where people live their lives and businesses do their business, and know their communities better than anyone else. This is why they are best placed to lead the way towards a net-zero future."

● See p24

Local authorities told to take asylum-seeking children

All councils with children's services will be mandated to care for some of the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children arriving in the UK.

Councils have been given legal notice to accept transfers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children into their care because of large numbers of arrivals.

The Home Office says it will consider a number of factors when transferring a child to a council, including the existing child population, the number of supported asylum seekers, and pressures on children's services, as well as the best interests of the child.

Cllr James Jamieson, LGA Chairman, said: "Councils have a proud history of welcoming new arrivals in their communities and the majority of councils have stepped forward voluntarily to offer homes and support to asylum-seeking children.

"They will want to continue to work closely with government to ensure the rights and needs of children are at the heart of these new arrangements. These need to enable local partners to give children the help they need, including mental and physical health support and appropriate education.

"Councils continue to face challenges in finding appropriate homes, with ongoing issues around centrally led age assessment and delays in decision-making adding uncertainty for both councils and young people.

"These new arrangements must continue to swiftly take into account existing pressures in local areas, with greater join-up across government to improve engagement with councils on all the programmes that support new arrivals to start new lives in the UK."

Vulnerable children 'unable to access help due to austerity'

More than a million vulnerable children in England are growing up emotionally damaged and with reduced life chances because of billions of pounds of austerity cuts to family support and youth services, according to a cross-party House of Lords inquiry.

The Lords Public Services Committee said the pandemic had accelerated a pre-existing "crisis of child vulnerability", with too many children in deprived areas taken into care, excluded from school, suffering from poor health, struggling in the job market, or ending up in prison because of the lack of services able to intervene early with at-risk youngsters.

Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, said: "This important report is a stark reminder of the challenges councils face supporting and protecting vulnerable children.

"Funding announced by the Government in the Spending Review to invest in children's health and wellbeing and parenting support was helpful.

"However, with spiralling demand on children's social services and future cost pressures in children's social care set to increase by an estimated £600 million each year until 2024/25, councils still find themselves in the unsustainable position of having to overspend their budgets.

"Councils want to work with government on a child-centred, cross-government pandemic recovery plan that offers the very best future for children and families. This would need to be supported by the right level of funding to enable councils to provide the early intervention and prevention support to stop children reaching crisis point in the first place."



'Invest in bus services to hit net zero'

Investment in bus services is urgently needed if councils are to reduce car journeys, lower carbon emissions and help the UK work towards its net zero goal by 2050 or earlier.

Just doubling the average occupancy of buses could mean up to 12 fewer car journeys are required for every bus journey, according to the LGA.

The number of local bus passenger journeys in England in 2020/21 fell significantly by 2.5 billion or 61 per cent, largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but even since 2004/05, bus mileage has declined by 34 per cent in England outside London.

The LGA is calling on the Government to fully fund the concessionary fares scheme, which provides free, off-peak travel for elderly and disabled residents.

The scheme is currently underfunded by £700 million a year, leaving councils having to reduce spending on discretionary concessionary fares and wider supported bus services to plug this gap.

Buses are the cornerstone of the Government's future plans to decarbonise the way we travel, and additional funding for the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme was announced in the Spending Review, bringing the total to £270 million in 2021/22.

By plugging the concessionary fares



funding gap, councils would have even greater means to invest in their existing schemes and pave the way to decarbonise fleets.

Cllr David Renard, LGA Transport Spokesperson, said: "Public transport, along with cycling and walking, is going to be key as we look to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050 or sooner, but with a drop of more than 60 per cent in bus journeys, and car journeys returning back to their pre-pandemic peak, it is clear that more work has to be done to encourage less carbon-intensive travel across the country."

Rise in domestic abuse

The number of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded in England and Wales rose 6 per cent in the year ending March 2021, alongside a 22 per cent rise in calls to the National Domestic Abuse Helpline in England.

Meanwhile, a separate Office for National Statistics' analysis of the lasting impact of violence against women and girls has found significant impacts such as mental health issues, suicide attempts and homelessness.

The data were released ahead of the 16 Days of Action – a campaign encouraging businesses to take action against domestic abuse, which ends on 10 December.

Cllr Nesil Caliskan, Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, said: "Councils are determined to help tackle violence against women and girls in our local communities, and work alongside police,

the NHS, and charities to make sure we do all we can to protect them.

"With demand having risen throughout the pandemic, the need for comprehensive domestic abuse services, early intervention and prevention schemes, and work with perpetrators to challenge their behaviour could not be more crucial.

"A whole society response, underpinned by a government commitment to long-term funding and support, is needed to give women and girls confidence that there is not just the will but also the power to improve things through cultural change."

The LGA is calling on the Government to increase and extend its Safety of Women at Night Fund, which was oversubscribed. Ten council projects were awarded funding last month.

More funding for councils

Councils will receive new government grant funding totalling £4.8 billion over the next three years, courtesy of Chancellor Rishi Sunak's recent Spending Review and Budget announcements.

The LGA said the additional £1.6 billion a year from 2022 will help meet some, but not all, of the costs of maintaining local services at pre-pandemic levels.

Measures announced in the Spending Review included:

- £2.6 billion for school places for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- £208 million by 2024/25 for early years, including £18 million for family hubs
- a new £500 million Multiply Fund to help adults improve their numeracy skills
- £9 million to help councils create new, urban 'pocket parks'.

There was also capital investment in skills, transport, and house building, as well as the release of the first £1.7 billion of the Levelling Up Fund.

But there was no extra cash for public health nor frontline adult social care services, and no mention of a multi-year funding settlement for councils.

Cllr James Jamieson, LGA Chairman, said: "We are pleased the Spending Review has provided new government grant funding for councils to support vital local services.

"It is disappointing that the Chancellor has not provided additional funding to address existing pressures on adult social care services and not increased public health funding.

"We remain concerned that the money allocated to social care from the Health and Care Levy will be insufficient to fund reforms."

He added: "Investing in local places is one of the most powerful tools of the Government's levelling up agenda. With adequate long-term resources and freedoms, councils can deliver world-class local services for our communities, tackle the climate emergency, and ensure all parts of the country are able to prosper in the future."

● See p16 for more on the Spending Review

Calls for register as more children educated at home

An estimated 115,542 children were being home educated at some point during the 2020/21 academic year, up 34 per cent on the previous year, according to a survey by the Association of Directors of Children's Services.

It is calling on the Government to bring forward its planned mandatory register of all electively home-educated children –

something the LGA also supports.

Councils also need powers to enter the homes of, or otherwise see, children to establish if they are receiving a suitable education.

And they need the resources to better identify children not receiving a suitable education and to intervene if they are being taught in unsuitable or dangerous environments, according to the LGA.

Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board: "Although most parents and carers provide a good home education, we are concerned that the pandemic has led to increasing numbers of children receiving education outside the classroom and missing out on the benefits that a school environment brings, such as safeguarding and learning and socialising with other children.

"While parents, carers, councils and schools all have responsibilities to ensure that children receive suitable education, some significant gaps in legislation mean that it is possible for children to slip through the net and be exposed to serious risks by not being in full-time education."

In brief

Childhood obesity

The proportion of children with an unhealthy weight has increased during the pandemic, and children living in the most deprived areas are more than twice as likely to be obese than those living in the least deprived areas, according to the latest National Child Measurement Programme statistics. Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, called for investment in councils' public health services and new powers and funding to tackle the clustering of existing takeaways and restrict junk food advertising near schools. He added: "Money raised from the soft drinks industry levy should also be reinvested in other council-run programmes, including exercise referral schemes and offering free or reduced-cost sport."

Cyber security

The LGA is building on its sector-led support offer for local authorities by piloting six new peer challenges on cyber security. The challenges will take place between January and March 2022 and will provide participating councils with a funded opportunity to gain advice and support from experts and peers. The programme, which is designed to provoke thought and discussion, will focus on sharing good cyber principles and signposting participants to further support rather than testing specific solutions. For more information or to express an interest in taking part, either as a peer or a participating council, please email lgacybersecurity@local.gov.uk

Membership survey

The LGA wants to know what you – our members – think of the work we are doing on your behalf. We have commissioned BMG Research to undertake our annual 'perceptions' survey and would urge councillors approached by researchers to share their views on how well we are doing in our role as the national voice of local government. We use the results to help inform our priorities, our ways of working and our approach to supporting councils. The survey will only take around 15 minutes and will run until mid-December. Please contact Help_Line@bmgresearch.com to book an appointment. For any queries about this research, please email james.harman@local.gov.uk



Employment and skills map launched

The LGA has launched a new online resource to map national employment and skills provision in every local authority in England.

The resource, designed in partnership with Research Matters, identifies almost 50 nationally run employment and skills programmes managed and commissioned by government departments and agencies, delivered over different boundaries by multiple providers.

A key challenge of the employment and skills system is that there are so many schemes. This can make provision difficult to navigate for residents and businesses, especially as there is no single local organisation responsible for coordinating the provision.

Cllr Kevin Bentley, Chair of the LGA's People and Places Board, said: "All too often, the skills and employment system can be complex and fragmented.

"This is an important resource, which supports local authorities to better understand and navigate employment and skills provision in their local areas.

"We also want it to help improve connections between local and national government on how to collaborate on existing provision within local areas and to plan future provision.

"Helping our residents retrain and get into work is critical to building back better from the crisis into recovery and levelling up our communities.

"Throughout the pandemic, local government has been trusted to coordinate employment, training and business support for their local areas.

"Councils want to build on this as we help our communities recover, and an important way of doing that is working with government, businesses and other partners to make the most of vital national employment and skills support."

● See p20, p28



Universal free garden waste collections 'unnecessary'

Councils have said government plans to introduce universal free garden waste collections are "unnecessary" and will not tackle the issue of garden waste ending up in landfill.

The LGA wants to work with government to minimise garden waste sent to landfill, but warns the rollout of free garden waste collections is not the answer.

This follows new analysis by the LGA that shows free garden waste rounds could require 600 extra HGV drivers at a time when there is a shortage, and cost local taxpayers more than half a billion pounds every year.

It warns the extra fossil-fuel consuming refuse trucks would increase carbon emissions at a time when many councils have already declared a climate emergency and want to reduce air pollution.

The LGA says individual councils, with their residents, should be allowed to

decide how to carry out waste collections locally and whether the costs of providing additional green waste collections should be met by taxpayers or those who use the service. It also says it is unfair on households without a garden – for example, residents in urban properties – who would be required to foot the bill for those who do.

Cllr David Renard, LGA Environment Spokesperson, said: "We want to work with the Government to reduce green waste being sent to landfill, but introducing blanket free garden waste collections is unnecessary.

"The proposals risk having an adverse impact on local roads, increasing traffic, and pumping out more carbon emissions and making air pollution worse.

"Hundreds of extra HGV drivers would also be needed, at a time when there is a shortage. At the very least, if the Government is to proceed it should fully fund it."

£220 million for local jobs

The Government has announced the 500 successful projects for its £220 million Community Renewal Fund.

The fund, which is delivered by local authorities, is a precursor to the UK's Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which looks to support investment in jobs, local infrastructure and local businesses.

The UKSPF is replacing existing EU structural funding, which is due to end following Brexit.

Cllr Kevin Bentley, Chair of the LGA's People and Places Board, said: "We are pleased that councils have finally been given the go-ahead to deliver this important investment, which will bring opportunities for local communities and help them build back better from the pandemic.

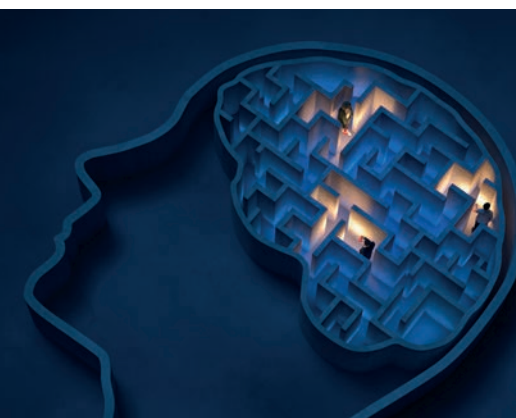
"It is good that councils have been

given the delivery responsibilities for this scheme. They are at the heart of their local communities and are best placed to bring together partners to deliver improvements to their local areas.

"Given the delay in announcing this funding, it is positive that the deadline for delivery has been extended until the end of June, something for which we have been calling.

"Councils look forward to working with the Government to learn from these schemes to design and deliver a successful long-term UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

"Bringing more funds together into single pots, with greater flexibility and over longer time periods, will allow councils and their partners to deliver most effectively for their communities."



Engaging on climate change

The LGA continues to influence debates and legislation on the environment

November was a significant month for the future of the environment, with the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) taking place in Glasgow (see p10-11).

In Parliament, the LGA briefed MPs and LGA vice-presidents ahead of Commons' debates on limiting global temperatures, the Committee on Climate Change's 2021 progress report, and, most recently, the impact of air pollution on public health and wellbeing.

We highlighted air pollution as the largest environmental risk to public health, outlined the measures needed to effectively decarbonise transport and noted the importance of local government in achieving these ends.

Air pollution contributes to cardiovascular disease, lung cancer and respiratory diseases, costs the UK economy £20 billion a year and is a factor in more than 25,000 deaths a year.

Air pollution in the UK is a factor in more than 25,000 deaths a year

Councils and directors of public health are already tackling air pollution, by introducing clean air zones, encouraging the use of electric vehicles with recharging points, and promoting cycling and walking.

They are also investing in cleaner buses, managing borough-wide air pollution monitoring networks, planning for new places in ways that improve air quality, and engaging with businesses to increase awareness and reduce their environmental impact.

To assist councils, the Government needs to develop consistent national



public health messaging about the benefits of clean air zones and take greater ownership of measures to reduce air pollution.

It was disappointing that the Budget and Spending Review did not provide any additional public health funding (see p16-17). Local authorities' public health grant has been cut by 24 per cent since 2015/16, equivalent to a £1 billion reduction, impacting councils' ability to address health inequalities created by air pollution.

Keeping people healthy and well throughout their lives reduces pressure on the NHS, social care, criminal justice, and the benefits system.

During the debate, Maria Miller MP (Con, Basingstoke) spoke of the work carried out by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, referencing the local authority's Clean Air Campaign.

Kate Osamor MP (Lab, Edmonton) also made the case for investing in public transport to reduce air pollution.

Closing the debate, Jo Churchill MP, Minister for Climate Adaptation, outlined efforts undertaken by the Government to improve air quality through the Environment Bill (see right); emphasised the importance of local authorities in air quality improvement; and stressed the need for a joined-up approach that involves the business sector and service providers.

New laws on the environment

The recently enacted Environment Act is a wide-ranging and important piece of legislation for local government.

It aims to improve air quality, restore natural habitats, increase biodiversity, halt the decline of species by 2030, reduce waste and make better use of resources by encouraging recycling.

These changes will be driven by new and legally binding environmental targets, and enforced by a new, independent Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) – which will hold government and public bodies to account on their environmental obligations.

The Environment Act also points to a new environmental relationship between local and national government, with councils taking on a new environmental improvement role in their local areas.

The LGA engaged with the legislation throughout its passage through Parliament. As it is implemented, we are continuing to engage with government on forthcoming regulations and related policy, and to ensure all new duties are accompanied by the powers, flexibilities, support and long-term funding councils need to deliver on the Act's ambitions.



For more information about the LGA's parliamentary work, please visit www.local.gov.uk/parliament

Local action on climate change

COP26 podcast

The LGA's next Forget What You Think You Know podcast episode focuses on climate action and looks at the agreement that was made at COP26 in Glasgow (see www.local.gov.uk/podcast).

This episode explores what is needed to fulfil the agreement and what else could have been added so communities could go further and faster on climate action.

The podcast also explores the important need for diverse leadership when it comes to tackling climate change, and why it is so important every level of government plays a role in tackling climate change.

Speakers include: Corinne Le Quere, a Royal Society Research Professor of Climate Change Science; Cllr Pippa Heylings, Deputy Chair of the LGA's Environment, Housing and Transport Board; and Olivia Sweeney, from Black and Green Ambassadors.

COP26 underlined councils' importance in tackling the climate emergency



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

Last month, we saw world leaders set out their commitment to tackle the climate emergency, with a headline-grabbing mix of ambitious targets and multi-billion global funding announcements at COP26. Countries signed up to reduce emissions, safeguard forests and tackle methane, as part of the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow.

For councils, the conference was also an invaluable opportunity to share learning and experience with our counterparts around the world.

I was delighted to be part of the LGA's delegation in Glasgow, alongside our Chief Executive Mark Lloyd and other local leaders.

The LGA had representation in both the Blue Zone, where the negotiations took place, and the public-facing Green Zone.

In the Blue Zone, we hosted a series of important discussions and events focusing on the vital role of councils in delivering net zero and the potential for local government to make this happen further and faster.

In the Green Zone we had an interactive exhibition stand, in partnership with Northern Ireland LGA, where we showcased the important work councils have been doing to address the climate emergency.

Throughout COP26, we worked to make sure councils were at the forefront of the discussions – because it is only local government that holds the wide range of powers and tools needed to decarbonise transport, buildings, waste, energy, and growth.

And it will be local governments, in cities, towns and rural areas across the world, that will be mobilising and driving the collective action required to address climate change over the coming years.

Before the conference, the LGA had led calls for a dedicated local and regional government day, which took place on 11 November as the Cities, Regions and the Built Environment Day.

On that day, we joined local government representatives from across the globe to discuss an international framework for climate change and call for formal recognition of the contribution of sub-national governments to climate action.

The LGA also released new polling that found more people trust councils

Resources for councils

Spending more than £60 billion every year, council procurement teams are uniquely placed to use their collective purchasing power to drive the transition to net zero and deliver real change.

The choices that are made now can positively shape local supply chains for years to come, affecting our long-term ability to reduce carbon emissions, create green jobs, and deliver on affordable and social housing targets. The LGA toolkit, 'Sustainable procurement: delivering local economic, social and environmental priorities' (see

www.local.gov.uk/publications), has been developed to support commissioners, procurement practitioners and contract managers to consider social value outcomes when delivering local priorities – including achieving net zero and reducing consumption and waste.

Meanwhile, we have created an e-learning module on biodiversity for council officers and members (www.local.gov.uk/biodiversity-e-learning-councils). It will offer an introduction to the subject and guidance on how councils can protect natural habitats.



Members of the LGA's delegation at COP26

to act on climate change and reduce carbon emissions in their areas than government or world leaders.

We are very pleased the negotiators responded to these fantastic international efforts by securing recognition, in the COP26 text, of the urgent need for multi-level action, and of the role of local communities in addressing climate change.

This is an important achievement for us domestically, too, as it underlines local government's role as a key delivery partner on climate change.

Meanwhile, we continue to call on government to empower local leaders with the right resources and powers to accelerate local climate change action.

Councils are a unique and powerful partner in achieving net

zero, impacting on more than a third of all emissions from villages, towns and cities, such as through housing, transport and the natural environment.

But the influence councils can have on reducing carbon emissions has been underused.

We want the Government to deepen the climate change partnership between central and local government with a new approach focused on delivery, that gives councils the long-term funding to decarbonise building stock, reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport, deliver clean energy projects, and more.

For example, with the right investment and support, councils stand ready to embark on an ambitious programme of retrofitting more than

1,000 homes a day with low-carbon efficiency measures by 2030, reducing energy bills by nearly £700 million a year.

This would mean warmer and more comfortable homes and buildings, saving the NHS £1.9 billion a year, and supporting almost 31,000 new, skilled jobs in the construction and retrofitting industries.

We should also not be building new homes that will need retrofitting in the future.

Long before Glasgow, councils up and down the country have been declaring a climate emergency and taking local action in a variety of exciting ways to achieve net zero.

In Leeds, we have seen half of the organisations taking part in an electric vehicle trial scheme tell the city council they are now considering switching to zero-emission vehicles.

North Somerset has plans to rewild as much land as possible, creating new habitats and enabling wildlife to thrive.

In York, the council is delivering a new-build housing programme with all homes built to achieve zero carbon.

It is the action taken in the places where people live and businesses do business that will determine how successful we are in tackling the climate emergency.

Recognition for net zero programme

The Net Zero Innovation Programme, led jointly by the LGA and University College London, has won a 'highly commended' award in the first Climate Challenge Cup – a new international competition celebrating innovative local solutions to global climate issues.

The programme brings UK universities and English local authorities together for an intensive eight-month period to address a local challenge that can help councils achieve their net zero commitments, by sharing resources and knowledge, and working on

real-life projects to test methodologies, gather data and deliver impact.

Current projects include Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and Leeds Beckett University designing and overseeing the construction and evaluation of a new, low-energy housing estate in Barnsley using the latest research and innovation in insulation and renewable energy; and Hertfordshire County Council and the University of Hertfordshire working with care homes to reduce energy consumption and increase efficiency. See www.local.gov.uk/NZIP

i For more on the LGA's work at COP26, please visit www.local.gov.uk/lga-cop26. See also p24

Rural planning issues

Addressing climate change is a top priority for residents



Cllr **Dr Tumi Hawkins** is Lead Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Delivery at South Cambridgeshire District Council

Since COP26 has taught us anything, it is that we are running out of time to reverse the damage that is being done to our planet, and that we must all take action, starting now.

Local plans identify the development needs of the areas we live, work, play and study in, where they should be met, and how they should be met.

In the current climate emergency, we must also ensure that we balance development with the need to enhance our natural environment, to reduce warming and achieve net zero by 2050.

South Cambridgeshire District Council, together with Cambridge City Council, is in the 'Regulation 18 first proposals' stage of creating the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

Preparing a joint plan has allowed us to consider the strategy choices available, and determine the best strategy for the Cambridge area, rather than being guided by arbitrary lines between city and district.

This plan is being prepared within a wider regional context, including the Oxford Cambridge Arc, the UK Innovation Corridor (London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough) and the Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor. Ongoing consultation ends on 13 December 2021.

In our 'first conversation' in 2020, we proposed four big themes – climate change, biodiversity and green spaces, wellbeing and social inclusion, and great places – to influence how homes, jobs and infrastructure are planned.

The consultation responses showed clearly that addressing climate change was the top priority for our residents. That gave us the confidence

Water is a key issue in our region – a real deal-breaker

to pursue new approaches to reducing carbon emissions and enhancing the environment.

The groundbreaking carbon-modelling work we commissioned has enabled us to understand which policy interventions would be most effective at minimising our climate impacts, and we shaped our plan through that evidence.

The spatial strategy we propose prioritises locations with access to high-quality transport and opportunities for cycling and walking, shifting the emphasis away from unsustainable locations in rural villages.

It has a good balance of locations, with only 4 per cent of the proposed new homes in rural areas, helping to preserve the precious character of our villages that is so important to residents.

The proposals also set ambitious targets for building standards, including

recommendations for low-carbon buildings to help us on our net-zero carbon journey.

Residents also told us we should be doing more to increase biodiversity and tree planting. Following our first ever 'Call for green sites', the proposals also include suggested new green spaces and wildlife projects.

We have included policy proposals that demand higher levels of biodiversity improvement than national standards, and which require the planting of new trees. All of this, we anticipate, will help in achieving our vision for 'doubling nature' in South Cambridgeshire.

Water is a key issue in our region, and evidence shows how critical it is to reduce the amount of water taken from the groundwater aquifer. The local plan proposals make it very clear that water is a real deal-breaker, and that we need action from industry and government to sort this out.

This is an exceptionally green plan, with the environment and affordability of homes at its very heart. We want South Cambridgeshire, within the context of Greater Cambridge, to be a place where a big decrease in our climate impacts comes with a big increase in the quality of everyday life for all our communities.



See bit.ly/3qMNMZo for South Cambridgeshire's **Doubling Nature Strategy**. For more information about the **Greater Cambridge Local Plan**, please visit consultations.greatercambridgeplanning.org

Showing our worth as place-makers

The LGA Independent Group's annual conference discussed planning, climate change, and violence against women and girls



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

Huge thanks to all who managed to attend our hybrid annual conference this year, held on 29 October.

It is the biggest event exclusively for LGA Independent Group members, and was the best attended conference we have had, with a full hall at the LGA's London headquarters and many more councillors online.

Opening the conference, I outlined the successes of our growing group of more than 2,900 councillors. Over the past year, our members have been extremely busy, responding to consultations, speaking and writing to ministers, commenting in the press, and lobbying on behalf of our councils.

We've seen more money come to councils. We have demonstrated our worth as place-leaders, continuing our community and business support in response to the pandemic.

We successfully pushed back on government plans to curtail our right to campaign ahead of May's elections. We've also shaped the LGA's position on issues including planning and infrastructure, climate change, building safety, and civility.

Thank you to all who have contributed to our think tanks over the past 12 months – key thinking that is vital to getting the right solutions.

At our conference, LGA President Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson spoke about her work in the House of Lords, assisting us with important changes in legislation.

LGA Chairman Cllr James Jamieson outlined the LGA's corporate plan, setting

out our asks of government to help us 'build back local'.

Crossbencher Lord Victor Adebowale took an Independent look at the future of local government and challenged councils to do things differently, while thanking us for keeping the country moving through difficult times.

In discussing impending changes to planning, our members were very clear about the importance of council control, rather than a centralised tick-box exercise.

Members also expressed concern about the unfair approach to housing numbers, an issue I later took to Secretary of State Michael Gove.

It seems the Government still has the priority of getting 300,000 dwellings built every year – probably an impossible task if we are also to keep to reaching net zero by 2050.

We had a powerful discussion, alongside the police and third-sector partners, on what councils can do to address violence against women and girls.

And, meeting ahead of COP26, we heard from Jo Wall, Strategic Director for Climate Response at Local Partnerships, about their work on net zero; and then

the theory and practice of 'doughnut economics', including its application in Cornwall, to ensure decisions are made holistically, balancing all the competing pressures.

Thank you to all our session chairs (Cllrs Hannah Dalton, Emily O'Brien, Patricia Patterson-Vanegas and Rosemary Harris), our speakers for superb presentations, and our group officers and LGA staff who helped on the day.

This event forms a significant springboard for our members, and all the resources are available on our website (see www.local.gov.uk/lga-independent/events/past-conferences).

We closed the conference with our annual prize giving. We had many outstanding nominations for awards, celebrating community activism, group and council leadership, and contributions to the wider work of the LGA.

Five councillors were nominated for our group's highest honour, the Clarence Barrett Award, in memory of a key member of the group. They included Cllrs Clive Woodbridge, James Hall, Kevin Etheridge and Tim Gwilliam. Huge congratulations to Cllr Phélim Mac Cafferty (Green, Brighton and Hove), our outstanding winner.

i For more information about the LGA's Independent Group, please visit www.local.gov.uk/lga-independent



The Independent Group's annual conference was a mix of in-person and online



Building back better means building back local

The Government is expected to publish its Levelling up White Paper later this month (Dec), and the LGA understands this will include a significant set of proposals for English devolution.

Our perspective on levelling up is that building back better means building back local.

The Levelling Up White Paper presents an opportunity to reset the relationship between national and local government and put councils at the heart of delivering the Government's ambitious programme to improve opportunities in all parts of the country.

Councils have a critical role to play, have demonstrated their leadership throughout the pandemic, and are willing and able to deliver this agenda – so it is important that they are empowered to do so.

One way of doing this is by 'levelling up devo' – as per the findings earlier this year of an inquiry by the Devolution All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG).

The APPG recommended that

government should work with local government to set out a 'national devolution baseline' for England, including a list of new powers available to every council without the need to negotiate a devolution deal, as well as further powers that are available subject to clear eligibility requirements.

Devolution from Whitehall to councils should be by default and at the heart of national government policy. The LGA has long called for a rethink of the 'culture of centralisation' in the UK and a new devolution settlement for England, with powers and funding devolved to local communities to further improve services for everyone.

*Devolution from Whitehall to councils **should be by default***

Good jobs and career opportunities where people live are central to the Government's levelling up ambitions.

The route to achieving this is also through greater devolution, which would empower local leaders to create local, integrated skills and employment offers tailored to the needs of local economies and residents, helping create jobs and training opportunities.

We are working with government to ensure that changes put forward in the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill make use of local government's expertise to deliver better outcomes, and that the bill is used as an

opportunity to tackle our fragmented employment and skills system.

The LGA would welcome further steps towards defragmenting all local funding arrangements to help maximise the strength of councils' local leadership, which was demonstrated so strongly during the pandemic.

The Government should build on the approach to future growth funding signalled at the recent Budget and continue to retreat from a pattern of piecemeal, fragmented and short-term interventions.

We need to move towards a localist settlement that gives councils the powers and resources to drive green and inclusive growth that meets the needs of their communities.

The Government says its Levelling Up White Paper will build on actions it is already taking to level up across the country and will set out "bold new policy interventions to improve livelihoods and opportunities in all parts of the UK".

Its four themes will be: empowering local leaders and communities; raising living standards, especially where they are lower; improving public services, especially where they are weaker; and enhancing people's pride in the places they live.

None of this can be delivered without local government. Councils have demonstrated that with the right funding and freedoms, they can improve people's lives and ensure the successful delivery of those priorities that are shared by national and local government.

i The LGA will publish its response to the Levelling Up White Paper at www.local.gov.uk. See also p24. See www.local.gov.uk/build-back-local for more about the LGA's 'Build back local' campaign

Stepping up efforts to tackle HIV

Councils and charities have played a central role in reducing transmission of the virus



Councillor **David Fothergill** is Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board and **Ian Green** is Chief Executive of the Terrence Higgins Trust



Put simply, we have the tools to end HIV transmission.

The HIV Commission set the roadmap on where our efforts should be focused. The

Government has promised to consider the commission's recommendations within its national HIV Action Plan – due to be published imminently.

This action plan must focus on how collectively we can work together to tackle HIV cases and ensure people living with HIV are supported to thrive.

Within local government, we must continue to lead the way – providing world-class sexual health services that embrace innovation and are accessible to all who need them.

As HIV charities, we will continue to work with communities

After 40 years of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) affecting often the most marginalised in our communities, it is within our grasp to end transmission within the next 10 years.

Local communities, charities and councils have played a central role in this progress.

This has helped to turn the tide on HIV with a decline in new cases since 2015, including a remarkable fall of 47 per cent among gay and bisexual men in this period.

But we can't stop now.

Last year, the independent HIV Commission, supported by the Terrence Higgins Trust, National AIDS Trust and Elton John AIDS Foundation, set out a blueprint for how England could end new HIV transmission by 2030.

This ambitious but achievable target was set by the Government with an interim commitment to reduce new cases by 80 per cent by 2025.

This target is undeniably attainable. We now have HIV treatment that reduces the virus to such low levels that it cannot be passed on to others sexually (known as 'undetectable = untransmittable', or U=U).

We have the highly effective HIV prevention intervention PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis), which is now routinely available in sexual health services, supported by local councils. And we have an increasing number of options to test for HIV including self-tests.

to design and deliver campaigns and services, and agitate to ensure that progress continues to be made – for all.

But reaching the 2030 goal will need a whole system approach. The NHS must play its role – ensuring that opt-out HIV testing is available in secondary care in high HIV incidence areas and supporting the roll out of HIV testing and PrEP provision in primary care.

National government must step up and ensure it is fully funding efforts to meet the 2030 goal.

From supporting the delivery of relationships and sex education lessons in schools to supporting 'chemsex' services in clinics – councils can lead the way, but we need the broader system to play its part.

The next step for local councils is to look again at local plans to tackle HIV. Are we using all the tools we have at our disposal? How accessible is HIV testing? Is year-round at-home HIV testing available?

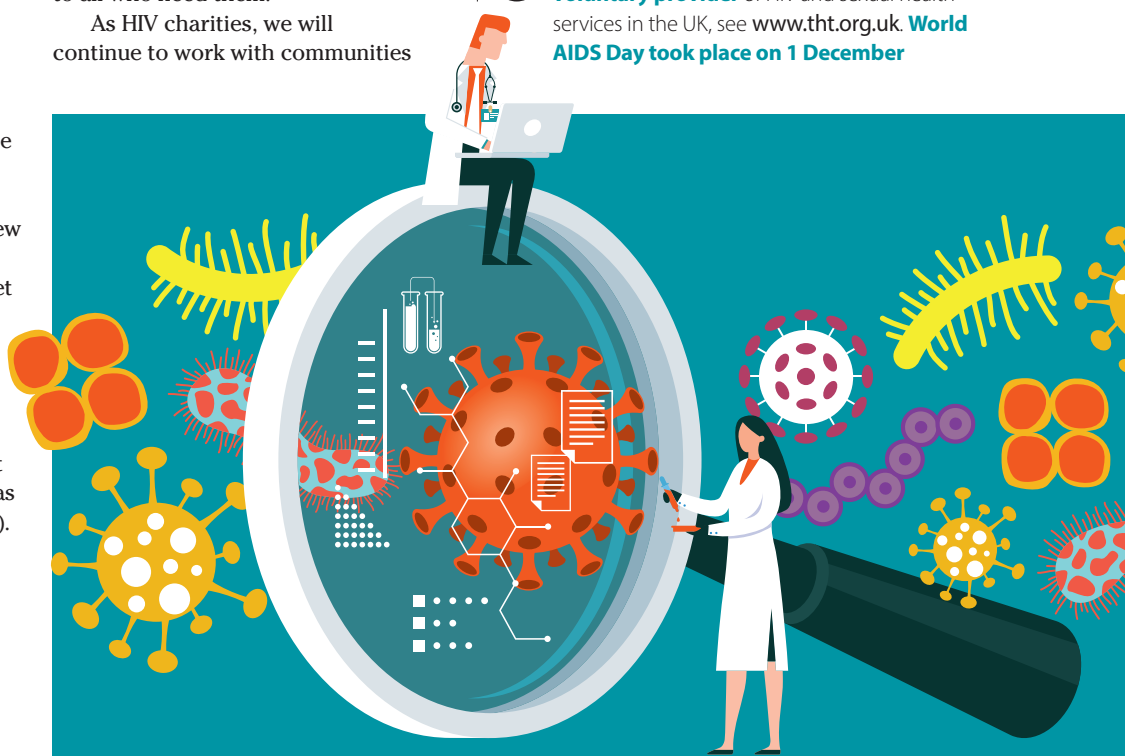
Who could benefit from PrEP but is currently missing out? Are we maximising the potential reach that local charities have? Are any local communities falling behind in progress made on HIV?

A local HIV action plan must have equity front and centre – no community should be left behind.

As local government and charities we will play our part. Together we can end HIV.



The Terrence Higgins Trust is the largest voluntary provider of HIV and sexual health services in the UK, see www.tht.org.uk. **World AIDS Day took place on 1 December**



New grant funding for councils

Increases in funding will not meet all cost pressures

Faced with significant economic challenges to address, the Chancellor's Spending Review provided a mixture of positive news and disappointments for local government.

The LGA was pleased to see the inclusion of new grant funding for councils over the next three years to support vital services.

This will help meet some – but not all – of the extra cost and demand pressures they face just to provide services at pre-pandemic levels.

The funding packages of capital investment in skills, transport, house building and the provision of school places for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) were also positively received, and will support councils in their work to address existing issues exacerbated by the pandemic and raise living standards for residents.

However, despite councils playing a critical and trusted role over the past 18 months, we were disappointed to see that the Spending Review did not commit to a much-needed multi-year funding settlement for local authorities, nor give any indication on the future of business rates retention and the Fair Funding Review.

Increases in core spending power projected by the Government will require a council tax rise of 3 per cent per year (a general increase of 2 per cent plus a 1 per cent adult social care precept). This will meet estimated cost pressures to provide

services at pre-pandemic levels in 2022/23 but leaves a shortfall of at least £1 billion in 2024/25.

Insufficient funding has been made available to meet the existing funding pressures faced by councils, especially in relation to adults' and children's social care.

This leaves councils facing immediate challenges and continued uncertainty of how services will be funded in the medium term.

Without this security, councils' ability to plan and create budgets and invest resources that reflect local need is limited, maintaining pressures on the rest of the public sector and putting vulnerable people at risk of being left behind.

Though funding will be allocated to social care from the Health and Care Levy, which will ensure personal care costs are capped and provide some further investment for purposes to be outlined in a forthcoming white paper, the Government's reliance on increases in

council tax to meet cost pressures is not a sustainable way to fund adult social care in the long term.

The LGA remains concerned that the funding from the levy will be insufficient to fund reforms that have been announced.

We also warned that council tax increases will place additional financial burdens on already struggling households.

The LGA has long maintained the view that investing in local places is one of the key tools government can use to level up communities and build back better from the pandemic. There is a risk that increased government spending will not reach the local authorities and their communities that need it most.

Moving forward, we will continue to engage with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to lobby on behalf of councils and anticipate the approach to grant funding through the provisional local government finance settlement, which is due before the end of 2021.



i For a full breakdown of the LGA's response to the Spending Review, see our on-the-day briefing at www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses

Funding for local government

The Government is providing councils with £4.8 billion of new grant funding over the 2021 Spending Review period for social care and other services, including a \$200 million commitment to increase Supporting Families funding, funding for cyber security, and funding to improve local delivery and transparency.

This is positive news. However, we remain unclear whether the Government intends to use any of this pot of funding to equalise for the differential impact of the council tax adult social care precept, as it has done in previous years.

Adult social care

In September, the Government announced \$5.4 billion of additional funding to reform adult social care, to be funded by the new Health and Social Care Levy.

The Spending Review confirmed that, in England, \$3.6 billion of this will go directly to local government to fund the introduction a cap of \$86,000 for personal care costs and for expanding the means tested support to people with less than \$100,000 in relevant assets, with \$1.7 billion over three years to improve the wider social care system, including the quality and integration of care. At least \$500 million of this will fund investment in the skills, qualifications and wellbeing of the care workforce, according to government.

Education and children's social care

We welcome the \$2.6 billion for school places for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), which will help councils provide places locally, rather than children having to travel to get the support they need.

Funding of \$259 million over the 2021 Spending Review period will be used to maintain capacity and expand provision in secure and open residential children's homes. This will provide high-quality, safe homes for some of our most vulnerable children and young people.

A new funding package of \$104 million by 2024/25 will be used to take forward reforms to unregulated provision in children's social care, improving safeguarding standards, along with \$7 million in 2024/25 to implement the Department for Education's adoption strategy 'Achieving excellence everywhere', to improve access to services and support for adopted children and their families.

Council tax

The referendum threshold for increases in council tax is expected to remain at 2 per cent a year. In addition, local authorities with social care responsibilities are expected to be able to increase the adult social care precept by up to 1 per cent per year.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will set out full details of the council tax referendum principles and proposed approach to allocating grant funding in the provisional local government finance settlement, expected later this month.

The LGA has always maintained that the council tax referendum limit should be abolished so councils and their communities can decide how local services are paid for, with residents able to democratically hold their council to account through the ballot box.

Levelling up and investing in communities

The release of the first \$1.7 billion of the Levelling Up Fund gives those councils who were successful in the bidding process an opportunity to deliver much-needed improvements for their communities.

The forthcoming Levelling Up White Paper presents an opportunity to reset the relationship between central and local government and put councils at the heart of delivering the Government's programme to improve opportunities in all parts of the country.

However, for levelling up to be a success, the Government needs to move away from a pattern of piecemeal and fragmented funding streams, many of which fund very similar activity. This would help maximise the strength of councils' local leadership, which was demonstrated during the pandemic.

Net zero

Since March 2021, the Government will have committed \$30 billion of public investment for the green industrial revolution in the UK, supporting the delivery of all the priorities in its Ten Point Plan and going further in several key areas.

As leaders of place, we are pleased the strategy recognises the importance of local government in delivering net zero and we look forward to working with government through the Local Net Zero Forum to ensure all places have the powers and resources to reduce carbon emissions.

✧The Government's reliance on increases in council tax to meet cost pressures is not a sustainable way to fund adult social care in the long term✧

New homes for rough sleepers

Deputy Mayor of London Tom Copley joined Councillor Peray Ahmet, the Leader of Haringey Council, and Greg Hill, Deputy Chief Executive of Hill Group, for the official handover of 33 new Modulhaus homes – designed and developed by Volumetric

Tackling homelessness

Haringey has become the first council in London to provide the custom-designed Modulhaus solution to tackle homelessness and help those in need of safe and secure accommodation. The modular homes for rough sleepers have been installed on disused council-owned land in Tottenham through a partnership between Haringey Council and Hill Group.

Manufactured in just nine weeks, delivered complete and taking five days to install – half of the homes have been donated by Hill Group with further major funding provided by the Greater London Authority and central government.

It is the first project in London to benefit from Foundation200, a £15 million charitable initiative by Hill Group to donate 200 modular

homes to organisations supporting people experiencing homelessness.

Haringey Council expects residents to stay in the modular homes for around two years. They will provide a more stable base than the streets, hostels or shelters, allowing rough sleepers to eventually move into permanent accommodation.

Future Homes Standard

Volumetric has worked in close collaboration with Foundation200 to develop Modulhaus to meet individual site briefs and budgets of councils, local authorities and third-sector organisations.

Designed to the Future Homes Standard and exceeding Building Regulations – the homes have energy costs of around £5 per week. Delivered fully furnished and equipped for a single person to move straight into, Modulhaus homes are LABC assured with a BOPAS-accredited design life of 60 years.

As there may be a requirement to stack the modules, the structure is formed from hot-rolled steel point-loaded cornerpost frames. Walls are lined with a fire-rated A1 non-combustible board to provide fire and acoustic performance. As this is the first development to be carried out above two storeys, there were some challenges. Bespoke

i If you have an enquiry or an immediate requirement, please contact the Volumetric team. Email info@volumetric.co.uk, call 01743 290 020 or visit: volumetric.co.uk



connections were developed to align the external stairs and walkways and the client also repurposed a unit as a community office.

Cost-effective solution

Created to meet the needs of those battling to find a cost-effective solution to address rough sleeping, modules include low-energy lighting, white goods, controlled flow showers and dual-flush cisterns to minimise energy and water consumption.

Renewable energy technology is built into every home and the well-insulated structure delivers U-values as low as 0.09W/m²K. Six plant rooms manufactured by Volumetric provide mechanical, electrical and plumbing services for the development. However, instead of the modules having the standard card meters for electricity, the client proposed an alternative method of centrally charging occupiers for energy.

Positive outcomes

Cllr Peray Ahmet, Leader of Haringey Council, said: "I'm proud to be part of this joint initiative to help people move on securely from a life of sleeping rough.

"We know we can't tackle this problem alone, which is why I'm so delighted our collaboration with Hill is helping us deliver good quality, transitional housing that



ensures people in need can get their lives back on track."

A team of Haringey Council staff will provide specialist support to enable residents to adjust and settle into their new homes, as well as to tackle the issues that led them to becoming homeless.

"This raises the bar for London's homelessness response," said Gill Taylor, the Council's Head of Service and Strategic Lead for Homelessness. "Rough sleepers deserve quality housing like this, and we're currently exploring other sites in the borough to build more."

MODULHAUS™

CHANGING LIVES FOR THE BETTER



For more details on this innovative interim housing solution - email info@volumetric.co.uk or call 01743 290 020

volumetric.co.uk

An award-winning concept developed and rigorously tested to help overcome the homeless crisis and relieve the burden on Local Authorities of ongoing expenses associated with traditional temporary accommodation.

MODULHAUS™ SPECIFICATION:

- Designed to the Future Homes Standard
- Energy costs of less than £5 per week
- BOPAS certified structure with 60-year design life
- LABC Assured Building Control approval
- Fully non-combustible structure
- Renewable energy technology
- Stackable to two storeys
- Relocatable with over 95% material recoverability and re-use





Lisa McCance is a
Director at Shared
Intelligence

Supporting councils with business engagement

The pandemic recovery offers a real opportunity to reset the relationship with local businesses

The pandemic has had a major impact on local economies, particularly for businesses in sectors such as tourism, retail and hospitality.

Central government recovery funding provided a welcome relief as it was swiftly distributed through the channels of various parts of local government.

This has meant that the relationship between councils and their local businesses has not only deepened but also strengthened, and councils have had more direct engagement with more businesses than ever before.

How councils build on this strengthened relationship in the years ahead is an extremely important question and one that we are tackling through research with the LGA.

What is encouraging to hear is that the conversation with business is shifting. It has slowly been moving away from emergency distribution of funding to a more substantial use of local business intelligence in local decisions and future strategy development.

Through our research, we have heard that businesses are becoming more central in setting policy at a local level, and that the evidence gathered during the pandemic is being used well to inform funding bids and emerging strategies.

This high-quality business intelligence is critically important in the future of local decision-making.

In the early part of the research, we heard from councils that are using hyper-local evidence to create a plan to support businesses in the short and medium-term. Examples of this include:

- creating forums to support landlords of managed workspaces vacant due to working from home
- identifying and using the exact issues facing businesses through bids to the Community Renewal Fund
- information campaigns to engage black and minority ethnic (BAME) business leaders
- task and finish groups to identify future perspectives of young entrepreneurs.

All of these examples are encouraging a healthy conversation intended to collectively solve some of the issues of the day.

The research has also found that there has been a different experience reported in relation to working with local partners.

In some areas, there was a strong presence of other supporting organisations working alongside the council. In other places, business support partners were not able to manage the needs of businesses as well, leaving councils to pick up the majority of action required.

In the longer-term, the outcome of the Government's review of local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) will be significant, as will the role of 'business representative organisations', as identified in January's Skills White Paper, to deliver the skills agenda.

Whatever the outcome, securing and sustaining a business voice to inform local policies and decisions will continue to be central to maintaining

quality place-shaping and vibrant local economies.

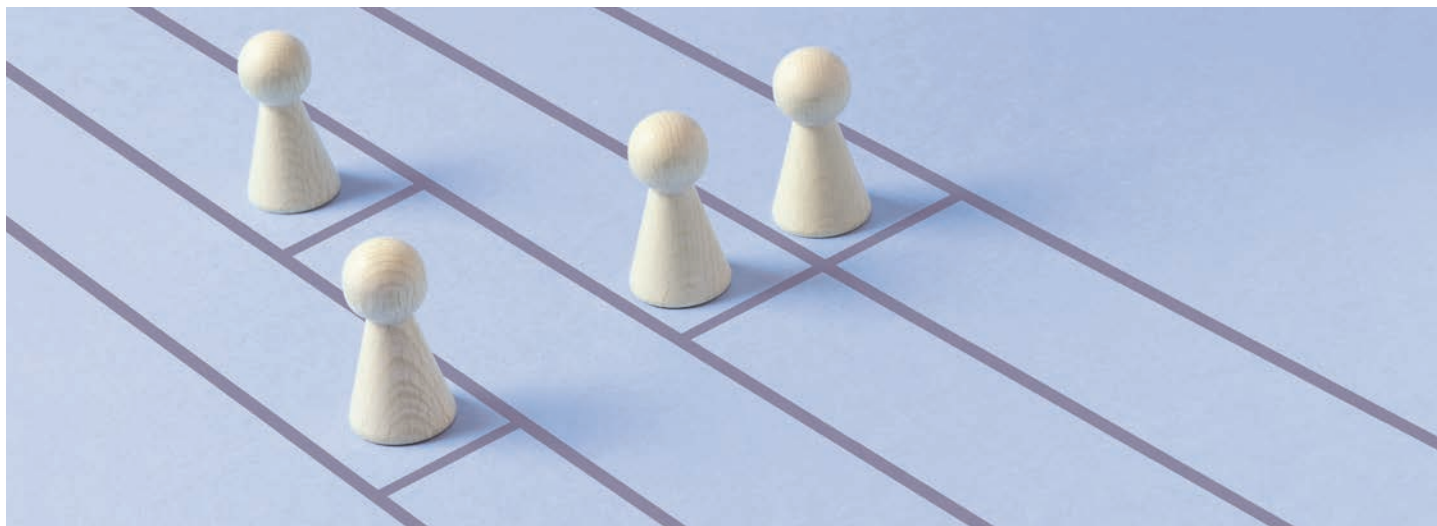
Equally key to this will be the nature of relationships between different types of councils and their constituent businesses. This relationship varies greatly across combined authorities, counties and districts.

Councils are an important 'anchor' institution, as their spending power and role as commissioners of goods and services can encourage local social value priorities.

Ensuring local firms are well positioned to pick up these opportunities is key to delivering innovation, local growth and jobs.



The final report on Shared Intelligence's research on councils and business engagement will be available on the LGA's website in early December, see www.local.gov.uk/publications. See also p28



Shaping places for healthier lives

The LGA and The Health Foundation have launched a new programme aimed at tackling health inequalities



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

Everyone deserves to be able to live a long and healthy life, no matter where they live.

COVID-19 has tragically exposed and exacerbated our deep-rooted health inequalities, which need to be urgently addressed if we are to level up our communities for the future.

Importantly, because of the pandemic, we are all more aware of what is meant by health inequalities and the ways in which they impact on people's lives.

The strongest determinants of our health are the social, economic, commercial and environmental conditions in which we live – for example, whether our homes are overcrowded, where we go to school, what jobs are open to us locally, and if we have a park nearby.

These wider determinants of health are multiple, diverse, and interrelated factors that shape the health of people

in an area. Creating the conditions for better health in local places requires system-wide partnership action on these wider factors.

It is vital we act to reduce inequalities, prevent poor health and improve people's opportunities for better health – which is the aim of our Shaping Places for Healthier Lives Programme (2021).

Working in partnership with The Health Foundation, the LGA is supporting five council-led partnerships to tackle the wider determinants of health, and to share learning about effective ways of shaping places for healthier lives for all, across complex systems.

The aim is to make sustainable changes to local systems, which are consistent with improved population health, and designed to last beyond the lifetime of the programme.

The five councils – Doncaster Council, London Borough of Newham, Northumberland County Council, and Shropshire Council, plus a joint partnership with Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils – will each receive £300,000 over three years.

The councils will use a 'complex systems' approach to address topics

such as food insecurity, mental wellbeing, and crime and anti-social behaviour, in their local areas.

They have set out clear plans as to what they are planning to achieve over the next three years, including working with local partnerships (like other councils, public health departments, NHS services and local and national charities) towards their common goals, and looking at why previous interventions may not have been successful along with evidence of what is currently working.

Learning from the councils' work will be shared with a host of organisations including public health bodies, local partnerships, academics, council partners, health and housing organisations, care and health charities, the police and employment centres via the LGA's website, The Health Foundation, and a Shaping Places for Healthier Lives learning network.

This programme is an important first step in finding new ways to influence the social determinants of health, such as food poverty, anti-social behaviour and mental health services, which can make the difference in how long someone can live healthily while reducing the pressure on other public services, such as the NHS and social care.

By improving the way our systems and services work together, we can encourage new ideas and finally help reduce the healthy life expectancy gap between those in the least and most deprived areas.

i To find out more about the **Shaping Places for Healthier Lives Programme**, please visit www.local.gov.uk/shaping-places-healthier-lives-about-programme, or email SPHL@local.gov.uk.

The Health Foundation is an independent charity committed to bringing about better health and care for people in the UK, see www.health.org.uk



Councillor **Neil Prior** is Deputy Chairman of the LGA's Improvement and Innovation Board, and Productivity Lead Member

Understanding cyber risk

There is an urgent need to manage cyber risk to councils

The COVID-19 crisis has been a catalyst for digital innovation within local government. However, this comes with an increased risk of cyber attacks – a risk that may cost councils millions of pounds and result in the sensitive data of our most vulnerable residents being sold on the dark web.

In light of this, the LGA has delivered security testing to a representative 10 per cent sample of local authorities, identified with the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and the Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation.

This has helped us to better understand common vulnerabilities in councils, make operational recommendations, and come to strategic conclusions for local government leaders, which we are sharing to support the sector's efforts in managing cyber risk.

For now, I would like to draw your attention to the seven strategic conclusions:

- People, process, technology – vulnerabilities stem from people and processes, as much as technology.
- Investment – underinvestment in any of the above comes at increasing cost and risk. New vulnerabilities arise, so ensure old vulnerabilities do not linger.
- Cyber leadership – decision makers

and scrutiny bodies must have the cyber knowledge and understanding they need.

- Risk management – technology cannot be completely 'de-risked', but risks can be managed.
- Workforce – cyber security is a whole-workforce issue. Everyone must understand their role in protecting the organisation and residents.
- Readiness – expect a successful attack and to be impacted. Plan and exercise response and recovery.
- Prioritise cyber security-related change programmes – the impact of a successful attack on services will exceed the frictional impact of change.

There has never been a more urgent need to understand and manage

cyber risk. In doing so, we are more likely to protect key services and vulnerable people, and respond and recover more quickly when an incident occurs.

Councillors have a hugely important role to play in showing political leadership and making the case for investment in this area.

Cyber security may feel like a technical subject; however, it doesn't mean we can't have useful conversations around how our councils are approaching and managing cyber risk.

Our '10 questions a councillor could ask' is a great place to start (see below, and bit.ly/30oRbcb).



For more information on the LGA's work on cyber security, please email LGACyberSecurity@local.gov.uk

10 questions to ask

- **How does my council understand, assess, manage and remediate cyber risk,** and what testing regimes, policies, processes and tools does it use?
- **Do my council's decision makers and scrutineers have the knowledge and information** they need to make/scrutinise decisions relating to cyber risk?
- **How do officers back up council data** – is this secure, offline, and tested regularly?
- **Are staff given training on their role** in reducing cyber risk, and is cyber security understood as a whole-workforce issue?
- **Do members receive regular cyber security updates** – including on threats, incidents and near misses?
- **How does my council use** the National Cyber Security Centre's tools and services?
- **What are the response, recovery and continuity plans** for cyber incidents, and are they exercised and tested?
- **How would we deliver services** if, following a cyber incident, we had no access to IT?
- **What are we doing to understand and manage** cyber security risk within the supply chain?
- **How well connected is my council** to others from which it may learn, or that may support it, in the event of an attack?

COMMENT

Empowering local communities



Councillor **Sam Chapman-Allen** is Chair of the District Councils' Network

I would first like to express my thanks to the hundreds of district and unitary council leaders and chief executives who joined us for our annual conference last month.

After such a long time behind a screen, it was lovely to be able to see so many colleagues in person and learn from our shared experiences of an extraordinary 18 months.

Over the course of this pandemic,

District Councils' Network (DCN) member councils have stepped up heroically to the challenges presented to us.

Whether it be delivering £9 billion in lifeline business support grants, providing emergency shelter to thousands of rough sleepers, or helping local businesses and high streets reopen safely, our members have been at the heart of supporting our communities when they have needed it the most.

This is an exciting time to be taking over as Chair of the DCN. Cllr John Fuller did a tremendous job in this role and he leaves big shoes to fill.

But it is an honour to help support and promote the fantastic work that our member councils do every day to help their communities, as we look to build back better from the pandemic.

It's clear that much of the Government's well-publicised ambition to level up the country cannot be achieved without a strong partnership with local government. This creates a fantastic opportunity for us to shape what the Government does on the big issues of the day.

Levelling up cannot simply be a political slogan. Fundamentally, it must be about giving powers and responsibilities to local communities to reduce inequality, to create opportunities, to make local economies thrive, and to improve the life chances of people living across the country.

For too long, England's fastest-growing towns and cities have been locked out of opportunities to shape more of their future – at great national cost. The approach so far, focusing on large metropolitan areas, has overlooked an inconvenient truth: that smaller places were growing faster than larger ones.

If levelling up is to be a success, it should be bottom-up, flexible and non-prescriptive, allowing councils to come together to reflect the economic patterns around towns and cities, and supporting connections across larger areas.

We need the Government to lay out the full range of powers and funding that it is willing to devolve to local areas, and then deliver on its commitment.

During the pandemic, we've proven our capacity and desire to support and lead our local communities. We want Government to give us the powers to do even more.

We want the Government to support local areas to develop their own partnerships of choice to attract the powers needed to support their economic geographies, with every council in those areas on an equal footing in any agreed deals.

District councils stand ready and able to help fulfil the Government's aim to level up the country and ensure that nowhere is left behind.

With the right backing, the flexibility and the powers to deliver change, we can help drive the national recovery and make the country fit for the future.

✧ Levelling up ✧ cannot be achieved without a strong partnership with local government ✧

The DCN wants the backing and powers to deliver change locally

DISTRICT COUNCILS' NETWORK
BETTER LIVES – STRONGER ECONOMIES



BETTER LIVES
STRONGER ECONOMIES

i The District Councils' Network is an LGA special interest group and a cross-party organisation representing 183 district and unitary councils in England; see districtcouncils.info

Councils are leading the fight on climate change



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

As COP26 negotiations in Glasgow ended, some promising commitments were made to tackle the climate emergency – so why is our government already going backwards?

Even before COP26 started, Chancellor Rishi Sunak's Budget slashed the duty on domestic flights, and last month ministers made yet another U-turn on commitments to 'level-up the North' through a comprehensive rail network, which would have been a great step forward for low carbon public transport.

No wonder the public don't think that Boris Johnson can be trusted.

To fight climate change, we need meaningful empowerment of local government and funding to accompany it.

As leaders of our towns and cities, Labour councillors are leading the way in taking bold action towards a net zero future. We know our communities best and find innovative solutions that are tailored to our local areas.

Councils are also most trusted to tackle climate change. Recent polling by the LGA has found that 40 per cent of residents trusted their councils most to address the climate emergency.

In local government, we are the driving force behind green investment and can ensure local communities are consulted on plans to move toward a greener future.

Local ambition is way ahead of national government. Around 300 councils have declared a climate emergency, with plans to go faster and further than the Government's current agenda.

Councils should collaborate and share best practice in order to take inspiration from one another and lead citizens along the difficult path to net zero. The UK100

and LGA Labour Climate Emergency websites showcase examples of how determined local authorities are to tackle climate change.

Ultimately though, local authorities represent just one cog in a global wheel: councils need funding from national government to implement the green infrastructure we need to tackle climate change.

Local government is on the frontline and ready to deliver the policies needed – it's finally time for national government to catch us up, delivering the resources we need to turn our aspirations on climate change into action.

"Councils need national funding to implement the green infrastructure we need to tackle climate change"



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

Levelling up requires devolving down

Levelling up has meant "everything and nothing" for some people because they "haven't been able to get a fix on it" – not my words, but those of Michael Gove MP, on his 36th day as Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities.

Mr Gove was speaking at the LGA's most recent Councillors' Forum, and he was refreshingly clear about what he sees as the four elements of levelling up.

These are: strengthening local leadership; improving living standards (particularly where they are lower); improving the quality of public services (particularly where they are poor); and making sure people have a "proper pride" in the place they call home.

We are looking forward to seeing these ambitions – and a strategy for delivering them – set out in the

Government's Levelling Up White Paper, due out before Christmas.

Because we are also quite clear about what it will take to deliver levelling up – and that is a place-based strategy with real devolution of powers to local government. The default should be devolution.

Councils have demonstrated strong leadership throughout the pandemic, yet the UK remains one of the most centralised countries in the democratic world.

As we look towards a recovery that works for all, now is the right time to bring forward an ambitious new devolution settlement that gives councils the powers and funding they

need to address regional inequality, tackle concentrations of deprivation and make our towns and communities attractive places to live, work and visit.

Encouragingly, Mr Gove also told us he was keen to "get behind local government, empower local government, and consider how we can drive devolution further".

We have set out some ideas about how we can do this (see p14), and we look forward to working with councils and government to make this ambition a reality. I continue at every opportunity to emphasise that if we are to successfully build back better from this pandemic, it has to be local.





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

Local government's climate role recognised

Last month, I was privileged to be part of the LGA delegation to COP26, the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, alongside our Chairman, Cllr James Jamieson, Cllr David Renard, Chairman of the LGA's Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, and colleagues from the other political groups.

It was great that the LGA was present at such a high-profile event, including in both the Green Zone, the public-facing part, and the Blue Zone, where the formal negotiations took place.

With the LGA having led the calls for a dedicated local and regional government day, we were delighted to participate in the Cities, Regions and the Built Environment Day, which, alongside our exhibition stand, provided a great opportunity to highlight the excellent work being undertaken by the sector to tackle climate change and move towards net zero.

We were also pleased that the final text of the conference recognised the urgent need for multilevel and co-operative action and the important role of local and regional governments in relation to this.

"The UK is a world leader in the fight against climate change"

My abiding memories of the conference will be of people from across the world coming together with a common purpose, as well as the recognition from many foreign delegates that the UK is a world leader in the fight against climate change.

In partnership with the excellent COP26 President, Alok Sharma, who remains in post for another year, it is now incumbent on us to work together to ensure that the agreements made at the conference are implemented.



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

Time for action after COP26

Now that the dust has settled on COP26, we turn our attention to the actions we must take following the conference.

After months of effort, we can celebrate our success in getting recognition of the importance of local government in tackling climate change into what was agreed.

"This agreement falls way short of the action that was needed"

It showed the LGA's cross-party working as the 'voice of local government' at its best.

I would like to say a big thank you to Cllr Pippa Heylings, our climate change lead, who was amazing at COP26 last month; she's driven the argument, in so many ways.

But even with recognition of local government, we cannot pretend that the world is suddenly saved. This agreement falls way short of the action that was needed.

This disappointment is hardly surprising. Despite the importance of the conference, the Prime Minister and his Government were distracted, preoccupied with trying to help their friends out of lobbying and corruption scandals. It is simply not good enough.

The Paris Agreement set out the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C. That is the tipping point beyond which the world is set to see billions of people facing extreme weather events, countless millions displaced from their homes and, quite possibly, societal collapse.

COP26 was supposed to chart the course to meet this target: instead, it has barely been worth the excess emissions caused by the flights to Glasgow.

I know my Liberal Democrat colleagues in power in councils up and down the country are doing their bit, are others?



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

The human impact on climate change

Several of our members attended COP26, speaking up effectively inside and outside the arena, demonstrating just how much the human impact on climate change matters.

I spoke at three events: a passionate call to action, a more measured piece on planning and the Environment Bill, and one for local government in Europe.

We also worked to help get the wording improved in the final declaration, making sure local government is identified as part of the solution.

The Paris-agreed goal is to minimise the impact on our planet to a maximum global warming of 1.5°C. On our current trajectory, the earth will heat by 2.7°C by 2050.

If all the promises were costed and put into place, we would reach around 2°C, which sadly, is not enough.

Imagine how it will be when great cities and whole countries have become uninhabitable because of the increasing extremes of weather, taking people's homes and land currently needed to grow food.

COP26 was an amazing, vibrant event with so many people encouraging each other to do more. The downside is that it is not enough.

"Imagine how it will be when great cities and whole countries have become uninhabitable"

This is not about building more, but less. Planting trees and moving to electricity is much discussed, but it doesn't excuse our current rate of consumption.

A no-waste economy and preserving resources is where we need to focus our innovation and efforts.

There are many initiatives: what we need is a properly costed strategy with the impacts calculated, costed and funded, at every level.



Sarah Mann is
Director of Friends,
Families and Travellers

Countering inequalities

Over the past 18 months, here at Friends, Families and Travellers, we have continued to support all Gypsy and Traveller people, regardless of background or ethnicity, pushing to get a fair deal and protect the nomadic way of life.

We know that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are known to face some of the poorest life outcomes, across multiple indicators, among the UK population.

At the height of the pandemic, other issues such as lack of access to water and sanitation, evictions and lack of information

around self-isolation for community members arose in a more public way than ever before.

The pandemic has exacerbated these issues and highlighted the significant difficulties that Gypsies and Travellers face on a daily basis.

While still supporting Gypsies and Travellers with issues that have stemmed from the pandemic, our attention must now also turn to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, which threatens the nomadic way of life and the foundations of Gypsies' and Travellers' existence as a whole.

With the national chronic shortage of sites, it is a scary prospect that the criminalisation of trespass looms ever closer and it is more important than ever that we work together to protect and support Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Friends, Families and Travellers are

i **Friends, Families and Travellers is a national charity** that works on behalf of all Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. See www.gypsy-traveller.org/training-packages/ for more information about its cultural awareness training



continuously working with various organisations, including local government, and providing support to help engage and work with local Gypsy and Traveller communities.

One thing local government has found really helpful is our training: in the past year, more than 850 individuals completed our cultural awareness training to help provide more inclusive services for Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Our recent course, delivered to councillors, has positively impacted the provision of transit and sites in certain areas.

Small practical changes such as this have a big impact on individuals and communities, and are the first step to countering the vast inequalities faced by Gypsies and Travellers across the country.

High-quality sites for Gypsies and Travellers



Boris Worrall is Chief
Executive of Rooftop
Housing Group

The Gypsy, Romany, and Traveller communities remain too often misunderstood, marginalised, and even maligned.

Local authorities have always played a key role in managing the complex landscape of providing housing and services for these communities, while also balancing the need to discharge enforcement duties and respond to public and political pressures which can arise within the settled community.

Where significant problems arise, the costs can run into hundreds of thousands of pounds for a local authority in any given year.

But where high-quality sites are provided for the Gypsy, Romany, and Traveller (GRT) communities, and managed effectively, there is a wealth of evidence about better outcomes for residents, positive

**Accommodation at
Gables Close, Solihull**



community relations and the avoidance of taxpayer costs.

Quite simply, providing good social housing for this distinct demographic delivers the triple bottom line of social, environmental, and financial impact.

Delivering good housing for Gypsy, Romany and Traveller communities is also a moral imperative, in addressing significant health and inequality gaps which have widened further during the pandemic.

While there are undoubted challenges,

help is at hand through a new guide to delivering sites, produced by a group of specialist housing associations that came together to share ideas and support those wanting and needing to address unmet housing need, or unsuitable existing provision.

'Places we're proud of' is designed as an easy-to-read introduction to what we think works, with examples of how successful sites have been delivered elsewhere.

It has already sparked interest from local authorities, as well as the Scottish Government, which has a new £20 million GRT housing investment programme running at the moment.

Members of our group and I have shared development appraisals, site profiles and site management insight with more than 20 councils in the past year.

My own organisation is about to develop a new site with a Midlands council, is working up a proposal with another, and advising a third.

Our message is that while delivering sites might not be easy, we are absolutely here to help you.

i **The Rooftop Housing Group Ltd** is a registered provider of social housing. See <https://bit.ly/3C0TGhA> for '**Places we're proud of: a short guide to providing and managing sites for Gypsies and Travellers**'



Rayhan Haque is
Campaign Manager
at Community
Wealth Fund Alliance

Investing in 'left behind' areas

If levelling up is to be a success in the most 'left behind' neighbourhoods it needs to bolster their social infrastructure, alongside interventions targeted at improving specific metrics such as employment, training or education.

Both evidence and experience indicate that strong social foundations will help to secure the success of these other interventions in such areas; without it, they are likely to fail.

More than 460 public, private and voluntary sector organisations, including some 40 councils and combined authorities, are supporting a proposed 'community wealth fund', which would see the creation of an independent endowment designed and distributed to provide support and funding to reinvigorate social infrastructure in 'left behind' neighbourhoods.

Four key principles would govern the fund: long-term, 'patient' funding (10-15 years); investment directly into 'left behind' neighbourhoods; community-led decision-making; and appropriate support provided to build community confidence and capacity.

These principles are based on learnings from previous government and charitable funding initiatives.

Research from the University of Cambridge (2019) analysed the effects of

government funding schemes over the past 40 years.

It found that the key ingredients to success included long-term funding of at least 10 years, community involvement embedded at every stage of design and delivery, and support and guidance throughout to ensure the best outcomes for residents.

These key elements are also supported in a recent report by Onward, a non-profit think tank, on what works in neighbourhood regeneration.

In January 2021, the Government estimated that at least £880 million could be released from dormant bonds, stocks, securities, shares, insurance and pension funds.

Currently, this funding is earmarked for spending on 'social and environmental purposes'. We believe that this funding should be used to create a community wealth fund and would have a transformational impact on levelling up the country.

On 16 November, in a significant moment, the House of Lords voted in



Local Trust was established in 2012 to deliver Big Local, a National Lottery Community Fund-funded programme, see <https://localtrust.org.uk/>. **It is a founding member of the Community Wealth Fund Alliance**, see <https://communitywealthfund.org.uk/>



Community-organised health walks around the local area of Wormley and Turnford in June 2021

favour of community wealth funds during a debate on the Dormant Assets Bill.

In terms of impact, the fund is likely to have a significant payback.

A leading consultancy, Frontier Economics, conducted an independent assessment of the fiscal and economic returns of a community wealth fund in the most 'left behind' areas.

Using only robust evidence, and with conservative assumptions, it estimates that a £1 million investment in social infrastructure in a 'left behind' area could generate approximately £3.2 million in fiscal and economic benefits over a 10-year period.

It's important to stress that community wealth funds do not seek to undermine or diminish the role of local government. Local democratic structures are an important part of our national settlement and require proper resourcing in order to play their vital role.

Rather, our proposal is for complementary investment in building the capacity of communities to participate in civic life, strengthening its weave and weft, and securing much stronger local accountability by giving communities power over some decisions and a budget to improve their areas.

Dozens of local councils and combined authorities who recognise the potential of a community-led approach to addressing deep-rooted social and economic problems have joined our campaign for the fund. We hope you will join them too.



Enterprising young people



Pat Shelley is Chief Executive Officer of Launch It

Launch It runs enterprise centres in deprived communities, encouraging more young people in these areas to start businesses.

We target 18 to 30-year-olds who face social and economic disadvantage, addressing barriers by providing an intensive two-year support programme featuring workspace, training, mentoring, networking and access to funding.

We offer subsidised rent without long-term contracts, allowing new entrepreneurs to build their businesses without unnecessary financial risks, and work closely with local authorities to repurpose under-used buildings in which to deliver our services.

Awais Parvais has been supported by Launch It to start his vegan food company, Vegoo Foods. He says: "My life has not been easy with all the personal issues I've had. I always wanted to start a business and with Launch It's help that has been made possible. I feel like I've upgraded as an individual and with this new mentality, I don't see any barrier for what I want to achieve out of life."

The Launch It programme has a significant impact on young people like Awais, many of whom are struggling to find work or source the support to start their new business. They develop skills, build confidence and feel status and pride in their achievements.

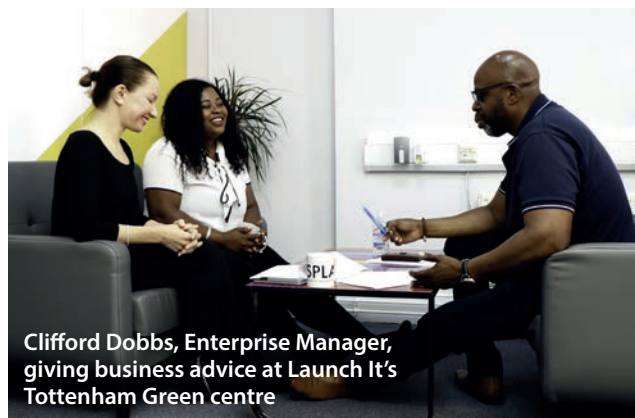
Our 'Level Up' report shows that more than 75 per cent of young entrepreneurs are more satisfied with their work than their peers in employment and 81 per cent said their finances are as good or better than before they started a business.

For the wider community, there's an increased number of business start-ups,

leading to increased local spending and reduced unemployment.

On average, 66 per cent of Launch It businesses are still trading after five years, and just under half of those go on to employ at least one other person. Of those still trading, 88 per cent remain in the borough in which they started.

We are looking to expand and would welcome opportunities to discuss our plans with UK local authorities. Please email me at Pat@launchit.org.uk or call me on 07711 424245.



Clifford Dobbs, Enterprise Manager, giving business advice at Launch It's Tottenham Green centre

i **Launch It is a group of charities** aiming to change lives through enterprise, see www.launchit.org.uk

Making better use of technology



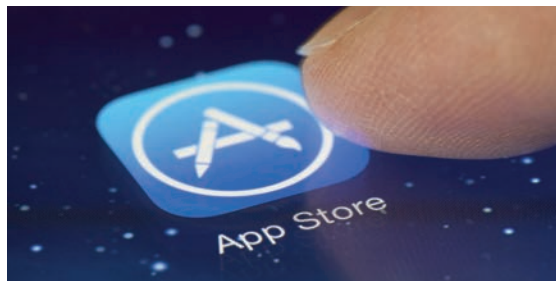
Councillor **Clare Golby** (Con) is Deputy Leader of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Why doesn't local government use technology better?

As Deputy Leader of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, it's a question I often ask myself.

I'm also Business Development Manager for a tech company and consequently have a good view of issues in public sector organisations, with knowledge that solutions are already available or easily achievable via private sector tech companies.

It's amazing what's out there with app development, artificial intelligence (AI) and data-driven analytics.



How can we play our part in making the UK a science and technology superpower if local government – which makes fundamental decisions affecting the lives of millions of people every day – doesn't improve our use of technology?

Perhaps because there will always be customers for our services there is a reluctance to change?

A captive clientele is no excuse for slow transformation – with the gateway to services the most obvious place to start.

Missed bin collection? No problem, there's an app for that, or there should be.

The lag in local government uptake of technology could perhaps be attributed to a lack of available finance.

Better use of technology, streamlining and improving services will help improve our customers' experience and reduce cost to the public purse. Spend to save. It's not actually that expensive over a longer-term financial view.

The public sector is definitely not helped by 'government framework for suppliers' applications only being opened once a year, leading to smaller tech companies being overlooked or excluded. The same big tech firms seem to dominate, and competition in government's digital marketplace isn't what it should be.

Smaller tech companies are agile and responsive to rapidly changing landscapes in technology. A smaller, more local focus would arguably be better to assist with bespoke digital transformation in local government.

Now is the time to do things differently, leverage our data, and take the best of the private sector to provide cost-effective, customisable, scalable solutions to councils – bringing local government services into the 21st century.

LGA Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition

15-16 March 2022, Hilton Hotel
Newcastle Gateshead

The Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition is a key event in the calendar for senior officers and members of fire and rescue authorities.

The fire and rescue sector has played a critical role in the ongoing pandemic response whilst continuing to deliver the core functions that keep our communities safe. The 2022 LGA Fire Conference provides an opportunity to consider key strategic and practical developments that can be expected to impact the fire and rescue sector over the next year.

To book your place visit: www.local.gov.uk/events



LGA virtual events programme

**The LGA continues to run a full
programme of virtual events.**

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

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

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



60 SECONDS WITH?



Elliott Lancaster

Elliott Lancaster is a 24-year-old postgraduate student at Keele University. He was a finalist for the Chegg.org Global Student Prize 2021 for his Utter Rubbish app, which helps councils handle waste and recycling

Q How did you get interested in rubbish?

A I did a work placement project at a Staffordshire council and was working with officers. I wasn't previously aware of the big problem of contamination of recycling – it can cost £200 a bale, with councils facing bills in excess of half a million for contaminated recycling.

Particularly considering climate change, it's much better to recycle because it reduces our carbon footprint and generates revenue for councils – that's so important, I realise they have challenges around that.

Q What does the Utter Rubbish app do?

A Utter Rubbish is a social enterprise and mobile app connecting citizens to local councils, helping to reduce waste and updating residents on recycling policies in real time. The app notifies residents of their recycling times, what goes in each bin, what can be recycled and when, to avoid any confusion. It provides clear communication about recycling.

I found as a student that different councils have different policies and practices. If you move to a different area, you have different bins, with different things that go in each. Students try to recycle but, for example, there are so many different types of plastic, all with recycling symbols on the back – I found it very confusing.

Some residents are also not aware of what is best practice. The app is designed to help them and to increase recycling and reduce fly-tipping. It has a fly-tipping reporting mechanism, so councils can be notified immediately and identify areas where there are recurring problems.

It can also be used for information campaigns. For example, if an area seems to have a problem with a particular material, it can target that area and counter any myths about what can and can't be recycled.

Q How did it feel to be one of the 10 students shortlisted for the Chegg.org Global Student Prize 2021?

A Being recognised by the prize has been an amazing experience. It's an

opportunity to show people the work of all the nominated students. It's incredibly humbling to be recognised in this way.

Q What are you studying?

A I did an undergraduate degree in accounting and finance and am doing a postgraduate qualification in responsible enterprises. It's important to support organisations that want to make a difference in the world.

Q What do you want to do next?

A I'd really like to continue with the app, and get more councils on board, and see the impact it has. I would also like to promote young people and make sure the student voice is heard and that young people are empowered. I also campaign and lobby for mental health, sustainability, social enterprise, solutions for homelessness, and for organisations to become carbon neutral.

ELECTIONS

A disparate set of results



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



go, again finishing a distant second. Undaunted, he tried and succeeded at the third time of asking. Labour struggles to progress. Its win in Carlisle's Currock and Upperby ward was

a gain from UKIP, where the now largely defunct party did not field a candidate.

In Newark and Sherwood's Rainworth South and Blidworth ward, Labour had the misfortune to run into Independent Tina Thompson. She failed by just 54 votes to win the Blidworth county division from the Conservatives, but was too strong for her Labour opponent this time.

Labour failed, too, in Canterbury, where the Greens captured the vacant seat in Gorrell ward. In 2019, Labour won all three seats, but their third-placed victor finished just nine votes ahead of the Green.

Next May's elections should provide some interesting battles between these two parties.

There were some fascinating stories, but no clear electoral trends emerged from this latest, large and disparate set of by-elections.

Running contrary to a national trend that sees the Conservatives under pressure, the party made some by-election gains.

The narrow margin of 19 votes saw it regain control of Surrey Heath Borough Council after taking a Lib Dem seat in Frimley Green. The absence of any UKIP candidate this time helped the Conservatives' cause.

In West Devon's Bere Ferrers ward, the Lib Dem fate was sealed following a strong Labour performance and the intervention of the Greens, which assisted Conservative victory.

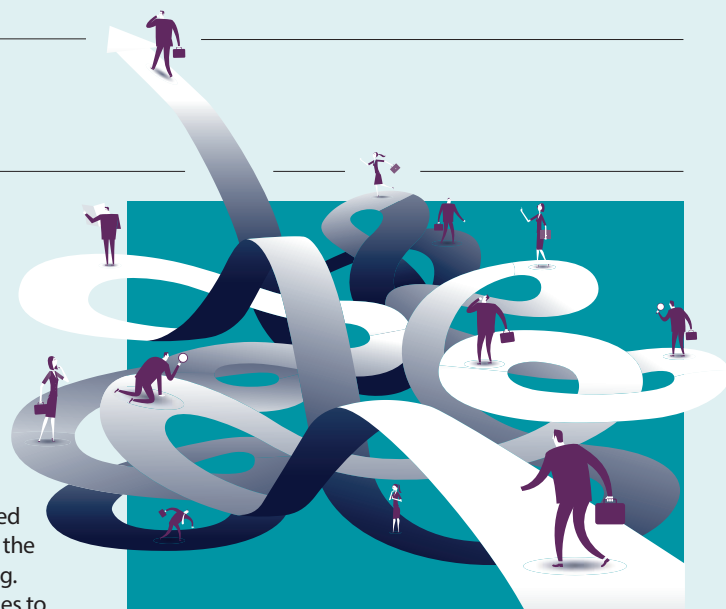
In North Kesteven's Metheringham ward, the Conservatives were only denied two wins in the double vacancy when the second seat was decided by lot after a tie with the Lincolnshire Independents.

The Conservatives had an easier ride in the Sleaford Castle ward, when the Independents did not defend their seat.

In South Kesteven, however, local support for Independent Richard Cleaver, the winner of the Sleaford West division in the county election last May, resulted in a Conservative defeat in Stamford All Saints ward.

Gloucester's Longlevens ward saw Lib Dem Sarah Sawyer and Conservative Julie Evans resume their battle for election. Last May, the three-member ward divided its support, giving the Lib Dems one seat and the Conservatives two, with Sawyer narrowly losing out then – but winning this latest contest.

The Lib Dem gain in West Sussex provides a further example of perseverance rewarded. The Bourne division was contested by Andrew Kerry-Bedell in a 2019 by-election that saw a Conservative returned. Earlier this year he had another



But there was better news for Labour in Cardiff's Heath division – which the Heath and Birchgrove Independents decided not to contest – and better still in Rutland, where Labour's Leah Toseland provided the party with a very rare victory.

She prevailed in a straight fight with her Conservative opponent for the privilege of representing Oakham North West ward. According to our records, this is the first elected Labour member on Rutland County Council since 2002.

i Only results where there was a change of political control are shown below. For the full results, and additional data on other recent results, please visit www.local.gov.uk/first

Local by-elections

Canterbury, Gorrell

GREEN GAIN FROM LAB
13.2% over Lab Turnout 31.5%

Cardiff, Heath

LAB GAIN FROM IND
16.4% over Con Turnout 38.2%

Carlisle, Currock and Upperby

LAB GAIN FROM UKIP
20.2% over Con Turnout 17%

Gloucester, Longlevens

LIB DEM GAIN FROM CON
29.3% over Con Turnout 34.7%

Newark and Sherwood, Rainworth South and Blidworth

IND GAIN FROM LAB
49.1% over Con Turnout 22.2%

North Kesteven, Metheringham (2)

CON GAIN FROM Lincs IND
Lincs IND HELD
2% over Lincs Ind Turnout 21.3%

North Kesteven, Sleaford Castle

CON GAIN FROM Lincs IND
13.1% over Lab Turnout 14.8%

Rutland, Oakham North West

LAB GAIN FROM IND
25.2% over Con Turnout 18.5%

South Kesteven, Stamford All Saints

IND GAIN FROM CON
32.4% over Con Turnout 23.2%

Surrey Heath, Frimley Green

CON GAIN FROM LIB DEM
1% over Lib Dem Turnout 35.7%

West Devon, Bere Ferrers

CON GAIN FROM LIB DEM
0.1% over Lab Turnout 37.5%

West Sussex, Bourne

LIB DEM GAIN FROM CON
12.6% over Con Turnout 22.5%

LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition

28-30 June 2022

Harrogate
Convention Centre

www.local.gov.uk/conference

Early bird rate available for LGA members