

# first

Local government

Local  
Government  
Association

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**HM Queen Elizabeth II**  
1926 - 2022

**9** | **A life of service**  
Bringing people  
together to mourn  
HM Queen Elizabeth II

**12** | **A new PM**  
Decentralisation is  
key to delivering  
economic growth

**16** | **Young councillors**  
LGA support facilitates  
cross-party networks  
and tools to succeed

**18** | **Ordinary lives**  
Listening to people with  
learning disabilities and  
autistic people



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# CONTENTS



## Spirit of service

**I**t has been an extraordinary time in the life of the nation. I would like to thank you for all the work that you and your teams have done to enable your communities to express their grief and mark the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Moments like these bind our communities together and demonstrate the same spirit of service embodied by the Queen, in her long life of service (see p9).

These events have overshadowed the arrival of a new Prime Minister in Downing Street, but the LGA has welcomed Liz Truss and looks forward to working with her in the future (p12).

The LGA's political group leaders and I have reiterated the important role councils can continue to play in the life of the nation given the right powers and adequate funding (p28).

Elsewhere in this month's **first**, we look at the LGA's support for young councillors (p16); the beautifully ordinary lives that people with learning difficulties and autistic people want to lead (p18); how libraries are helping support the youngest children and their families (p21); and hear from Ofsted about employer standards for children's social workers (p22).

**Cllr James Jamieson**  
is LGA Chairman



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## FEATURES

### 09 A life of service

Councils bring people together to mourn Queen Elizabeth II

### 12 A new Prime Minister

Why councils are best placed to deliver locally

### 13 Financial resilience

Sustainable approaches to the cost of living

### 14 Culture and leisure

Providing vital social and economic support

### 16 Young councillors

LGA training builds cross-party networks

### 18 Ordinary lives

Listening to people with learning disabilities

### 21 Early years lifeline

How libraries support the youngest children

### 22 Employer standards

Support for children's social workers

### 24 Local leadership

Meet the LGA's new executive members

## COMMENT

### 27 Climate change

Local collaboration on reducing emissions

### 30 Delivering net zero

Co-creating a circular economy in Yorkshire

### 30 Tennis for all

Transforming lives with free local sport

## REGULARS

### 04 News

### 08 Parliament – housing

### 28 Chairman and group leaders

### 31 Local by-elections



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## Millions mourn passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II

**As first was going to press, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was being laid to rest in St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, following a state funeral attended by world leaders.**

The event marked the end of an official 10-day mourning period, in which thousands of people lined the streets for glimpses of the Queen's coffin on its last journeys and queued for hours to pay their respects while she lay in state in St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, and at Westminster Hall in the Palace of Westminster.

Councils opened public and virtual books of condolence, flew flags at half-

mast, provided places for the public to lay flowers, organised proclamation ceremonies announcing the accession of His Majesty King Charles III, and set up big screens in key locations for people to view his mother's funeral together.

On behalf of all councils across England and Wales, Cllr James Jamieson, LGA Chairman, expressed sincere condolences to the whole Royal Family, in a letter to the King.

"Councils have been proud to serve Her Majesty throughout her reign," said Cllr Jamieson.

"Her Majesty's dedication to every one of

us, alongside her continuous hard work and loyalty to her United Kingdom, was clear to see throughout her life.

"Her high regard for local government was also truly reflective in her focus and appreciation of councils' work and determination in her annual Queen's Speeches."

He added: "Her celebration of communities and recognition of civic pride and achievement in all walks of life empowered local leadership and commemorated all those who have contributed to the life of the nation and the Commonwealth.

"It was fitting that communities up and down the country had the opportunity to pay tribute to Her Majesty this summer at The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, which brought the entire nation together in celebration of her longstanding service to the country."

● See p9, p28

**first** is essential reading  
for **councillors and chief  
executives** in the LGA's **member  
local authorities** and both the magazine  
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# LGA welcomes new PM

**The LGA has called on the new Prime Minister to “realise the opportunities devolution can offer” by decentralising powers and services away from Whitehall to empower and strengthen local communities.**

Liz Truss, the former Foreign Secretary, defeated former Chancellor Rishi Sunak in the Conservative Party leadership contest to replace Boris Johnson.

Cllr James Jamieson, LGA Chairman, said: “On behalf of councils across England and Wales, I would like to congratulate Liz Truss on becoming our next Prime Minister and very much look forward to meeting and working with her and her government to help deliver her domestic agenda, and on the key issues and opportunities which lie ahead.

“As our new PM already knows, councils have led their communities through an extraordinary few years, with the pandemic highlighting what can be achieved when

government works with councils as equal partners to support all residents and local businesses.

“Currently, whether it is helping those impacted by the increasing cost of living, supporting those fleeing Ukraine and Afghanistan, looking after the vulnerable, building desperately needed homes and giving our younger generation the best start in life, councils stand ready to work with the Government to provide the best possible help to those that need it.

“It is also abundantly clear that further decentralisation of powers and services away from Whitehall to local communities can empower and strengthen neighbourhoods.

“Now is the perfect opportunity to bring central and local government closer together to realise the opportunities devolution can offer and to deliver public services that reflect local needs and ambitions.”

● See p12, p28



## Rent cap on social housing – consultation

A consultation inviting views from social housing tenants and landlords on a proposed rent cap has been launched by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Under the proposals, a cap would be placed on social housing rent increases for the coming financial year, at either 3, 5, or 7 per cent.

The cap is designed to help support the most vulnerable households that are currently facing significant cost-of-living pressures.

However, the LGA says there are concerns that a cap will impact on housing providers' ability to provide critical services for residents and invest in new and existing homes.

In a joint statement with Kate Henderson, Chief Executive of the National Housing Federation, Cllr James Jamieson, LGA Chairman, said: “Councils and not-for-profit housing associations are very concerned about the impact rising living costs are having on social housing residents.

“Housing providers have been carefully considering their approach to next year's rents and will do all they can to keep increases low where possible.

“Decisions on the level of rent increases for tenants need to be made by housing providers within the existing government rent policy commitment, ensuring that there is a careful balance between affordability for tenants and investment in the homes that they live in.

“If the Government does take forward a lower cap, then it should provide additional funding for 2023/24 and for future years so that housing providers can continue to safeguard services and meet the country's future housing needs.”

● The consultation closes on 12 Oct, see [www.government.uk/government/consultations](https://www.government.uk/government/consultations)

## New ministers for local government

Former local government minister Simon Clarke has returned to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) as Secretary of State, under new Prime Minister Liz Truss.

Mr Clarke takes over from Greg Clark, who was appointed by former PM Boris Johnson after he removed his predecessor, Michael Gove.

In 2010, Mr Clarke, the then Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government, told **first** he was a “convinced devolutionist” and that “we should be humble in terms of recognising the limitations of the central state”, (see **first** 651).

The ministerial team at DLUHC now comprises Paul Scully and Lia Nici, appointed in July, and Dehenna Davison and Lee Rowley, both appointed in early September.

Former DLUHC minister Kemi Badenoch is now International Trade Secretary, while former Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick returns to the frontbenches as a health minister.

Other significant cabinet appointments for local government include Thérèse Coffey as Secretary of State for Health and Social Care; Suella Braverman, Home Secretary; Jacob Rees-Mogg, Business Secretary; Chloe Smith,

Work and Pensions Secretary; Kit Malthouse, Education Secretary; Ranil Jayawardena, Environment Secretary; Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Transport Secretary; Robert Buckland, Secretary of State for Wales; Michelle Donelan, Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Secretary; and Graham Stuart as Climate Minister.

The LGA's political leaders have written to new ministers outlining key policy issues for councils and seeking early meetings.



Simon Clarke,  
Levelling Up  
Secretary

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## In brief

### Early years warning

A new report by the charity Action for Children has warned that over one-third of low-income families are struggling to access vital child development and parenting support in children's centres and family hubs across England. An LGA spokesperson said: "While it was good the Government announced funding through the best start and family hubs programme, we are concerned only half of councils will be able to access support through the programme's funding over the next three years. It is vital the Government fully funds the early years entitlements, ensuring providers get the support they need while enabling all children to have access to places."

● See p21

### Capital and care costs

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman has issued guidance for councils where people may have given away money or other assets with the intention of avoiding charges for adult social care. Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "Councils rightly expect that all those who can afford to contribute financially to their own care do so in accordance with national and local charging policies. If people try to avoid paying for their care, this ultimately puts further pressure on the system and the taxpayer, and it is unfair to those who do make the expected financial contribution. Councils support further guidance to ensure that work around possible deprivation of capital is handled fairly, accurately and carefully. They have a duty to act where they suspect deliberate deprivation has taken place."

### Teaching assistants

Schools in England risk losing teaching assistants to better paid jobs in supermarkets because of "chronic" low pay and the cost-of-living crisis, according to a report by researchers at the University of Portsmouth's Education Research, Innovation and Consultancy Unit. The report says that the "chronic" low pay of teaching assistants, despite their increased role in many schools, is an "an urgent threat" to their livelihood, and to schools.

## New cap on household energy bills

The Government is to cap average energy household bills at around £2,500 a year for the next two years, to protect people from soaring prices.

The plans – unveiled by new Prime Minister Liz Truss in early September – involve replacing the current price cap with a new 'energy price guarantee', which limits the amount suppliers can charge for each unit of energy. There will also be some short-term support for businesses.

Cllr Andrew Western, Chair of the LGA's Resources Board, said: "This plan will go some way to alleviating the pressures on households and businesses caused by rising costs of energy and other essentials.

"Councils are taking practical steps to support those in their communities this winter, to address immediate hardship and improve people's financial resilience and wellbeing, including through their use of the Household Support Fund.

"Ensuring financial support is targeted towards those most in need will continue to be crucial over the next few months, including for those on the lowest incomes.

"Longer-term, we need to ensure everyone can afford to heat their homes and prevent the risk of people developing health problems due to cold and damp conditions.

"The mainstream welfare system should ensure people have sufficient means to meet true living costs and councils and local partners need adequate resources to provide targeted and effective crisis support, alongside services that increase opportunity and lift people out of poverty for good.

"Accelerating the transition to renewable energy, retrofitting homes and buildings, and promoting comprehensive energy advice will all be essential to sustainably keeping energy costs down. Councils are uniquely able to help lead this local effort and are ready to work with government to deliver."

## Teachers 'lack training to support pupils' mental health'

A recent survey for the charity, the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF), has found that more teachers are seeing anxious pupils and the worsening of existing mental health problems, compared with just one year ago.

Seventy per cent of teachers have seen reduced motivation and engagement among pupils, 66 per cent a worsening of existing mental health problems, and 82 per cent an increase in levels of anxiety and low mood.

The survey found secondary schools and teachers face multiple barriers to better supporting pupils' mental health – predominantly because of a lack of qualified staff, insufficient help from other professionals and, critically, a lack of time.

Cllr Lucy Nethsingha, Deputy Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, said: "Councils have worked closely with schools and other partners to provide support to children and young people,



but have had to increasingly divert early intervention spending towards more acute services due to overstretched budgets and increasing demand.

"With the annual cost of mental health problems in England estimated to be £119 billion, the Government should use its 10-year strategy to ensure that local services have sufficient funding to meet current, unmet and new demand for support. It should also include funding for preventative mental wellbeing work that can stop the escalation of mental health needs so that more costly NHS treatment is avoided."

# Road maintenance costs 'up 22%'

**The costs of street lighting, filling potholes and building new roads have soared by more than a fifth, causing pressure on stretched council budgets and delaying works.**

New analysis by the LGA and the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT) estimates that councils have faced a 37.5 per cent increase in the cost of running and repairing streetlights over the past six months.

A number of councils have seen a 22 per cent increase in the cost of repairing a pothole, relaying a road surface and other maintenance costs.

And councils' capital budgets, which support the building of new roads and other local infrastructure, have had an estimated rise of 21 per cent, pushing up the cost of delivering investment in local areas.

Global issues are impacting on costs, with councils having to ration the supply of bitumen – a material used to repair roads – or find other sources of it. Prior to the war in Ukraine, an estimated 60 per cent of bitumen on the European market was sourced from Russia.

Increasing costs for electricity, steel,



lighting and cement are also impacting council budgets, while some areas preparing for winter have been hit by a 60 per cent increase in the cost of salt.

Cllr David Renard, LGA Transport Spokesperson, said: "Councils are facing unprecedented increased costs to repair our local roads, keep our street lights switched on and invest in improved local infrastructure.

"To tackle this issue, the new Government must cover these increased costs for councils or risk the condition of roads getting worse or reductions in other services.

"Only with adequate long-term funding and the right powers, can councils deliver for our communities, tackle the climate emergency, and level up all parts of the country."

## £2bn of funding for rough sleeping strategy

The Government has promised to deploy all tools at its disposal alongside £2 billion of funding to prevent more people finding themselves without a safe roof over their heads.

'Ending rough sleeping for good', the Government's rough sleeping strategy, also commits to improving access to mental health and drug and alcohol support, as well as acknowledging plans to use a 'Housing First' approach nationally.

This involves providing stable homes for rough sleepers and providing intensive support to help them rebuild their lives.

Cllr David Renard, the LGA's Housing Spokesperson, said: "Better access to mental health and drug and alcohol support for people sleeping rough will give those who are struggling with these additional burdens the support they need to recover, and a cross-government commitment that no-one will leave a public institution – such as a hospital or prison – to the streets is a strong preventative measure that will make a real difference.

"More supported housing and use of the Housing First approach nationally is a positive step, and we are pleased at the focus on investing in the relationships between housing and adult social care for vulnerable people sleeping rough who require supported housing.

"Data is key for councils, and we're glad to see the rollout of better and more frequent rough sleeping figures, now seen quarterly instead of annually, but more detail is needed on what support there will be for councils to implement this.

"The strategy makes some positive steps towards the ultimate goal of ending rough sleeping, and councils and the LGA look forward to continuing to work with government to develop and implement any new plans."



# Affordable homes programme 'could be more ambitious'

The Government's efforts to build more affordable homes could be more ambitious in working to achieve wider aims, including on net zero and improving the quality of local housing, according to a National Audit Office report.

The programme exists to provide grant funding to housing providers in England, to try to ensure there is a sufficient supply of affordable homes.

Cllr Darren Rodwell, the LGA's Housing and Environment Spokesperson, highlighted the need to balance the requirement for more affordable homes with the importance of considering how new and existing properties are contributing to national net zero targets – as all public funds should.

"This is particularly important for new properties as it is far more expensive and

potentially difficult to retrofit at a later date, and because the affordability of a home is likely to be increasingly linked to its energy source and efficiency over time," he added.

"As well as the environmental impact, the quality of home is equally important. Decent, safe, secure and affordable housing is at the cornerstone of everything local government does, and providing it is one of the biggest challenges we face.

"The Affordable Homes Programme must take account of size requirements and consider the contrasting housing needs of communities.

"To this end, we need a range of affordable housing options that are appropriate for all stages of life and as a springboard to support communities to live healthy and independent lives."



# PARLIAMENT

## Councils as place shapers

### Delivering good-quality housing and vibrant communities

**In our engagement with Parliament and the new Government, the LGA has been making the case that councils play a vital role in steering economic development.**

This should include delivering good-quality housing supported by vital infrastructure, addressing homelessness, and delivering on our net zero ambitions.

There have been a number of opportunities to push for councils to have the powers, flexibilities and funding they need to ensure everyone has access to high-quality, energy efficient, safe and secure homes, accompanied by the necessary infrastructure to build strong and vibrant communities.

Through our lobbying on the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, we have been clear that a genuinely 'planned system' must underpin planning

reform, to ensure communities can continue to shape the places in which they live.

We have made the case that councils want to work with government to ensure that the new infrastructure levy is a success.

Empowering councils to bring vacant properties back into use is also an encouraging step, but these powers should be simple, inexpensive, and effective for councils to use.

Meanwhile, the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill was introduced into Parliament in June, and had its Committee Stage in September. The Bill intends to



**To find out more about the LGA's parliamentary and stakeholder engagement,** please visit [www.local.gov.uk/parliament](http://www.local.gov.uk/parliament)

improve the regulation of social housing to strengthen the rights of tenants.

The LGA has made the case that councils are determined that tenants should have the security of a safe and well-maintained home, with any issues quickly and satisfactorily addressed.

We welcome proposals that will strengthen the role of the regulator to enable tenants to better hold their landlord to account on consumer issues. Of course, it will be important that any new requirements or responsibilities for councils are proportionate, risk-based, align with proposals being brought forward in both the Fire Safety Act 2021 and the Building Safety Act 2022, and are fully funded.

On the first day back for Parliament after the summer recess, MPs heard from Cllr Darren Rodwell, Vice Chair of the LGA's Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, as he provided evidence to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee on reforming the private rented sector.

The panel, which featured other council representatives, agreed that everyone deserves a safe, decent, warm and affordable place to live, as this is critical to the health and wellbeing of communities.

Cllr Rodwell made the point that, while the vast majority of landlords are good, it is grossly unfair that private rented sector tenants – many of whom would be unlikely to be able to access social housing because of insufficient supply to meet demand – can expect lower-quality standards in their accommodation.

The LGA recognises the need for measures to improve living conditions in the private rented sector, and a stronger regulatory framework and a legally enforceable Decent Homes Standard framework will help close the gap in housing quality.

As the Leader of Barking and Dagenham Council, the only one with a borough-wide licensing scheme, Cllr Rodwell described such schemes as a good tool for tackling area-specific issues in relation to poor-quality accommodation.

However, he made the point that councils lack the flexibility at present to use licensing to full effect, as the schemes are subject to approval by the Secretary of State, and he pushed for councils to be able to do more to improve standards in the private rented sector.





# A life of service



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

**B**y the time you are reading this, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will have been laid to rest in St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, alongside her husband His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh.

It is truly the end of an era and, like everyone else, it was with profound sadness that I first learned of the Queen's death on 8 September.

I wrote to His Majesty King Charles III on behalf of local government to pay tribute to the commitment, selfless

devotion and generosity of spirit shown by Her Majesty during her reign as monarch over the past 70 years.

As the Head of State and the longest reigning monarch in our country's history, Her Majesty played a central role in British life, bringing the country together and shaping our values as a nation.

The Queen was a champion of British values as a Royal Patron to more than 600 charities, many of them small ones supporting local areas.

Her life will be remembered for one of service, duty and devotion to communities up and down the country, the Commonwealth and beyond.

I know that over the course of her reign she visited many of our local communities all over the UK. It has been touching to see so many memories and images shared of →

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→ these trips over the past few weeks.

In particular, it has been moving to understand the impact these visits still have on those who were there, in some cases many years after they took place. There are images of just a few of these visits on these pages.

Councils have been proud to serve Her Majesty throughout her reign and have long played an important historic civic role at the heart of their local areas, often helping to facilitate royal events in their communities.

Many councils had their own unique relationship with the Queen and the Royal Family, and no doubt will continue to do so under HM King Charles III.

Moments like these bind our communities together. This has been clearly demonstrated in the way that local authorities rapidly put together plans to support people in their local communities to mourn.

Councils did what they do best, bringing people together in different ways to mark this sombre milestone.

For example, councils from all over the UK organised proclamation ceremonies to announce the accession of HM King Charles III shortly after the death of his beloved mother.

This is a tradition that spans more than 300 years and was originally intended to inform local areas of the news of a new monarch.

Despite modern communications meaning news like this can now be broadcast around the world in an instant, these events gave communities an opportunity to come together and reflect on an important moment in our nation's history.

In addition, councils have provided local books of condolence online and in public buildings, ensured flags are flown at half-mast, and provided spaces where people have been able to leave floral tributes.

Councils organised 'big screen' broadcasts for members of the public of the Queen's funeral, meaning that those who could not join the crowds in London were able to share in their grief together with their friends and neighbours.

The death of Her Majesty has had a great effect on everyone in our local government family and the communities we represent.

As HM King Charles III begins his reign, councils will continue to serve our nation, bringing our local communities together to promote the rich and vibrant values of our country.



Visiting a housing development in Peterlee, Durham, 1960



Derbyshire, 1949



The Queen opens the Royal Surrey County Hospital, 1981



St Albans, 1982



County Buildings, Stafford, 1955



Arnold House Cheshire Home, Enfield, 1983



Birmingham, 2012



The Queen inspects the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, Newcastle, 1974







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The Queen's Golden Jubilee visit to Treorchy, Wales, June 2002

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Chester, 2018 – first official engagement with just the Queen and the Duchess of Sussex

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Launch of Child Friendly Leeds, 2012

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Opening Hampshire's Record Office, Winchester, 1993

COURTESY OF HAMPSHIRE CHRONICLE



Wolverhampton, 1994

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Dunsop Bridge, 2006

COURTESY OF RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL



# Welcome to the new government

The LGA is your voice on the national stage as we engage with the new Prime Minister and her team



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

**T**he LGA, as your national membership body, enjoys a constructive relationship with government as we seek to achieve our shared vision to improve people's lives, provide value-for-money public services and stimulate economic growth.

I am pleased to join my colleagues in meeting regularly with secretaries of state and ministers to push for the powers, flexibilities and funding you need.

Alongside our ongoing engagement at the highest levels of government, our attention turned over the summer to the race to be the new leader of the Conservative Party and, therefore, the nation's new Prime Minister.

It is good that our new Prime Minister is a former councillor. Through her time at the London Borough of Greenwich (2006-10), Liz Truss understands the challenges and opportunities facing councils.

In recent weeks, she has spoken often about local issues – whether it be through steering local economic growth, prioritising adult social care, creating a high-performing school system or ensuring a community-led planning system that can support the delivery of new homes.

Decentralisation is key to this as, in her words, “people [cannot] sit there in Whitehall and direct everything that happens in local communities across our country”.

We, as local councillors, could not agree more.

As the LGA's political group leaders

and I said in our welcome letter to the Prime Minister, councils are best placed to help the Government achieve its ambitions to: boost local economic growth; revive town and city centres; build more homes; improve our transport infrastructure; boost the life chances of children and young people; support older and disabled people to live well; drive improvements in public health; and equip people with the skills they need to succeed so no one is left behind.

Never is that more important than now, as we face an unprecedented challenge with the rising cost of living.

Councils have worked hard to process the council tax energy rebate, as well as other support measures, and will continue to make sure that residents and businesses are protected.

At the LGA, we have created a cost of living hub ([www.local.gov.uk/cost-living-hub](http://www.local.gov.uk/cost-living-hub)), which shares best practice and resources to help councils support their residents (see p13, p28).

We are keen to take a more collaborative approach and have offered to work in partnership with the Government to develop a long-term solution.

This should address financial resilience, tackle concentrations in deprivation, and reduce inequalities and level up the country. It will require investment in both the national benefits system and a longer-term system of local welfare support.

Energy prices, spiralling inflation, and National Living Wage pressures are, of course, set to add significantly increased costs to councils' budgets.

As the Government seeks to address the economic challenges we face, the LGA is making the case that it is only by addressing this significant funding gap that councils can protect services, invest in local services, employ the necessary skilled and motivated workforce, deliver for our communities and level up all parts of the country.

In the coming weeks and months, the LGA will continue to represent the priorities of councils in our discussions with new secretaries and ministers of state, and officials.



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**Liz Truss makes her first address after becoming Prime Minister**

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# Building financial resilience

Councils are at the heart of sustainable approaches to reducing cost pressures on residents



Councillor **Andrew Western** is Chair of the LGA's Resources Board

have recently been appointed as the Chair of the LGA's Resources Board, which leads work on council finances, workforce, and support for low-income households.

The cost-of-living pressures currently facing councils, people, businesses and communities are a key priority for my board, and across the LGA.

We are committed to working across the political spectrum and with the LGA's other boards to ensure that we are shaping policy and supporting councils in the most effective way possible.

Councils are facing considerable challenges in sustaining essential services because of the rising costs of energy and other inflationary pressures. Many of these – for example libraries, leisure centres and community hubs – are the very services that people depend on to stay healthy and connected, and to access advice and support.

People are also turning to us in increasing numbers for help and advice across all our services.

We have been working closely with government, partners and councils on shaping and delivering initiatives that

provide immediate help, such as the Household Support Fund.

At the same time, councils are at the heart of a more integrated, sustainable approach to reducing the cost pressures that households face, building financial resilience and leading strong, inclusive economies.

We are working with members and colleagues across the LGA to identify key priorities for the sector. For example, we recognise rising fuel prices are a major concern for councils and communities, so have been pressing government to work with councils to accelerate the transition to renewable energy.

Retrofitting homes and promoting energy advice will be essential to keeping energy costs down sustainably, while also supporting the transition to net zero.

We are urging ministers to act now to ensure healthy food is accessible and affordable to everyone.

Increasing eligibility for free school meals, investing in local food systems, and ensuring emergency food provision is linked to wider support services will be vital in preventing hunger and reducing health inequalities in the context of rising food prices.

We are pushing for an explicit, national-level focus on homelessness prevention work and an associated funding regime that enables councils to

deliver measures that prevent residents reaching a crisis point and requiring far more costly emergency support.

I know you will be taking similar approaches in your own councils, and we are developing some cross-cutting case studies for the LGA's cost of living hub to share learning across the sector (see [www.local.gov.uk/cost-living-hub](http://www.local.gov.uk/cost-living-hub)).

We have recently launched a cost-of-living network that will bring together speakers from councils, national charities, and government departments to explore what is being done to help mitigate the impacts of the rising cost of living.

In Trafford, my own council, we have also taken an integrated approach to addressing the cost-of-living pressures and have made supporting people out of hardship one of our main corporate priorities.

The Trafford Poverty Strategy 2022-2025 has been developed in partnership with Trafford Poverty Action Group and pulls together our work on creating an inclusive economy, improving access to information and advice, maximising household income, supporting children and young people, and building community resilience.

I believe that creating a strong and supportive social infrastructure allows communities to thrive, creates benefits for local people and places, and promotes an inclusive economy. It is also important to delivering an effective and long-lasting response to cost-of-living pressures – in Trafford, and elsewhere.



**You can sign up for** the LGA's cost of living bulletin at [www.local.gov.uk/e-bulletins](http://www.local.gov.uk/e-bulletins)



Councillor **Gerald Vernon-Jackson**  
is Chair of the LGA's Culture, Tourism  
and Sport Board

# Countering the cost of living

Cultural and leisure services provide vital social and economic support to residents



**C**ulture and leisure services and organisations showed how adaptable, innovative and resilient they could be during the pandemic.

Their ability to respond rapidly to disruptive change will be important again as they work to support residents affected by the rising cost of living.

The physical and mental health benefits of these services save the NHS more than £314 million a year by preventing the need for costly health interventions; and their free or low-cost offer will make them a lifeline for communities who are feeling the squeeze on their budgets.

Their economic impact is also huge. 'Unlocking the potential', our recent partnership publication, found that the sport sector contributes £85.5 billion per

year in economic and social benefits, as well as offering crucial employment opportunities to young people: 45 per cent of the 585,000 paid jobs in the sector go to young people aged between 16 and 24.

The creative industries have an equal impact by generating £111 billion to the UK economy each year and employing more than two million people.

Public sector provision of cultural and leisure services underpins this vital social and economic ecosystem, and we have a key, if often unacknowledged, role in keeping it going and ready to grow once these latest pressures have passed.

This will not be easy.

Our services are seeing energy bill increases of between 250 and 450 per cent, particularly for those running swimming pools, and we also face workforce and recruitment challenges

as the rise in the National Living Wage is, rightly, implemented.

The LGA is in constant dialogue with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and funding bodies about these challenges and how we respond to them.

Over the past year and a half, the LGA has commissioned two long-term pieces of work on the future of sport and cultural services.

'Securing the future of public sport and leisure services' sets out the changes that need to happen at national and local level to transform sports services so they are sustainable and deliver on multiple objectives such as health, climate change and levelling up.

Our current piece, the Commission on Culture and Local Government, has been exploring all these issues as it investigates the role of councils in underpinning our cultural infrastructure. Councils are the biggest public funder of culture in England, spending over £2.2 billion a year on culture and related services, and the commission is revealing the vital contribution this makes to communities and local economies.

Its call for evidence has resulted in more than 50 case studies from councils across the country highlighting the way in which culture, library and heritage services can:

- build civic pride in place
- promote better health and wellbeing, tackling loneliness, isolation and mental ill-health from the pandemic
- support local economic growth, including revitalising high streets and the wider visitor and night-time economies
- encourage social mobility, by providing routes into the rapidly growing creative industries
- offer vital access to safe, warm spaces for vulnerable people during times of crisis.

This online case study resource will be launched on 11 October, with the commission's full recommendations launching in December.



You can read 'Securing the future of public sport and leisure services' and read about the work of the Commission on Culture and Local Government at [www.local.gov.uk/topics/culture-tourism-leisure-and-sport](http://www.local.gov.uk/topics/culture-tourism-leisure-and-sport)



# Creating opportunities

## Why the Care Leaver Covenant can play a crucial role in helping local authorities to empower young people

**E**very corporate parent wants the best for their care leavers. The recent Independent Review of Children's Social Care underscored the urgent need for more support. CCLA is engaging with Spectra, delivery partner for the Care Leaver Covenant, to drive even more collaboration with local authorities to ensure more young people leaving care are able to access the opportunities they deserve.

There are around 103,000 young people in care in the UK, with approximately 10,000 leaving care each year. While many will do very well, we know that young people leaving care are far less likely to attend university and more likely to be NEET (not in education, employment or training). Roughly 25% of the prison population and 33% of the homeless population are care-experienced.

The Care Leaver Covenant is a national inclusion programme that has been supporting

care leavers aged 16-25, across England, to live independently. Our ambition is to grow a universal family of individuals and organisations across all sectors who create tangible support offers, with the purpose of extending the reach of corporate parents, and building a community of concerned and committed people to support those with care experience.

Councils have a crucial role to play as part of their legal duty to provide and publicise a 'local offer' to support and empower the young people in their communities. Their efforts can be enhanced through a collaborative partnership approach with the Care Leaver Covenant and our signatories. This means that young people can benefit beyond the budgetary or statutory limitations of what councils can do alone.

CCLA is one such advocate. Cllr Richard Kemp CBE, Chair of the Local Authorities' Mutual Investment Trust (LAMIT), the third-largest shareholder of CCLA, explained: "When the LAMIT Board, which includes councillors from all parties, all over the UK, looked at issues of social concern to support, we unanimously decided to look at the challenges confronting care leavers."

It was this collaborative approach that formed the focus of a recent roundtable discussion, sponsored by CCLA, at the LGA Annual Conference. Sharing their views

with hundreds of councillors at the event, Cllr Kemp said they were 'amazed' at the way councils immediately wanted to help. "We hope to build up a consortium of leading charities and organisations to work with the Care Leaver Covenant and councils UK-wide to provide more support to this highly vulnerable group of young people," he continued.

The Care Leaver Covenant engagement team was also on the CCLA stand at the conference, providing an opportunity to speak with decision-makers from more than 60 local and combined authorities, and other partners who work directly with care-experienced young people.

Cllr Jon Clarke, Cabinet Member for Darlington, Portfolio Holder for Children & Young People, told us they have seen a real change in opportunity creation for their care leavers by adopting the Covenant's 'Whole-Council Approach', which recommends that councils use procurement processes to encourage care leaver support. Cllr. Clarke was encouraged by a prospective partnership between CCLA and Spectra, highlighting the importance of ensuring policy development is grounded in care-experienced voices.

**Disclosure:** The views expressed do not constitute financial, investment or professional advice. CCLA Investment Management Limited (registered in England, No. 2183088) and CCLA Fund Managers Limited (registered in England, No. 8735639), whose registered address is: One Angel Lane, London, EC4R 3AB, are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

**i** For more information about the Care Leaver Covenant, visit the website [www.mycovenant.org.uk](http://www.mycovenant.org.uk), where you can also download our Social Value Toolkit





## 'Excellent training opportunities'



Councillor **Andrew Saywell** (Conservative) is Cabinet Member for Organisational Development, Workforce and Digital Transformation at Devon County Council

I was one of the first councillors to attend the Young Councillors' Weekender all the way back in 2010, and 12 years on I think I can still just about count myself as a young councillor! I was only 20 when I was first elected and back then the support networks for younger councillors were few and far between.

But the Young Councillors' Weekender and LGA's Leadership Academy courses were invaluable, not only for building up a mutual support network but also for providing young councillors like myself with excellent training opportunities that were tailored to our needs and gave many of us the confidence and the skills to take on leadership responsibilities in our councils.

I would encourage any young councillor to attend the weekender event and Leadership Academy courses and to make the most of the invaluable opportunities they will provide you.

# Young leaders

The LGA's political leadership programme helps ensure our local politicians are confident and capable

**F**or 15 years, the LGA has been helping young councillors find their feet and connect with each other.

Our popular Young Councillors' Weekender event is designed to provide learning and development around some of the key issues and challenges for all young councillors, and a unique opportunity to meet and network with colleagues from across the political spectrum.

This year's programme includes plenary sessions led by leadership experts and leading member peers, covering personal development and issues such as navigating the dynamics of political groups, managing your mental health, finances, and decision-making.

Since the annual event started in 2009, more than 500 councillors have taken part, with the Young Councillors' Weekender recognised as providing a kick-start in the development of any politician's leadership skills.

Proof of that lies in the fact that previous participants now include one national party leader, six MPs, 26 current and past council leaders or directly elected mayors, 16 current and past deputy leaders, and 85 cabinet members or group leaders.

Grace Collins MBE, the LGA's Adviser (Leadership), who has been involved with the young councillors' events from the start, said: "I am extremely proud of all the young councillors from all parties, their journeys, the ongoing networks they have formed, and the comradeships that they have established over the years.

"So many have had fantastic political leadership journeys: here are four who have kindly written their stories."



To find out more and book a place on the LGA's **Young Councillors' Weekender**, taking place from 19-20 November in Warwick, please visit [www.local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership/focus-leadership](http://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership/focus-leadership). You must be aged 40 or under



Participants in the Young Councillors' Weekender 2017 with the LGA's Leadership Adviser, Grace Collins MBE (centre, front)



## 'Set me up for the future'



Cllr **Carla Denyer** is Co-Leader of the Green Party and a councillor at Bristol City Council

I took part in the Young Councillors' Weekender at a critical point in my political career, though I didn't know it at the time.

Ten days before the weekend started, my now-famous motion to Bristol City Council passed unanimously: Bristol declared a climate emergency and brought forward its carbon neutral date by 20 years, from 2050 to 2030.

It was the first council in Europe to do so, and since then three-quarters of UK local authorities and many other institutions have followed suit.

Six months later, I was to stand as an MEP, and then as an MP candidate. Within three years, I would be the national leader of my party.

But as I caught the train to Warwick that weekend, none of that was on my horizon. My priority then, as now, was to do the best job I could as an elected representative to tackle the biggest problems facing society – climate change and social injustice.

The sessions at the Young Councillors' Weekender – on local government finance, public speaking, personal effectiveness and navigating group dynamics – helped me prioritise my time and set me up for a future I didn't yet know was mine.

So, if you are a young councillor, no matter what you think the future holds for you, this course could help you achieve it.

## 'The tools to succeed'



Councillor **Anthony Okereke** (Labour) is Leader of the Royal Borough of Greenwich

You've finished campaigning, you're now elected, and you know the key issues you want to prioritise. But knowing where to start as a councillor and how to turn these issues into actions in a local authority can sometimes feel like a maze.

The LGA's Young Councillors' Weekender is the one course that will place you on a firm footing in your new role.

As a new councillor myself in 2018, taking the course taught me how to make impactful presentations, work alongside political stakeholders and demystify local

government finance in an easy way.

It also helped impart great skills, such as time management, and gave me the tools to succeed in the role while holding down a full-time job.

These are skills that have stayed with me and that I have developed and built on as Cabinet Member for Housing and now as the Leader of Greenwich Council.

In this journey, finding friends who will hold you accountable and help you develop your ideas is key. This was exactly what I found at the Young Councillors' Weekender in 2018.

The training not only presents incredible skills for navigating local government but proved beneficial for other spheres of life also. All the best!

## 'Lasting friendships'



Councillor **Laura McCarthy** is Liberal Democrat Group Leader at Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

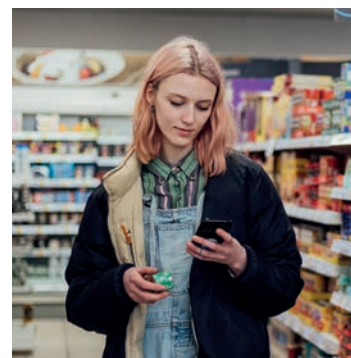
I attended the LGA's young councillors' course shortly after being elected in 2018. Coming from a background in community activism rather than politics, it was safe to say that I was less than confident about

my abilities as a councillor. The course gave me the skills to scrutinise, speak in public, and find political allies throughout the chamber.

I made lasting friendships and the skills I learned have stayed with me as I progressed to Deputy Group Leader and then onto Group Leader at Solihull.

Representing my residents is the most important part of my job and this course gave me the tools I needed to do that successfully.

# Beautifully ordinary lives



How well do councillors understand the lives of autistic people and people with learning disabilities?



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

**O**ver the summer, it was my great pleasure to chair an informal and interactive event at the LGA for elected members, people with a learning disability, autistic people, family and carers, advocates, academics and inspectors.

Beautifully Ordinary Lives provided councillors with the opportunity to meet people with learning disabilities, autistic people and family carers, and to hear



## 'It's time to **change things**'

A whole-system response is needed to make sure support for people with learning disabilities and autistic people improves, according to the person in charge of inspecting provision.

Debbie Ivanova, the Care Quality Commission's Director for People with a Learning Disability and Autistic People, highlighted poor practice across hospitals, in care homes and supported living, including "still far too many restrictive interventions".

Speaking at the LGA's Beautifully Ordinary Lives event, she said providers were trying to "fit people into a model that fits with economies of scale rather than 'what does this individual need'...it won't give people the life they deserve".

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is changing how it inspects, and trying to

get under the culture of an organisation, said Ms Ivanova.

'Right support, right care, right culture', the CQC's recently updated statutory guidance, sets out how it regulates providers supporting autistic people and people with a learning disability.

Inspectors are asking – how does it feel to live here, is there a plan for my life, are we listening to what I want to be able to achieve and do.

"People should not be asked to live in services...that don't meet their needs," she added.

Ms Ivanova referenced the abuse scandals in settings for people with learning disabilities, such as at Whorlton Hall hospital in Durham, and successive learning disabilities mortality reviews ('LeDeR' reports), which continue to show

that people with learning disabilities have a much shorter life expectancy – with six out of 10 dying before age 65 compared to one in 10 of the general population.

She urged service commissioners to think about "how we respect every person and their aspiration", about enabling and person-centred care, and to think about the community as well.

"There is a shocking lack of ambition for people's lives...you can be in no doubt it's time to change things," she added.

"Really listen. Listen to what people are telling you they need in their placements... people want to live in their communities; they and their families know best."



See [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)





about their lives and aspirations, their hopes for the future, and the challenges they face in living an ordinary life in their communities.

In addition to short speeches from key representatives (see below), leading organisations and councils that are supporting change and promoting inclusion in the most creative of ways were on hand to talk about their work.

These included self-advocacy organisations Speakup and Ace Anglia, which have worked with the LGA to produce 'easy read' and video versions of our framework for supporting people with learning disabilities (see p20).

A magnificent lunch was also provided by Unity Works, a social enterprise supporting people with a learning disability to gain skills, achieve qualifications and secure jobs, so →



**The LGA provides support** to councils to help them improve services for autistic people and people with a learning disability, see <https://bit.ly/3DtC7v0>

## 'We want equal lives'



**Gary Bourlet** is a Co-Founder of People First England and of Learning Disability England, where he is now Membership and Engagement Lead

"I wasn't assertive enough," says Gary Bourlet, of when he started as a self-advocacy leader with learning disabilities, 36 years ago.

His dad helped him write his first two speeches, one of which was about how "dull food makes dull minds", made in front of dinner ladies from his day care centre. Sadly, his dad died before hearing the second speech, about "who makes the rules".

"In 1982... we were scared of service providers, carers and parents, who had a lot of power," says Gary. "We just wanted to be able to speak freely and talk about the issues that affected our lives."

In 1984, he attended the first international conference organised by People First, a self-advocacy movement, in the United States. Inspired by seeing people with learning difficulties speaking up, "free and able to say what they wanted", he returned home to help set up People First England. In 2016, he also co-founded the charity

Learning Disability England (LDE), a membership organisation.

Speaking at the LGA's Beautifully Ordinary Lives event, Gary outlined the Good Lives framework, hosted by LDE, which brings together people's thoughts and ideas about what it will take for everyone with learning disabilities to be able to live their 'good life'. Its six chapters set out what is happening now and some ideas for change, covering: 'at home'; 'communication and staying connected'; 'the right support'; 'to love and be loved'; 'effective voice – self-advocacy and advocacy'; and 'employment and contribution'.

"Progress has been made in my 30-plus years, but there is more progress to be made," Gary told delegates.

"Pre-pandemic, about 6 per cent of people with learning disabilities were in employment, and just 5.1 per cent in 2021... we are asking businesses to employ 6 per cent of people with learning disabilities and make that difference.

"What really matters to people with learning disabilities is the same as what matters to everyone – a home, to be loved, and to contribute a voice. We want equal lives."



See [bit.ly/3S9TlI8](https://bit.ly/3S9TlI8) for more about the Good Lives framework

## 'We need to think differently about autistic culture'

Alexis Quinn's parents took her to a doctor when she was three years old, because "something was very different about her – possibly something wrong?"

Nearly 40 years ago, the advice was to exercise their busy, inquisitive and active child. Alexis really enjoyed swimming and, because of her parents' support, she represented Great Britain.

She also excelled at school, thriving on the structure, routine and predictability that it provided. Feeling comfortable in academia, she went to university, becoming a PE teacher.

But then she had a baby and her brother died soon after. Her interests changed.

"I couldn't really understand what had happened to my brother," she told delegates at the LGA's Beautifully Ordinary Lives event, describing how her interests

changed from academia and swimming to researching death.

Advised to seek medical help because of her unusual interest and increased sensory perception, Alexis was recommended a 72-hour rest in hospital.

As soon as the doors to the ward closed, however, "I stopped being a teacher and an international athlete, and just became this risk and this medical thing that needed to be controlled", she said.

The sensory-charged, busy and chaotic ward created a cycle of overload, distress and meltdown, leading to restrictions and controls, and Alexis routinely being restrained by up to 10 people.

She spent more than three years locked up in mental health institutions, before fleeing the country.

"When I went into hospital, I was expected

to get better... yet I wasn't sick. I was required to mask my autistic expression and make eye contact, converse, sit still and stay in the room," she told delegates.

"We need to think differently about autistic culture and change the language we use to describe neurodivergence. If people want to help, they need to honour our uniqueness and our passions.

"It is not OK to tell toddlers from the age of 18 months that they are a problem... We need to teach pride in difference so all children can grow up feeling useful and valuable members of society."



**Alexis Quinn is Manager of the Restraint Reduction Network and author of the memoir 'Unbroken'.** See [www.restraintreductionnetwork.org](https://www.restraintreductionnetwork.org) to find out more about the work of the network



→ they can reach their full potential.

The session highlighted how important the work of councils and the LGA is in addressing the inequalities people face.

We hope this report of the event will provide you with some idea of the questions to ask in your local areas about the challenges faced by residents with learning disabilities and/or autism.

You can also access a suite of supportive materials and guidance on the LGA's website, at [bit.ly/3RiVJWD](https://bit.ly/3RiVJWD)

## 'Restricted levels of support'



**Chris Hatton** is  
Professor of Social Care  
at Manchester  
Metropolitan University

Professor Chris Hatton and colleagues have been tracking the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on 500 people with learning disabilities and 300, mainly family, carers and support workers.

Aside from the support people received to go online during lockdown – something previously seen as a “challenge and impossible” – he had few positives to report to participants at the LGA's Beautifully Ordinary Lives event (see also p18-19)

Even before the pandemic, people with learning disabilities were experiencing huge inequalities, and were more likely to experience poor health and care.

When the pandemic hit, people with learning disabilities were more likely to catch the virus, less likely to get hospital care, less likely to get intensive care and treatment when they did arrive in hospital, and three to four times more likely to die from COVID-19, and at a younger age.

“People with learning disabilities and family members were doing their best to keep themselves and others safe,” said Professor Hatton. “People have paid a real

price for that support of the common good, in worsening mental health, isolation and poorer physical health.”

While pandemic-related restrictions have lifted, COVID-19 has not gone away and represents a high risk for some people, who continue to live more restricted lives.

Meanwhile, social care and health services have not returned to ‘normal’ – in some cases, support has not returned at all, even to those with the greatest needs, or has been on a much-reduced basis.

“People are really worried this is becoming the new normal,” said Professor Hatton.

People with learning disabilities are reporting poorer health, less access to GPs and annual health checks, not going out so much, concerns about the cost of living, and a “real crisis in staffing – people just can’t get hold of the staff to support them at all”.

The impact of the pandemic “is not as talked about as it should be, it’s still ongoing for people, and there are huge implications for local authorities supporting people”, he said.



**To find out more about the impact of COVID-19 on people with learning disabilities**, please visit [bit.ly/3BGOyCA](https://bit.ly/3BGOyCA) and [bit.ly/3U8rBzv](https://bit.ly/3U8rBzv)

## Supporting adults with learning disabilities

The LGA has recently published ‘easy read’ and video versions of a framework designed to help councils review and improve their services to people with learning disabilities.

The ‘Supporting adults with learning disabilities to have better lives framework’ was drawn up by the LGA and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services.

It is designed to help directors and lead members identify how they can improve support to adults with learning disabilities, and how they can be assured that the care and support in their area is good value and delivering positive outcomes.

David Hill, a digital designer from Ace Anglia, a people-led independent advocacy organisation, worked with colleagues with learning disabilities on the ‘easy read’ version of the framework.

The framework was ‘co-produced’, going through multiple revisions with input from

a range of people, including people with hearing, sight and other impairments, and autistic people – which was key to making it as accessible as possible.

“The framework is being adopted by local councils to improve services, and they are looking to work with people with learning disabilities to do that,” said David.

“However, people with learning disabilities might not know what the framework is or why it’s important, and they are not going to read a 30-page document.”

The accessible versions were co-produced with the LGA, Ace Anglia’s accessible information steering group, people with learning disabilities, and other agencies.

For example, David liaised with colleagues from Speakup Self Advocacy who were working on the video version of the framework, which helped ensure similar

language was used across all the formats.

Speakup’s advocates brought ‘person-centred learning’ to the project, according to the organisation’s Principal Officer, Annie Ferguson.

She described how councils want to consult on changing existing services for people with learning disabilities, when they should ‘start from scratch’ by asking them ‘what would make your life better’ – and providing support.

“If councils can try to keep really person-centred services and get co-production right, then things will change for people with learning disabilities,” she added.



See [bit.ly/3ex4zSo](https://bit.ly/3ex4zSo) for the LGA’s **‘Supporting adults with learning disabilities to have better lives framework’**, including its accessible versions





Cllr **Abi Brown** is Chair of the LGA's Improvement and Innovation Board and Cllr **Louise Gittins** is Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board



# Early years lifeline

An LGA review has identified how library services can support the youngest children and their families



**L**ibraries have long been hubs of information and support in many areas, but they are also a key resource in supporting children's early years, from language development to enabling strong pre-literacy skills and parental support.

As part of its Early Years Programme, the LGA delivered mini reviews into libraries' work in early years across Bradford, Dorset, Leeds, Reading, St Helens, Swindon, Tameside and Wakefield from January to March 2022.

Funded by the Department for Education – and supported by the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians, and membership organisation Libraries Connected – the reviews looked at identifying the key ways in which family hubs and library services can work together to enhance and develop a genuine integrated local offer to children and families, with a focus on support for speech, language and communication development.

Each council had access to peer consultants, who met with key stakeholders, for up to eight days, and focus groups were facilitated with service providers and users.

A testament to the work of local authorities and their library services, the mini reviews identified a significant amount of existing good practice in the provision of support for early years development and parental mental health.

These included the successful delivery of national initiatives such

as 'Rhymetimes', which aim to build confidence, develop vocabulary and teach social skills, and 'Storytime' sessions, which help children develop close bonds with parents while promoting social wellbeing and community cohesion.

In Swindon, Bookstart, the national programme providing free books to babies, is promoted universally by health visitors when children are six to eight weeks old and three to four years old, and is strongly supported by the library service.

and language therapy department, where a Reading-wide pathway for speech, language and communication was being developed at the time.

As a result, Rhymetimes across Reading libraries have now been identified as a possible targeted intervention for children with delayed speech, language and communication skills.

Benefits for parental support were identified in areas such as St Helens, where parents and grandparents frequently stay on after Rhymetime sessions to chat with other parents and carers.

In Bradford, the library offers a baby friendship group, giving families a chance to share ideas and seek support from other parents, for advice and guidance around their child's development.

With the overwhelming evidence to demonstrate the value of libraries in contributing to the offer for children and families, it is extremely positive that the reviews opened up constructive conversations between key partners. These supported a greater understanding of how libraries can align strategies with those partners, and contribute to universal and targeted services across local areas.

Equipping councils with the tools to continue developing opportunities for closer partnership working, and sharing skills and expertise across library staff and partner services, will greatly enhance the coordination and delivery of family hubs to better support their local communities.

*Recognising libraries as part of the local speech and language pathway is a valuable resource*

In Tameside, the early years team works with library staff to quality assure their Rhymetime sessions. They have also provided training in signing and visual symbols to support some children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Recognising libraries as part of the local speech and language pathway is a valuable resource for councils.

In Reading, the LGA mini review enabled conversations between library staff, children's services, and the speech



**'How council library services can support children and families in the earliest years'** can be read in full at [www.local.gov.uk/publications](http://www.local.gov.uk/publications)

# Setting employer standards



## Inspectors have provided insight into the national standards for social workers



Councillor **Andrew Western** is Chair of the LGA's Resources Board and Councillor **Louise Gittins** is Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board



**G**ood social work can transform people's lives and protect them from harm.

To achieve consistently high-quality outcomes for service users and their carers, social workers must have and maintain the skills and knowledge to establish effective relationships with children, adults, families and professionals in a range of agencies and settings, and be the key connectors in communities.

In their turn, employers, including councils, should implement a 'whole systems' approach to supporting the social work profession.

'The standards for employers of social workers in England', developed by the sector and hosted by the LGA,

set out the key components of whole systems approaches and the shared core expectations of employers.

They can also help to improve recruitment and retention by providing the right conditions for social workers to thrive.

The eight standards include effective workforce planning, safe workloads and case allocation, wellbeing, continuing professional development, and strategic partnerships.

Councils can use the standards to help develop a working environment where social work practice and social workers can flourish, in turn supporting recruitment and retention and enhancing their own reputation as a service provider and employer.

Each year, the LGA surveys thousands of social workers in an annual 'health check' to find out what they think about their working



**For more information about the national standards for social workers**, please visit

[www.local.gov.uk/standards-employers-social-workers-england-0](http://www.local.gov.uk/standards-employers-social-workers-england-0). For more general information about the LGA's support to councils on workforce issues, see [www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support](http://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support)





environment, what factors influence them to remain engaged with their work and to stay with their organisations, and how well employers are delivering the standards.

This year's survey launches in October and is open until the end of the year, so please ensure your council emails us at [workforce@local.gov.uk](mailto:workforce@local.gov.uk) to sign up for it, and encourage your registered social workers, mental health practitioners and occupational therapists to take part.

We will provide you with an anonymised breakdown of your council's results, providing invaluable local information that can inform your improvement work and help you plan and manage recruitment and retention, staff morale, training needs and other issues.

As well as providing a way for you to assess and review your council's social work performance against the standards, the results also help support the LGA's lobbying work.

We're delighted to mark the launch of this year's survey with some thoughts from Yvette Stanley, Ofsted's National Director (Regulation and Social Care), in response to questions about children's social care and the eight standards (see right).



**Yvette Stanley** is National Director (Regulation and Social Care) at Ofsted

## The employer role in creating **great social work practice**

**Q What role do you think wider corporate leaders have in establishing an environment for great social work practice to thrive?**

**A** In a nutshell, we are looking for a place where the shared ambition for children and for services for children and families is well articulated and owned across the organisation.

Leaders like the chief executive, the council leader and lead member will know the level of risk that is being carried in relation to child protection. Put simply, who gets early help and how much harm might children experience to become subject to child protection inquiries or a plan?

They will have access to a range of information to assure themselves that social workers and wider staff are being well-supported to carry out their roles. So they will have information on the caseloads being managed across different parts of social care and will have access to data on both timeliness and quality of their work, as well as information to assess the impact on the experiences and progress of children.

It is also important they have a strong grip on how the wider organisation is supporting children's social care doing its best work: from supporting recruitment and retention of social workers through to having the right administrative support and timely legal advice.

**Q How can we spot where caseloads and workloads are too high and what are the consequences of this for staff and children?**

**A** I am often asked for a magic number in terms of caseloads. It is not an exact science and it depends on the nature and complexity of the cases.

Heads of services, team managers, assistant

directors and directors need to know which teams are under pressure and to take action quickly when intake volumes rise or staffing capacity falls.

The oversight we build into social care is not inefficiency. It is the capacity to oversee complex risk, to constantly re-prioritise and to support staff who are managing very high levels of actual as well as risk of harm to children.

What we do know is, when we get it wrong, social workers will not be able to do enough direct work and their record-keeping will suffer, leaving a poor trail for future workers and manager oversight.

Most importantly, for children it will mean they do not get the time to build a relationship with their social worker and our collective decision-making will be poor, impacting negatively on children's progress and outcomes.

**Q Is the need for employee wellbeing and a positive workplace culture understated?**

**A** Whatever services we lead it makes absolute sense to recruit, develop and retain the workforce to do their very best work.

So, for social care, where we are asking staff to do difficult work with families, to hold very high levels of partner anxieties and to take difficult life-changing decisions about children's lives, it is absolutely vital.

It makes absolute sense in terms of the positive impact on children and families and it makes economic sense in terms of the cost of agency and recruitment costs generally.

Employee wellbeing and a positive workplace culture must never be understated or underestimated in its importance. It is always good to see local leaders triangulating all the workforce information, and to respond to the annual health check with a clear action plan.



**This is an edited version of Yvette Stanley's responses to questions posed by the LGA about 'The standards for employers of social workers'.** Other questions covered the impact

of the pandemic, the role of supervision, what constitutes a strong offer of continuing professional development (CPD), and safeguarding and corporate parenting partnership arrangements. See <https://bit.ly/3ROFdOH> to read the full response.

# Local leadership

## The LGA is run by its members, for its members

**T**he LGA is a politically led, cross-party membership organisation, representing local authorities across England and Wales.

Its membership includes: almost all English councils; local fire and rescue authorities; the 22 Welsh councils in corporate membership through the Welsh LGA; national parks authorities; and parish and town councils via corporate membership with the National Association of Local Councils.

It is run by its members for its members, with councillors setting priorities, providing strategic direction, and shaping policy positions.

The LGA has four political group

offices – Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent – and, wherever possible, works on the basis of consensus across all four groups.

Each year, the LGA's political leadership structures are populated by the groups, according to the organisation's political balance – defined by the outcome of the English and Welsh local elections each May.

With the LGA's political year starting on 1 September, the new executive and policy boards for 2022/23 (see below) have been established, and have started meeting to address the issues that are facing local government – not least, the current cost-of-living crisis and the associated

cost pressures on councils and their residents. Together, the chair, vice-chairs and deputy chairs form the LGA Board, and direct the LGA's activities, business and strategic priorities.

The board members, chairs of the LGA's policy boards, representatives of Wales and the nine English regions, plus some other members form the LGA's Executive Advisory Board. It plays a coordinating role, providing strategic direction to the association's work through the business planning process. It also advises the LGA Board and holds the policy boards to account.

See below for an introduction to the LGA's lead members.

To find out more, including the full membership of each board and previous and forthcoming meetings, please see [www.local.gov.uk/about](http://www.local.gov.uk/about)

## Board of Directors (LGA Board)



Cllr **James Jamieson** OBE (Con, Central Bedfordshire) was elected Chairman of the LGA in July 2019 and was previously Leader of the LGA's Conservative Group from July 2018.

He was first elected to Central Bedfordshire Council in 2009 and led the authority from 2011 to January 2021.

[james.jamieson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:james.jamieson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)



Cllr **Shaun Davies** (Lab, Telford & Wrekin) is the LGA's Senior Vice-Chair and became Leader of the LGA's Labour Group in 2022. He has led Telford & Wrekin Council since 2016

and was formerly Chair of the LGA's Resources Board.

[shaun.davies@telford.gov.uk](mailto:shaun.davies@telford.gov.uk)



Cllr **Izzi Seccombe** OBE (Con, Warwickshire) was elected Leader of the LGA's Conservative Group and became an LGA Vice-Chairman in July 2019. She was elected to Warwickshire

County Council in 2001 and became its first female Leader in 2013.

[cillrseccombe@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:cillrseccombe@warwickshire.gov.uk)



Cllr **Joe Harris** (Lib Dem, Cotswold) was elected Leader of the LGA Liberal Democrat Group and Vice-Chair of the LGA in July 2021. He was first elected to Cotswold District Council in 2011,

aged 18, and has led it since 2019. He is also a member of Gloucestershire County Council.

[joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk](mailto:joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk)



Cllr **Marianne Overton** MBE (Ind, Lincolnshire) is an LGA Vice-Chair and has been Leader of the LGA's Independent Group since 2011. She is Leader of the Lincolnshire

Independents, Leader of the Opposition on North Kesteven District Council and sits on Lincolnshire County Council.

[cillm.overton@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:cillm.overton@lincolnshire.gov.uk)



Cllr **Robert Alden** (Con, Birmingham) is a Deputy Chairman of the LGA. First elected in 2006, he is Leader of the Conservative Group on Birmingham City Council.

[robert.alden@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:robert.alden@birmingham.gov.uk)



Cllr **John Fuller** OBE (Con, South Norfolk) is an LGA Deputy Chairman, Leader of South Norfolk District Council, and a former Chairman of the District Councils' Network.

[john.fuller@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk](mailto:john.fuller@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk)



Cllr **Teresa O'Neill** OBE (Con, Bexley) was first elected to the London Borough of Bexley in 1998 and became its Leader in 2008. She is an LGA Deputy Chairman.

[councillor.teresa.o'neill@bexley.gov.uk](mailto:councillor.teresa.o'neill@bexley.gov.uk)



Cllr **Anntoinette Bramble** (Lab, Hackney), an LGA Deputy Chair, is the Equalities Advocate for the LGA's Executive Advisory Board, and Deputy Mayor at Hackney Council.

[anntoinette.bramble@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:anntoinette.bramble@hackney.gov.uk)



Cllr **Tudor Evans** OBE (Lab, Plymouth) has served as a councillor continuously since 1988, is Leader of the Opposition at Plymouth City Council, and a Deputy Chair of the LGA.

[tudor.evans@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:tudor.evans@plymouth.gov.uk)



Cllr **Georgia Gould** (Lab, Camden), a councillor since 2010, is an LGA Deputy Chair, Leader of Camden Council, and Chair of London Councils. Cllr Gould is also the

regional representative for London on the LGA's Executive Advisory Board.

[georgia.gould@camden.gov.uk](mailto:georgia.gould@camden.gov.uk)



Cllr **Michael Payne** (Lab, Gedling) is an LGA Deputy Chair, Deputy Leader of Gedling Borough Council, and a member of Nottinghamshire County Council.

[cillr.michael.payne@gedling.gov.uk](mailto:cillr.michael.payne@gedling.gov.uk)



Cllr **Bridget Smith** (Lib Dem, South Cambridgeshire), an LGA Deputy Chair, is Leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council and a lead member on the Peterborough

and Cambridgeshire Combined Authority.

[cillr.bridgetsmith@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:cillr.bridgetsmith@scambs.gov.uk)



Cllr **Hannah Dalton** (Residents' Association, Epsom and Ewell) is Vice-Chair of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Strategy and Resources Committee, and

an LGA Deputy Chair.

[hdalton@epsom-ewell.gov.uk](mailto:hdalton@epsom-ewell.gov.uk)



## Other Executive Advisory Board members



Cllr **Kevin Bentley** (Con, Essex) is Chairman of the LGA's People and Places Board. First elected to Essex County Council in 2009, he became its Leader in May 2021.

[cldr.kevin.bentley@essex.gov.uk](mailto:cldr.kevin.bentley@essex.gov.uk)



Cllr **Abi Brown** (Con, Stoke) is the new Chair of the LGA's Improvement and Innovation Board. First elected in 2010, she has been Leader of City of Stoke-on-Trent Council since 2019.

[abi.brown@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:abi.brown@stoke.gov.uk)



Cllr **David Fothergill** (Con, Somerset) is Leader of the Opposition at Somerset County Council and became Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board in May 2021.

[djafothergill@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:djafothergill@somerset.gov.uk)



Cllr **David Renard** (Con, Swindon) is Chairman of the LGA's Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board. He has been Leader of Swindon Council since 2013.

[drenard@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:drenard@swindon.gov.uk)



Cllr **Nesil Caliskan** (Lab, Enfield) is Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board. Elected in 2015, she became Enfield's first woman leader in 2018, aged 29.

[cldr.nesil.caliskan@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:cldr.nesil.caliskan@enfield.gov.uk)



Cllr **Sam Chapman-Allen** (Con, Breckland) is Chairman of the District Councils' Network and has been Leader of Breckland Council since 2019.

[sam.chapman-allen@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:sam.chapman-allen@breckland.gov.uk)



Cllr **Sir Stephen Houghton** CBE (Lab, Barnsley) is Leader of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and Chair of the LGA's Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities.

[cldrstephenhoughton@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:cldrstephenhoughton@barnsley.gov.uk)



Cllr **Louise Gittins** (Lab, Cheshire West and Chester) is the new Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board. She was first elected in 2011 and became Leader of Cheshire West and Chester in 2019.

[louise.gittins@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:louise.gittins@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)



Mayor **Marvin Rees** (Lab, Bristol) is Chair of the LGA's City Regions Board. In 2016, he was the first mayor of black African heritage to be elected by a major European city.

[mayor@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:mayor@bristol.gov.uk)



Cllr **Andrew Western** (Lab, Trafford) is the new Chair of the LGA's Resources Board. He has been Leader of Trafford Council since 2018, having been first elected in 2011.

[andrew.western@trafford.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.western@trafford.gov.uk)



Cllr **Gerald Vernon-Jackson** CBE (Lib Dem, Portsmouth) is Chair of the LGA's Culture, Tourism and Sport Board and Leader of Portsmouth City Council. He has been a councillor since 2003.

[cldr.gerald.vernon-jackson@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:cldr.gerald.vernon-jackson@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)



Cllr **Paul Woodhead** (Ind, Cannock Chase) is a Balancing Member on the LGA's Executive Advisory Board. He is Leader of the Chase Community Independents and Green Group.

[paulwoodhead@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:paulwoodhead@cannockchasedc.gov.uk)



Cllr **Tim Oliver** (Con, Surrey) is Chairman of the County Councils Network, Leader of Surrey County Council, and a former Leader of Elmbridge Borough Council.

[tim.oliver@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:tim.oliver@surreycc.gov.uk)



Alderman **Sir David Wootton** (Ind, City of London) is Chairman of Local Partnerships and a member of the City of London Corporation.

[david.wootton@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:david.wootton@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

## Wales and regional



Cllr **Ralph Bagge** (Con, South Bucks) is a regional representative substitute on the LGA Executive. He is Chairman of Buckinghamshire Council's Finance and Resources Select Committee.

[ralph.bagge@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:ralph.bagge@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)



Cllr **Marc Bayliss** (Con, Worcester) is Leader of Worcester City Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills at Worcestershire County Council. He represents the West Midlands.

[mbayliss@worcester-research.co.uk](mailto:mbayliss@worcester-research.co.uk)



Cllr **John Hart** (Con, Devon) was first elected in 1989 and has been Leader of Devon County Council since 2009. He is Chairman of South West Councils.

[john.hart@devon.gov.uk](mailto:john.hart@devon.gov.uk)



Cllr **Nicolas Heslop** (Con, Tonbridge and Malling) is Chair of South East Councils and a former Leader of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

[nicolas.heslop@tmcc.gov.uk](mailto:nicolas.heslop@tmcc.gov.uk)



Cllr **Matthew Hicks** (Con, Suffolk) is the regional representative for the East of England. He is Chairman of the East of England LGA and has been Leader of Suffolk County Council since 2018.

[matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk)



Cllr **Christopher Poulter** (Con, Derby) represents East Midlands Councils. He was first elected to Derby City Council in 2006 and has been Leader since 2018.

[christopher.poulter@derby.gov.uk](mailto:christopher.poulter@derby.gov.uk)



Cllr **David Baines** (Lab, St Helens) represents the North West on the LGA's Executive Advisory Board. He has been Leader of St Helens Borough Council since 2019.

[cldrdbaines@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:cldrdbaines@sthelens.gov.uk)



Cllr **Graeme Miller** (Lab, Sunderland) is the regional representative for the North East. First elected in 2006, he has been Leader of Sunderland City Council since 2018.

[cldr.graeme.miller@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:cldr.graeme.miller@sunderland.gov.uk)



Cllr **Rob Stewart** (Lab, Swansea) represents Wales on the LGA's Executive Advisory Board. He is Deputy Leader of the Welsh LGA and has led the City and County of Swansea since 2014.

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**The LGA's political year runs from September to the following July.** You can find out more about the LGA's lead members, our governance arrangements, and policy and executive meetings by visiting [www.local.gov.uk/about/our-meetings-and-leadership](http://www.local.gov.uk/about/our-meetings-and-leadership)



# Councillor e-learning

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## Collaboration on regional net zero



**Kevin O'Malley** is the Innovation Lead, Clean Growth and Infrastructure, at Innovate UK

### The action that's needed to address and arrest the impacts of climate change is wide-ranging and profound.

Local authorities carry a significant proportion of the burden in delivering this. Their statutory roles will need to be fundamentally disrupted to transition to carbon neutral activities.

During a time of decreasing resources and increasing demand for services, this transformation will require bold choices and ground-breaking technologies.

It's clear that councils recognise the urgency and significance of this situation, with 95 per cent having some strategy, policy or target reflecting their commitment to net zero.

Innovative businesses have also been working hard to provide the step-changing technologies to deliver on this ambition, but much of it has yet to be deployed at any significant scale.

This has been explored in Innovate UK's report: 'Getting to net zero: bridging the innovation gap between places and companies'.

Innovate UK sees the enormous opportunity for the UK to prosper environmentally, economically and socially from being the fastest transitioning economy to net zero. With this in mind, it set out to explore the mechanisms to accelerate the uptake and scaling of net zero technologies among local authorities.

Earlier work with local authorities had indicated that there are a range of critical barriers hindering roll-out of innovative net zero technologies. These include:

- a lack of alignment between the challenges prioritised by local authorities and the innovation sector's understanding of those challenges and translation of these challenges into relevant, deployable products and services

- the complexity, expense and risk associated with procuring net zero innovations at scale
- a lack of clearly articulated and understood business cases for investment in net zero solutions and associated infrastructure
- an under-utilisation of dedicated options for procuring innovation.

Innovate UK looked to address some of these barriers by working with Innovate UK KTN and the East of England LGA (EELGA) on a 'net zero regions' pilot in the East of England.

EELGA provided a critical convening role, encouraging participation and brokering communications with its 50

local authorities. Innovate UK KTN ran the workshops, which identified eight shared challenges across the region.

It then implemented its 'innovation exchange' process to identify the optimal solutions in the market to extending the life of fleet vehicles via low or zero carbon technologies.

The pilot concluded with a networking and showcasing event at Homerton College, Cambridge, where local authority delegates could share their priorities and plans, and the delivery partners could share the learning for this pilot exercise.

Our explorations suggested that the following needs to be in place:

- a project partner engaged with, and credible to, regional local authorities to ensure good levels of participation and trust
- an environment of genuine open dialogue between authorities, to ensure that valuable experiences along the journey, rather than just success stories, are shared
- connections and communication with other relevant regional and national stakeholders (for example, net zero hubs, Crown Commercial Services, central government bodies).

Innovate UK recognises the extraordinary help of EELGA and Innovate UK KTN, without whom this project would never have happened, and is enormously grateful to the local authorities in the East of England who participated so enthusiastically.

We will be employing the lessons learned during this pilot in developing a new, 'net zero living', place-based innovation programme, which we hope to launch toward the end of 2022.



**i** **Innovate UK is the UK's national innovation agency**, supporting business-led innovation in all sectors, technologies and regions. It is a non-departmental public body, see [www.ukri.org/innovate-uk](http://www.ukri.org/innovate-uk)

## Bringing people together



Councillor **Shaun Davies** is Leader of the LGA's Labour Group

**I**t was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September. This is a profound national loss.

Her Majesty set the standard of what is expected of those in public life.

On her 21st birthday, the Queen declared she would devote her whole life, whether long or short, to serving her people; a promise that she kept.

The image of the lone monarch obeying coronavirus restrictions at the Duke of Edinburgh's funeral provided much-needed reassurance that we were all in it together, all following the same rules.

The Queen will also be remembered for her great compassion, and her ability to express the collective grief felt by all following national tragedies such as Aberfan, Dunblane, and the Grenfell Tower fire.

While we mourn the passing of Her Majesty, I was proud to see councils across the country providing so many opportunities for our communities to pay their respects locally.

Councils opened public and virtual books of condolence and arranged areas for floral tributes to be displayed.

I am sure councils will continue to find ways to bring people together to celebrate the Queen's selfless devotion to our country and the Commonwealth.

As Labour Leader Sir Keir Starmer said in his own tribute in Parliament: "Our Elizabethan age may now be over, but her legacy will live on forever. And as the children of that era, it falls upon us to take that legacy forward."

As His Majesty King Charles III begins his reign, I send him my deepest sympathy for the loss of his mother.

Every council conducted a proclamation ceremony to announce the new King, and I have no doubt he will follow the inspiring example set by his mother.

All of us in local government will give him our very best wishes as he takes on this great responsibility, and will be proud to serve him.

May our Queen rest in peace. God save the King.

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**"I was proud to see councils across the country providing so many opportunities for our communities to pay their respects locally"**

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

## Financing future growth

**A**s **first** was going to press, we were expecting an emergency fiscal package from the Government, announcing tax cuts.

Alongside previously announced help with energy bills (see p6), this is a key plank of the new Prime Minister's economic agenda for recovery in the face of high inflation and the rising cost of living.

However, local economies each need different interventions to ensure they can thrive in the future. Understanding the exact nature of an effective and sustainable stimulus can only be carried out locally – something the LGA's political group leaders and I pointed out in our welcome letter to PM Liz Truss.

In it, we also reiterated our belief that greater fiscal freedom for all councils – including the power to raise more money locally and greater local control over how it is spent – is crucial to ensuring all parts of the country are able to prosper.

Councils could also provide better value for money for the taxpayer by making longer-term investments that deliver savings, if they have adequate, certain, sustainable and long-term funding.

Last November, when councils were setting their budgets, the forecast was that consumer price index (CPI) inflation would be 4.4 per cent in 2022/23.

Since then, energy prices, spiralling inflation, and National Living Wage pressures have added significantly increased costs to councils' budgets.

At the point when CPI was expected to be 8 per cent in 2022/23, our analysis showed this led to £2.4 billion in extra cost pressures this year, and a funding gap of £3.6 billion in 2023/24 rising to £4.5 billion in 2024/25, based on inflation coming down to much lower levels in future years.

While inflation dipped slightly in September to 9.9 per cent, the Bank of England predicts the rate will be 13 per cent in the autumn.



It is only by ministers addressing this significant funding gap that councils can protect services, invest in local services, employ the necessary skilled and motivated workforce, deliver for our communities and level up all parts of the country.





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

## The rock on which Britain was built

In the many tributes, obituaries, and messages of condolence from around the world following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, a constant theme has been a recognition of her service, duty and devotion to communities across the UK, the Commonwealth and beyond.

Just a few months ago, during her Platinum Jubilee, we came together to celebrate her 70 years of extraordinary service to our nation.

The scale of the celebrations and the joy that they brought were testament to the affection in which she was held and the respect that we had for her.

As the Prime Minister noted in her tribute, Queen Elizabeth was the rock on which modern Britain was built.

She was there for us in the good times and the bad times. She provided us with strength and stability throughout her reign, including most recently during the pandemic when her broadcast to the nation reassured millions that we would get through it and that we would meet again.

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**"A constant theme has been a recognition of the Queen's service, duty and devotion"**

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At this time of great sadness, my thoughts are with all the members of the Royal Family, but especially our new monarch, His Majesty King Charles III.

His accession to the throne marks the start of a new chapter in our national story.

I am sure that it will be marked by the same service and devotion to this country that his mother exhibited during her 70-year reign, and we in turn will express our loyalty to him by saying the words: God save the King.



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

## Elizabeth the Great – leading by example

On behalf of the Liberal Democrat local government family, I offer our condolences to His Majesty King Charles III and the Royal Family on the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Watching how our sector pulled together at short notice to organise books of condolence, commemoration services, proclamations and public screenings of the Queen's funeral is typical of how local government often leads by example, much like our late Queen.

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**"Her Majesty knew the sacrifices that so many in local government make to better their area"**

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Her Majesty knew full well the sacrifices that so many in local government make to better their area and that often this comes without the deserved credit.

This was clear to me when I met her in 2014. I was presented to the Queen and introduced to her as a local councillor and mayor of my town at the age of 20.

She quipped: "Good grief, why on earth would you want to do that?"

As well as demonstrating that dry sense of humour we've heard so much about in recent weeks, it was also an acknowledgement of how challenging being in public service can be.

Most of us go into local government to serve our community, give something back and improve our area and, whether you are a monarchist or a republican, the Queen's sense of duty and service was a shining example to all of us in public service.

People have already started using 'Elizabeth the Great' to describe her – a title not forged by conquest or battle but by public service.



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

## Winning hearts and minds everywhere

So many of our members reflected a great sadness at the loss of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. We have written to His Majesty King Charles III with sincere condolences to all the Queen's family.

As Britain's longest-reigning monarch and figurehead over seven decades, our Queen demonstrated the very essence of unstinting public service, winning hearts and minds wherever she went.

Her inspiring and constant integrity, humanity and support will be much missed as Head of State, Head of the Commonwealth and as our Queen, where so many of us feel a very personal connection. Her inspiration lives on as we face our own challenges ahead.

Like so many others, I travelled and queued to pay my final respects to the Queen, a moving experience. I also laid flowers in Green Park on behalf of our 3,000-strong Independent Group.

Meanwhile, thank you to all our members who have worked hard representing the Independent Group on the LGA's boards this past year, to those who expressed an interest in taking on this work, and to all supporting us through our busy think tanks.

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**"Our Queen demonstrated the very essence of unstinting public service"**

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There has been a huge amount of change with a new monarch and prime minister, while our communities are facing huge challenges with increased energy bills and the rising cost of living.

Do join us on 28 October at the LGA's London offices to reflect on these challenges, sharing thoughts, ideas and good practice at our annual Independent Group Conference. More information is available at [www.local.gov.uk/lga-independent](http://www.local.gov.uk/lga-independent)

# Co-creating a circular region



**Katie Thomas** is Senior Strategy Manager – Low Carbon and Environment at York & North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership



**Over the past three years, local authorities have declared climate emergencies and taken an active role in supporting the delivery of net zero.**

In many cases, action has focused on energy – whether by reducing demand through housing retrofit or switching to renewable energy sources.

The role of moving towards a circular economy remains a missing piece of the jigsaw puzzle. It aims to decouple economic activity from the consumption of finite resources and greenhouse gas emissions, ensuring that materials stay circulating within our economy.

It has three key principles:

- design waste out of our communities and businesses
- keep products and materials in use for as long as possible

- regenerate farmland and natural systems.

Research undertaken by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation indicates that 55 per cent of global emissions are directly from energy: moving towards a circular economy can help us tackle the overlooked 45 per cent by transforming the way goods are made and used.

Across Yorkshire and the Humber, we've been developing a work programme to accelerate the move to a circular economy.

Taking a more regional approach has provided the opportunity to explore the interdependencies between rural and urban areas and develop interventions that create true circular systems.

To facilitate this work, we've held two collaborative stakeholder workshops to identify key opportunities.

This approach, including local authorities, communities, academia, businesses and other organisations, has been critical to supporting innovative thinking and capacity building for change.

We've recently secured funding from Yorkshire and Humber Councils and North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub to recruit an officer to coordinate the delivery of the work programme across the region.

This will build upon best practice projects, including the innovative 'Circular Malton' initiative that aims to create the first 'circular' market town in Malton and neighbouring Norton, in Ryedale, North Yorkshire.



For more information, please visit [www.ynlep.com](http://www.ynlep.com)

## Transforming lives with tennis



**Patrick Hollwey** is Co-Founder of Tennis for Free

**Tennis For Free operates fully inclusive alternative tennis sessions for all ages and all members of the community nationwide at public parks for free.**

Based on a mass participation weekly session, we run mixed ability group games and drills managed by qualified coaches and supported by volunteers.

The result is that we are making tennis and sport available to all – from those who simply want to try the game to the less privileged who may otherwise not engage in tennis or any sport.

There are no catches: everything is free, including equipment and coaching. We feel that providing free sport is essential in these times of hardship for many families.

We work in partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association and councils to help open up local courts and maximise the use of facilities, particularly targeting those in areas of high deprivation, and encouraging all to come along.

The benefit to mental and physical wellbeing cannot be underestimated.

Adrian Gaylon, Sports Development Officer at Rother District Council, told us that working in partnership with Tennis for Free was the right option for his local authority "not just because it helped the project to happen by bringing in expertise, funding and resources, but equally important the charity had the same philosophy of wanting to build local tennis communities and break down barriers which might stop people playing".

He added: "This includes developing family sessions, activities based on fun and inclusion, and breaking down barriers to why people might not come, such as session costs or the cost of buying equipment."



We are not just tennis; we are a community initiative addressing many of the social problems currently faced by society.

Our sessions change lives, they build social networks, reduce isolation, support families, teach new skills, and build life skills such as teamwork and communication.



**Tennis for Free is a registered charity**, see [www.tennisforfree.com](http://www.tennisforfree.com) or email [support@tennisforfree.com](mailto:support@tennisforfree.com) if you have any questions



# ELECTIONS



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



## Warning shots fired

**We have a new Prime Minister – and although local elections will be nowhere near the top of her burgeoning agenda, seasoned observers know that the weekly results from up and down the country can be leading indicators of the ebb and flow of political fortunes.**

In that context, it is clearly not good news for Liz Truss that the Conservatives lost all eight council seats they defended over the past month.

In some cases, local factors were to the fore. In the Preesall ward of Wyre Council, for example, where the Conservatives had topped the poll at every election since 1976, controversy over the siting of a gravel quarry played into the hands of one of the Independent candidates.

By contrast, the contests in Cannock Chase and in Redditch (including a Worcestershire County Council vacancy) featured a more traditional two-party battle, with clear swings to Labour, leading to three gains for Sir Keir Starmer's party.

The Hednesford North ward and the Arrow Valley West division do trend towards Labour when the party is competitive, but Redditch's Headless Cross and Oakenshaw ward had previously been won by the Conservatives ever since its creation in 2004.

Labour also gained a seat following the resignation of an Independent in the wonderfully named Foggy Furze ward in 'red wall' Hartlepool. This marks a further step towards the reinstatement of 'normal' party politics there, after many years of factionalism and splits.

Elsewhere, there were ominous signs for the Conservatives that both selective

party competition and tactical voting might see them caught in a pincer movement by whichever opponent is best placed to defeat them.

In Beverley Rural, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, the Green party did not stand, despite polling quite strongly in both 2015 and 2019. That decision helped pave the way for a Liberal Democrat gain.

In West Sussex, on the other hand, the Liberal Democrats appear to have stood aside in the Barnham ward of Arun District Council, the better to improve the chances of the Greens – who had finished second to the Conservatives and taken a seat in this three-member ward in 2019.

In the neighbouring West Sussex division of Felpham, neither the Liberal Democrats nor the Greens fielded a candidate. This undoubtedly helped Independent Jaine Wild, a local parish councillor and anti-fox hunting campaigner, over the line in a division that UKIP had won in 2013.

Of course, this is not yet on anything like the scale Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown managed to encourage in the run-up to the 1997 General Election, which left the Conservatives in overall control of scarcely a dozen councils across Britain, compared with 200 for Labour and 50 for the Liberal Democrats.

But they are warning shots, with the Conservatives likely to lose their leadership of the LGA following next May's extensive local elections if things don't pick up.

**i** For more details of these and other recent by-elections, please visit [www.lgafirst.co.uk/local-by-elections](http://www.lgafirst.co.uk/local-by-elections)



### Local by-elections

#### Arun, Barnham

GREEN GAIN FROM CON

9.4% over Con

Turnout 21.3%

#### Cambridge, Trumpington

LIB DEM HELD

26.7% over Lab

Turnout 27.3%

#### Cannock Chase, Hednesford North

LAB GAIN FROM CON

8.1% over Ind

Turnout 14.4%

#### East Riding of Yorkshire, Beverley Rural

LIB DEM GAIN FROM CON

25.4% over Con

Turnout 29.2%

#### Hartlepool, Foggy Furze

LAB GAIN FROM IND

5.2% over Con

Turnout 15.8%

#### Lancaster, Warton

GREEN GAIN FROM CON

41.1% over Con

Turnout 40.5%

#### Redditch, Headless Cross and Oakenshaw

LAB GAIN FROM CON

4.4% over Con

Turnout 28.2%

#### West Sussex, Felpham

IND GAIN FROM CON

3.8% over Con

Turnout 19.2%

#### Worcestershire, Arrow Valley West

LAB GAIN FROM CON

18.0% over Con

Turnout 15.8%

#### Wyre, Preesall

IND GAIN FROM CON

6.6% over Con

Turnout 33.9%

# LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition

4-6 July 2023

Bournemouth  
International  
Centre

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