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LGA annual conference Harrogate 2024

The Budget

Further council cuts would be “disastrous” **p16**

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Showcasing councils

I'm looking forward to meeting many of you in Harrogate next week, at my first LGA annual conference as LGA Chair.

As ever, we will be discussing the issues that matter to local government with high-profile speakers from across the sector, national politicians, and our partners and stakeholders (p10).

The Innovation Zone will once again be at the heart of conference, showcasing councils' big ideas and local solutions to the challenges we all face (p13).

The Budget and Spending Review follow hard on the heels of Harrogate, and you can read about the LGA's submission to the Treasury in this month's edition of **first** (p16-17).

We also have reflections on the recent Liberal Democrat (p19), Labour (p20) and Conservative (p21) party conferences, and on 20 years of the LGA's leadership programme for black, Asian and minority ethnic councillors (p24), as councils around the country mark Black History Month.

Finally, you may have noticed some changes to **first!** The new look aims to improve how we keep you informed about the LGA's work, and is more accessible. Let us know what you think of the redesign by emailing karen.thornton@local.gov.uk. ●

Councillor Louise Gittins is LGA Chair

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LGA calls for emergency funding for vulnerable children

Child protection investigations

have hit a record high, with numbers amounting to more than 600 a day on average, the LGA has warned.

It is calling for emergency funding for children's social care to be announced in the Budget on 30 October.

Government statistics show a record 225,400 child protection investigations in England in the year to 31 March 2023 – equivalent to 617 a day. This is 66 more cases each day than in 2019, when the current data set started being collected.

Child protection investigations, known as section 47 enquiries, take place whenever a council identifies a reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

The LGA is calling on the Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, to use her first Budget to ensure councils are fully funded and resourced to tackle the rising demand for support for vulnerable children.

Councils have faced spiralling costs and pressures in children's social care, with budgets up by 11 per cent in real terms in the last year alone. Key drivers behind

the increase in children needing support include mental health concerns and domestic abuse.

The rise in investigations has also been fuelled by an increase in schools making referrals to children's social services, with an 8 per cent increase in five years.

Cllr Arooj Shah, Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, said: "It is deeply saddening when any child experiences suffering, and it is absolutely right that councils act where there are

concerns. However, these disturbingly high figures show the huge pressures councils are under to intervene and provide that vital care and support.

"As a society, we must do what we can collectively to ensure every child is safe from harm.

"This is why we are calling on the Chancellor to provide an emergency cash injection for children's social care to help councils continue to provide this lifeline of support for vulnerable children." ●



'Empower local authorities to deliver more homes'

Making housebuilding targets

mandatory centralises policy and weakens local decision-making powers, the LGA has warned in response to proposed planning reforms. Such a move would reduce flexibilities to develop an area over time, and make it more difficult to meet local and national priorities.

All councils have their part to play, through their local plans, to improve housebuilding outcomes, including the essential need to deliver more homes for social rent and homes that

are genuinely affordable, according to the LGA.

It supports the Government's commitment to empower local authorities to deliver more homes, particularly for social and affordable rents and, in its response to a consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), sets out a range of pragmatic ideas about how to do so.

The LGA's response highlights that planning permission is not a barrier to housebuilding, with local authorities approving almost nine in 10 planning applications despite significant

resourcing and capacity issues.

It also warns that some of the proposals in the Government's consultation, including a new methodology to determine mandatory housebuilding targets, could lead to unintended consequences, such as speculative unplanned development without the infrastructure to meet the needs of communities.

LGA Housing Spokesperson Cllr Adam Hug said: "There is a strong appetite across local government to work constructively to improve coverage of local plans and encourage housebuilding.

"However, councils and local communities know their areas best, and need to be full partners in tackling the housing crisis, with new development supported by the infrastructure needed to make communities thrive, and proper consultation and engagement that can help ensure local people are able to benefit." ●

i See www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses to read the LGA's NPPF submission in full

Health prevention 'is not a luxury' – LGA

Better targeting of existing money spent on health prevention could deliver an extra £11 billion annual return on investment, according to the NHS Confederation. It recommends more investment in prevention – particularly around children and young people, exercise and smoking, diabetes, and cardiovascular interventions – and on high-value interventions.

The LGA has long endorsed a greater emphasis on prevention in health care. Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said this should be a "core part of health and care and not a luxury extra when budgets allow".

Councils and their partners play a "vital role" in addressing the wider determinants of health, through their role in public health, care and support, housing, green spaces, youth services, and the local economy. But with resources under intense pressure, council spending is increasingly used to meet growing demand and cost pressures in acute, frontline services – leaving less and less for preventative support, he added.

Cllr Fothergill said: "We have called on government to invest in the public health grant and other vital areas of prevention, such as supported housing (see p7) and health visiting. This must be part of a new long-term approach to funding prevention and early action support, and a more sophisticated understanding of the social return of that investment." ●

● See p15, p22

Councils warn against funding reductions

Further reductions to council funding would be "disastrous", the LGA has warned in a letter to Chancellor Rachel Reeves ahead of her first Budget on 30 October.

The cross-party letter, jointly signed with other local government organisations, calls for immediate action to stabilise council finances and protect vital local services, amid a "perfect storm" of rising demand and cost pressures and inflation.

The LGA estimates that councils made £24.5 billion of savings and efficiencies between 2010/11 and 2022/23 because spending on services did not increase in line with cost and demand pressures.

The letter – signed by LGA Chair Cllr Louise Gittins and her counterparts at the County Councils Network, District Councils' Network, Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities, Core Cities, Key Cities, and London Councils – calls for measures to stabilise the sector's finances in 2025/26, including:

- a significant and sustained increase in overall funding

- specific measures such as uprating local housing allowance rates
- multi-year finance settlements
- simplification of the number of funding pots
- an end to competitive bidding for grant funding
- certainty on finance reforms, including the business rates reset
- more financial freedoms and flexibilities.

The letter concludes: "Stabilising the local government sector financially will not only protect key services, it will also provide a return on investment to the taxpayer, while improving outcomes for the people and places councils serve. From giving young people a good start in life and pursuing preventative strategies, to unlocking and enabling talents, skills, spaces and places, a robust and sustainable local government sector will be critical to the realisation of the Government's growth, housing, planning and infrastructural ambitions for our country." ●



Social care workforce 'at breaking point'

The LGA has called for "immediate and decisive" action to tackle the adult social care workforce crisis, as a new report reveals huge challenges in recruiting and retaining staff.

The LGA report shows widespread staffing shortages, increasing reliance on costly agency workers, and growing financial pressures on councils. Most importantly, staffing shortages are having a profoundly negative impact on people who draw on care and support, leaving an enormous amount of unmet and under-met need across the country.

Findings from the LGA's survey of councils include:

- a 16 per cent vacancy rate for full-time equivalent adult social care staff working in councils
- 87 per cent of councils surveyed reported difficulties recruiting qualified social workers in mental health services
- 55 per cent of councils said low wages were the primary reason staff were leaving
- an estimated £292 million was set to be spent on agency staff in 2023/24, up from £277 million the previous year.

Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "The adult social care workforce is at breaking point.

"We are calling on the Government to work with councils on a fair pay agreement for care workers to attract and retain skilled professionals, implement a fully funded workforce strategy for the sector, and provide councils with the resources they need to reduce their reliance on costly agency staff.

"We are urging all political parties to put the national interest first and work together to secure the future of adult social care." ●

Incineration tax cost fears

A new eco 'incineration tax' risks pushing councils to the brink, the LGA has warned.

Emissions from burning waste will be taxed from 2028, as part of efforts to encourage the uptake of greener technologies. Around half of all household waste collected by councils is burned in facilities that produce the same amount of greenhouse gases as around three million homes.

The carbon tax could cost as much as £6.5 billion by 2036, and £747 million in 2028, according to research by the LGA, the County Councils Network and the District Councils' Network.

The tax, which currently applies to aviation, power and industry, adds around £65 per tonne of carbon produced. Councils could be forced to raise taxes or cut other vital services unless the tax burden is shifted, the LGA has warned.

All three bodies are calling for the taxes to be shifted to the industries that manufacture the materials, such as packaging, textiles and furniture, as councils have no way of reducing the amount of waste they have to collect – while manufacturers can move to more recyclable materials.

LGA Environment Spokesperson Cllr Adam Hug said: "Current proposals risk councils and local taxpayers facing enormous costs, which simultaneously risks the scheme failing to meet its objectives while exposing councils to significant additional financial risk." ●



'Boost local growth by extending UKSPF'

Vital funding used to boost inclusive economic growth should be extended by a year to avoid a cliff edge in support for local projects, the LGA has urged.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which was established as a replacement for EU regional funding, is due to run out in March 2025.

The LGA says the fast-approaching deadline is starting to impact on delivery of valued locally led schemes, including on regenerating high streets, skills training, and creating jobs.

In its submission to the Treasury, the LGA says the upcoming Budget should be used to provide fully flexible one-year additional funding, equal to the

third and final year of the current UKSPF.

Councils are also awaiting clarification on other growth funds, including the third round of the Levelling Up Fund.

It comes as a new report commissioned by the LGA says the current funding system for economic development is too short-term, fragmented and costly.

Longer term, the report says there should be a simplified approach to growth funding that gives local leaders greater flexibility over where and how investment decisions are made locally.

Cllr Martin Tett, Chairman of the LGA's People and Places Board, said: "The Government should use the upcoming Budget to provide stability and certainty to councils and local businesses, who want to invest in communities, by providing an extra year of fully flexible, additional funding for UKSPF.

"This should be part of a wider review of local growth funding that means councils have the powers, resources and long-term funding to tackle regional inequalities, promote regeneration and boost economic development." ●



7.7m households 'in fuel stress'

There are 7.7 million households in England at risk of fuel stress this winter, including the majority of families with children, new research has found.

The Resolution Foundation think tank said the Government needs to do more to support vulnerable households who are no longer eligible for winter fuel payments and those who never have been eligible.

Fuel stress is defined as families needing to spend more than 10 per cent of their income (after housing costs) on heating.

The report calls on the Chancellor to expand the cold weather payments scheme to protect vulnerable households – including pensioners and working-age families living in poverty – in time for this winter.

Cllr Pete Marland, Chair of the LGA's Economy and Resources Board, said

councils are doing what they can to support the most vulnerable in their communities, adding: "It is good that the Household Support Fund has been extended and will allow many councils to provide much-needed support to families.

"As this report recommends, expanding and reforming cold weather payments could capture more households most in need of help with rising energy bills, including poorer pensioners, as well as families, without adversely impacting on public finances.

"Ultimately, councils want to see a shift away from short-term crisis support so they can invest instead in preventative services that improve people's financial resilience and life chances. Crucially, this must be underpinned by a sufficiently resourced national welfare system." ●

Children in temporary accommodation

The number of households with children living in temporary accommodation in England for at least five years has risen by almost a quarter.

The latest official figures show that there were 16,790 such households in some form of temporary accommodation for this length of time. In total, 78,560 households were assessed as homeless and therefore owed a relief duty by councils in 2023/24, up 12.3 per cent from 2022/23.

Factors underlying the increase include a rise in those threatened with homelessness because of the end of an assured shorthold tenancy, or because family or friends are no longer willing to accommodate them.

Cllr Adam Hug, LGA Housing Spokesperson, said: "The increase in the

numbers of people who find themselves in this tragic situation shows the scale and urgency of the issues they face. More and more people are having to turn to their local council for homelessness support, and these figures show councils are supporting another record-high number of households living in temporary accommodation.

"The temporary accommodation subsidy gap, currently stuck at 2011 levels, needs to be urgently addressed in the Autumn Budget, as this is driving ever higher spend on temporary accommodation and limiting the resources available for homelessness prevention.

"This is alongside giving councils the powers and resources needed to address the national shortage of affordable housing." ●

Supported housing 'could save millions'

Providing supported housing for older people and those with learning disabilities or mental health needs could lead to major savings for the public sector, the LGA has said.

Supported accommodation, which provides residents with care, support or supervision, has been shown to reduce hospital admissions and the need for residential care, with the LGA estimating an investment of £1.6 billion would generate £3.4 billion in savings across the public sector.

A series of case studies published by the LGA highlights the financial and social value of supported housing. For example, a scheme in Bradford has saved up to £47,000 per person for the NHS, while a project in Medway has helped 151 people with complex needs find employment or training in just nine months.

These examples demonstrate the vital role supported housing plays in enabling individuals to lead fulfilling, independent lives. However, years of funding cuts and the removal of ring-fenced funding in 2011 have left supported housing in a precarious position, with concerns over the quality of unregulated providers.

The LGA is calling on the Government to address these funding challenges in its



Budget on 30 October, by creating a specific housing support fund, allowing councils to invest in long-term solutions.

Supported housing is just one part of the preventative care system, which also includes adapting homes and reducing isolation.

Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, emphasised the need for sustainable funding, adding: "High-quality supported housing not only improves lives, but also delivers significant savings across public services. A renewed focus on preventative care is essential for better services and long-term savings." ●

New renters' protection plan announced

The Deputy Prime Minister, Angela Rayner, has announced a series of measures to protect renters and improve housing standards.

These include tackling issues such as fire defects, damp and mould by including a new law aimed at ensuring landlords respond to reports of hazards swiftly.

Set out at last month's Labour Party conference, the proposed legislation – Awaab's law – is named after two-year-old Awaab Ishak, who died as a result of direct exposure to mould in the social home his family rented in Rochdale.

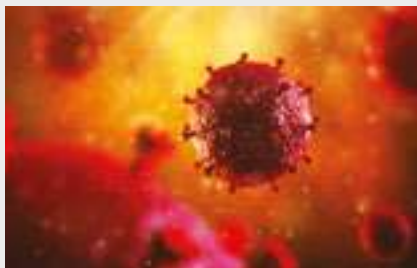
Ms Rayner also announced plans to accelerate efforts to fix unsafe cladding on high-rise buildings across the UK.

In addition, she laid out intentions to consult on a new decent homes standard for all social and private rented homes.

Cllr Adam Hug, LGA Housing Spokesperson, said: "Councils are committed to addressing the challenges of unfit housing and want their residents to have the security of a safe and well-maintained home, with any issues quickly and satisfactorily addressed.

"While we look forward to seeing the detail behind this announcement, councils need further funding and support to raise standards in the private rented sector.

"Councils could also do much more if they were given the right tools, such as removing the requirement for Secretary of State approval for larger selective licensing schemes." ●



LGA calls for 10-year sexual health strategy

The number of heterosexual men and women newly diagnosed in England with HIV has risen by more than 30 per cent since 2022, according to the latest HIV surveillance data from the UK Health Security Agency.

This shows that diagnoses among heterosexual men increased by 36 per cent (445 in 2022 to 605 in 2023), and among heterosexual women by 30 per cent (602 in 2022 to 780 in 2023).

The rise in cases was steepest for ethnic minority heterosexuals, with a 45 per cent increase in this group compared with the previous year.

The LGA said the figures show demand for sexual health services is increasing and emphasises the need for a 10-year sexual health strategy.

Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "While it is good more people are getting tested for HIV, these figures show significant challenges remain in reducing HIV infections, despite the progress of recent years.

"Demand for sexual health services is on the rise, which reinforces the need for a 10-year sexual health strategy to tackle infection rates and ensure that sexual health services are properly funded.

"The progress made in supporting people with HIV, enabling them to live independent, fulfilling lives, and the fact that it is no longer the death sentence it once was, is a major public health success story." ●

Falling smoking rates 'testament' to councils' efforts

New figures show that around six million people aged 18 and over (11.9 per cent) smoked cigarettes in the UK in 2023 – the lowest proportion of current smokers since records began in 2011.

The LGA said falling smoking rates were "testament" to the efforts and hard work of council public health teams.

The data, published by the Office for National Statistics, found those aged 25 to 34 had the highest proportion of current smokers (14 per cent) in the UK in 2023.

It also showed that around 5.1 million

adults aged 16 and over (9.8 per cent) currently use an e-cigarette daily or occasionally. E-cigarette use was highest among people aged 16 to 24.

Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "Council public health teams work hard to help reduce smoking rates and it is testament to their efforts that smoking rates continue to fall.

"They can help the Government achieve its ambition of eliminating smoking in England, and we look forward to the publication of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill.

"We are also calling on the Government, in the Autumn Budget, to increase investment in the public health grant, which has suffered a cut of 27 per cent in real terms since 2015/16." ●

Demand rising for public health funerals

More than 12 public health funerals (PHFs) are taking place every day around the country, according to new LGA research.

A snapshot survey of councils found that there were 4,400 such funerals in 2022/23, and that demand for them is increasing, with a 12.8 per cent increase from 2021/22, when there were 3,900.

PHFs are provided by local authorities as a last resort, when someone dies without family or friends who are able to arrange a funeral for them.

The increase in demand for them has pushed the total spend on public health funerals across England to £5.96 million in 2022/23, up from £5.63 million in 2021/22.

Costs have been steadily rising in recent years, with the total spend over the past four years being more than £21 million (between 2019/20 and 2022/2023).

Despite the increased demand for PHFs, the LGA's survey showed that councils were largely able to deliver the support and information that deceased individuals and their families need in this challenging time.

A significant majority of respondents were familiar with good practice on delivering PHFs (84 per cent) and



nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) provided information online about PHFs and how to access them.

Cllr Heather Kidd, Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, said: "The rising number of public health funerals is a clear example of how councils are having to do more with less, while also continuing to ensure that the most vulnerable in our society are treated with dignity.

"As this survey shows, as costs increase it's going to add more pressure onto council budgets, even when they can recoup some money from the deceased's estate." ●



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Councillor Louise Gittins is Chair of the LGA

I am incredibly excited to be welcoming many of you to my first LGA annual conference as Chair, in Harrogate.

With the new Government's Budget a little more than a week ahead, there couldn't be a more important time to be meeting to discuss the many challenges and opportunities local government faces.

At last year's event in Bournemouth, my predecessor, Cllr Shaun Davies, announced our plans for a Local Government White Paper, which we launched in June, ahead of the general election. This set out how public services could be delivered faster, better and more efficiently locally, by empowering councils to deliver for their residents. It also called for a new central-local partnership, in which local government can work to its full potential for our people, places and planet.

Since July's general election, the LGA has been working tirelessly to ensure local government remains at the forefront of the national agenda and to support, promote and improve your work in line with the White Paper's proposals.

However, the financial pressures facing councils continue to occupy our attention as local leaders, particularly in respect of children's and adults' social care, temporary accommodation, and provision for children

with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

I am proud and humbled by how you, the LGA's members, have striven to carry out your important responsibilities and services in the face of ever-reducing budgets, higher and more complex demands, and higher costs.

Last week, with the District Councils' Network, County Councils Network, the Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities, Core Cities, Key Cities, and London Councils, we wrote to Chancellor Rachel Reeves, warning of the disastrous effect further cuts in council funding would have. In our joint cross-party letter, we emphasised how stabilising the local government sector financially will not only protect vital local services, but will also be critical to the realisation of the Government's ambitions for economic growth, housing, planning and infrastructure.

While the LGA will continue to press for a better and long-term settlement for councils up to and beyond Budget day on 30 October, I remain optimistic and upbeat about the sector's ability to continue to deliver for residents, be innovative, and make a difference.

The breadth and depth of what councils already do every day is represented in the many sessions at the LGA's annual conference and in its Innovation Zone, our 'ideas hub' for councils (see p13).

How to hit net zero, deliver inclusive growth, tackle anti-social behaviour, improve support for care leavers, facilitate community cohesion, address the digital divide, develop an effective and financially sustainable approach to SEND, tackle health inequalities, build a place-based approach to asylum and resettlement,

"I remain optimistic and upbeat about the sector's ability to continue to deliver for residents"



© LGA/Gregg Brown Photography

Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner is scheduled to speak at the LGA conference

attract new talent into the local government workforce, prepare for adult social care inspections, address temporary accommodation, reform homicide reviews, secure healthy homes, and tackle fraud, are some of the questions that will be discussed on just the first day!

I hope every delegate will find something of value to take back to their local authority to help continue their improvement journeys, and to better support their people and places.

The LGA will also be using conference to shine a light on the range of work we do on behalf of local government, and the support we provide to the sector.

For example, we will be highlighting our new, centrally funded, national recruitment campaign – developed with councils, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (Solace), and regional employers' organisations – following a successful trial in the North East. With councils across the UK facing major workforce recruitment and retention issues, 'Make a difference' will showcase the wide variety of rewarding careers in local government.



See you in Harrogate...

The LGA's Annual Conference and Exhibition 2024 takes place in Harrogate from 22-24 October.

We will be debating the issues that matter to local government, with a host of speakers from across local and national government, other public services, business, media and the third sector.

It's not too late to book your place, at www.local.gov.uk/conference. You can also download the conference app via the App Store or Google Play (search for 'LGA events'). If you are unable to join us, you can follow events on X using **#LGAconf24**, or online by visiting www.local.gov.uk.

In addition to councillors, elected mayors, chief executives and officers from across local government, this year's conference speakers include:

- **Angela Rayner MP**, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government
- **Richard Fuller CBE MP**, Chairman, Conservative Party
- **Clr Vikki Slade MP**, Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Housing, Communities and Local Government
- **Carla Denyer MP**, Co-Leader of the Green Party
- **Fatima Whitbread MBE**, retired British Olympian and Ambassador for Action for Children
- **Jim McMahon OBE MP**, Minister for Local Government and English Devolution
- **Kevin Richardson, Mayor**, Lake Barrington, Illinois, USA
- **Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson DBE**, LGA President
- **James Bullion**, Interim Chief Inspector of Adult Social Care and Integrated Care, Care Quality Commission
- **Nicole Jacobs**, Domestic Abuse Commissioner (virtual speaker)
- **Ravi Gurumurthy**, Chief Executive, Nesta
- **Alex Norris MP**, Minister for Democracy and Local Growth
- **Dame Angela Eagle MP**, Minister of State, Home Office
- **Baroness Taylor of Stevenage**, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Housing and Local Government
- **Matthew Taylor**, Chief Executive, NHS Confederation
- **Sally Warren**, Director General 10-year health plan, DHSC
- **Tony McArdle OBE**, Commissioner, MHCLG
- **Sarah Calkin**, Editor, Local Government Chronicle
- **Fiona Howie**, Chief Executive, Town and County Planning Association
- **Leigh Middleton**, Chief Executive Officer, National Youth Agency
- **Natalie Turner**, Deputy Director, Centre for Ageing Better
- **Rob Young**, Award-winning writer and artist
- **Owen Mapley**, Chief Executive, CIPFA
- **Lord Khan of Burnley**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, MHCLG (virtual speaker)
- **Megan MacLeod**, Director, Office of Care Leaver Advocacy
- **Sarah Clarke**, Co-Chair, National Network of Parent Carer Forums
- **Anne Longfield CBE**, Founder, Centre for Young Lives
- **Emma Richards**, Head of Project Development, Carbon Literacy Project
- **Jess McGregor**, Vice President, Association of Directors of Adult Social Services
- **Vicky Davis**, Director, Local Government Value for Money, National Audit Office
- **Julie Bass**, Chief Executive, Turning Point
- **Fran Hegyi OBE**, Deputy Chair, and Executive Director, Creative Industries Council and Edinburgh International Festival
- **Richard Clark MSc BA(Hons)**, Senior Fire Engineer – Protection, National Fire Chiefs Council
- **Graham Vidler**, Chief Executive Officer, Passenger Transport UK
- **Mark De-Lisser**, Founder at Singology Choir, ACM Gospel Choir, The World Choir.

I'm also looking forward to promoting our new assurance framework – an example of how we can lead sector-led improvement ourselves. We have also reached out to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to co-create a system of improvement and assurance that places a greater emphasis on sector-led improvement and support, and therefore less need for intervention from government or other bodies.

Local government's focus on prevention and its innovative use of current funding show that we are proactive problem solvers, delivering better outcomes without always asking for more money, and creating thriving communities and places while supporting the most vulnerable people in society. I look forward to discussing these and many more issues with you in Harrogate. ●

Please visit www.local.gov.uk/conference to join us in Harrogate for the local government event of the year. If you can't make it, you can follow the conference on social media at **#LGAConf24** or online via our website www.local.gov.uk

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Proud sponsors of the
LGA Conference Innovation Zone.

We look forward to welcoming local authorities, including a number of our clients, to the Innovation Zone, to showcase new ideas and innovations for the future of local government.

Using local authority and partner data to realise prevention at scale

23 October, 10:35 - 11:05

All delegates are invited to join this session led by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham supported by Xantura, a Newton Company. They will showcase the benefits, challenges, and their future ambitions of using local authority and partner data to scale prevention and maximise the potential of AI.

[Find out more in the conference app.](#)

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Unlocking innovation in local government

The LGA's 'ideas hub' is back!



Councillor Abi Brown OBE is Chairman of the LGA's Improvement and Innovation Board

The Innovation Zone is the 'ideas hub' of the LGA's annual conference, featuring the best and brightest new ideas in local government, and it will remain a key part of the conference programme this year.

Taking place from 22-24 October in Harrogate, this year's Innovation Zone will provide a vibrant and interactive space at the conference. It will give councils and partners the opportunity to showcase their innovative solutions to the sector's challenges to delegates from across the local government sector.

As Chair of the Improvement and Innovation Board, and of the Innovation Zone's Member-Led Working Group, I am delighted to say we have another diverse programme this year.

There will be more than 40 engaging talks featuring councils from across the country. Sessions will showcase work on key issues of significance for the sector – ranging from social services and digital technologies to public health, workforce, and much more.

“With up to three presentations at any one time, there will always be something exciting on”



Last year's Innovation Zone proved to be a big hit with delegates at annual conference



All sessions will be creative and interactive, with opportunities for delegates to ask questions and share learning about improving local government services and communities across all regions.

With up to three presentations running at any one time, there will always be something exciting going on to interest delegates.

Our highly regarded 'Spotlight on' sessions will also feature again this year, providing talks on cutting-edge issues that aim to challenge and inspire.

The first session will be focused on a joint project by the Carbon Literacy Trust and Manchester City Council to train unprecedented numbers of its officers and members (96 per cent) in carbon literacy. The aim is to enable delivery of action plans, driving carbon targets and greater embedding of climate performance across policy and decision-making.

The 'Spotlight on' series will also highlight an artificial intelligence project by our hosts, North Yorkshire Council. Speakers will showcase a tool they have used to review and highlight information from a multitude of sources to enable social workers to see data in a different

way, and to deliver services more effectively while improving outcomes for the children and families that use the service.

I am particularly looking forward to presenting, alongside Best Value Commissioner Gavin Jones, on the LGA's strengthened Corporate Peer Challenge approach launched earlier this year, and the relationship with the new Best Value guidance. Liverpool City Council will also be sharing insights from its experience of this process and the impact it has had.

The zone will also feature a series of exciting talks hosted by Newton, our Innovation Zone sponsor, and its partners, including a session with Leeds City Council on integration of health and social care systems, and the positive impacts this has had on its residents.

Finally, besides its excellent programme of events, Newton will be supplying free coffee throughout the conference, brewed by a team of professional baristas, to give delegates a chance to recharge!

Find out more about the Innovation Zone and book your conference place at www.local.gov.uk/conference – I am looking forward to seeing you all in Harrogate. ●

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Reducing health inequalities

Adding extra years to life and extra life to those years



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

Our population is ageing. There are currently more than 21 million people aged 50 and over in England, and more than 10 million aged 65 and over – making up 38 and 18 per cent of the population respectively.

The number of people aged 65 to 79 is predicted to increase by nearly a third, to more than 10 million, in the next 40 years, while those aged 80 and over – the fastest-growing segment of the population – is set to more than double to more than six million. But while greater longevity is to be welcomed, far too many of those later years are being spent in poor health.

Currently, women can expect to live, on average, another 21 years when they reach 65, while, for men, it is close to another

“Through concerted and determined local and national action, we can make a huge difference”

19. But only half of those years are spent in good health – or disability free, as it is known.

Inequalities in life and health expectancy remain wide, and have been entrenched and exacerbated, particularly by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The gap between the local authorities with the highest and lowest life expectancy was 7.4 years in 2017-19 and it grew to 8.7 years in 2020-22.

There's also a sharp difference in healthy life expectancy at birth between English regions.

In the North East, it was just 57.6 years for males and 59.7 for females in 2020-22. In stark contrast, male healthy life expectancy at birth in the South East was 64.6 years and 64.7 years for females.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was a significant turning point, causing the sharpest fall in life expectancy since World War II.

However, regardless of the pandemic, where you live should not dictate how many years of your life are spent in good or



very good general health.

The disorders making the greatest contribution to poor health – cardiovascular disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases and some cancers – are preventable. To tackle them, we must address their associated risk factors.

Now more than ever, unhealthy behaviours such as smoking, physical inactivity, drinking too much alcohol and eating an unhealthy diet are in the spotlight.

Local government, with its role in public health, supports and proactively led on hard-hitting national action on obesity, smoking, alcohol and other major health risks, while tobacco control and getting to grips with obesity remain high on the political agenda.

Local government is also key to tackling the wider factors that shape our health – such as having a secure job and adequate income,

decent housing, high-quality education, and green spaces.

Consequently, the LGA strongly welcomed the Government's commitment to halve the gap in healthy life expectancy. Reducing the avoidable differences in health across the population must be a priority, but it requires action across multiple areas.

So, we are encouraged by the Government's commitment to establish a mission delivery board to bring together all government departments with an influence over the social determinants of health.

The ambition is achievable and has been done before: through concerted and determined local and national action, we can make a huge difference.

If we tackle this head on, we can help ensure that not only do we add extra years to life, but also extra life to those years. ●

● See p22

Budgeting for prevention

Further reductions in council spending would be disastrous

The 2024 Autumn Budget (on 30 October) and the Spending Review are taking place in the context of challenging fiscal conditions.

The LGA's submission on these key events is aimed at improving the lives of our councils' residents and helping the Government deliver its missions in the context of these financial challenges.

However, with councils facing a funding gap of more than £2 billion next year (2025/26), the LGA has warned that further cuts would be disastrous for councils and their communities. They would also prevent councils from making any meaningful contribution to the Government's agenda – from social care and housing to economic growth and tackling climate change.

In our submission to the Treasury, we have said that the Government needs to take immediate steps to stabilise council finances and protect vital local services.

With 18 councils already relying on exceptional financial support from government to balance their books this year, we are warning that there is a growing risk of systemic financial failure.

LGA analysis shows that, because of inflation and wage, cost and demand pressures, English councils face a £2.3 billion funding gap in 2025/26, rising to £3.9 billion in 2026/27 – a £6.2 billion shortfall across two years.

Key drivers include soaring costs in children's social care because of the rising complexity and cost of placements, while home-to-school transport costs for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) have surged because of a 62.7 per cent rise in education, care, and health plans from 2018/19 to 2023/24. There is also growing pressure on councils' dedicated schools grant budgets because of increased demand for services for children with SEND, with the deficit here forecast to reach £5 billion by 2025/26.

Rising costs and demand in adult social care have driven a £3.7 billion (18.1 per cent) increase in budgeted spend from 2019/20 to 2024/25, while homelessness service costs have increased by £604 million (77.4 per cent) since 2019/20, driven by asylum and resettlement issues, housing shortages, and record spending on temporary accommodation.

The National Living Wage has increased by nearly 10 per cent in this financial year and the last, and there could be a further substantial increase in 2025/26. Supporting those on the lowest pay is not only fair, but also improves the motivation, loyalty, productivity, and retention of hardworking council staff – especially when more than nine in 10 councils are struggling to fill essential roles. However, these unfunded increases add to pressure on budgets.

Councils are increasingly having to draw on their financial reserves to manage these cost pressures and balance their budgets – which is not a sustainable solution.

While the Government has warned that the Autumn Budget will be "painful", with Whitehall departments tasked with finding savings, we are warning that any further local government funding

cuts would tip many more councils towards financial ruin and leave them unable to deliver key local services.

New LGA analysis shows that service spending in 2022/23 was 42 per cent lower than it would have been had service spend moved in line with cost and demand pressures since 2010/11. This means that councils have made £24.5 billion in service cuts and efficiencies over this period. There is simply no more capacity for further cuts to council budgets.

Council tax-raising powers have also been too heavily relied on by government in recent years to boost local government core spending power.

While council tax is an important funding stream, the significant financial pressures facing local services cannot be met by council tax income alone.

Instead, the Government must provide adequate funding to sustain the vital services on which our communities rely every day, and the LGA is clear that there needs to be immediate action to support the sector in the short term.

The LGA's submission – which sets out eight priorities for local government (see right) – also looks ahead to next spring's Spending Review, setting out the benefits of investing in preventative services rather than having a reactive, demand-led model to service spending.

Services that intervene earlier in people's lives reduce the need for later acute and reactive spend, and are vital to addressing the drag on our economy from socioeconomic inequality and poor health.

The LGA wants to work with the Government to improve outcomes and increase the efficiency of public spending by intervening at the earliest opportunity to minimise preventable disadvantage. ●



i This is an edited version of the LGA's 'Autumn Budget and Spending Review Submission 2024', which can be read in full at www.local.gov.uk/publications

Local government priorities

Sufficient and sustainable funding

Councils need:

- a significant and sustained increase in overall funding that reflects current and future demands for services
- multi-year and timely finance settlements
- a cross-party review of the local government funding system, including of council tax and business rates retention.



A new focus on prevention

The Government should:

- ensure the potential long-term benefit of spending on prevention is routinely considered in Whitehall
- work with councils to strengthen cost-benefit analysis, enhance understanding of social return on investment, and better track long-term outcomes
- increase investment in the public health grant
- ensure NHS spending on prevention at 'integrated care system' level increases annually by at least 1 per cent over the next five years.



Building the houses we need

The Government should:

- strengthen housing revenue accounts via a long-term rent settlement
- reform Right to Buy to support one-to-one replacement of existing social housing
- increase temporary accommodation housing benefit subsidy rates so that councils have more resource to invest in homelessness prevention.



Supporting our children and young people

The Government should:

- produce a cross-government strategy for children
- provide sustainable funding for preventative and early help services across children's services and SEND provision
- introduce a children's workforce plan
- reform the SEND system, as set out in research commissioned by the LGA and the County Councils Network (see **first** 697)
- write off all dedicated schools grant deficits
- provide more funding for home-to-school transport, particularly for children with SEND.



Reforming and sustainably funding adult social care

The Government should:

- provide immediate funding to alleviate the worst consequences of the current challenges
- end the reliance on council tax and the social care precept for funding adult social care
- commit to reviewing NHS continuing healthcare
- provide new funding to kickstart a more preventative model of care and support
- take action on care worker pay.



Backing local climate action

The Government should:

- revitalise partnership with local government through a local green energy mission delivery programme
- ensure every area is covered by a local climate action plan agreed by central and local government, with long-term funding certainty
- rapidly retrofit social and fuel-poor homes
- bring forward and devolve all funding for retrofitting such homes to councils
- rewire current proposals to extend the Emissions Trading Scheme so that the costs are passed onto manufacturers and retailers, not councils.



Delivering economic growth

The Government should:

- ensure all councils, including in mayoral combined authorities, can play a full and meaningful role in delivering inclusive growth
- introduce a simplified, consolidated and long-term approach to growth and infrastructure funding
- progress current levelling up-funded projects and provide an additional year of fully flexible UK Shared Prosperity Fund revenue funding
- work towards a fully devolved and integrated employment and skills offer
- introduce a reformed funding package for local bus services.



Safer streets

The Government should:

- invest in communities hardest hit by recent violence, including in youth hubs and diversionary activities for young people
- ensure community safety partnerships are equipped with the powers, resources and partners to deliver
- ensure community safety partnerships have the intelligence and data-sharing capabilities to prioritise local responses.



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Agents for change

Liberal Democrats commit to a stronger voice for councils in Westminster



Councillor Vikki Slade MP is Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Our autumn Liberal Democrat gathering in Brighton was a conference to remember!

As one of the newly elected Liberal Democrat MPs, I was delighted to be there. With 72 Lib Dems now occupying the green benches in the Commons, there was a brilliant, positive atmosphere, and a feeling that we will make a real difference.

The conference was also a wonderful chance to catch up with colleagues from across the country.

As someone who was a council leader (at Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council) until my election to Parliament, I am determined that the voice of councils will be even stronger in Westminster.

I was pleased to see that the LGA, as ever, played a vital role at our conference in emphasising the importance of local government.

It was great that the LGA Liberal Democrat Group Leader, Cllr Joe Harris, gave a keynote speech to conference, reminding the party of the strong track record that Lib Dem councils have on issues such as fighting climate change and innovative practice in social care provision.

I was also pleased that, on the conference floor, Liberal Democrat councillors tabled a couple of crucial amendments.

The first was that the policy to fully fund improvements to social care must be met by the Government. The second was on improving access to music for children across the country: again, conference agreed that, should this scheme go ahead, it should be fully funded.

The first LGA fringe debate was titled 'Community energy – powering the future?' The panel consisted of my colleague Pippa Heylings MP, former South Cambridgeshire councillor; Cllr Susan Juned, Leader of Stratford-on-Avon District Council and a Director of Heart of England Community Energy; and Cllr Steve Mason,

“As someone who was a council leader, I am determined that the voice of councils will be even stronger in Westminster”



Vikki Slade is one of 72 Liberal Democrat MPs in the House of Commons

of North Yorkshire Council, a Sustainability Adviser.

The meeting explored the many practical, strategic and communication-focused things councils can do to support the development of local community energy schemes.

As well as playing a key role in meeting the UK's net zero target, Pippa highlighted that supporting the local development of community energy projects has positive impacts on equality, social cohesion and economic opportunity.

In the evening, the LGA's ever popular Local Government Reception, with speeches by Lib Dem Leader Sir Ed Davey MP and Cllr Joe Harris, celebrated the brilliant results the party had in both the May local elections and July's general election.

The other LGA fringe meeting was 'Funding local government – the oncoming

storm'. Panellists Helen Morgan MP and Cllr Keith House, Leader of Eastleigh Borough Council, delivered blunt warnings of what councils will face if urgent action is not taken to stabilise finances and protect vital local services.

Chairing the session, Cllr Heather Kidd, of Shropshire Council, noted the 18 councils already relying on exceptional financial support from the Government to balance their books this year.

As the newly appointed Lib Dem Spokesperson for Housing, Communities and Local Government, I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Helen Morgan MP, for her hard work – thank you! My previous role was as Lib Dem lead member on the LGA's Local Infrastructure and Net Zero Board, so I know many people within the LGA and look forward to working with you again. I will also be at the LGA's Annual Conference in Harrogate, from 22-24 October (see www.local.gov.uk/conference). ●

Planning for the future

Hundreds of councillors attended Labour's annual conference



Councillor Bev Craig is Leader of the LGA's Labour Group

What a conference! The first Labour Party annual conference with a Labour Government since 2009 was a wonderful mix of celebration, policy debate, and fringe engagement from a variety of organisations.

It was fantastic to see so many councillors from across the country (more than 1,000 registered!) and I was able to thank many of you in person for the hard work you do for your communities and for the Labour Party, year in, year out, whether there is a general election or not.

It was also my first Labour conference as the Leader of the LGA Labour Group, so I was privileged to address the main conference hall in this capacity. With so many councillors in the audience, I outlined the dire inheritance from the Conservative Government, which has left so many councils on their knees, an NHS on the brink of collapse, unprecedented homelessness, and an economy that has flatlined for far too long.

Labour councils have fought against these circumstances for years, protecting vulnerable residents and planning for the future.

We were able to look to the future in both the Prime Minister's and Deputy Prime Minister's speeches.

National, regional and local government will work hard together to deliver Labour's five missions and change our

“National, regional and local government will work hard together to deliver Labour's five missions and change our country for the better”



country for the better. From devolving powers to mayors and councils to plans for a record number of council homes, turning attention to the social care system, building a better future through education for our young people and making our communities safer, local government is committed to delivering.

The LGA Labour Group hosted an excellent Rally for Local Government, which was packed to the rafters.

The highlights were speeches from Angela Rayner MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government; Jim McMahon MP, Minister for Local Government and English Devolution; and Louise Haigh MP, Secretary of State for Transport – as well as from some of our fantastic leaders in local government.

Events such as these demonstrate the influence local government has and highlight how the new Labour

Government is keen to work with us in partnership.

The wider LGA also hosted a number of panels in conference's Local Government Zone. Speakers included council leaders and cabinet members from across the country; Florence Eshalomi MP, Chair of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee; chairs of housing providers and of business associations; and MPs.

I was pleased to speak on how devolution can support local growth, alongside Jim McMahon MP, Steve Rotherham, Mayor of Liverpool City Region, and external stakeholders – all chaired by Cllr Louise Gittins, Chair of the LGA.

Manchester City Council has seen first hand how growth can be accelerated by place-based decisions, and I was pleased to fly the flag.

We now look forward to the LGA's annual conference in Harrogate from 22-24 October, for cross-party as well as party-political discussions on everything local government.

I hope to see many of you there (see www.local.gov.uk/conference). ●



David Simmonds CBE MP
is Shadow Minister for
Local Government

Positive engagement

Conservative local government provides a bedrock of support

As a former Conservative Group Leader at the LGA, it is a real privilege to have been invited to write my review of this year's Conservative Party conference.

This was a particularly special conference for myself, as I have been appointed as the Shadow Minister with responsibility for Local Government.

Three months ago, the party suffered a frustrating result in the general election and that cannot be ignored.

But having recently returned from Birmingham, I am delighted to report that while reflective, I found conference uplifting and optimistic.

Perhaps the optimism in

“It is important that we remember there are still more than 5,000 Conservative councillors and 77 Conservative-led councils in the UK”



Birmingham came from the missteps of the new Labour Government, or the buzz of a leadership election, but more than likely it came from the bedrock of support we find in local government.

Even before we reached the International Conference Centre in the heart of Birmingham, there was a buzz around our local government family.

Over recent weeks, we have had a string of impressive local by-election results. Since the general election, we have seen

Conservative gains across the country, taking council seats from Labour and others.

Perhaps most notably, Tim Barnes won in London, paving a way for us to reclaim control of London boroughs in 2026.

Arriving in Birmingham, I was delighted to see many of my former colleagues from the world of local government.

Having spent more than two decades as a local councillor, and with various responsibilities, I have always thoroughly enjoyed discussing the issues we all face in our local communities.

It is important that we remember there are still more than 5,000 Conservative councillors and 77 Conservative-led councils in the UK.

While impossible to tell, it was certainly clear that many of these councillors travelled from across the country to meet in Birmingham.

All those reading will know that the LGA has been essential in providing a regular forum in which Conservative councillors can meet and organise, and this year's conference in Birmingham was no different.

I was delighted to not only attend the LGA's annual reception, but to also sit on one of its fringe events. Those who attended the debate

will know that we discussed how to support councils while providing constructive opposition in Westminster.

Away from the LGA events, members who attended the conference will know that this year had a focus on housing. With the leadership candidates making their pitches on the big stage, I spent much of conference meeting different stakeholders and sitting on panels relating to housing and planning.

With the new Government announcing the review of the National Planning Policy Framework, local councils and housebuilders have many concerns.

Hearing directly from councillors and council leaders about how anxious the new Government has made them will influence our national response.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to mention the centrepiece of the conference, the leadership contest. I hope that councillors leaving the conference will share my confidence that, whoever becomes the leader of our party, we have two final candidates – Robert Jenrick and Kemi Badenoch – who know the importance of local government. I know all will be playing close attention to our local government family. ●

The challenges we face as a society are incredibly complex and deeply interwoven. Any issue tends to have multiple interrelated causes, and tackling these in isolation will not create lasting change.

Instead, an approach that takes account of the whole system is needed. This is often referred to as a 'systems' or 'systems change' approach.

A system is anything that is made up of different parts that are related to one another. For example, a forest – otherwise known as an eco-system – is made up of trees, soil, animals and other organisms, which are dependent on one another for survival.

A change in one part of the system influences what happens elsewhere.

Taking a 'systems approach' means considering all parts of a system when addressing a challenge, rather than looking at them in isolation. A 'systems approach' accepts complexity and looks for the (at times unpredictable) ways in which the system is connected.

Shaping Places for Healthier Lives (see www.local.gov.uk/shaping-places-healthier-lives-about-programme) – a grant programme launched by the Health Foundation and the LGA – set out to learn about the implementation of systems approaches to reducing local health inequalities.

Between 2021 and 2024, five council-led projects received funding and support.

Based on their hard work, tenacity and leadership, the LGA has produced a new guide setting out seven key learnings on how to take a systems approach to creating place-based change.

The first is to understand your system and decide where to focus your energy

Creating place-based change

The LGA has published new guidance on a 'systems' approach to change

for maximum impact. Understanding your system is the first step in adopting a systems approach, before then homing in on where you can have the most impact.

Second, co-develop a clear and ambitious vision that will remain at the forefront of your work – this will be your guiding beacon.

Developing one with a range of local stakeholders is an important way of imagining a hopeful future that you can begin to move towards together.

Third, treat relationship-building as real work and

spend time investing in it – systems are made up of people, and the relationships between them determines how a system operates.

Fourth, think about how to have a long-term impact – systems change takes time, so make sure your efforts leave a lasting legacy.

Fifth, experiment with ways of working that challenge traditional behaviours: embedded within a systems approach is the knowledge that the current system is not working.

Instead of adopting the same behaviours and power

dynamics that created and sustain the current system, taking a systems approach must encourage the ability to test, and learn from, new ways of doing things.

Next, regularly take time to step back and reflect: systems change requires the ability to zoom out and retain sight of the bigger picture.

Regular reflection touchpoints with key stakeholders help ensure that you can adapt to emerging opportunities, understand what has worked well and what hasn't, and take stock of wider system changes.

Finally, communicate in a way that inspires action. It can be tempting to do this by making people aware of how dire a situation is. However, the Shaping Places for Healthier Lives teams found the opposite approach to be more effective: messages of hope, positive stories and tailored communication are more likely to motivate action. ●



i 'Taking a systems approach to create place-based change: seven learnings from the Shaping Places for Healthier Lives programme' and its associated council case studies are available in full at www.local.gov.uk/publications

High impact

Helping councils recruit local graduate talent

The LGA's flagship graduate scheme – Impact: The Local Government Graduate Programme – has recently opened applications for candidates as part of its latest recruitment round.

Formerly known as the National Graduate Development Programme, Impact has been attracting the best and brightest to local government for more than two decades.

The two-year programme aims to develop the future leaders of the sector and, together with countless partner councils, boasts senior leaders (including chief executives) among its 2,500-plus alumni.

Annually, almost 5,000 candidates apply for a graduate management trainee position at one of around 100 participating local authorities. The LGA runs a rigorous and competitive recruitment process that matches high-calibre candidates with councils.

On the programme, trainees rotate a minimum of three times across placements at their host authority, and complete a learning and development programme, culminating in a Level 7 Chartered Management Institute qualification.

Although it is a national programme, Impact also offers councils the opportunity to recruit the best of their local (graduate) talent through an Impact local recruitment campaign, with councils supported to market their



Trainees work towards a Chartered Management Institute qualification

trainee posts to local graduates.

This option mirrors the national campaign and, aside from a couple of differences, the process is exactly the same – which ensures candidates are of the same high calibre.

Councils wanting to participate through this route simply sign up and indicate as such through a brief form (bit.ly/3N17gV9). The Impact team then requests some additional information required to set up a unique advert and application page on its applicant tracking system.

Participating councils receive the link to their unique application page and can share this through channels at their local level, including on social media, with

employment services and any university partnerships.

The programme receives candidate applications for individual council campaigns on behalf of authorities.

Candidates are asked to answer additional questions to evidence they meet the local criteria of their chosen council.

Recognising that 'local' can mean different things, the Impact team can assist in defining this – though, typically, this includes those residing, working or studying in the area.

In effect, candidates are ringfenced to the respective authorities as they are allocated interviews exclusively at the chosen council (provided they reach the final stage of

Employing talent in finance

Impact has a four-year specialised finance stream, which is being piloted in London and is designed for graduates who want to pursue a career in public finance.

The recruitment process is very similar to the main programme, though candidates are asked to complete an additional numerical test.

On the programme, graduates work towards the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Level 7 Apprenticeship.

London councils wanting to sign up are encouraged to contact the team as soon as possible by emailing impact.finance@local.gov.uk.

recruitment). In this way, candidates are guaranteed an interview with their local authority.

Partner councils running a local campaign are well supported, benefiting from resources and marketing materials, as well as named contacts from the Impact team.

Councils are now able to register interest for Cohort 27 (autumn 2025 intake). ●

i To find out how Impact can help your council take on the very best of your local talent, contact the team by emailing Impact@local.gov.uk by **31 October 2024**. For further information about the programme, visit www.local.gov.uk/impact-local-government-graduate-programme-councils

Diversifying leadership

The LGA's BAME leadership programme is celebrating its 20th birthday as councils across the country mark Black History Month



Grace Collins MBE is an LGA Leadership Adviser

This year marks a significant milestone: 20 years of the LGA's annual leadership programme for black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) elected members.

I've had the privilege of convening and organising this programme from the beginning, alongside David Weaver, LGA Senior Associate and Chair of Operation Black Vote, and I am immensely proud of the profound impact it has had.

Over the years, many participants have risen to senior positions within their

councils, and a significant number have gone on to become MPs.

The programme is widely recognised for contributing to this success, offering a unique space where black, Asian and other ethnic minority leaders can reflect on their distinct leadership journeys and explore strategies to become even more effective in their roles.

Initiatives such as this are critical. They allow participants to focus on what truly matters in their leadership development – building a political brand, living their values, and leading with integrity.

While leadership should not be solely defined by ethnicity, the ongoing reality of racism and discrimination requires black, Asian and other ethnic minority leaders to give focused attention to how they navigate these complexities, influence and achieve change, and improve their effectiveness as leaders.

This month, we are all celebrating Black



The programme offers a unique space for BAME councillors to reflect on their leadership journeys



Participants at an LGA BAME leadership weekend event

History Month, and I would argue that black history should be celebrated year-round. However, it is important that we use this moment to recognise the immense contributions that black elected members and people of colour have made to advancing equality and justice for all.

I am both grateful to and in awe of the participants whose voices and contributions have driven the programme's success. Their stories (some of which are featured here, see right) are testament to the necessity and value of the programme, and they continue to inspire us all. ●

“Initiatives such as this are critical. They allow participants to focus on what truly matters in their leadership development”



Councillor Chewe Munkonge (Lab) is Cabinet Member for A Healthy Oxford at Oxford City Council



Councillor Evelyn Akoto (Lab) is Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing at Southwark Council

'Inspiring the younger generation'

The LGA's BAME leadership event equipped me with the insight and knowledge to excel in my role. Also, it was an opportunity to meet and learn from other BAME councillors. Black History Month is a time to reflect on the great things achieved by our forefathers. By highlighting these, we are inspiring the young generation to work hard, and showing that they can achieve anything, regardless of who they are.



Councillor Mara Makunura (Con) is Mayor of Rushmoor Borough Council

'Reflecting on political journeys'

Black History Month is a time of reflection, appreciation and acknowledgement of blackness and the rich tapestry of our culture that permeates all aspects of society.

This feeling of reflection is a key aspect of the LGA's BAME councillor events. The events not only allow BAME participants to reflect on their personal and political journey, but also provide a support group and remind us that the admiration shown this month – and the experiences gained via the BAME councillors events – should be something that is consistent throughout the year.



Councillor Shanice Goldman (Residents Association) is Chair of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Crime and Disorder Committee

'Cross-party dialogue'

The BAME councillors event has been a transformative experience, fostering a strong sense of community and empowerment among participants. It has served as a vital platform for sharing experiences, challenges, and successes, enabling councillors to connect and support one another in their roles.

Its cross-party nature encourages open dialogue and the free exchange of thoughts and experiences, enriching our collective learning.

For many, Black History Month holds profound significance, celebrating the invaluable contributions of black individuals to our society while reminding us of the ongoing struggle for equality and representation.

It inspires our BAME councillors to advocate for their communities with renewed passion, ensuring that diverse voices are not only heard, but also valued in the decision-making process.

'Inspiring and supportive network'

The LGA's BAME weekend was absolutely amazing. I would highly recommend this conference.

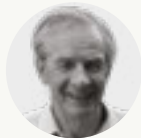
It provided me with access to a really inspiring and supportive network, not to mention brilliant interactive workshops and keynotes.

I exchanged details with many of the attendees and we have all made great efforts to keep in touch.

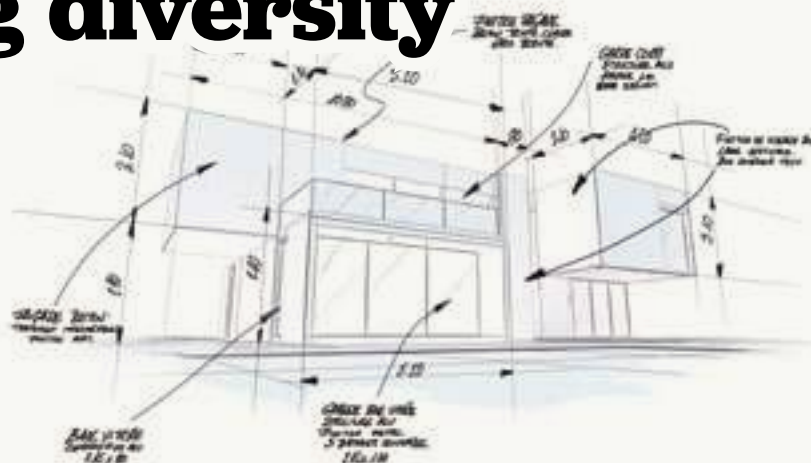
I also managed to pair with a mentor who has been playing a hugely supportive role in my developing career in local government. A huge thank you to the LGA and organisers.

i The LGA's next BAME leadership weekend event, 'Developing your political skills', takes place in Coventry from 22-23 February. It is one of the LGA's 'Focus on Leadership' series of events, which also offer councillor development and network opportunities to LGBTQ+ councillors, opposition leaders and deputies, and young councillors. To find out more and book your place, please visit bit.ly/3zB7X9V and email grace.collins@local.gov.uk

Empowering self-build and housing diversity



Councillor John O'Neill (Lib Dem) is Cabinet Member for Adults and Homes at South Gloucestershire Council



As housing challenges continue to grow, we've embraced self-build and custom-built (SCB) housing as essential solutions to meet the varied needs of residents.

Through dedicated policies and strategic initiatives, we have positioned ourselves as a leader in promoting self-build opportunities.

Our commitment to self and custom-build housing began in 2013, with the establishment of a Self-Build Task and Finish Group to investigate how the council could encourage self-build housing, fund projects, and provide residents with more housing options.

Since then, we've focused on self-build through several key initiatives.

In 2017, we created the role of a self-build officer to actively manage SCB plots, engage with developers, and guide individuals through the process.

Policy PSP42 was introduced, requiring that 5 per cent of plots in developments of 100 or more homes be allocated for SCB. This ensures self-build projects are integrated into larger developments, with plot sizes set at 108 square metres (gross internal area) to control costs and make them affordable.

In April 2021, our Custom and Self-Build Supplementary Planning Document was adopted to guide the delivery of high-quality SCB homes in larger developments. We launched our Self-Build Partnership to improve land availability and accelerate SCB plot delivery by collaborating with developers and self-build enablers. These efforts align with the council's ambition of supporting housing diversification within the community.

There are several reasons for councils to support self and custom housebuilding.

SCB housing empowers residents to have a direct say in the design and construction of their homes, providing tailored solutions that standard housing developments often lack. This diversity in housing options also supports small and medium-sized businesses in the construction sector.

Supporting SCB aligns with the council's values of sustainability, community engagement, and economic growth.

By providing serviced plots, the council enables self-builders to create homes suited to their needs, while boosting the local economy.

Developments in South Gloucestershire, such as Charfield Gardens and Blackberry Park, demonstrate how self-build can create vibrant, sustainable communities, particularly benefiting first-time buyers, low and middle-income groups, and downsizers.

Our experience provides valuable insights for other councils interested in promoting SCB housebuilding.

One important lesson is establishing a dedicated officer/team to oversee self-build projects. This approach is crucial for

the success of SCB initiatives. Councils should also consider policies such as PSP42, which mandates that a percentage of plots in large developments be reserved for SCB.

Another strategy is forming partnerships with developers and self-build enablers, to facilitate SCB plot delivery while reducing developers' financial risks.

Councils should use information from their self and custom-build register to assess demand.

The Right to Build Task Force, a dedicated resource offering guidance workshops and peer reviews, has been instrumental in our success, and could benefit other councils as well.

To conclude, self and custom-build housing has significant benefits for communities, offering flexible, sustainable, and personalised housing options.

For councils prepared to embrace this approach, the Right to Build Task Force can offer expert advice, resources, and hands-on support.

We encourage other local authorities to consider making SCB a core part of their housing strategy. Together, we can empower individuals to build the home of their dreams. ●

i The LGA's virtual event 'Delivering self and custom-build homes: the council perspective' takes place on 30 October, see www.local.gov.uk/events. To find out more about the Right to Build Task Force, please visit www.righttobuild.org.uk. See www.lgafirst.co.uk/comment for an additional case study from Fareham Borough Council



Councillor Roger Phillips is Chair of the Rural Services Network

This year's National Rural Conference, hosted last month by the Rural Services Network (RSN), served as a pivotal gathering for around 650 delegates from more than 130 organisations, representing a diverse range of sectors. It provided a unique opportunity for policymakers, community leaders and industry experts to collaborate on the most pressing rural issues.

With a new government in place, the conference underscored the urgent need for a cohesive rural strategy to unlock the 'sleeping giant' of the rural economy, which – with the right policy framework – could create an additional £9 billion to £19 billion a year in tax revenues.

The event featured 30 speakers, including prominent local government leaders, policymakers and industry experts, all advocating for the critical role of rural areas in driving national growth. They reiterated that rural areas are not just an afterthought, but a vital component of a prosperous national economy.

Key topics of discussion included digital connectivity, equitable public funding, and affordable rural housing challenges, as well as debate on rural transport and net zero – all with an overarching focus on potential policy solutions and sharing of best practice.

The virtual event's success would not have been possible without the generous support of sponsors and partners, including BT, the National Association of Local Councils,



Building momentum for rural prosperity

Retrofit Information Support and Expertise, the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution, the National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise, Go Cornwall Bus, and the University of Lincoln.

The conference concluded with a strong call to action for a comprehensive, well-resourced rural strategy that fully recognises the inherent value of rural areas.

It also set a powerful agenda for rural growth, calling for strategic, well-funded policies to ensure rural communities have the resources, infrastructure and representation they need to thrive.

The ethos moving forward should avoid pitting communities against one another in the scramble for funding, and should ensure that everyone has access to an affordable home, digital connectivity, a

thriving economy, and health and care services.

This approach will not only strengthen rural areas, but also contribute significantly to national growth and prosperity by fostering inclusive development and maximising the potential of all communities.

With the collective expertise and commitment of its delegates and speakers, the conference laid the groundwork for a future in which rural prosperity is no longer just an aspiration, but an achievable goal.

The RSN provides the secretariat for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Rural Services, which recently appointed Sarah Dyke MP as its Chair. We aim to provide the group with key rural policy briefings to ensure that rural MPs are clear on the issues within their constituencies and the impact of government

policy on rural communities.

Meanwhile, the insights shared at the conference will shape ongoing advocacy efforts, pushing for a future in which rural prosperity is not only a national priority, but also a reality.

To further explore these themes and align them with the RSN's ongoing efforts, our Delivering for Rural campaign outlines clear policy asks of the government, echoing the need for a strategic, well-supported approach to unlock rural potential.

You can learn more about the campaign and how it complements this year's conference outcomes at:

www.rsnonline.org.uk/delivering-for-rural

i The Rural Services Network is an LGA special interest group – see www.rsnonline.org.uk

GROUP LEADERS



Councillor Bev Craig is Leader of the LGA's Labour Group

The art of the economically possible

Our Labour Government has the unenviable task of balancing what it would wish to do with what is economically possible.

Councils of all colours have experience of making difficult decisions and having to prioritise what is essential while investing in the future, and national government is no different.

We all want a secure economy, thriving communities, and a better standard of living.

The Government is clear that it will focus on its five missions: kickstarting

economic growth; making Britain a clean-energy superpower; taking back our streets; breaking down barriers to opportunity; and rebuilding the NHS – to build a better future.

While we look to the future positively, we cannot ignore the dreadful inheritance the Conservatives have left us.

They crashed the economy, created a crisis in public services, and left a £22 billion black hole in the nation's finances, which a responsible government has to deal with.

The problems the Conservatives have left us will take time to put right, but we are moving away from sticking-plaster politics and towards radical, fundamental change to fix the foundations of our country.

This represents the politics of public service rather than populism that Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer has always championed.

As we look towards the Budget on 30 October, we must remember that we are thinking of the long term; and while

“We are moving away from sticking-plaster politics and towards radical, fundamental change”

there may be difficult decisions, we must remember that we are striving for a fairer society for all.

This new Labour Government represents a new chance for local government.

I'm pleased to see that we now have a Cabinet that truly understands the vital role local government plays in our country and communities.

Their active engagement with us is encouraging, as is being acknowledged as key partners in the delivery of the Government's missions.

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

A regional focus



Councillor Louise Gittins is Chair of the LGA

Visiting local authorities to find out about the amazing work you are doing on behalf of your residents is one of the most enjoyable, but also humbling, parts of my role as Chair of the LGA.

Following successful visits to the West Midlands and the North West, I'm pleased to say that visits to the South West and North East are in my diary, with virtual meetings pencilled in with colleagues in the East of England, Yorkshire and the Humber, and London.

During my North West visit earlier this month, it was good to meet Emily Spurrell, Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner and recently elected

Chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, as well as Steve Rotherham and Katherine Fairclough – respectively the Mayor and Chief Executive of Liverpool City Region Combined Authority – and council leaders from across the city region, to discuss local priorities and how the LGA can best support member councils.

Similarly, in the West Midlands, we met a range of colleagues, including leaders and chief executives from Sandwell, Walsall, Solihull and Birmingham.

The challenges of temporary accommodation and asylum are particularly acute in the region, and this reinforced the work we need to do at the LGA to shape and influence a national, long-term resettlement strategy

We will continue to prioritise such visits to ensure the LGA's work is not London-centric. By July 2025, my aim is to have visited every region, ensuring we remain connected to the realities on the ground.

Finally, we will be holding another



virtual meeting with council leaders next month to reflect further on the summer's far-right riots, and to share lessons, ideas and 'asks' of both government and the LGA.

Look out for the invite in your inbox, as our initial asks from similar meetings over the summer contributed to the Government announcing financial support for the 20 most affected areas, and the LGA has started attending the Deputy Prime Minister's Recovery Steering Group.



Councillor Kevin Bentley is Leader of the LGA's Conservative Group

Local government is the pillar of our party

Conservative Party conference this year demonstrated that the Conservative local government family is now the dominant pillar of our party.

We still control 77 councils and local authority budgets amounting to billions of pounds.

Being out of government nationally is tough, but our party can continue to deliver conservatism through the Conservative councils we continue to prudently run. People trust Conservatives and their delivery in local government. It is why our family has seen eight local by-election gains since the general election.

“We can continue to deliver conservatism through the councils we run”

I want to thank all our Conservative councillors who engaged with us during conference. We had 700 attend our reception to celebrate the achievements of Conservatives in local government.

As The Times reported last month: “Conservatives in the LGA have been on the front foot in this leadership contest.”

The LGA Conservative Group has been relentless in lobbying the leadership candidates for the local government family. I am pleased that all the candidates realise we won't get back into government until we become the largest party in local government again.

On a separate note, the LGA Conservative Group has now formally submitted its consultation response to the Government's proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

As I have continued to stress, Conservatives in local government are not against housing. But we will only deliver it alongside proper infrastructure and design.



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

Committed to serving our communities

As I reminded my party's conference in September, there were local elections this May – as well as the amazing general election results, where a record 72 Lib Dem MPs were returned.

The 2024 local elections saw us win more than 500 seats, including 100 from other parties. We now have more than 3,100 councillors in the UK and are part of the leadership of 79 councils.

We are delighted that Cllr Vikki Slade MP – who was, until July, the Leader of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, and a lead LGA board member – has taken on the local government front-bench role for the Liberal Democrats in Parliament. We look forward to working with her and the team.

Despite severe budget cuts, our councillors have remained committed to serving their communities.

“We're pushing for councils to start building homes again”

Our councils lead on recycling and investing in renewable energy, and we're fighting the housing crisis by pushing for councils to start building homes again.

Crucially, ahead of the Budget and the provisional local government finance settlement, we have been vocal in requesting immediate action to stabilise council finances and protect vital services.

We need increased funding for adult and children's social care, SEND services, home-to-school transport, and temporary accommodation, as well as long-term financial reforms, including multi-year settlements. A strong and sustainable local government sector is essential to achieving the Government's goals for growth.

GROUP LEADERS



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

Keeping democracy near to residents

We will shortly be gathering for the 'Glastonbury of local government', the LGA's annual conference in Harrogate.

We need to combine forces to be more effective, for example, shaping the direction of travel of the new Government on devolution and planning.

It is critical that we keep democracy near to our residents and for services to be delivered at the most local level.

Councillors are our bastions of democracy, closest to the people we serve.

Thank you to everyone who responded to the consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework and who joined one of our group sessions to shape our response.

“It is critical for services to be delivered at the most local level”

You all spoke passionately about the impact of the new top-down housing targets and how the planning system is not the blocker in the creation of homes people can afford.

Without a national energy plan, we seem to be at the mercy of speculative energy developments who industrialise vast areas of good farmland for 40 years or more, tied under expensive long-term contracts on fast-outdated solar technology.

Meanwhile, an estimated 630,000 acres of commercial roof space lies vacant.

Representing local government at the Conference of the Parties (COP) on climate change, I have seen first-hand how the technology has moved on to be much more versatile, leaving our food-growing land for local use and profits kept in the UK.

I look forward to seeing many of you at conference to discuss these issues and more. ●

Select committees are cross-party groups of MPs or Lords (or both, in some instances) and are one of Parliament's main tools for holding government to account.

Engagement with select committees is a key part of the LGA's parliamentary work, with the LGA by far the most called on organisation to give evidence to their inquiries.

Select committees are chaired by backbench MPs and the chairs are chosen at the beginning of each Parliament.

The majority of select committees mirror government departments, and run inquiries and evidence sessions to explore topical issues and hold ministers to account.

Parliamentary rules state that the balance of committee chairs should reflect the party balance in the House of Commons. Following July's general election, Labour were assigned 18 committee chairs, the Conservatives were granted five, and the Liberal Democrats were given three.

The election of the new chairs of the Commons' select committees took place last month, and with so many new MPs elected to Parliament there was a battle between long-serving members and fresh faces keen to make their mark.

LGA Vice-President Florence Eshalomi MP was elected Chair of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee.

The LGA has a good relationship with her, which should stand us in

Holding government to account

Working with select committees

good stead to influence the work of her committee once future inquiries get under way, particularly on devolution, housing and planning, and local government funding.

Elsewhere, another LGA Vice-President, Layla Moran MP, has been elected Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee.

The committee will no doubt be scrutinising the Government's mission to build an NHS fit for the future, including plans for a national care service, and the LGA will be contributing to future inquiries.

Helen Hayes MP, an LGA Vice-President and former councillor, is the new Education Select Committee Chair. She previously served on the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, and was a Shadow Minister for Children and Early Years in the last

Parliament, so understands many of the challenges facing councils in maintaining their responsibilities for protecting children and young people.

The LGA is calling for the committee's inquiry into children's social care to be extended to this Parliament.

Dame Karen Bradley MP, former Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, and for Northern Ireland, was elected Chair of the Home Affairs Committee and will be responsible for scrutinising the Government's plans on crime and policing, asylum and migration.

For the full list of those elected as select committee chairs, please visit www.parliament.uk. The members of each committee will be confirmed in October, once each party has decided who will represent it on each committee.

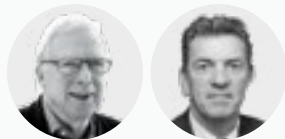
The LGA is in the process of writing to the committee chairs to outline councils' priorities for their communities in this new Parliament. We will also be engaging with the clerk of each committee to better understand their upcoming agendas and where the LGA and councils can contribute to these.

There are a number of new or continuing inquiries to which we will be contributing evidence, including the Science and Technology Committee's inquiry on digital skills, and the House of Lords' Built Environment Committee's on the grey belt. ●



To find out more about the LGA's work in Parliament, please visit www.local.gov.uk/parliament

Low turnout 'troubling'



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

Thirteen by-elections followed the resignation of Labour councillors after being voted into Parliament, with a net loss of nine seats.

The Conservatives, Greens and Liberal Democrats all profited, but, notably, Reform UK gained a seat from Labour in Blackpool's Marton ward.

This was the party's second by-election gain, the first coming on general election day in a Conservative seat on East Riding of Yorkshire.

Labour, whose by-election vote in Marton was a fraction of previous support, was defeated by Reform's Jim O'Neill, a former solidier campaigning on withdrawal of the winter fuel allowance.

Three more Labour defences arising from resignations of councillors (now MPs) –

Longbeck ward in Redcar & Cleveland, Westminster's West End, and Marine in Worthing – all fell to Conservatives.

Two other Labour defeats to the Conservatives came in Gedling's Bestwood St Albans ward, where Labour lost by 58 votes, and Waverley's succinctly named Godalming, Binscombe and Charterhouse ward, which was decided by a margin of 11 votes.

The Conservatives also gained a seat from the Greens, in Thurston ward on Mid Suffolk District Council.

After becoming a Conservative-free zone at the last general election, a tiny blue shoot has appeared in Wales after the party's win over Labour by 51 votes in Denbighshire's Rhyl Trellewyn. Wales also witnessed Labour's only gain, when the Independents lost Merthyr Tydfil's Bedlinog and Trelewis ward. Defeat for the Independents and two defections from the group mean that Labour is now the largest party on the council.

But Independents saw success elsewhere, albeit in

unusual circumstances in one case. After the death of the Liberal Democrat incumbent in Norfolk's Freebridge Lynn, the party chose not to contest the vacancy – instead giving support to Simon Ring, Independent candidate and Deputy Leader of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council. The Greens, too, opted out, easing his path to victory.

In Huntingdonshire, however, the successful Independent faced the defending Conservatives and a strong Liberal Democrat challenge to win St Neots Eatons.

Both the Greens and Liberal Democrats have played their part in troubling Labour.

The Greens' Liam Davis won Hackney's Stoke Newington ward after an 18-point swing against Labour, while Lancaster's Scotforth East produced a 21-point swing.

Not to be overshadowed, the Liberal Democrats seized Bromsgrove's Sidemoor ward with a 27-point swing, where Labour normally polls above 40 per cent. It slipped to third place and a 17 per cent share.

Part of the explanation for these poor results for Labour may lie with turnout, which exceeded 30 per cent in only three cases.

Average turnout for September by-elections was just 20 per cent, the lowest September average in 41 years, and three points lower than the previous record set in 2001. That year also brought a record

By-election results

Blackpool, Marton
REFORM UK GAIN FROM LAB
11.5% over Lab | Turnout 23.1%

Bromsgrove, Sidemoor
LIB DEM GAIN FROM LAB
25.7% over Con | Turnout 19.7%

Denbighshire, Rhyl Trellewyn
CON GAIN FROM LAB
16.5% over Lab | Turnout 11.5%

Gedling, Bestwood St Albans
CON GAIN FROM LAB
7.7% over Lab | Turnout 18.0%

Hackney, Stoke Newington
GREEN GAIN FROM LAB
13.0% over Lab | Turnout 20.4%

Huntingdonshire, St Neots Eatons
IND GAIN FROM CON
1.7% over Lib Dem | Turnout 18.9%

Lancaster, Scotforth East
GREEN GAIN FROM LAB
35.4% over Lab | Turnout 30.8%

Merthyr Tydfil, Bedlinog and Trelewis
LAB GAIN FROM IND
11.5% over Ind | Turnout 28.2%

Mid Suffolk, Thurston
CON GAIN FROM GREEN
5.2% over Green | Turnout 21.0%

Norfolk, Freebridge Lynn
IND GAIN FROM LIB DEM
20.0% over Con | Turnout 18.1%

Redcar & Cleveland, Longbeck
CON GAIN FROM LAB
17.6% over Lab | Turnout 29.9%

Waverley, Godalming Binscombe & Charterhouse
CON GAIN FROM LAB
0.6% over Lib Dem | Turnout 29.4%

Westminster, West End
CON GAIN FROM LAB
10.7% over Lab | Turnout 16.8%

Worthing, Marine
CON GAIN FROM LAB
4.0% over Lab | Turnout 31.7%



low general election turnout, which 2024's equivalent only just avoided.

Such widespread lack of engagement in the future is likely to impact most on Labour. ●

i Only results where wards changed hands are shown here. For more information on all recent by-election results, please visit www.lgafirst.co.uk/local-by-elections



CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

HARROGATE | 22-24 OCTOBER 2024

#LGAConf24

Confirmed speakers include:

The Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP

Deputy Prime Minister

Jim McMahon OBE MP

Minister of State, Ministry of Housing,
Communities and Local Government

Vikki Slade MP

Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Housing,
Communities and Local Government

Fatima Whitbread MBE

Retired British athlete

Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson DBE

President, Local Government Association

Carla Denyer

Member of Parliament for Bristol Central

Richard Fuller CBE MP

Chairman, Conservative Party

Kevin Richardson

Mayor, Lake Barrington, Illinois, USA

Nicole Jacobs

Domestic Abuse Commissioner (virtual speaker)

Ravi Gurumurthy

Chief Executive, Nesta