

LGA Conservative Group

Report & Review 2018/2019



Contents

4. Message from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government - The Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP
6. Message from the Chairman of the LGA and the LGA Conservative Group Leader
8. LGA Group Executive 2018/2019
10. What has the LGA achieved for local government over the past year?
12. Out And About: LGA Conservative Group Briefing Seminars
15. Who are my Conservative LGA Board representatives?
16. Children and Young People Board
17. City Regions Board
18. Community Wellbeing Board
19. Culture, Tourism and Sport Board
20. Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board
21. Improvement and Innovation Board
22. People and Places Board
23. Resources Board
24. Safer and Stronger Communities Board
25. The Fire Services Management Committee and the Fire Commission
26. LGA Training, Development and Learning Courses
28. Peer Review
29. Next Generation
30. The Conservative Group Office

Message from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP

It has been another busy and challenging year and I recognise the significant contribution the local government sector has played.

We can be proud of what we have achieved together; having, for example, delivered more homes last year than in any bar one of the previous thirty-one.

The removal of the government cap on how much councils can borrow to build offers the prospect of boosting supply further still, with 300,000 new homes a year and a new generation of social housing in our sights.

It has also been very welcome to see the first fall in the number of people sleeping rough in eight years as our Rough Sleeping Strategy starts to have an impact.

There is, of course, much more to do and I'm hopeful that our landmark proposals to abolish unfair section 21 evictions will help us take a much more preventative approach towards homelessness.

Another big priority this year has been ongoing work to support those affected by the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, to keep people in similar buildings safe and transform the way we build to prevent anything like this happening again.

Again, I'm very thankful for your dedication to this vital and incredibly challenging agenda – a dedication that underlines the significant role played by local government at the heart of the communities you serve, particularly as we strive to ensure that all parts of our country are successful through Brexit and beyond.

That's why I will be championing the sector through the upcoming Spending Review to ensure we deliver a sustainable future for local government and quality services for the communities we represent.

You are among our most committed and important public servants and it's a privilege to be representing and working alongside you to make a difference and help people build better lives.



The Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP

Lord Porter, the LGA Chairman, and Cllr James Jamieson, the LGA Conservative Group Leader, chat with James Brokenshire before the MHCLG Ministerial Team Question and Answer Session at the 2018 Conservative Party Conference (organised by the CCA and sponsored by the LGA Conservative Group).



James Brokenshire and members of the MHCLG Ministerial Team take part in a Question and Answer Session at the 2019 CCA Local Government Conference (sponsored by the LGA Conservative Group).

Message from the Chairman of the LGA and the LGA Conservative Group Leader

Over the past eight years, Conservatives in local government broke one of the golden rules of British politics – one that certainly held true for us in the early to mid-nineties and then for Labour from 1997 onwards – namely that the party in power nationally will inevitably see its local government base dramatically reduced. In fact, in the local elections between 2011 and 2018 we had a net gain of council seats – a remarkable performance given the financial decisions that central government has had to make and their impact on councils’ budgets.

However, that run came to an end dramatically at the local elections this May when we experienced a net loss of 1330 council seats and 44 councils. Through no fault of their own, hundreds of councillors who were tireless and effective champions for their local communities lost their seats and high-performing Conservative councils lost their majorities.

We would like to extend our commiserations to all those who were not re-elected, including those who served on LGA policy Boards over the past year: Cllr Natasha Airey (Windsor and Maidenhead Council); Cllr Tim Warren (Bath and North East Somerset Council); Cllr Gillian Brown (Arun District Council); Cllr Janet Walton (Poole Borough Council); Cllr Ainsley Arnold (Cheshire East Council); and Cllr Harvey Siggs (Mendip District Council).

Whilst local factors will inevitably have had an impact on some results – and in a number of areas we had some very good results against Labour, including taking control of North East Derbyshire, North East Lincolnshire and Walsall councils -

anyone who spent time on the doorstep will have been aware of the anger about the Parliamentary deadlock over Brexit.

Whatever your views on Brexit, it is clear that the current impasse can only be resolved in Westminster and that MPs need to work together to find a resolution.

The LGA’s work over the past year has focused on the things that our member councils have told us are most important to them and the communities that they serve: adult social care, building new homes, devolving employment and skills, Brexit, devolution, improving the lives of children and mental health services, to name just a few.

As a result of the LGA’s lobbying we have achieved a number of high-profile wins for local government, including the removal of the housing borrowing cap (which will enable councils to build more homes each year), a ban on combustible materials on high-rise residential buildings and over £1 billion of in-year funding for local government as well as separate additional funding for adult social care in 2018/2019 and 2019/2020.

We have also proactively shaped the national debate in key policy areas, most notably through the publication of our well-received Adult Social Care Green Paper and our ongoing and high profile lobbying and media work in relation to the Spending Review, where we are continuing to make the case for a sustainable funding settlement for local government.

Further information on our key ‘wins’ and lobbying on your behalf can be found



Lord Porter of Spalding CBE



Cllr James Jamieson

on pages 10 to 11 and also in the reports from our lead members on the LGA's various policy Boards.

These successes are a reflection of the high level engagement with Ministers that takes place throughout the year, the most obvious example of which is the weekly meeting with James Brokenshire and his MHCLG Ministerial team every Wednesday morning when Parliament is sitting.

We attend these meetings along with Cllr Paul Carter (Chairman of the County Councils' Network), Cllr John Fuller (Chairman of the District Councils' Network), Cllr Teresa O'Neill (Conservative Group Leader at London Councils) and Cllr Rory Love and, from March 2019 onwards, Cllr Mark Hawthorne (the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 CCA Chairmen respectively).

These meetings provide a unique opportunity for James and the team to brief us on key announcements and for us to raise issues on your behalf. We are very grateful to James and his Ministers for making time in their busy schedules to meet with us on such a regular basis.

Over the past year we have also had useful meetings with Ministers from across Whitehall, including with Matt Hancock on the NHS Long Term Plan and the funding of adult social care, with Damian Hinds on issues relating to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and with Kit Malthouse on planning reform.

In addition to this annual report we regularly communicate with you in various ways throughout the year, including our monthly email bulletin

which updates you on key policy announcements, lobbying activity and forthcoming events. We hope that you find these bulletins useful and we would welcome any changes that you might like to suggest.

We are also on Twitter, so please do follow us at @LGACons for all the very latest news and views from the LGA and the Conservative Group.

In order to get out of Westminster, over the past year we have organised a number of briefing seminars around the country in partnership with the Conservative Councillors' Association (CCA). Please see pages 12-13 for further details on these events.

The LGA tries to be as accessible as possible to all of our members and its regular Councillors' Forum is open to all councillors from member authorities who wish to attend.

The Councillors' Forum is often attended by Ministerial speakers and over the past year we have welcomed James Brokenshire, Kwasi Kwarteng (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Exiting the European Union) and Caroline Dineage (Minister of State for Care).

The Conservative Group meeting beforehand offers an ideal opportunity for us to discuss key issues in a private political setting, and we are often joined by the Minister who will be speaking at the Councillors' Forum as well as other Parliamentarians and staff from CCHQ.

Details about forthcoming Councillors' Forum meetings are included in our monthly bulletin. If you wish to attend

please email the group office at: lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk

Finally, in what has been our last and first year as LGA Chairman and LGA Conservative Group Leader respectively, we would like to thank you for your support, advice and hard work on behalf of your communities and the Conservative Party.

In our roles we have visited many different councils and Conservative groups across the country over the past year and are both continually inspired by the work that is done, day in day out, at all levels of local government and the strong and ambitious leadership that drives our economic prosperity and results in significant improvements for local communities.

LGA Conservative Group Executive

2018/2019

The LGA Conservative Group Executive is elected annually and is the body which takes decisions on behalf of the LGA Conservative Group.

A new team is elected in June of each year. The elected members for 2018/2019 were:



LGA Chairman
Lord Porter of Spalding CBE
South Holland District Council



Group Leader
(and LGA Vice Chairman)
Cllr James Jamieson
Central Bedfordshire Council



Deputy Group Leader
(and LGA Deputy Chairman)
Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE
Warwickshire County Council



County Council Executive Member
Cllr Nick Rushton
Leicestershire County Council

'At large' Executive Members



Cllr Philip Atkins OBE
Staffordshire County Council



Cllr Kevin Bentley
Essex County Council



Cllr Neil Clarke MBE
Rushcliffe Borough Council/
Nottinghamshire County Council



Cllr Colin Noble
Suffolk County Council



Non-Met District Council
Executive Member
Cllr John Fuller OBE
South Norfolk District Council



London Borough Council
Executive Member
Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE
London Borough of Bexley



Metropolitan District Council
Executive Member
Cllr Geraldine Carter
Calderdale Council



Unitary Council
Executive Member
Cllr Charlotte Haitham-Taylor
Wokingham Borough Council



Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE
CCA Chairman (Ex-officio)
Gloucestershire County Council



Further information

For all the latest news on the LGA
Conservative Group please visit our website:

www.local.gov.uk/lga-conservatives

What has the LGA achieved for local government over the past year?

The LGA is a politically-led, cross-party organisation which:

- Lobbies on the key financial and policy decisions which affect your council.
- Presses for greater powers to be devolved from Whitehall to local government.
- Speaks with one voice through local, regional and national media to promote the good things that councils are doing and defend local government's reputation.
- Supports councils to drive innovation and improvement and shares best practice in order to help councils become more efficient and effective.
- Negotiates pay and pensions settlements and provides advice on workforce matters.

Our work often takes place behind the scenes with Government ministers, their advisers and a wide range of partner organisations. As well as securing extra money for councils, we work to prevent additional burdens, both costs and duties, being imposed on councils.

The following are just some examples of the additional funding and legislative change that the LGA has secured for its member councils over the past year:

- Following sustained work – both publicly and behind the scenes with ministers and officials – the Autumn Budget saw the Chancellor announce over £1 billion in short term funding for councils in 2019/2020.
- This was then followed by the announcement of additional funding for social care in the Local Government Finance Settlement - £240 million in-year funding for 2018/2019 and £650 million in 2019/2020.
- Removal of the housing borrowing cap, which will allow councils to invest in the homes that people need and help solve our national housing crisis. This is something that our Chairman, Lord Porter, in particular has long campaigned for.
- Following a sustained campaign for change by the LGA, the Government announced a reduction in the maximum stakes on fixed odds betting terminals from £100 to £2, which came into effect at the start of April.
- Following intensive LGA lobbying, led by Lord Porter, a ban on combustible materials on high-rise residential buildings came into force and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) outlined its plans to implement the Hackitt Review recommendations to make buildings safer.
- Again following sustained lobbying from the LGA, in May the Government agreed that it would cover the £200 million bill to replace Grenfell Tower-type cladding on more than 150 private tower blocks.
- The Government has pledged to introduce national minimum standards and legislation to update taxi licensing. This builds on our work to introduce a national register of licence refusals and revocations.
- After continued LGA lobbying, the Government announced a consultation into whether businesses and manufacturers will be required to pay the cost of recycling and disposing of packaging.
- Councils with their own housing association tower blocks will benefit from access to full funding for the removal and replacement of dangerous cladding plus financial support to carry out emergency remedial work on unsafe private sector buildings.
- The LGA-led Homelessness Prevention Task and Finish Group helped to secure a further £215 million in funding via the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant in 2019/2020, plus £26 million for councils to combat rough sleeping as part of the Government's Rapid Rehousing Pathway programme.
- Our lobbying helped secure an extra £55 million in 2018/2019 from the Disabled Facilities Grant to support children with disabilities and adults on low incomes.
- Following our engagement with the Government on Brexit, councils received £56.6 million in new funding to help with their preparations.
- Councils will benefit from a new power to increase the council tax premium on empty homes, ranging from up to 200% on homes that have been empty for between five and ten years and up to 300% per cent on those that have been empty for ten years or more. This is in addition to proposals to allow councils to double

the council tax premium for homes that have been empty for two years or more.

- New powers to fine householders who dump rubbish illegally up to £400 and access for councils to a £10 million fund to support innovation in waste and recycling.

In addition, the LGA has supported its members through lobbying or collective legal actions that co-ordinate and support groups of councils that are pursuing actions – negotiating fees, securing third party funding where appropriate and seeking extra funding for councils where legislation has created new financial burdens. The following are some examples of this:

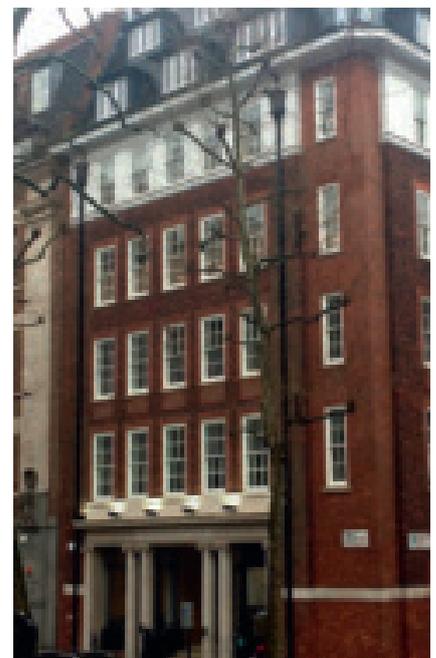
- We secured agreement from the Government that councillors would be exempt from paying data protection registration fees, saving each councillor £40 a year.
- Following Visa and Mastercard being found to have breached European Competition Law on charges, we are co-ordinating a £23 million claim involving 97 councils.
- A 2016 investigation found that a number of trucks manufacturers had broken EU rules by colluding on prices. We are co-ordinating a £70 million claim on behalf of councils, fire and rescue authorities and national parks.
- NHS Trusts in England are claiming refunds of 80 per cent of their business rates, to be backdated for six years. If successful, councils will have to repay significant sums and

see future income reduced. We are fighting the action and advising on the new burdens implications if the claims are upheld.

In addition:

- We worked with councils to deliver a seamless transfer of Local Land Charge registers to HM Land Registry. We are now seeking further funding to cover councils' post-transfer costs.
- We are fighting a private waste company's claim that council commercial waste collections should be VAT exempt which, if successful, would add 20% to the cost of the service.
- In addition, in April the Local Government Mutual opened for business. This offers councils a cost-effective alternative to traditional insurance products and services. Designed by local government for local government, it is owned by and operated for the benefit of its members with no shareholders expecting an investment return.

The LGA Conservative Group can provide, upon request, a briefing of how LGA activity has specifically benefited your own council over the past year.



Out and about: LGA Conservative Group Briefing Seminars

Over the last year, in partnership with the Conservative Councillors' Association (CCA), we have organised a series of regional seminars across the country for Conservative councillors and candidates.

These events, which were held in Birmingham, Cambridgeshire, Devon and Kent, provided an opportunity for those attending to network, share experiences and hear from leading LGA Conservative Group members and senior officials from CCHQ.

The first briefing seminar, which took place in October in Birmingham, focused on supporting opposition councillors. Cllr Robert Alden of Birmingham City Council and Cllr Peter Golds of Tower Hamlets Council took the lead by sharing their own experiences as opposition leaders.

In addition, Theo Von Prondzynski, senior copywriter from CCHQ, led a session on producing effective literature whilst Marcus Jones MP, the Party's Vice Chairman for Local Government, talked about how councillors and MPs can work together effectively on local issues.

This was Cllr James Jamieson's first regional seminar since he became the LGA Conservative Group Leader, so the seminar concluded with him outlining some of the LGA's key lobbying achievements over the past year and his priorities for the year ahead.

In January 2019 we headed to Cambridgeshire for our second seminar. This event was more focused on policy, in particular housing and local government funding.

Cllr Martin Tett, Chairman of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, spoke about current challenges in relation to housing whilst Cllr John Fuller, Vice Chairman of the Resources Board, provided an overview of the Fair Funding Review and the Spending Review.

There were also presentations on 'Campaign 2019' from Hashim Kohan from CCHQ and on social media from Cllr Peter Fleming, the Chairman of the Improvement and Innovation Board.

Despite the bad weather and snow in early February, our third seminar in Devon was attended by many enthusiastic councillors and candidates. Cllr John Hart, Leader of the County Council, started the seminar by welcoming the attendees and was then followed by Neil Parish, the MP for Tiverton and Honiton, who talked about Brexit and rural issues amongst other things.

We then covered a range of topics, including campaigning for May's local elections and the work of the CCA and the LGA Conservative Group. The seminar also included a lively session on the public's perception of local government, led by Will Brooks, the LGA's Principal Adviser.

Our fourth and final seminar in this cycle was held at the end of February at Kent County Council's headquarters in Maidstone. The programme was packed full of Conservative local government experts, including the LGA Chairman, Lord Porter, Cllr Paul Carter, the Leader of Kent County Council, and Rachel Oldham, the Head of Local Government at CCHQ.

The first presentation was delivered by Helen Whately, the MP for Faversham and Mid Kent and the Conservative Party's Vice Chair for Women. Helen focused on the need to get more women involved in politics at all levels and the actions that the Party is taking to achieve this.

Next, the Head of Local Government, Rachel Oldham, provided an overview of the 2019 local elections, the campaign action plan, and the work of the CCA.

Cllr Paul Carter then spoke on how health and social care services in Kent are working closely together to improve services for local people – a great example of partnership working.

Lord Porter then led a lively question and answer session.

The feedback from those who attended each of the four seminars has been very positive, with many commenting on the wide range of topics that were covered,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many speakers who gave up their time to contribute to these events, and of course to all of those who attended.



- ^ Rachel Oldham (Head of Local Government at CCHQ), Cllr James Jamieson (LGA Conservative Group Leader) and Cllr Paul Carter (Leader of Kent County Council) lead a session on Campaign 2019 at the Kent briefing seminar.
- ✓ Theo von Prondzynski from CCHQ leads a session on producing effective literature at the Birmingham briefing seminar.



Who are my Conservative LGA Board representatives?

How can I get involved?

The LGA is a politically-led organisation and the members who serve on its policy Boards are responsible for developing and overseeing its lobbying and policy formulation across all the key policy areas that local government is responsible for.

The LGA's political groups make annual appointments to the Boards with the overall LGA proportionality figures determining how many lead positions and places they are entitled to.

The following pages include summaries from our Conservative lead members outlining the work that they and their colleagues have undertaken on your behalf over the past year.

For more detailed information on each Board, including your Conservative representatives, please contact the LGA Conservative Group Office.

Conservative councillors are appointed to serve on these Boards annually.

Nomination forms are sent to group leaders in June, the appointments are made in July and take effect at the start of the new LGA year on 1st September.

Each group leader can nominate up to three councillors from their group.

Each year we are heavily oversubscribed and so unfortunately we cannot offer a place to everyone who is nominated.

However, vacancies do occur throughout the year and we keep every application form on file for consideration as and when these arise.

In making the appointments the LGA Conservative Group Leader considers a number of factors. The areas of expertise and supporting statement are obviously important and we are very careful to ensure that the appointments reflect our geographical strength across all the various tiers of local government as well as including members from opposition groups.

Whilst there has been a perception amongst some councillors that the appointments are biased towards the South of England, detailed analysis each year shows that overall they reflect the representation of Conservative councillors geographically. Ultimately we want a strong and varied team which is reflective of Conservative councillors across the country.

How to submit an application

1. Download the nomination form from www.local.gov.uk/lga-conservatives - OR ask your group leader for a form - OR request one from the LGA Conservative Group Office.
2. Fill in your contact details, your areas of interest and expertise and write a short supporting statement.
3. Give the completed form to your group leader to countersign.
4. Ensure that the form is returned to the Conservative Group Office no later than Monday 8th July 2019.

Once the appointments have been finalised we will write to everyone who has applied to let them know whether or not they have been successful.

Children and Young People Board

Cllr Roy Perry

The Children and Young People Board is concerned with the wellbeing of children and young people, including education, social care and careers.

In November, the LGA published *Bright Futures: One Year On*. This update highlights what has happened in relation to our vision for the future of children's social care and what more there is to do. The report is available at <https://local.gov.uk/bright-futures-one-year>

I welcomed the additional funding that was announced at the end of last year, including an extra £350 million for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision: £250 million over the next two years for high needs budgets and £100 million for SEND capital, creating more specialist places in mainstream schools, colleges and special schools.

However, LGA research shows that councils are facing a high needs funding shortfall of £472 million this year, rising to £806 million next year and up to £1.6 billion in 2020/2021. So whilst the additional funding is welcome, the LGA will continue to highlight this issue as part of its wider lobbying in relation to the Spending Review which is expected to take place later this year.

As Vice Chairman of the Board I was pleased to speak at the launch of the Early Intervention Foundation's report, *Realising the potential of early intervention*, which seeks to reframe the narrative to focus more on the long-term impact of early support for children and families.

Linked in with this, the Board responded to the Health and Social Care Committee inquiry into the First 1000 Days of Life. We welcomed the inquiry and submitted evidence on the role that councils play in supporting and improving people's mental

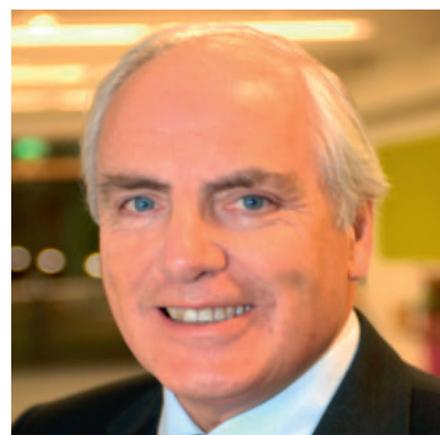
health and physical wellbeing through their services and partnership working with other public service partners.

I was grateful to my Board colleague, Cllr Natasha Airey, for speaking at a roundtable event at the Conservative Party Conference organised by the National Youth Agency. This focused on youth work and youth services, and Natasha took the opportunity to highlight the good work that councils are doing in this area despite the financial pressures.

The role of the lead member for children's services is one of the most challenging in local government, and the LGA's Children's Services Leadership Essentials programme provides invaluable training for lead members. This cross-party programme, which is also open to scrutiny chairs, covers issues ranging from the role of the council in education, the growth of academies, children's social care and child sexual exploitation to sector-led improvement.

The feedback from those who have attended Leadership Essentials courses is very positive and if you are a lead member or scrutiny chair who has not already participated in one of these I would urge you to consider doing so. Please contact the LGA Conservative Group Office for further information on how you can get involved.

Finally, as this year marks the end of my four years as our lead member on the Board I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of my Conservative colleagues, both past and present, for their support and advice during my time as both Chairman and Vice Chairman, and to pass on my best wishes to all Board members for their work over the coming year.



Cllr Roy Perry

City Regions Board

Cllr Abi Brown

The City Regions Board has responsibility for LGA activity in relation to growth, transport, infrastructure, skills and wider public service reform. Its membership is drawn from the Core and Key Cities, SIGOMA and the London Boroughs.

Following the announcement from the Government that every area would be invited to develop a Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), the LGA has commissioned a comprehensive improvement support offer for councils looking to play an active role in supporting Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Combined Authorities in the developments of a LIS.

The Board has played a leading role in the development of this, which will include delivery masterclasses, resources to support shared learning and the creation of a LIS online hub. Further details on this offer as it develops will be available at: www.local.gov.uk/local-industrial-strategies

Following the publication of the National Local Growth Assurance Framework, which seeks to address some of the recommendations of the Government's LEP Review, we will continue to look at how our policy and improvement work can support the strengthened democratic accountability of LEPs, particularly in relation to changes to the compositions of Boards.

I am pleased that our Board continues to work closely with the People and Places Board, which is chaired by a Conservative colleague, Cllr Mark Hawthorne. One issue that we are particularly focused on is responding to national developments on trade and investment and guiding the LGA's work in this area over the coming year.

This will seek to build on the key recommendations that were contained

in the International Trade Committee's report, including that a representative from each of the devolved administrations and the LGA should be included on the Strategic Trade Advisory Group, thus ensuring that they will be consulted throughout trade negotiation processes.

To inform this activity, a survey of the LGA's membership was undertaken at the end of last year to highlight the depth and diversity of existing trade and other international links between councils and global partners, with a view to strengthening the role of sub-national government in future trade and investment policy.

Following on from positive discussions with Anne Milton MP, the Skills and Apprenticeships Minister, we are continuing to pursue a strategic partnership with the Department for Education on post-16 skills to benefit both devolved and non-devolved areas.

In partnership with Core Cities, London Councils, SIGOMA and Key Cities, the Board has commissioned new research to explore the particular cost pressures arising in urban areas and the opportunities to address these through fiscal devolution. This is an exciting project which will form an important part of our work over the coming year.

Finally, the Board continues to highlight the LGA's specific sector-led improvement offer for Combined Authorities. This includes a number of networks that allow Combined Authorities to share best practice and discuss issues of common concern. The LGA's improvement offer is available to all Combined Authorities, as well as bespoke and tailored support. For more information, please see: <https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/devolution/combined-authorities>



Cllr Abi Brown

Community Wellbeing Board

Cllr Ian Hudspeth

The Community Wellbeing Board is responsible for LGA activity in relation to the wellbeing of adults, public health, mental health, lifelong learning, training, health and social care.

The LGA has led efforts in recent years to highlight the significant pressures facing adult social care and the need for central government to adequately fund the system.

In the absence of the Government's Social Care Green Paper, we decided to proactively publish our own, *The lives we want to lead*, which has been widely regarded as leading the debate on how we fund and deliver social care in the future. It also sets out the findings from our extensive consultation and includes 14 recommendations to Government.

The recommendations span two broad objectives: sustaining the here and now whilst also countering some of the immediate consequences of underfunding that are most apparent, and laying the ground for delivering a system that is sustainable in the long-term.

The paper was formally launched at the National Children and Adult Services Conference in November. On the launch day the website had more than 1500 page views, the document was downloaded multiple times, and I was interviewed by various media outlets.

Earlier this year I had the opportunity to speak to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Housing and Care for Older People. This was a great opportunity to highlight the innovative approaches that councils are adopting to promote health and wellbeing, including the provision of the right type of housing for older people, to a key group of Parliamentarians.

I also gave evidence to the Health and Social Care Committee on the NHS Long Term Plan. I took the opportunity to outline the implications of the Plan for local government, including the absence of a long term strategy for social care and

the need for greater clarity about how it will be implemented. I also highlighted the importance of engaging local communities.

I was delighted to be able to welcome Matt Hancock, the Health Secretary, to our Board meeting in January and to the Conservative group meeting beforehand. Following on from this, along with Cllr James Jamieson, I have had monthly meetings with the Secretary of State. These have given us a valuable opportunity to highlight the crucial role that local government can play in delivering the NHS Long Term Plan.

I am also delighted to have been appointed to the NHA Assembly, a broad grouping of around 50 people who are assisting the NHS with the long-term plan. My observation at the first meeting was that it was disappointing that I was the sole elected representative.

As part of our programme of Ministerial engagement it was also encouraging that Jackie Doyle-Price, the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Minister, wrote to councils thanking them for the work that they are doing on suicide prevention. It was also pleasing to hear her endorse our work with the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) to develop a sector led improvement offer on suicide prevention.

Finally, as this has been my first year as the Chairman of the Community Wellbeing Board, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my Conservative colleagues for their support and enthusiastic participation in relation to the many different issues that we have covered.



Cllr Ian Hudspeth

Culture, Tourism and Sport Board

Cllr Janet Walton*

The Culture, Tourism and Sport Board has responsibility for LGA activity in the areas of culture, tourism and sport, including the legacy of the 2012 Olympic Games.

We had our first joint conference with the Football Association (FA) in September at Wembley Stadium, which largely focused on how councils can help provide and maintain football facilities. We are looking forward to further strengthening our links with the FA and between councils and football associations over the coming year.

In March, we held another successful Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference, which this year was hosted by the City of London at the Guildhall. The event had a wide range of speakers, including a keynote speech from Sir Nick Serota about Art Council England's new ten year strategy, and delegates enjoyed cultural walking tours and a range of workshops.

We also launched an important report, *Culture-led regeneration: achieving inclusive and sustainable growth*, at the conference. The publication brings together 15 cases studies from a diverse set of councils, demonstrating different approaches to culture-led regeneration across England and Wales and the positive impacts that this has for local communities. You can access the report at: <https://local.gov.uk/culture-led-regeneration-achieving-inclusive-and-sustainable-growth>

I would also like to draw your attention to the LGA's Culture Hub, which can be accessed at <https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/culture-tourism-leisure-and-sport/good-practice-culture>. This valuable resource highlights good practice in the delivery of cultural services by councils and their partners and will hopefully make a useful contribution to sector-led improvement.

As a Board we submitted a written response to the House of Lords Select Committee on regenerating seaside towns and communities. Utilising information from the LGA's research into how councils can lead, promote and support culture-led regeneration, we were able to share key findings and selected case studies with the committee as part of the submission.

Although our Board is chaired by a Liberal Democrat, our Conservative delegation plays an active and prominent role in its deliberations and has shaped its agenda over the past year.

I am particularly grateful to Cllr Peter Golds for his involvement across various activities and meetings associated with the Board, ranging from our Culture Leadership Essentials courses for lead members to representing the Board at 'The Changing Shape of the UK Visitor Economy' conference and at the Tourism Society's meeting that was hosted at the LGA.

Thanks are also due to Cllr David Jeffels for representing the Board at the Visit England/Visit Britain Destination Forum, Cllr Geraldine Carter for being our representative on the Tourism Alliance, and Cllr Matthew Lee and Cllr Barry Lewis for being our representatives on the Libraries Taskforce and the Peak District National Parks Authority respectively.

They and the other members of the Board are all champions of the role that councils can play in promoting our work to the wider culture, tourism and sport sector and ensuring that a strong Conservative voice is heard at both internal and external meetings and events.

**Unfortunately, Cllr Walton lost her seat at the local elections. We would like to thank her for her work as our lead member on the Board and wish her the best for the future*



Cllr Janet Walton

Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board

Cllr Martin Tett

The Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board provides strategic oversight of the LGA's policy, regulatory and improvement activity in relation to the environment, transport, housing and planning, waste and climate change.

Following the removal of the HRA borrowing cap – something for which the LGA has long campaigned – we have been actively working to promote, facilitate and enhance the role and capacity of councils to build the homes that local communities so desperately need.

Many councils want to move quickly, so our Building Council Homes Programme provides targeted support to those who are keen to increase the delivery of homes via their HRA. This includes support to: fulfil local development potential, innovate in the delivery of new homes, explore and build partnerships and acquire the skills necessary to deliver new homes.

The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act (2018) became law in November and includes a new provision to help councils tackle long term empty homes.

The percentage by which a council may increase the council tax payable in respect of a long-term empty dwelling has risen to up to 300 per cent for some properties. We welcomed the new provision as recognition of the challenge facing councils in tackling empty homes and as a potentially useful new tool.

We also contributed to the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy, published last August, which included over £100 million of new funding (some of which responded to direct asks from the LGA).

The subsequent delivery plan states that MHCLG intends to work with us to develop a package of sector-led support for homelessness and rough sleeping.

We have also supported MHCLG to engage with councils on this issue by hosting one of three regional homelessness workshops.

We also supported the Tenants Fees Bill (now Act) which ban excessive fees being imposed on tenants. Our lobbying also secured an amendment in the House of Lords to exempt local authority incentive payments to landlords from the bans, as councils used this mechanism to prevent 17,000 cases of homelessness last year.

Following the welcome announcement in the Budget of the £675 million Future High Streets Fund, the Government has launched its prospectus for this initiative which will provide co-funding for projects that bring transformative change to town centres. We are keen to work with the Government to ensure that the full benefits of this funding are realised.

As we look forward to the Spending Review later this year, the Board continues to lobby on the underfunding of the statutory concessionary fares scheme, which the LGA currently estimates to be £652 million. We will continue to highlight the impact that this underfunding has on other council services, including supported bus travel and discretionary concessions.

Finally, waste policy is another key issue for the Board and we will be working with the Government as it consults on its Resources and Waste Strategy, which was launched by Michael Gove at the end of last year.



Cllr Martin Tett

Improvement and Innovation Board

Cllr Peter Fleming OBE

The Improvement and Innovation Board has responsibility for LGA activity in relation to improving councils' performance, including peer support and mentoring, and also relations with the various central bodies who contribute to that process.

Peer challenge is a key part of the LGA's offer to councils (please see page 28 for further details) and its success as a tool for improvement within local government is now well established. However, this relies on experienced councillors contributing their time and expertise so we are always keen to encourage senior members to put their names forward.

If you feel that that you have the necessary experience and skills for this role please contact the Conservative Group Office to obtain further information about the accreditation process.

Peers are a key part of sector-led improvement, an approach established by councils and the LGA following the Coalition Government's abolition of Labour's national performance framework.

However, it also encompasses a range of training and councillor development opportunities that are offered by the LGA and its partner organisations.

Ranging from courses for council leaders and cabinet members to newly-elected and opposition group councillors, these courses are highly rated by those who have taken part. More detailed information about the opportunities available is provided on pages 26-27.

In recognition of the pressures on council budgets, the LGA is always keen to show how innovative and collaborative working can both save money and improve outcomes.

For example, shared services have developed significantly in recent years, allowing councils and other public sector bodies to pool resources and expertise to develop a huge range of high quality, efficient services. The latest available figures show that more than £971 million in cumulative efficiency savings from 559 shared service arrangements has been achieved, reinforcing local government's reputation as the most efficient part of the public sector.

The LGA maintains a shared services map which provides detailed information on these projects. You can access this and a wealth of other information by typing 'shared services' into the LGA website.

Cyber security is an issue of increasing importance for councils and over the past year the LGA has organised a number of events for both councillors and officers.

Attendees were updated on the high level findings from the LGA's Cyber Security Stocktake, a snapshot study of the cyber security arrangements in place in councils across England.

Speakers came from a range of key partners, including the National Cyber Security Centre, the Police and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

For those of you who are attending the LGA Conference in Bournemouth, I do hope that you will take the opportunity to visit the Innovation Zone which is located on the main LGA stand.

This year's theme will be 'Taking the Plunge' as we will be showcasing brave and innovative ideas from across the sector that have paid off. Please do take this opportunity to hear some great examples of best practice from those directly responsible for delivering them.



Cllr Peter Fleming OBE

People and Places Board

Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE

The People and Places Board is responsible for LGA activity in relation to economic growth, transport, infrastructure, skills and wider public service reform. Its membership is drawn from the CCN, the DCN and non-county unitary councils who are outside those bodies.

The Post-Brexit England Commission, which was established by the Board to explore the issues and opportunities facing local areas outside England's major city regions, held its seventh and final engagement roadshow earlier this year.

The Commission has visited all England's regions outside London and took evidence from over 200 non-metropolitan stakeholders on the opportunities and challenges that rural and non-urban areas are facing.

The feedback from these conversations, as well as the external research that we have commissioned, will shape the Commission's final report which will be launched at the LGA Annual Conference in July.

Having secured a commitment from the Government that areas will be able to agree a Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), the LGA has commissioned an improvement support offer focused on this. This includes hosting masterclasses sessions on inclusive growth and collaboration with businesses. The Board has contributed its views on how this can best support councils from non-metropolitan areas to engage with LIS development.

The Board has also continued to represent the interests of non-metropolitan areas in relation to the Government's review of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and the design of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

The LEP Review is particularly important for councils and over the coming year we will continue to respond to developments in relation to this. In particular, we will focus on ensuring that councils' oversight role and democratic mandate are recognised.

The Rural Digital Connectivity Working Group has overseen the LGA's response to an Ofcom consultation on the delivery of the broadband Universal Service Obligation (USO), and I was therefore pleased to be invited to a mobile connectivity roundtable hosted by Which? that was attended by various business, rural and consumer stakeholders.

There was a consensus on the need for the Government and Ofcom to consider regulatory measures such as rural roaming (where a mobile can utilise the strongest signal from any mobile network operator) to incentivise the market to provide better coverage in rural areas.

Finally, the Board continues to work closely with our colleagues on the City Regions Board, including in relation to the establishment of the Skills Taskforce last year. The key objective of this was to engage with industry experts and stakeholders on the LGA's *Work Local* objectives and explore the potential of joint working on shared lobbying objectives.

We organised three themed roundtables: *Local coordination of a fragmented employment and skills system*, *Careers and retraining for a changing local economy* and *The future of work: how changing skills needs of sector-specific industries will play out in the local economy*. The key findings will be brought together in a refreshed *Work Local* report that will be published at the LGA annual conference in July.



Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE

Resources Board

Cllr John Fuller OBE

The Resources Board is responsible for shaping and developing the LGA's policies and programmes in relation to local government finance; welfare reform; European structural investment funding and workforce issues.

The LGA's responses to the Government's consultations on Business Rates Retention and the Fair Funding Review were submitted in February. They were shaped by the Task and Finish Group, on which I sit, and influencing these two key pieces of work, both of which provide the opportunity to put local government finance on a sustainable long-term footing, will remain lobbying priorities for both the Board and the LGA over the coming year.

In order to help the sector understand the implications of the reforms, which are inevitably very technical in nature, we have over the past year published a series of models for the Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Retention that members can access in order to help them assess the financial impact of the key proposals contained in the consultation papers.

In conjunction with MHCLG, we also ran free regional events in January and February for councils to hear about the key proposals in the consultation documents and express their views. These were attended by over 220 delegates from 150 member authorities.

Following sustained LGA lobbying – both publicly and behind the scenes with ministers and officials – the Autumn Budget saw the Chancellor announce over £1 billion in short-term funding for councils in 2019/2020. This was then followed by the announcement of additional funding for social care in the Local Government Finance Settlement, comprising £240 million in-year funding

for 2018/2019 and £650 million in 2019/2020.

In addition, negative RSG was eliminated and the New Homes Bonus remained unchanged.

As welcome as the extra funding is, we all know that councils still face significant financial pressures. In conjunction with MHCLG, we have therefore organised roundtable discussions with representatives from across the sector to discuss cross-cutting and service-specific themes relating to the Spending Review with officials from various government departments.

The first of these covered Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and the Dedicated Schools Grant, whilst the second looked at welfare reform, temporary accommodation and homelessness. Other topics that will be covered include adult social care, children's social care, financial sustainability and placed based services.

Our annual Finance Conference, held in January, was a great success. It featured speakers from across the political spectrum including the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Liz Truss, and our Secretary of State, James Brokenshire, as well as officials and technical experts.

Finally, I would like to remind you that the Local Government Mutual was launched in April. This offers member councils a cost-effective alternative to traditional insurance products and services. Designed by local government for local government, it is owned by and operated solely for the benefit of its members. If you would like more details about the opportunities that being part of the Mutual offers please do contact the Conservative Group Office.



Cllr John Fuller OBE

Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Cllr Morris Bright MBE

The Safer and Stronger Communities Board is responsible for all LGA activity in relation to the safety of local communities. This includes crime and anti-social behaviour, police liaison, Police and Crime Commissioners and Police and Crime Panels, community safety, public protection, the fire service, emergency planning, and licensing and other regulatory activities.

In January, we submitted our response to the Commission for Countering Extremism's call for evidence. The Commission is a non-statutory independent expert committee of the Home Office, headed up by Sara Khan as Lead Commissioner. Its initial objectives are to engage on extremism and British values across the public sector, communities, civil society and with experts; produce a strategic assessment of the threat faced from extremism and the current response; and advise Ministers on the Commission's future structures and work programme.

Our submission set out councils' core role in countering extremism, and how, working with communities and partner agencies, they are best placed to understand the complexities of local issues and what works in response. It also examined the impact of extremism on local areas, evolving threats and how understanding, responding and building resilience to this requires a joined-up and long-term approach at both the local and national levels.

In February, the Department for Transport (DfT) responded to the recommendations made by the Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) Task and Finish Group. The response was very positive from an LGA perspective as it accepted many of the Group's recommendations, including those that the LGA has been calling for. These include the Government announcing that they intend to legislate to introduce national minimum standards for taxi and PHV licensing, national enforcement powers and a national licensing database. There is also

a commitment to looking at how to more effectively resolve cross-border issues.

Earlier this year we had a successful Licensing Conference which was attended by over 100 members and officers. The conference covered a range of different areas and the Minister for Licensing, Nusrat Ghani MP, took the opportunity to announce that the Government would be responding to the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle working group report (as outlined in the preceding paragraph). We also welcomed speakers from the Information Commissioner's Office and Defra.

The Board submitted evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry into modern slavery, which highlighted the role of councils in tackling this problem but also the barriers that they face in doing so. On the same subject, ahead of a House of Commons debate we briefed Parliamentarians on the problems that councils face due to the lack of published guidance and the increasing concern of county lines activity linked to modern slavery.

Earlier this year, we published *Breaking the Cycle of Youth Violence*. The report, which is available on the LGA website, contains a number of case studies which demonstrate how councils and their partners are taking the lead in tackling youth violence and intervening early to divert young people away from a life of serious violence and crime.

Finally, on a personal note, having served for four years as the Conservative Group lead member on the Board, I will shortly be stepping down from the role. I have thoroughly enjoyed undertaking this responsibility and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the many Conservative colleagues who I have worked with over this period for their support, advice and friendship and to wish them and the Board all the very best for the future.



Cllr Morris Bright MBE

The Fire Services Management Committee and the Fire Commission

Cllr Nick Chard

The Fire Services Management Committee and the Fire Commission represent the views of fire authorities in relation to service modernisation and all other fire related issues.

In December, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published reports for the 14 services covered in tranche one of inspections and a national report summarising the findings. They are expected to publish tranche two reports in the summer, with tranche three and a final 'State of Fire' report due in December.

The reports found that most fire services are good at what matters most – responding to emergencies – despite an increasingly challenging financial climate, but there are other areas, including efficiency within the service, where more work needs to be done.

Governance was not covered in these inspections, but it is the members of fire authorities who are legally responsible for the service, and who therefore have a duty to ensure that their service responds effectively to inspection results. I would therefore urge all authority members to read the national report in preparations for their own inspections.

In the meantime, Board members are working closely with HMICFRS to refine the inspection process via the Inspectorates External Reference Group. Chairs and Chiefs meetings have also allowed us to share learning from the first set of inspections, and at a recent meeting HMICFRS outlined their proposals for the corporate governance inspection regime.

I was pleased to attend the inaugural meeting of the Fire Finance Senior Sector Group at the Home Office earlier this year. The group, which has representatives from the National Fire Chiefs Council and the

Home Office, is designed to support the fire sector in producing a submission to the Spending Review which is expected to take place later this year.

I was also pleased to attend the first meeting of the new Fire Standards Board, which has been established as part of the Government's fire reform programme in order to support the 'continuous improvement' of fire and rescue services in England.

The Board has responsibility for overseeing the identification, organisation, development and maintenance of professional standards for fire and rescue services in England, and I am looking forward to continuing to shape and support its work over the coming year.

We held another successful Fire Conference earlier this year. It was a jam-packed two days that included a range of speakers from the fire sector and key stakeholders as well as a variety of workshops on topics ranging from the Fire Standards Board to collaboration, inspections and building safety post-Grenfell.

We also used the conference to launch our new publication *Beyond Hackitt – protecting the vulnerable in the years ahead*, which is available via the LGA website.

Finally, I would like to thank my Conservative colleagues on the Fire Services Management Committee for their support over the past year, my first as the Conservative lead member, and for their enthusiastic and valuable contributions to our work, which has included more joined-up working with our colleagues on both the Safer and Stronger Communities and Community Wellbeing Boards, both of which have areas of common interest with us.



Cllr Nick Chard

LGA Training, Development and Learning Courses

The LGA offers a wide range of training, development and learning courses for all types of councillors.

Leadership Academy

The Leadership Academy is the LGA's flagship development programme for councillors in leadership positions (council leaders, deputy leaders, group leaders, portfolio holders, shadow portfolio holders, scrutiny chairs and committee chairs). It aims to develop the behaviours, strategies, skills and mind-sets of leaders.

Leading councillors from across the country have found that the Leadership Academy has helped them to address key challenges and utilise new opportunities. The programme is now recognised by the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM), the UK's leading awarding body for leadership and management, and graduates receive an ILM certificate.

The Leadership Academy is based on three two-day residential modules over three months:

- Module 1 focuses on how councillors can develop, maintain and use relationships (both internal and external) to provide effective leadership at the organisational, political and wider community levels.
- Module 2 develops participants' ability to lead and manage complex change to improve effectiveness and achieve better outcomes for communities.
- Module 3 focuses on helping participants to communicate with and provide leadership to their communities and within partnerships.



Political Leadership Masterclasses

These one-day courses are for councillors who hold leadership positions on their councils (cabinet members, committee chairs and opposition group leaders).

They cover a variety of subjects ranging from risk management to working with the media to emergency planning and civil resilience.

Leadership Essentials

The Leadership Essentials programme comprises leadership programmes and workshops that focus on particular themes, including: finance, health and wellbeing, fire and rescue, children's services, effective scrutiny, adult social care and sport and physical activity.

Focus on Leadership

Focus on Leadership are two-day development programmes for councillors who aspire to move into leadership positions on their councils. They include:

- **Effective opposition:** Aimed at opposition leaders and deputy leaders, this programme helps participants to gain a better understanding of how they can enhance the effectiveness of their opposition group. It covers a range of topics, including building relationships with key officers, engaging with stakeholders, working with the local media and getting the best out of social media.
- **Young Councillors' Weekender:** This is designed to give councillors aged 40 and under an opportunity to benefit from leadership skills training and to network with other young politicians. In the ten years that this programme has run approximately 40 participants have attended each year and several have gone on to take up cabinet positions on their councils or roles on LGA Boards.

Next Generation

The Next Generation programme, which is overseen by the LGA's political groups, is aimed at councillors who have already demonstrated potential leadership qualities and who are considered to have the capacity to develop further. Key areas covered include:

- Policy and strategy
- Community leadership
- Political management
- Personal skills development
- Communications

There is no cost involved in attending this programme but there is a competitive application process. The format of the programme is reviewed each year but is typically based around three residential blocks over two days. Information on the Next Generation programme for 2019/2020 will be sent to Conservative group leaders over the summer.

Please see the testimony from Cllr Kelham Cook, who participated in the 2018/2019 Conservative 'Next Generation' programme, on page 29.

In-house training

The LGA can deliver training in-house tailored to your council's needs (using a member peer and a trained facilitator) on topics such as chairing skills, influencing skills, community engagement, partnerships and getting the best out of social media.

Councillors' Guide

The new Councillors' Guide for 2019/2020 is now available online and can be accessed at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership/councillors-guide>

Councillor workbooks

The LGA's councillor workbooks, which cover topics ranging from being an effective ward councillor to local government finance, are particularly useful for newly elected councillors and can be downloaded at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/councillor-workbooks>

E-learning modules:

These modules, which can be accessed at <https://lms.learningnexus.co.uk/LGA/>, cover 17 topics ranging from licensing and regulation to scrutiny of finance. To access the modules, you must register to receive a username and password by emailing: elarning@local.gov.uk

Further information on these programmes and resources can be obtained by contacting the LGA Conservative Group.

Peer Review

Enabling learning, development and improvement within local government

Corporate Peer Challenge is a core element of the LGA's sector-led improvement offer to councils. Managed and delivered by the sector on behalf of the sector, the peer challenge process is designed to support councils to take responsibility for their own improvement.

At the heart of the process are local government officers and councillors who spend their time as 'peers' at a council that they have no direct association with in order to contribute to its improvement and development. As fellow local government practitioners, these peers bring credibility, trust and mutual respect to the challenge process.

Sharing knowledge and learning is a key feature of the interaction that occurs during the peer challenge process. Peers provide challenge and reassurance and in doing so draw on experience from their own organisations, helping to raise performance standards across the sector. Crucially, they almost always take something back to their own council too.

Often the peer challenge is a catalyst for continued informal relationships, networks and the sharing of knowledge and learning. Mutual learning not only

occurs between the council and the peers, but amongst the peer team too. Peers learn about practice in the council they are visiting, but can also benefit from their discussions with colleagues on the review team.

Cllr Peter Fleming, the Leader of Sevenoaks District Council and one of our Conservative peers, comments:

"I have had the privilege to participate as a member peer on a number of peer challenges. Each review is always different as individual councils inevitably have their own cultures, priorities and dynamics.

"Whilst a key part of my role as a team member is to share my experience and expertise with the council I am visiting, it is very much a two-way process and I have always taken away something that I feel will benefit my own council.

"Sharing the experiences gained from peer work has definitely been beneficial for me. I believe that it has contributed to my development as both a councillor and a council leader."

The average peer review is 3-4 days and all member peers receive a flat daily rate plus expenses for any work that they undertake.

If you are an experienced councillor who has held a senior position – a Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member or Scrutiny Chairman – for at least three years then you are welcome to apply to become a peer.

Please email us at lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk or call us on 020 7664 3264.

We will answer any questions that you may have and if you wish to formally put your name forward we will then send you an application form to complete.

When we receive your completed form it will then be considered by the LGA Conservative Group Executive. If they feel that you meet the criteria expected of a peer then they will approve your application. You will then officially become a peer and will be considered for peer requests that match your areas of expertise and experience.

Next Generation

Cllr Kelham Cooke of South Kesteven District Council

I am always interested in developing my knowledge of local government and learning best practice from other councils. I had heard from a few friends about the Next Generation Programme so as soon as I heard applications were open I knew I had to apply.

My engagement with local government started purely by chance, as is often the case with most people! I campaigned for Nick Boles MP at the 2010 General election, and then the following year I offered to deliver some leaflets for the local elections and ended up being persuaded to stand as a candidate. I was successfully elected to the District Council at the age of 20, and for the following four years I sat on various committees. After the 2015 District elections I was asked to join the Cabinet, and then two years later, at the age of 26, I was formally appointed as the Deputy Leader of the Council, which is the role I continue to hold.

I applied to become part of the Next Generation programme because I wanted to use this opportunity to increase my awareness and understanding of different styles of leadership.

I had attended the LGA's Leadership Academy when I was first appointed to the Cabinet, which I thoroughly enjoyed as it improved my understanding of local government. As Deputy Leader, I continue to meet with a council leaders because I am intrigued by the different approaches to dealing with the challenges within local government. The Next Generation programme is all about political development and how we can increase our understanding of different leadership styles and gain the confidence to try different approaches.

This year's programme focused on leadership, communication and political

relationships, and we had leading figures speak on these topics and help us assess and develop our skills.

It was really useful to hear from Cllr Peter Fleming OBE, Leader of Sevenoaks District Council, and Cllr Sean Anstee CBE, former Leader of Trafford Council, on how they ran their councils, innovated and worked with officers. Engaging with colleagues from other councils was also a valuable opportunity as there is always much to learn from their experiences.

The programme also included many interactive sessions that evaluated our skill sets. Sandie Miller from RADA taught us how to communicate with confidence and analysed how we delivered presentations, focusing on our speech and body language. We also had mock journalist TV interviews led by Cllr Morris Bright MBE, Leader of Hertsmere Borough Council and Chairman of Elstree Studios.

As awkward as most of us will find it to watch ourselves on TV, being interviewed by an experienced journalist and receiving Morris' feedback on how best to come across has been invaluable for both my professional and political career.

I thoroughly enjoyed the programme and would strongly recommend it to anyone that wants to develop their leadership and communication skills. Before taking part one of my biggest challenges was how to approach confrontational situations. Now, after learning how best to communicate my message, I will be able to approach any conflict with self-assurance.

*For more information on the Next Generation programme, please contact Angela Page in the LGA Conservative Group Office on **0207 664 3223**.*



Cllr Kelham Cooke

kelham.cooke@southkesteven.gov.uk

[@kelhamcooke](https://twitter.com/kelhamcooke)

The Conservative Group Office

The Conservative Group Office exists to support Conservative council groups and individual councillors. It is also the day-to-day voice of Conservatives in the wider corporate LGA.

There are four full-time members of staff who have a wealth of knowledge, including first-hand experience of being a councillor and of Conservative Campaign Headquarters (CCHQ) and the Conservative Councillors' Association (CCA).

We work closely with the CCA and the Local Government Department at CCHQ, including hosting joint events and sponsoring sessions at the Local Government Conference.

Although much of our time is spent supporting the Group Leader, Group Executive and Conservative members of the various LGA governance bodies, we also deal on a daily basis with enquiries from Conservative councillors in relation to a variety of policy or legal issues, and we aim to be the first port of contact for Conservative council groups.

Should you need support on confidential matters, whether it is checking the advice you may have received or assistance with employment, finance or legal issues you are dealing with, the Group Office can assist by putting you in touch with experienced members or officers.

A key role is to establish and maintain dialogue with Ministers. This includes supporting our lead members in lobbying on specific issues of legislation or policy proposals and securing the attendance of Ministers at Conservative group meetings or corporate LGA events.

In summary, the work of the Group Office is focused on the following areas:

- Acting as a secretariat to and arranging the appointments of Conservative councillors on LGA governance bodies.
- Working closely with, but where appropriate challenging, the Government and Party organisation.
- Shaping the LGA's corporate campaigns, policy, media and public affairs work.
- Offering advice and guidance to individual councillors and to Conservative council groups on policy and legal issues.
- Producing an annual report to inform members of our activities.
- Producing an annual directory of Conservative members appointed to LGA bodies.
- Organising the Conservative 'Next Generation' programme each year for aspiring future leaders.

- Delivering the Conservative part of the LGA's 'Be a Councillor' programme.
- Attending and running sessions at Party Conference and the CCA Local Government Conference, and having a visible presence throughout the LGA annual conference.
- Sending out a monthly email bulletin to keep you updated on key developments.
- Organising a regular programme of briefing seminars around the country.
- Supporting Conservative councils through sector-led improvement.
- Co-ordinating the LGA's Conservative peer support programme.

For the latest information on our work and activities, please follow us on Twitter @LGACons



Head of Group Office Angela Page

Angela joined the LGA in 2001 as a Political Assistant and then in 2007 she changed roles to become a Political Adviser. In June 2016 she was appointed Head of Group Office. She is responsible for advising on and implementing the overall policy and management of the Conservative Group and

providing advice to the Group Leader and the Group Executive. Having been a Conservative Party member for a number of years, Angela was elected as a councillor on the London Borough of Bromley in May 2014 and then re-elected in 2018.



Political Adviser Paul McCannah

Paul joined the LGA in 2004 from the CCA. He supports and advises Conservative members who serve on the Children and Young People Board, the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board and the Community Wellbeing Board.

Paul served on Enfield Council from 2002-2014. During this time he chaired a number of scrutiny panels and was a Cabinet Member for Community Safety and for Leisure Services. Prior to joining the LGA, he worked as the National Organiser of the CCA.



Political Officer Ghazaleh Pourzadi

Ghazaleh joined the LGA in 2018. She is responsible for maintaining and developing the Group's communications network with Conservative councillors and parliamentary colleagues. She also covers the Safer and Stronger Communities Board, the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board, the People and Places Board and

the City Regions Board. Prior to joining the LGA, Ghazaleh worked at the Conservative Councillors' Association, for an MP and at a number of international charities. She graduated from Kingston University in 2012 with a Masters degree in International Relations with Law.



Political Administrator Penelope Galvin

Penny joined the LGA in April 2018. She provides administrative support to the Group Office, Group Leader and to Conservative members. She is the first point of contact for general enquiries, as well as facilitating all meetings. Penny also coordinates peer work for the Conservative Office, finding suitable Conservative Peers for each peer request.

Penny is a recent Politics graduate from the University of Hull, successfully completing the Westminster Hull Internship Programme at CCHQ alongside her degree. Prior to joining the LGA she worked for an independent recruitment agency.

Contact Us



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