

# LGA Conservative Group

Report & Review 2016/2017



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

**The past twelve months have certainly been eventful for Conservatives, both locally and nationally, as we have experienced the vote to leave the European Union and its aftermath, the appointment of Theresa May as Prime Minister and, most recently, the General Election.**

The impact of Brexit on local government, progress towards the localisation of business rates by 2020, moves towards greater devolution around the country (as evidenced by the first Mayoral elections which took place in May), and the future funding of adult social care, to name just a few issues, have kept the LGA and the LGA Conservative Group incredibly busy over the past year. These matters are covered in greater detail throughout the report.

To effectively lobby on such issues it has been essential for us to maintain strong and close relations with Ministerial teams across Whitehall.

Of course, DCLG is the department with whom we have the closest relationship and having established excellent relations with Sajid Javid following his appointment as Secretary of State last year we were delighted when he was re-appointed in the recent reshuffle.

In the same way as we did with Eric Pickles and Greg Clark, when Parliament sits we have held weekly meetings with Sajid and his Ministerial colleagues over the past year.

These meetings, which have also been attended by Cllr Paul Carter (the Chairman of the County Councils' Network), Cllr Neil Clarke (the outgoing Chairman of the District Councils' Network), Cllr Teresa O'Neill (Leader of the Conservative Group on London Councils) and Cllr Rory Love (Chairman of the Conservative Councillors' Association) have been used by Sajid to brief and consult on key issues whilst also allowing us to raise issues on your behalf.

We have worked successfully with Sajid on a range of issues but we would particularly like to thank him for his support in relation to adult social care funding. This culminated in the announcement by the Chancellor in the Budget of an extra £2 billion in funding for social care over the next three years, including £1 billion in 2017/2018.

Over the past year we also worked closely with Gavin Barwell in the lead-up to and the aftermath of the publication of the Housing White Paper, which contained many proposals that we were able to welcome (such as greater flexibility in relation to planning fees).

Whilst of course sorry that Gavin lost his seat at the General Election, we were delighted that he was almost immediately appointed as the Prime Minister's new Chief of Staff.

It is very encouraging that someone with such a background in local government, and with whom we have a strong and established relationship, has been appointed to such an important position. We look forward to continuing to work with Gavin in his new role.

Following the reshuffle, we welcome Alok Sharma as the new Housing Minister, congratulate Marcus Jones and Lord Bourne on their re-appointment as DCLG Ministers, welcome Jake Berry as the new Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and wish Andrew Percy all the best following his departure from the Government.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with Sajid and his ministerial team over the coming year.

We would like to take this opportunity to place on record our thanks to Cllr David Hodge who, following major surgery last year, stood down as the Leader of the Conservative Group in March, for his many years of service to Conservative local government.



Lord Porter of Spalding CBE



Cllr David Simmonds CBE

David made an enormous contribution to the LGA as both a former Chairman of the People and Places Board and then as group leader and LGA Vice Chairman.

Prior to becoming our group leader he was also a successful Chairman of the County Councils' Network.

David's many years of service to local government and charitable services were recognised by the awarding of a CBE in the New Year's Honours list.

The purpose of this annual report is to provide you with information on the LGA's activity over the past year, both corporately and within the Conservative Group.

We hope that you will find it interesting and we would particularly draw your attention to the reports of our lead members on the LGA's various policy Boards.

These summaries outline how they have provided a strong Conservative voice within the LGA, how they have worked with Ministers across a range of Government departments and the key lobbying successes that they have achieved on your behalf over the past year.

In addition to this annual report the Conservative Group also sends out a monthly email bulletin to update you on key policy announcements, lobbying activity, consultations and to alert you to upcoming events. We hope that you find these bulletins useful and we would welcome any suggestions that you may have as to how they could be further improved.

The LGA Conservative Group is also on Twitter so please follow us at @lgacons for all the very latest news and views.

In order to get out of London we have, over the past year, organised a number of briefing seminars around the country in partnership with the Conservative Councillors' Association.

These events cover a variety of policy and campaigning issues and we are already planning future seminars, so if you are interested in hosting one please do let us know.

The LGA tries to be as accessible as possible to all of our members and as part of this it has opened up its regular Councillors' Forum meetings to all members who wish to attend.

The Councillors' Forum is often attended by Ministerial speakers – we have recently welcomed Sajid Javid and David Mowat, the former Social Care Minister, and are looking forward to welcoming Greg Clark, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, to our July meeting – whilst the Conservative Group meeting beforehand offers an ideal opportunity for us to discuss key issues in a private political setting.

If you are interested in attending the Councillors' Forum please contact the Group Office.

We would like to end by thanking you, our fellow Conservative councillors, for all that you have done for your communities and for our Party over the past year.

In both the local elections and the General Election, Conservative councillors proved once again that we are the backbone of our party. As the largest party in local government you can rest assured that your voice will continue to be heard loud and clear over the coming year both within the LGA and across Whitehall.

# LGA Conservative Group Executive 2016/2017

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

A new team is elected in June of each year and the elected members for the past year (2016/2017) were:



LGA Chairman  
**Lord Porter of Spalding CBE**  
South Holland District Council



Group Leader  
*(and LGA Vice Chairman) – to March 17*  
**Cllr David Hodge CBE**  
Surrey County Council



Acting Group Leader  
*(and LGA Vice Chairman) – from March 17*  
*(originally elected as Deputy Group Leader)*  
**Cllr David Simmonds CBE**  
London Borough of Hillingdon



County Council Executive Member  
*(and LGA Deputy Chairman since March 2017)*  
**Cllr Colin Noble**  
Suffolk County Council



Non-Met District  
Council Executive Member  
*(and LGA Deputy Chairman)*  
**Cllr Peter Fleming OBE**  
Sevenoaks District Council



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



Metropolitan District Council  
Executive Member  
**Cllr Robert Light**  
Kirklees Metropolitan  
Borough Council



Unitary Council Executive Member  
**Cllr Paul Bettison OBE**  
Bracknell Forest  
Borough Council

## 'At large' Executive Members



**Cllr Sean Anstee**  
*(and LGA Deputy Chairman)*  
Trafford Metropolitan  
Borough Council



**Cllr Philip Atkins OBE**  
Staffordshire County Council



**Cllr Kevin Bentley**  
Essex County Council



**Baroness Coultie of Downe**  
*(and LGA Deputy Chairman)*  
Westminster City Council



### Further information

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

[www.local.gov.uk/lga-conservatives](http://www.local.gov.uk/lga-conservatives)

# Brexit:

## what has the LGA been doing?

Reflecting the different views of the councillors and councils who make up our membership, the LGA remained neutral during the Brexit referendum last year, but following the result we have worked hard to ensure that local government's voice is heard during the negotiations.

### Key achievements to date:

To date the LGA has achieved two key wins.

Firstly, following strong lobbying by us the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced at last year's Conservative Party Conference that local areas with existing EU funding arrangements agreed at the point that we leave the EU will receive replacement funding following our departure.

Secondly, and again following LGA lobbying, the Government has confirmed that local government will be fully involved in the discussions relating to our departure from the EU.

### Key issues for local government:

We have identified the following as being the key issues for local government, and as such they are currently the focus of our work in relation to Brexit:

#### (a) Autonomy of local government

Building on the Government's ambitious devolution agenda, we believe that responsibilities repatriated from the EU cannot simply be kept in Whitehall.

As such, a presumption in favour of subsidiarity must apply to all levels of government, with powers being devolved and decisions taken as close to local people as possible.

#### (b) Developing a new legal base for local government

The Government's proposed Great Repeal Bill means that, post-Brexit, all existing EU legislation can be scrutinised and decisions taken by Parliament as to which aspects of those laws are to be retained, amended or removed from UK legislation.

To facilitate this process, the LGA has developed a comprehensive dataset of those EU decisions, regulations and directives that affect local government, with a particular focus on procurement, regulatory services, the environment, waste services and workforce issues.

#### (c) Localising regional funding

Following the Chancellor's announcement that areas with existing EU funding arrangements signed off when we leave the EU will receive replacement funding after our departure, the challenge now is to create a domestic replacement for EU regional aid funding which is based on local rather than Whitehall or EU rules.

Long before the referendum, the LGA had consistently argued for much greater local control over the management, design and delivery of such schemes.

We believe that the following should be the core principles for a new model of regional funding:

- **Local determination and delivery:** domestic redesign should support the principle of a locally-led, single, place-based strategy established around the needs of people.
- **Funding is delivered over a stable period:** the current EU funding programme is allocated over a seven-year period. This is regarded as a significant benefit as it allows for long-term planning beyond normal domestic funding and political cycles.
- **Maximum integration with other funding streams:** domestic redesign should encourage integrated financial support to increase sustainable growth and jobs within local areas. This will avoid the policy silos, duplications, gaps and inconsistencies which have characterised earlier schemes.

- **Funding is easier to manage:** domestic redesign should include a simplified and more proportionate approach to financial management, to allow for shorter time frames for decision authorisation and payment.
- **Funding of at least equal value:** the amount of funding for domestic replacement should be at least £5.3 billion for England and £1.8 billion for Wales, matching current ESIF funding levels for 2014-2020.

#### (d) Addressing place-based impacts

Along with Government departments, the LGA is assessing the potential and varied impact and opportunities of Brexit at the local level, in both urban and rural areas.

Potential challenges are, for example, possible labour shortages affecting both the public and private sectors (for example, in the care sector, seasonal unskilled work, etc)

Potential benefits are, for example, reducing unnecessary and burdensome red tape (eg, the freedom to move towards a simplified procurement process)

As previously noted, we see this as an opportunity to further develop the devolution agenda which the Government has actively pursued since 2010.

For example, to improve opportunities for 'left behind' communities we are calling on the Government to reform Whitehall's national approach to commissioning employment and skills funding (which is worth £10.5 billion a year).

It is currently fragmented, costly and fails to address the particular challenges faced in local areas. A more integrated approach would be based around groups of councils working with businesses and other partners to create single, place-based plans tailored to local needs.

The Government has confirmed that local government will be fully involved in the discussions relating to our departure from the EU.

### Your views

In order to support our evidence gathering on the impact of Brexit on local areas, the LGA is inviting feedback from councils and councillors. Please email:

[brexit@local.gov.uk](mailto:brexit@local.gov.uk)

### Further information

For all the latest news on how Brexit is impacting on local government, and updates on the LGA's activity in relation to this, visit our dedicated website:

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

# What is the LGA and what has it done for my council?

## 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 fair pay and pensions settlements and provides advice on workforce matters to councils.

Over the past five years we have reduced our total subscription income by 30 per cent and this year we have, again, frozen our subscription levels.

As a result of our lobbying over the past year the LGA has secured a number of 'wins' and additional funding for our member councils, including the following:

- £2 billion of new money over the next three years to protect social care services for older and disabled people, with £1 billion of this allocated in 2017/2018. This is a direct result of us leading, with others, a sustained campaign.
- £690 million for new local transport projects to improve congestion on roads and public transport.

- A £50 million annual fund for councils to support school improvement and a £148 million fund to support failing schools.
- A decision by the Government, announced by Sajid Javid at the LGA Councillors' Forum meeting earlier this year, to drop proposals to transfer responsibility for Attendance Allowance to councils as part of the further localisation of business rates. £5.5 billion is currently spent on Attendance Allowance.
- Provision in the Local Government Finance Bill for the Government to pay local authorities for the cost of business rates appeals. Currently, local authorities are forced to hold back around £2.5 billion to manage the risk of successful appeals.
- An announcement from Government that it would no longer legislate to force all schools to become academies. We estimated that forced academisation of all schools would have cost all councils up to £380 million by 2020.
- Significant wins secured in the Housing White Paper, including a minimum 20 per cent increase in funding for local planning teams, a new £45 million Land Release Fund for councils and flexibilities to establish local development corporations.
- £700 million for councils by 2020/2021 to help local areas recover from the damage caused by last winter's flooding.
- A £250 million pothole fund, announced by the Government following our sustained campaign.
- Support to deliver 'Ambition for Libraries,' including £4 million for councils.

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

## Parliamentary lobbying and influencing legislation

The LGA works closely with Parliamentarians to ensure the concerns of our members are represented in national policy debates. In 2016 we were quoted 953 times in Parliamentary debates, Select Committees and questions. We sought to influence 10 pieces of legislation, including the Homelessness Reduction Bill, the Local Government Finance Bill, the Children and Social Work Bill and the Neighbourhood Planning Bill. Our Parliamentary 'wins' for local government over the past year have included the following successes:

As a result of our work on the Homelessness Reduction Bill major changes were made, with proposed duties on councils to secure accommodation for those at risk being amended to be more flexible. We also secured a commitment from the Government to fully fund the new duties and this led to the announcement of £61 million to fund the cost burdens.

The Children and Social Work Bill had provisions allowing the Secretary of State to amend children's social care legislation in a council area in intervention without proper consultation or consent. We worked with Parliamentarians and the Government to remove this.

Working with the Government and Parliamentarians, we helped shape the Policing and Crime Bill to ensure that licensing authorities can take into account the potentially negative impact of having gambling premises clustered in an area when making licensing decisions.



## Conference and events

Councillors and officers from our member councils have access to more than 120 free or discounted events, from small seminars to large residential conferences. Over 60 per cent of our events over the past year were free to attend and half were held outside London.

## Promoting local government in the media

As the national voice of local government, the LGA is uniquely placed to provide a strong voice for councils as the national press office for local government – a 24/7, 365 days a year service committed to protecting and promoting the interests of councils.

In 2016, the LGA achieved 2,170 separate pieces of national coverage, together with a further 35,563 articles published in regional, local and trade media. Our spokesmen, from councils up and down the country, were interviewed 217 times by national broadcast media.

## Practical support for councils

There is a wide range of support available to your council. A regionally-based Principal Adviser acts as your first non-political point of call with the LGA, advising on the support and services available and regularly visiting your authority. In addition you can access:

- Support from specialist advisers across a range of policy areas from housing to health and social care, children's services to communications.
- On-the-day briefings covering all major government announcements, including the Budget, Queen's Speech and legislation affecting local government.
- Free legal advice and opinions.
- Free access to advice on pay, pensions and employment.
- Discounts on Microsoft and Adobe software licences through participating resellers.



For more information on this support please contact the Conservative Group Office.

[lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk](mailto:lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk)

# The 2017 Local elections

The local elections consolidated our position as both the largest party in local government and the largest political group at the LGA as we gained just under 400 seats in England and Wales and made substantial progress in Scotland.

Particular congratulations are due to our groups in Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire, East Sussex, Gloucestershire, Lancashire, the Isle of Wight, Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Monmouthshire, Suffolk and Warwickshire, where we gained overall control of the council.

UKIP lost every single seat that they were defending, Labour suffered net losses for a third year in a row, whilst the Liberal Democrats also had a net loss of seats.

There were also contests for elected mayors in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Greater Manchester, Liverpool City, Tees Valley, the West of England and the West Midlands.

Congratulations are due to Andy Street for winning in the West Midlands, to Cllr James Palmer for winning in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, to Cllr Ben Houchen for winning in Tees Valley and to Cllr Tim Bowles for winning in the West of England.

Cllr Sean Anstee, our LGA Deputy Chairman, fought a strong battle against Andy Burnham in Greater Manchester, as did Tony Caldeira in the Liverpool City Region.

The results in the Tees Valley and West Midlands are particularly encouraging as they show that Conservatives can win in urban areas traditionally been seen as Labour's heartlands.

The changes in the number of councillors and councils controlled for each party following this year's local elections are summarised below:

## Councils

	Conservatives	Labour	Lib Dems	UKIP	Others	NOC	Total
Before	189	108	7	0	4	65	373
After	200	104	7	0	4	58	373
Change	+11	-4	-	-	-	-7	0

## Seats

	Conservatives	Labour	Lib Dems	UKIP	Others	Total
Before	8526	6369	1761	431	1905	18992
After	8920	6164	1734	316	1835	18969
Change	+394	-205	-27	-115	-70	-23

# Be a Councillor

## Finding the next generation of councillors



**How do we convey the enthusiasm of existing councillors to a new generation by persuading people who are capable, vibrant and energetic that becoming a councillor is a worthwhile and rewarding experience?**

The LGA Conservative Group seeks to answer this question through its participation in the LGA's corporate Be a Councillor campaign which publicises the role of the councillor and encourages people who are engaged in their communities to consider standing for election.

Of course it is the electorate who ultimately decides who is elected but this campaign highlights how skills gained through experiences as diverse as raising a family, caring for a disabled relative, volunteering, running a business, or being active in a community or voluntary group could help make you a successful councillor.

In recent years we have worked with the Conservative Party to reach out to new people in a number of ways, ranging from funding mailshots to attract new candidates to holding events where they can speak to experienced councillors about the role.

Constituency associations and council groups can also make use of The X Factor: A talent spotter's guide for local elections and the Be a Councillor brochure for prospective candidates which includes case studies, information on the role of the councillor, legal requirements for standing and other useful information.

Cllr Jo Beavis, recently elected to Essex County Council, has been closely involved with the programme:

**"Never has there been a more interesting time to 'Be a Councillor.' Housing, health, social care, community wellbeing and devolution dominate the headlines as we, as councillors, shape the agenda within our communities.**

**Councillors have the democratic mandate to be local leaders of place. 'Be a Councillor' is helping to drive that vision for the future in searching for new talent and encouraging more people to be councillors. Please help the LGA to help you and your community by encouraging more people to come forward to represent their communities as councillors."**



It is never too early to plan for the next set of local elections, so please do visit the website to see how we can help you recruit your next generation of candidates and councillors.

If you would like further information about the campaign and how you can help in your local area, or if you have good practice that you would like to share from your local association or group, please do email us at:

[lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk](mailto:lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk)



The Be a Conservative Councillor guide can be downloaded from the LGA Conservative Group website, with hard copies also available on request.

The Be a Councillor page on the LGA website provides further detailed information and resources, including the Be a Councillor toolkit for councils and e-learning:

[www.beacouncillor.co.uk](http://www.beacouncillor.co.uk)



You can also follow the Be a Councillor campaign at [www.twitter.com/beacouncillor](https://www.twitter.com/beacouncillor)



## 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 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 please visit the webpage link that is provided at the bottom of each of these sections.

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 1<sup>st</sup> September.

Nominations forms are sent to each Conservative council group leader and they are invited to 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 occur.

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 our appointments reflect our geographical strengths across the various tiers of local government.

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](http://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 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

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.**

The proposed new national formula for schools funding was a key issue for the Board over the past year but also a difficult one due to the fact that some member authorities were due to be net winners whilst others were net losers.

Moreover, even those who gained overall faced specific issues since small and rural primary schools with less than 200 pupils often lost out from the application of a rigid national formula.

In particular, we raised concerns about the proposed timeline for its introduction, specifically around the transitional or 'soft' formula in 2018-2019 before the introduction a 'hard' formula in 2019-2020 as this would have been challenging for all schools, but particularly those that were facing a reduction in funding.

We were therefore pleased that the Conservative Party's General Election manifesto stated that there would be changes to the national funding formula to ensure that no school loses out whilst also pledging to increase the overall schools budget by £4 billion by 2022.

The major piece of legislation that we have focused on over the past year is the Children and Social Work Bill.

The LGA briefed actively throughout its Parliamentary process and we achieved a number of important concessions.

In particular, we argued that applications for powers to test new ways of working should always be council-led, allowing local authorities to make decisions based on the needs of local children and young people that they know best.

We were therefore delighted that the Government removed provisions which would have allowed the Secretary of State to make these decisions on behalf of councils in intervention.

More than 750 children have come to the UK from the Calais refugee camp since October 2016. While the majority of these children were reunited with family under the Dublin Treaty, approximately 200 children were placed in local authority care under the 'Dubs Amendment.'

Councils continue to demonstrate tremendous leadership in resettling these children, with the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children living in England increasing by more than 50 per cent in the last year.

The Board led various successful sessions at the annual National Children and Adult Services Conference in November. Topics covered included emerging research on the effectiveness of different models in driving children's services improvement, life chances and family stability, what works in preventing child abuse and neglect and tackling radicalisation in schools.

We also held a lively Education Question Time debate, met with the then Children's Minister, Edward Timpson, and the National Schools Commissioner, Sir David Carter.



Cllr Roy Perry



[www.local.gov.uk/topics/children-and-young-people](http://www.local.gov.uk/topics/children-and-young-people)

# City Regions Board

## Cllr Robert Light

**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.**

The City Regions Board was created in 2014 following changes to the LGA's governance structures. Its objective is to support councils in urban and metropolitan areas by ensuring that they have the legal and financial autonomy to drive growth and support their residents.

Our work programme over the past year has focused particularly on devolution, skills and employment and infrastructure. As part of this we have been particularly keen to ensure that we have a robust evidence base to promote the benefits of devolution.

To facilitate this we were co-funders of the RSA's Inclusive Growth Commission, whose final report was published in March and is available on their website.

The Commission recommends that combined authorities be given much greater control over – and responsibility for – public expenditure in their areas as part of a programme of new social contracts with central government to pursue growth.

It also recommends that post-Brexit repatriated European Structural and Investment Funds should be used as the basis of a new growth fund with £76 billion of funding to pump-prime growth-related interventions over the next 20 years.

Continuing the devolution theme, the Board is working closely with the Department for Work and Pensions on the new Work and Health Programme (WHP). This programme is designed to assist the long-term unemployed into work with as much local government involvement as possible.

Ten devolution deal areas are currently working bilaterally with DWP on the design of the programme in their localities.

Take up of the LGA's devolution offer, drawn up in partnership with our colleagues on the People and Places Board, remains excellent. Working closely with the LGA Conservative Group Office, we provided support, guidance and training to a number of the Conservative candidates who stood in the Combined Authority Mayoral elections in May.

My colleague on the Board, Cllr Sean Anstee, the Leader of Trafford Council, stood in the Greater Manchester contest and finished a credible second to Andy Burnham after running a strong campaign based on his record as a local leader.

As areas move towards the implementation phase of devolution, we are increasingly focused on developing and sharing best practice.

As part of this process we have worked with the Centre for Public Scrutiny to produce *Overview and Scrutiny in combined authorities – a plain English guide* to help members to play an active and informed role in both scrutinising and contributing to new governance arrangements. The guide is available on the Centre for Public Scrutiny's website.



Cllr Robert Light



[www.local.gov.uk/city-regions-board](http://www.local.gov.uk/city-regions-board)

# Community Wellbeing Board

## Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE

**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.

The announcement in the Budget of £2 billion in funding for adult social care therefore marks a significant step towards protecting services for the most vulnerable in our communities over the next few years.

Whilst strongly welcoming this announcement, we have been clear that councils must have full flexibility over how they use the funding to ensure that it genuinely helps people live independently in their communities whilst also providing support to older people and those with mental health conditions and learning and physical difficulties.

Adult social care is vital in its own right, as well as easing pressure on the NHS. Councils want to give people the best possible chance of staying out of hospital and to get them home quickly if a hospital stay is necessary.

As helpful as this immediate injection of funding is, short-term pressures remain and the challenge of finding a long-term solution to the social care crisis is far from over.

The Government's commitment to publishing a Green Paper to explore options for a long-term solution is a welcome recognition of this. The Board is clear that we in local government need to play a fundamental part in the discussions and that all options need to be on the table. Influencing this will be a key priority for the Board over the coming year.

Board members once again played an active role at the National Children and Adult Services Conference in Manchester through media work, chairing sessions and speaking at high profile sub-plenaries. As well as the key issue of securing adequate funding for adult social care, we focused on a wide variety of subjects ranging from workforce development issues to Sustainability and Transformation Plans.

The first national Come Back to Social Work programme – led by the LGA, the Department of Health and the Department for Education – has been successful in attracting talented and qualified social workers back into local government and both departments are keen to run further programmes.

Finally, a key success on behalf of member councils came when we successfully supported the National Aids Trust in their legal challenge against NHS England's decision that it did not have the power to commission the drug PrEP for those with HIV.

Their argument was that councils were responsible for preventative medicine. The costs alone of commissioning would have been £20 million. The Court of Appeal upheld the High Court's decision that NHS England did, in law, have the power to commission PrEP.



Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE



[www.local.gov.uk/  
community-wellbeing-board-  
local-government-association](http://www.local.gov.uk/community-wellbeing-board-local-government-association)

# Culture, Tourism and Sport Board

## Cllr Paul Bettison OBE

**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.**

I am delighted that the LGA and Arts Council England have recently updated their shared statement of purpose agreement. The agreement outlines how each organisation will work with each other nationally to support a place based approach to local cultural offers.

Our excellent working relationship with Arts Council England was reflected in the comments made by Paul Bristow, their Director of Strategic Partnerships, at a recent Board meeting when he stated that local government remains a key delivery partner for the organisation.

Over the past year we have also worked closely with Sport England on the delivery of their strategy *Towards an Active Nation 2016-2021*, helping to ensure that councils and local partners are central to their plans to promote exercise and activity and to re-balance funding away from national organisations and towards local bodies.

As Deputy Chairman of the Board, I was pleased to have the opportunity to give evidence on behalf of the LGA to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, with a particular focus on councils and Local Economic Partnerships support for and promotion of tourism as a key sector for rural economic growth.

I took this opportunity to highlight the need for councils to have access to the necessary powers to allow them to create the conditions for the growth of the visitor economy – one of the country's fastest growing sectors.

Meanwhile, my Conservative colleague on the Board, Cllr Colin Organ, has worked closely with the Tourism Alliance Board to discuss a number of key issues currently impacting on the tourism industry, including the likely implications of our exit from the European Union.

In February, we held another successful Culture, Tourism and Sport annual conference in Bristol.

Keynote speakers included Dame Kelly Holmes, Tracey Crouch MP, the Under Secretary of State for Sport, Tourism and Heritage, Viscountess Penelope Cobham CBE from Visit England, Shelia Healey from Arts Council England and Duncan Wilson, the Chief Executive of Historic England.

The conference, which has received excellent feedback from delegates, provided an ideal opportunity for members and officers to discuss key issues, network and share best practice.

We continue to work with Sports England and Arts Council England to deliver the Leadership Essentials Sports programme and the Leadership Essentials Culture Programme.

These events, organised in partnership with our partners, aim to support portfolio holders and to help councils meet the challenges facing sport and cultural services.



Cllr Paul Bettison OBE



[www.local.gov.uk/  
topics/culture-tourism-  
leisure-and-sport](http://www.local.gov.uk/topics/culture-tourism-leisure-and-sport)

# 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 economy, skills and employment, the environment, transport, housing and planning, waste and climate change.**

The Housing White Paper, *Fixing our broken housing market*, was launched this year and includes plans to boost housing supply and increase affordability across the country.

We were pleased to see that a number of recommendations made in the LGA's recent Housing Commission report were taken on board, such as removing the starter homes requirement and increased flexibility in relation to planning fees.

However, we will continue to push for the housing borrowing cap to be lifted and for councils to be able to keep 100 per cent of the receipts from Right to Buy sales so that councils can reinvest in building the affordable homes that our communities need.

Also on housing, during the progress of the Homelessness Reduction Bill through Parliament our lobbying helped to secure over £60 million in funding to meet new duties.

The Government also listened to our calls by committing to review its implementation no later than two years after the commencement of the Bill's substantive clauses.

Over the past year the Board has engaged with the National Infrastructure Commission and their work on producing the National Infrastructure Assessment, which will outline the long-term infrastructure needs of the country.

As part of this process we responded to a call for evidence by providing local government's perspective on a variety of infrastructure issues. In particular, we urged the Commission to consider how greater devolution of funding could ensure that the country's infrastructure is as well maintained and efficient as possible.

The Board submitted evidence to the Transport Select Committee's inquiry into urban congestion, as part of which we reiterated the LGA's longstanding case for councils to have the power to manage street works.

A notable achievement on behalf of councils came in September 2016 when the Board, in conjunction with the LGA's legal team, supported the Treasury in successfully defending a judicial review of the VAT exemption for council commercial waste services.

I am grateful for the engagement shown by Government Ministers in relation to the many policy areas covered by the Board.

Over the course of the year I have had particularly useful meetings with Gavin Barwell, the then Housing Minister and both Therese Coffey and Lord Gardiner, Parliamentary Under Secretary of States at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, in relation to flooding, rural issues, air quality and waste management.



Cllr Martin Tett



[www.local.gov.uk/  
environment-economy-  
housing-and-transport-board](http://www.local.gov.uk/environment-economy-housing-and-transport-board)

# Improvement and Innovation Board

## Cllr William Nunn

**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 and its success as a tool for improvement within local government is well established.

In September 2016 we hosted a Member Peer Conference in Birmingham attended by those councillors who contribute their time, experience and expertise to sector-led improvement.

Over 100 peers attended from all regions and it was an opportunity to network, discuss issues both within political groups and cross-party, receive updates on the LGA's own improvement plans and attend briefing sessions on work areas supported by peers.

The success of the peer system relies on experienced councillors putting their names forward. If you feel that you have the necessary experience and skills for the role please contact the LGA Conservative Group Office to obtain further information about the process for becoming an accredited peer.

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

An example of this is the report on shared management that we produced last year which showed how 45 councils in 20 partnerships have already delivered savings of over £60 million through shared chief executives and shared management teams.

Similarly, shared services have developed significantly in recent years, allowing councils to pool resources and expertise to develop a huge range of high quality, efficient services.

The LGA maintains a shared services map which provides detailed information on innovation and new ways of working from across the country. As more devolution deals are agreed it is essential that councils work even more closely together to deliver the next generation of public services. You can view the map on the LGA website by entering 'shared services' in the search engine.

In the New Year we had the welcome announcement of an expansion to the One Public Estate Programme (OPE) with a further 79 councils in 17 partnerships joining OPE.

These partnerships have been allocated over £2 million in funding in 2016/2017 to work collaboratively on land and property initiatives, generating new jobs and homes, creating more joined up services for local communities and delivering savings for the taxpayer.

At the same time, the existing 43 OPE partnerships also had the opportunity to apply for additional funding to expand their current programmes. As a result of this a further £1.8 million has been allocated to councils across 21 existing partnerships in 2017/2018.



Cllr William Nunn



[www.local.gov.uk/  
improvement-board](http://www.local.gov.uk/improvement-board)

# People and Places Board

## Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE

**The People and Places Board is responsible for LGA activity on 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.**

Over the past year, the LGA has carried out a wide-ranging array of work in relation to devolution and has continued to develop and deliver bespoke offers of support for areas that are developing devolution proposals and implementing devolution deals.

Areas in which we have actively supported councils include leadership development in relation to new governance arrangements, issues relating to constitutions, completion of assurance frameworks, civic and democratic engagement and communications.

With our colleagues on the City Regions Board we have continued to make the case for current employment and skills services to be better integrated and more localised, and for the sector to benefit from a devolution process which offers more freedoms and flexibilities.

It is the view of both Boards that national agencies like Jobcentre Plus (JCP) seldom coordinate effectively and thus fail to align with local services. We therefore strongly believe that the expiry of JCP estate contracts in 2018 presents an opportunity for reform, collaboration and integration to develop a locally relevant employment and skills system.

More generally, our Devo Hub website is a useful resource for all councillors who are interested in learning more about devolution as it includes updates on activity at both the local and national level, links to research and analysis that can bolster the evidence base for devolution bids and infographics that illustrate the benefits of devolution for businesses.

I would encourage colleagues to check it out at: [www.local.gov.uk/devolution](http://www.local.gov.uk/devolution)

Meanwhile, as part of the LGA's 'Up to Speed' campaign, which aims to ensure that every resident and business has access to faster broadband, I was delighted to welcome Sharon White, the Chief Executive of Ofcom, to speak at our January Board meeting.

We discussed, amongst other things, the need to achieve equality of access to broadband and in particular the need to secure adequate mobile coverage in rural areas.

In March there was good news for the campaign when the Chancellor used the Budget to announce £200 million for local broadband projects as well as £16 million to trial new 5G technology. I particularly welcomed the fact that the trials will take place in non-metropolitan areas as well as urban settings.

In recognition of the fact that rural issues are a key part of the Board's remit I was pleased to speak at the annual Rural Conference in Cheltenham last September. I took the opportunity to outline the Board's work in relation to key issues such as rural broadband.



Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE



[www.local.gov.uk/people-and-places-board](http://www.local.gov.uk/people-and-places-board)

# Resources Board

## Cllr John Fuller

**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.**

This past year has seen us focus on some of the key issues facing the sector, including:

- The continuing funding pressures affecting adult social care.
- The design of the 100% retention of business rates by 2019.
- Initial work on the related design and review of the fair funding formula.
- Preparing for the integration of the national minimum wage into a revised pay spine.

Working with Parliamentarians we have contributed to select committees on welfare reform, business rates retention and to the House of Lords Committee on Financial Exclusion.

The Local Government Finance Bill provides for the retention of all business rates by 2019/2020 within a framework of stronger long-term fiscal incentives for councils to grow their local economies – both longstanding asks of the LGA which are being delivered by a Conservative government. We welcomed powers in the Bill allowing for central funding of appeals whilst emphasising the importance of wider reforms to reduce speculative appeals.

The LGA's overarching approach to business rates retention is led by its specific Task and Finish Group, on which I sit, supported by other technical officer groups with direct access to DCLG officials. We have formulated detailed LGA responses to a number of technical issues, needs indicators and the progress of the Fair Funding Review including additional consultations on transitional arrangements for the 2017 business rates revaluation.

Our lobbying has involved a series of media appearances, including on Radio 4's Money Box, highlighting councils' key role in mitigating transition effects for the most affected businesses in each locality, which were subsequently provided for in the March budget.

We responded to the consultation on the provisional 2017/2018 local government finance settlement. We highlighted the big pressures facing adult social care and called for funding to address this. We were pleased that the Budget included provision for £2 billion of extra funding over the next three years for adult social care, including £1 billion in 2017/2018.

However, we expressed disappointment at the compensatory reductions in New Homes Bonus and the higher than anticipated hurdle-rate. We will continue to strongly lobby on this, recognising that district councils have been among the most adversely affected.

Cllr Roger Phillips, Chairman of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Advisory Board, has met with Richard Harrington MP, the then Pensions Minister, and Marcus Jones MP, the Local Government Minister about reform of asset management pools within the LGPS.

Board members play a leading role managing the cost pressures from the new pay spine that will take into account rises of the national minimum wage and the importance of addressing differentials without triggering the complicated and tricky issue of re-grading.



Cllr John Fuller



[www.local.gov.uk/resources-board](http://www.local.gov.uk/resources-board)

# Safer and Stronger Communities Board

## Cllr Morris Bright

**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.**

The main piece of legislation that we have scrutinised this year was the Policing and Crime Bill, and during its Parliamentary progress a number of changes were made to the legislation in line with the LGA's lobbying.

These included the Government introducing amendments to the 2003 Licensing Act which will allow councils to publish cumulative impact assessments and have regard to them when setting their licensing priorities. It has also introduced greater flexibility in the use of the late night levy so that it can be used in part of a council area rather across the whole of it.

Meanwhile, the Investigatory Powers Act received Royal Assent at the end of last year. Following lobbying by the LGA, the Act maintains councils' right to access communications data and will enable them to access a slightly expanded set of communications data which is likely to assist in some trading standards investigations.

I believe that local government has a key role to play in tackling radicalisation and extremism, and in recognition of this the Prevent Champions Network of elected members was established by the Home Office, in consultation with the LGA, in January.

The network will work with the Home Office to support local leadership of Prevent, including advising other elected members on the programme, championing Prevent in communities and leading sessions in a series of forthcoming regional meetings for elected members.

I am particularly grateful to my Conservative colleague on the Board, Cllr Joanne Beavis, who is herself a Prevent Champion, for her work in relation to this.

Over the past year we have sought to raise awareness of a loophole in the law which means that people licensed to drive public carriage vehicles – those seating between nine and sixteen passengers – by the DVLA are not subject to criminal record checks.

Drivers who have had their licence removed, or their application refused, can maintain a public carriage licence and continue to operate in the same area. Following our lobbying, the Department for Transport has committed to reviewing the law.

Meanwhile, the LGA has held a number of taxi licensing workshops across the country over the past year. These events promote best practice and have included presentations on the strategic role of licensing as well as training sessions on a range of issues from the role of members to determining the 'fitness' of applicants.

Finally, as Vice Chairman of the Board I was pleased to chair the LGA's Deaths, Funerals and Coroners conference late last year. The programme covered a wide range of issues including funeral poverty, the implementation of the medical examiners service, and the future of the services, pathology and commercialisation.



Cllr Morris Bright



[www.local.gov.uk/safer-and-stronger-communities-board](http://www.local.gov.uk/safer-and-stronger-communities-board)

# Fire Services Management Committee and Fire Commission

## Cllr Rebecca Knox

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

I am writing this days after the tragic fire in Kensington. Whilst we must wait for the official report into the incident to understand what exactly happened, the issue of sprinklers in multi-occupancy buildings has already been raised.

The Fire Services Management Committee and the Fire Commission have consistently highlighted the importance of sprinklers in preventing fires from spreading and this is something that we will no doubt wish to consider as part of our own discussions on the tragedy.

The Kensington disaster brought home the sacrifices that firefighters make to keep us safe and it was for that reason that I was privileged to represent the LGA at the annual Firefighters Memorial Service and wreath laying ceremony last September.

Following significant changes at the Home Office after the EU referendum, my colleagues and I have worked to establish good relationships with our new Ministerial team.

In January I met the Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, to discuss the Government's fire reform agenda. This was a useful meeting that covered a range of topics, including the Thomas Review and workforce reform, the future of the National Joint Council, collaboration with the emergency services and other key partners (such as health), the resilience of the services and the creation of a new inspection regime.

Indicative of our close engagement with Ministers is the fact that I attend the newly-created Fire Reform Board, the first meeting of which took place in January. The Board has been established jointly with the Home Office and the National Fire Chiefs Council to oversee the fire reform programme in England.

In March we held another successful Fire Conference. In addition to a speech from Brandon Lewis, the then Fire Minister, there were sessions and workshops on a variety of topics, including NJC reform, inspection, procurement, devolution and governance, working with health partners, emergency service collaboration and the review of peer challenge.

In the post-election reshuffle, Nick Hurd was appointed as the new Fire Minister. I look forward to working with Nick over the coming year.

Finally, since this has been my first year as the lead member I would like to place on record my thanks to Conservative colleagues on the Fire Services Management Committee and the Fire Commission for their support and enthusiastic participation in our work.



Cllr Rebecca Knox



[www.local.gov.uk/fire-commission](http://www.local.gov.uk/fire-commission)

# What is sector-led improvement and how can it benefit my council?

Sector-led improvement is the approach put in place by councils and the LGA following the abolition by the coalition Government of the previous national performance framework. It is based on the following key principles:

- Councils are responsible for their own performance and improvement and for leading the delivery of better outcomes for local people in their area.
- Councils are primarily accountable to local communities. Stronger accountability through increased transparency helps local people drive further improvement.
- Councils have a collective responsibility for the performance of the sector as a whole.
- The LGA's role is to maintain an overview of the performance of the sector in order to identify potential performance challenges and opportunities and to provide tools and support to help councils take advantage of this new approach.

Working with the corporate LGA, the Conservative Group offers a range of opportunities for councillors to develop their skills whatever their level of experience and current position.

## Peer challenge

Peer challenge is delivered by the sector for the sector, providing a 'practitioner perspective' and a 'critical friend' challenge. Working as a team, and supported by an experienced LGA peer challenge manager, member and officer peers spend time onsite at a council, or at a fire and rescue service, analysing performance and making constructive suggestions for improvements. The peers often benefit by being able to take new ideas back to their council.



All councils are entitled to one free corporate peer challenge every four to five years. Over the past year the LGA has delivered 125 peer challenges across various service areas, including children's safeguarding, adult social care, public health and fire services.

If you are an experienced councillor who has held a senior position – a cabinet member or at least a scrutiny chair – for three years or more then you are welcome to apply to become a Conservative peer by contacting the LGA Conservative Group Office, who will answer any questions that you have and send you an application form to complete.

When we receive your form it will be considered by the LGA Conservative Group Executive. If they feel that you meet the necessary criteria then they will approve your application and you will be considered for peer reviews that match your areas of experience and expertise.

## Leadership Academy

The Leadership Academy offers leadership development opportunities for councillors in frontline positions. The programme focuses on enhancing participants' leadership style and building skills and confidence, whilst also creating valuable support networks with colleagues in other councils. The key benefits of attending include:

- Developing leadership styles to improve leadership capabilities.
- Developing effective strategies in the current financial environment.
- Addressing participants' own particular challenges from within their councils.
- Developing a 'leadership toolbox' of techniques and strategies for the participants to draw on in different situations.
- Receiving an ILM accredited certificate on completion.
- Working with colleagues from other councils and political parties.

## Leadership Essentials

Leadership Essentials is a series of themed leadership programmes and masterclasses. They are aimed at leading members offering a stand-alone opportunity to concentrate on particular themes, develop leadership skills and share experiences and knowledge amongst colleagues dealing with similar challenges. The topics covered include Finance, Children's Services, Adult Social Care, Sport, Commissioning and Risk Management.

## Focus on Leadership

The Focus on Leadership programme provides events and workshops to help councillors in their existing roles and provide a bridge to more senior leadership positions.

## 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 2017/2018 will be sent to Conservative group leaders over the summer.

## Councillor mentoring and support

The LGA offers bespoke peer support such as up to five days 'change of control' for new leaders/cabinet members and tailored peer mentoring support for individual councillors from experienced councillors with relevant expertise.

## Community Leadership

Community Leadership draws attention to the LGA's resources available for newly elected councillors, including a wide range of workbooks and e-learning modules.



## Downloads

Our annual Councillors Guide, which provides a wealth of information and advice, can be downloaded from:

[www.local.gov.uk/councillors-guide-2017](http://www.local.gov.uk/councillors-guide-2017)



## Further information

For more information on these programmes and the LGA's development offer to councillors, please contact the LGA Conservative Group.



## LGA Conservative Group Best Practice Directory

**The LGA Conservative Group regularly produces a best practice directory, the latest edition of which, Improvement and Innovation, can be downloaded from our group website at: [www.local.gov.uk/lga-conservatives/best-practice](http://www.local.gov.uk/lga-conservatives/best-practice)**

The examples contained in the directory show how Conservative councils are supporting local businesses, helping to create jobs, providing training and employment opportunities for young people, assisting residents to get on the property ladder, protecting and enhancing their local environments and supporting vulnerable residents.

In recent years all councils have had to make difficult decisions to balance the books whilst ensuring that they still provide the best possible services for their residents. The examples contained in the directory are a testament to the hard work and innovation of Conservative councillors in difficult circumstances.

A recurring theme in the directory is how councils are working in partnership with other local authorities to reduce backroom costs and secure efficiencies through new ways of working:

"Adur and Worthing councils' award-winning digital strategy is delivering over £200,000 in efficiency savings each year, through end to end service re-design and digitisation.

"Meanwhile, the Customer and Commercial Board encourages all staff to share ideas to improve customers experience and services. In its first two years, the Board has delivered additional income in excess of £600,000 each year."

The directory also demonstrates how Conservative councils are developing proactive and innovative solutions to improve the lives of local residents:

"Recognising the need to assist older people in rural communities to be able to remain in their community as they become less able to manage their own home led Ashford Borough Council to develop a policy to allow exception sites to be used for specialist accommodation where there is a proven need from a group of nearby parishes.

"The first rural extra care scheme to be built on an exception site was completed in Aldington. The council made available land in its ownership on a long lease of 125 years for a nominal rent to Housing and Care 21.

"Quarry House opened its doors to the first residents in July 2016. There are 33 flats; 17 for affordable rent and 16 for shared ownership. Communal areas include a lounge, café, buggy store, hair salon and assisted bathroom. Kent County Council's social services department supported the development of the scheme and is a member of the allocations panel. A wellbeing charge collected by the county council funds the 24 hour cover."

We hope that the directory is a useful resource for Conservative councillors to learn what is happening in other councils and highlights schemes which might work in their own authority.

We are currently working on the next edition and want to include as many examples as possible from the widest possible range of councils and across all service areas.

Therefore, if you have a best practice example that you would like us to highlight please do email us at [lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk](mailto:lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk) so that we can publicise your good work!



# The Conservative Group Office

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

There are three 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). We work closely with the Local Government Department at CCHQ and the Conservative Councillors' Association, including hosting joint events and sponsoring sessions at the annual 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 call 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.

One of our key roles is to establish and maintain dialogue with Government 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.
- Influencing the policy debate within the Conservative Party. For example, prior to the 2015 General Election we produced Fit for the Future, which contained 31 detailed policy recommendations.
- 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 best practice directory showcasing the work of Conservative local government.
- Producing an annual directory of Conservative members appointed to LGA bodies.
- Organising the Conservative 'Next Generation' programme each year for aspiring future leaders.
- Attending and running sessions at Party Conference and the CCA Local Government Conference, and having a visible presence at 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 within the context of sector-led improvement.
- Co-ordinating the LGA's Conservative peer support programme.



Angela Page

## Head of Group Office Angela Page

Angela joined the LGA in 2001 as a Political Assistant in the Group Office and then in 2007 she changed roles to become a Political Advisor. Following Will Brooks' departure in June 2016 Angela was appointed Head of Group Office.

Angela is responsible for advising on and implementing the overall policy and management of the Conservative Group and providing direct support and advice to the Group Leader and the Conservative Group Executive.

Angela started her working life in banking and after a break whilst her children were still young she went on to become an estate agent before becoming involved in politics.

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.



Paul McCannah

## Political Advisor Paul McCannah

Paul joined the LGA in 2004. He supports and advises Conservative members who serve on the Children and Young People Board, the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, the Community Wellbeing Board, the Safer and Stronger Communities Board, the People and Places Board, the City Regions Board and the District Councils' Network Members' Board.

Paul served as a councillor on the London Borough of Enfield from 2002 to 2014.

During this time he chaired a number of scrutiny panels and was also a Cabinet Member for Community Safety and for Leisure Services. He chaired the London Councils' Grants Committee from 2006-2008.

Prior to joining the LGA, Paul worked as the National Organiser of the Conservative Councillors' Association at CCHQ.



Jessica Eagelton

## Political Assistant Jessica Eagelton

Jessica joined the LGA in September 2015. She provides support to the Group Office, Group Leader, and to Conservative members. She serves as the first point of contact for general enquiries, as well as facilitating all meetings.

As part of her role, Jessica organises regional briefing seminars for Conservative councillors across the country as well as assisting in the co-ordination of other events and functions.

Over the past year she has taken on the task of working with the LGA's peer review team in relation to the deployment of Conservative peers to local authorities.

A Party member and graduate, Jessica previously worked abroad with an international youth and health development charity.

LGA's temporary relocation to Layden House  
– October 2016 to September 2017  
(estimated return date)

The LGA has temporarily relocated from Local Government House (LGH) in Smith Square to Layden House (76-86 Turnmill Street, London, EC1M 5LG) to allow extensive refurbishment work to be carried out to LGH.

The refurbishment works will see the ground floor conference centre and all meeting rooms fully refurbished.

Floors 1, 2 and 3 will be upgraded and released for commercial letting to enable the LGA to maximise the income from this building as part of its drive for financial sustainability.

A new and larger Open Council will be located on the seventh floor. The refurbishment is expected to last for nine months and we expect to be back in LGH by September 2017.

## Contact Us



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