

# LGA in Parliament 2019/20

The national voice of local government in Parliament



“May I begin by sending my thanks to all those working in local government. Their efforts in every village, town and city across the country is making a difference in this national endeavour. Thank you.”

**Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP**

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

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# Foreword

Cllr James Jamieson Chairman

Mark Lloyd Chief Executive

It is our pleasure to welcome you to this year's Local Government Association (LGA) in Parliament report. It provides an update on our activities in the Palace of Westminster, including our work with MPs and Peers which remains one of the most important ways in which we ensure your membership association continues to be the national voice of local government.

This year's report is a little different to previous editions. The general election back in December 2019 means that we are currently in the middle of the parliamentary session and a lot of legislation is still being agreed and new proposals will be brought forward in the second half of this year. It has also been a difficult and unprecedented few months as we have faced what I am sure you will agree, is the most serious international public health emergency in our lifetimes. This year's LGA in Parliament is therefore a work in progress, an update on the issues we have sought to influence on your behalf and an opportunity to remind ourselves of the broad support and high-profile local government continues to enjoy in our politics.

Since the pandemic broke councils have played an essential leadership role, supporting their communities and showing once again the value of place-based leadership. Whether it has been protecting lives, supporting the vulnerable or helping businesses, local government has stepped up. Our polling shows an increase in resident satisfaction with councils and we have been making certain your leadership, and the challenges you face, are very much front and centre in the minds of parliamentarians.

The pandemic has changed many things. But one thing that it has not changed is our determination to continue to make those important arguments for our sector. Whether it is, to name a few: sustainable funding for local government, the need for a new settlement on devolution, the value of adults and children's social care services to society, or the importance of delivering a climate smart economy recovery – we continue to press your case nationally. We also continue to see welcome recognition in the corridors of Westminster for our approach to sector-led improvement and its importance in supporting national and local government to deliver services and share best practice. Innovation and improvement regularly features in Parliament, whether it is in response to parliamentary questions, our submissions to select committee inquiries or our briefings for parliamentary debates.

Progress has been made since we last updated. Whilst there is still much more to do to secure a sustainable funding settlement for councils, the Government did listen as it brought forward an emergency package of financial support for councils. We've also helped shape the government's thinking on a wide range of issues from giving councils the powers to meet flexibility, to improving personal protective equipment (PPE) delivery by making use of a more local approach, to the delivery of food parcels, to the vulnerable and those shielding. All of these are important decisions that we believe have helped national and local government in the emergency response to COVID-19.

In this report we look specifically at the work of the LGA on behalf of councils in enhancing legislation, influencing parliamentary committees and building the reputation of local government – the three cornerstones of our parliamentary lobbying. The approach has seen us improve the various pieces of legislation that made, or are making, their way through Parliament. We also continue to enjoy great success in our engagement with select committees and All-Party Parliamentary Groups on a wide variety of policy issues. Our thanks to all colleagues from local government who have given evidence on behalf of the LGA, on behalf of one of our Special Interest Groups or on behalf of your own councils. These evidence gathering sessions provide a chance to share ideas and build consensus for local government’s recommendations.

Supporting us in all of this are our President, Vice-Presidents and all the MPs and Peers we work with each day. Their efforts enable us to achieve so much more for our councils. We could not be your voice in Parliament without this support and we are very grateful for it.

Life never stands still. We are working hard on the big challenges that lie ahead as we look to a ‘new normal’ and local government’s role in rebuilding local communities and economies. We are heading to a Comprehensive Spending Review that must provide councils with the financial sustainability and certainty that they need to continue to support residents whilst delivering key services and helping to support local economies to grow. Our parliamentary lobbying will also be important in supporting our narrative that now is the time to ‘Re-think Local’ as devolution to local areas should be the default position in Whitehall as the Government takes forward its levelling-up agenda and looks to the economic recovery. We will also be redoubling our efforts to make the case for social care and demonstrate why it is so important that these vital services have parity of esteem with the NHS, with both rightly being equally valued for their contributions to our society. And of course, there is much to be done in the months ahead to make the case for a local, democratically accountable planning system.

At the LGA we are extremely proud to be ambassadors for local government and this report rightly highlights Parliamentarian’s admiration for councils public service. We are continually inspired by the work at all levels of local government and the strong and ambitious leadership that drives our economic prosperity and resilience. The LGA will be continuing our role ensuring the important voice of local government continues to feature in the national conversation.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Jamieson".

**Cllr James Jamieson**  
Chairman



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Lloyd".

**Mark Lloyd**  
Chief Executive

# Introduction

The last year has been one of change in Westminster. Since we last updated you on our campaigning in Parliament, there has been a December general election, the first national election to be held in the winter since 1974, and a poll that delivered a majority for one party in Parliament for the first time since 2015. We have had a wide-ranging Queen's Speech, the country has left the EU and the nation came together as we fought COVID-19. All of this has meant that, whilst we are now just over halfway through this parliamentary session, there is still much more to be discussed and agreed.

In response to COVID-19, Parliament – like councils – has worked differently. For the first time there have been virtual and hybrid meetings to ensure democracy can continue to function. This has bought a lot of discussion about the way both Houses operate, but it has also made it much easier for parliamentarians to hear from a variety of different speakers from across the country who may otherwise have found it more difficult to give evidence to the assortment of committee hearings and other meetings that are the essence of the parliamentary week.

Throughout all this tumult we have been consistent in working for councils, making sure that the importance of local democracy and decision-making is well understood by parliamentarians and features in their conversations. Alongside this advocacy, our engagement with Parliament has also

been an opportunity to communicate how the LGA's sector-led improvement offer has helped councils to continue to perform well with positive and rising levels of resident satisfaction. Promoting the vital work of councils and their role in delivering solutions to national challenges is fundamental to our approach when briefing on the whole range of issues that affect councils, such as highlighting the opportunities and challenges as we turn our attention to Comprehensive Spending Review, devolution and economic recovery, social care reform and the future of the planning system. As we look to the second half of the parliamentary session, our 'Re-thinking Local' campaign<sup>1</sup>, which sets out how with the right funding, powers and freedoms the nation can level-up communities and tackle long-standing inequalities will be essential in communicating the value of local decision-making.

We have continued to brief our network of parliamentary advocates, including our Vice-Presidents, to influence Government and promote our positive, forward looking policy agenda. We have engaged in various activities on behalf of our member-councils such as lobbying on legislation, supporting councillors and officers giving evidence to parliamentary committees, and bringing together councils, MPs and Peers at physical and virtual events. We also continue to proactively seek opportunities to work with a wide range of partner organisations and stakeholders to help influence parliamentary decisions and to inform committee recommendations.

Although this past year has bought significant challenges and new opportunities, the LGA and councils have continued to shape national decision-making. Set out in this report are just some of the examples where we've influenced parliamentary proceed on behalf of councils.

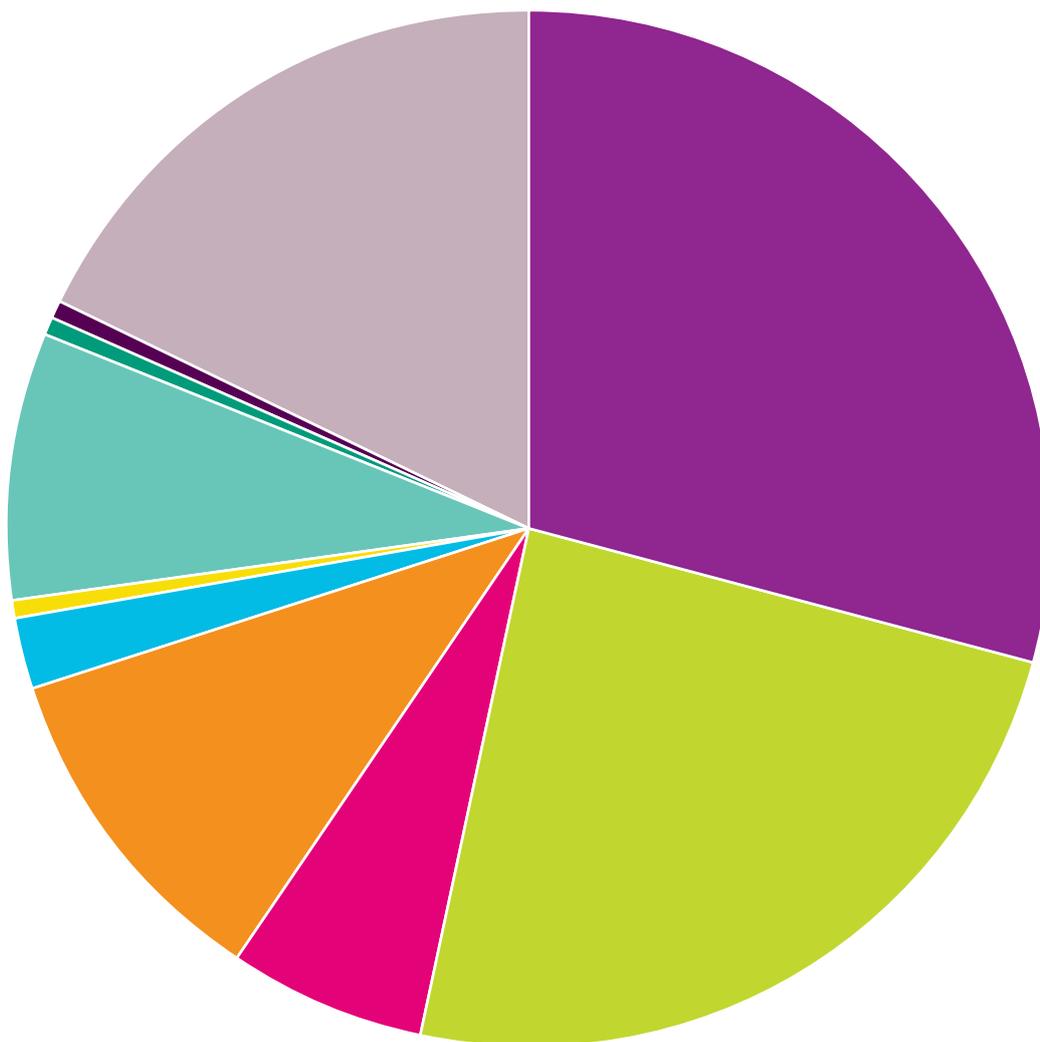


<sup>1</sup> [www.local.gov.uk/about/campaigns/re-thinking-local](http://www.local.gov.uk/about/campaigns/re-thinking-local)

# Analysis of parliamentary activity

Total Commons mentions **181**

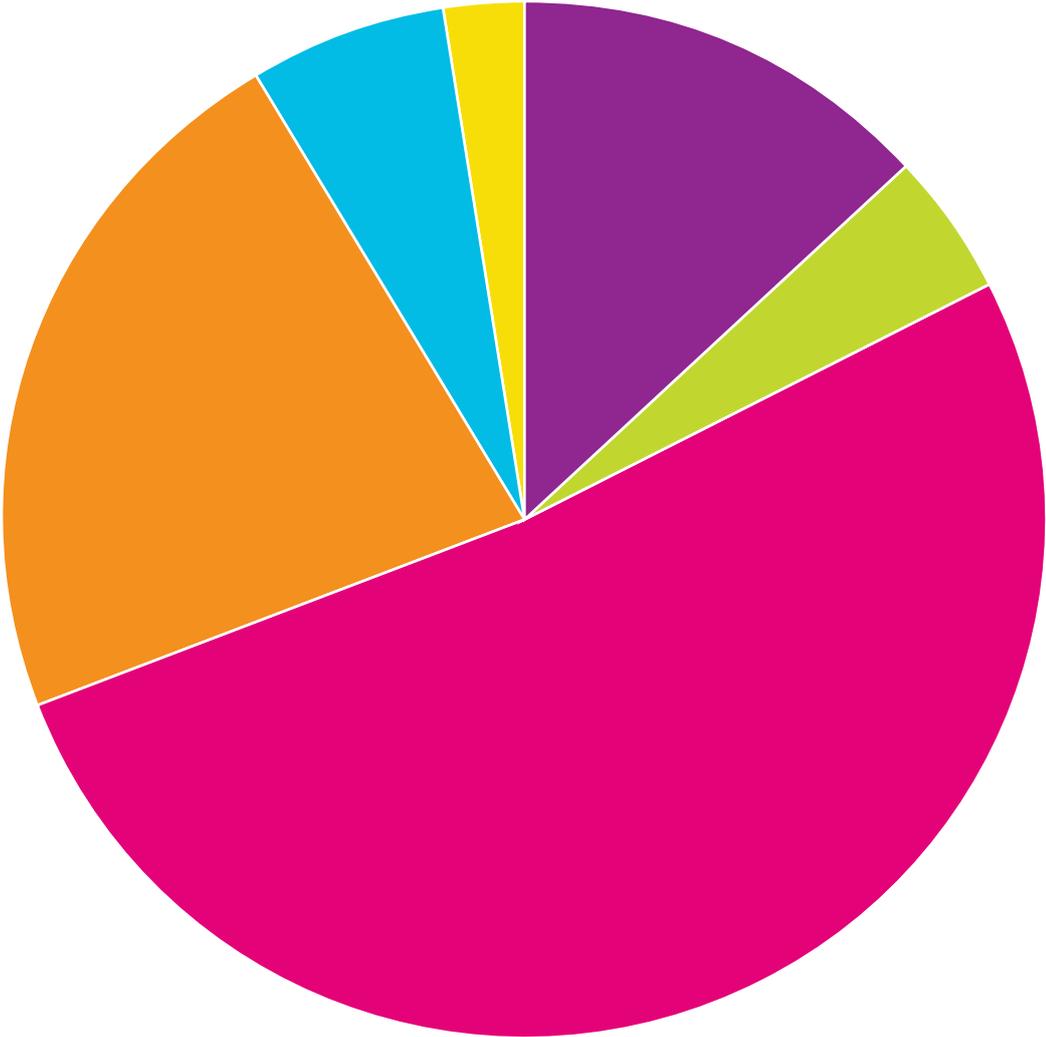
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|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ● Written question or answer      | ● Commons urgent question       |
| ● Chamber debate                  | ● Westminster Hall debate       |
| ● Oral answers                    | ● Written ministerial statement |
| ● Public bill committee           | ● Prime Minister's Questions    |
| ● Ministerial statement exchanges | ● Committee oral evidence       |

Total Lords mentions **130**

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- Written question or answer
  - Grand committee debate
  - Chamber debate
  - Oral answer
  - Ministerial statement exchanges
  - Urgent question

# Legislation

Influencing and shaping new legislation is a vital part of the work the LGA undertakes on behalf of its membership. We regularly speak with Government departments and ministers to help shape new proposals and as the Bills that our leadership team identify as high priorities for councils are introduced to the House, we lobby at each stage to promote our policy platforms and outline improvements that can be made to the legislation. To do this we brief on key priorities, work with our network of MPs and Peers to table any relevant amendments, use our high-profile campaign, media and stakeholder engagement platforms to keep our priorities high on the national agenda, and engage with the government department piloting the Bill through the House.

## Coronavirus Act 2020

The Coronavirus Act was emergency legislation developed to give public bodies across the UK the powers they need to carry out an effective response to the COVID-19 emergency. In response to representations from the LGA and councils, the Government amended the legislation to make provisions for the Secretary of State to lay regulations so that councillors can attend, speak at, vote in, or otherwise participate in local authority meetings without being together in the same place. This allowed councils to both postpone meetings and engage in decision-making and voting remotely, providing them with the flexibility required to serve their local communities.

## Business and Planning Act 2020

The Business and Planning Act was fast-tracked legislation to help support the reopening of hospitality businesses as well as setting out measures to boost construction in the recovery from the pandemic. The LGA lobbied for smoking to be restricted in pavement areas outside of hospitality businesses licensed through temporary pavement licenses. Following wide ranging support – including that of the LGA – for a cross-party proposal on the issue, the Government introduced its own amendment to make reasonable provision for seating in outdoor areas where smoking is not permitted.

“May I first echo the Secretary of State’s thanks to everybody working in local government? They are all heroes helping to keep our communities safe”

**Steve Reed MP**

LGA Vice-President and Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government



“Everybody in this country who loves freedom should join me in thanking all those who work in NHS test and trace, in Public Health England, and in local public health operations for successfully delivering on our plan of moving from a national lockdown to local action.”

**Matt Hancock MP**  
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care



## NHS Funding Act 2020

The NHS Funding Act places a legal duty on Government to give the NHS an extra £33.9 billion every year to transform care and protect frontline NHS funding. Our work on the legislation highlighted that the commitment for increased funding for the NHS will only be maximised if there is an equivalent scale of investment in social care, public health and prevention services that both improve people’s health, wellbeing and independence and relieve pressure on frontline NHS services. Our call on the Government to provide the same long-term certainty for social care and public health funding featured in parliamentary discussions.

## Agriculture Bill

The Agriculture Bill aims to replace the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) with a new payment system for farmers after the UK’s departure from the European Union. The Bill seeks to transform British farming, placing a new focus on the relationship between the agricultural industry and the environment. We briefed on how councils are well placed to play a role in this reform by bringing partners together to deliver leadership and direction. We also monitored amendments related to county farms, which may have resulted in a series of new duties on councils regarding smallholding estates and helped explain why the change would have gone against the principle of devolution.

## Domestic Abuse Bill

The Domestic Abuse Bill seeks to raise awareness of domestic abuse, including by legislating for the first time for a statutory definition of domestic abuse. It aims to transform the justice response and provide greater support for victims of abuse. It also introduces the new Domestic Abuse Commissioner to help drive consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse. Our work on the Bill has highlighted the need to reduce incidences of domestic abuse, the importance of offering a broad range of support packages for victims, interventions for perpetrators, and ensuring that services are fully funded and adequately resourced. We briefed ahead of all stages of the Bill in the House of Commons, gave evidence to the Public Bill Committee and we will be continuing this work as the Bill is scrutinised in the House of Lords.

## Environment Bill

The Environment Bill aims to put the environment at the centre of policy-making by creating a new Office for Environmental Protection and governance framework for resources and waste management, air quality and enhancing green spaces, amongst other things. We gave evidence to the Public Bill Committee and met with senior members of the Committee to propose new amendments to be tabled to the legislation on producer responsibility obligations, ensuring biodiversity credits remained within local authorities and flexibilities for councils in the proposed land drainage consent processing application fees. The Public Bill Committee proceedings were paused due to COVID-19 and we will be continuing our engagement with the legislation when it returns to Parliament in the autumn.

“The Local Government Association, speaking for local authorities across the United Kingdom, is calling for more powers to be given to councils to tackle air pollution, and I hope that the Government will think about going further.”

**Ruth Jones MP**  
MP for Newport West



## Fire Safety Bill

The Fire Safety Bill clarifies the Fire Safety Order 2005. It also provides a foundation for secondary legislation to take forward recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry phase one report. We welcomed the introduction of the legislation as an important step in the right direction, but said it needs to be backed up by further effective powers and sanctions in the Building Safety Bill, and sufficient funding to carry out the necessary inspections and enforcement activity. Our work also highlighted that Government needs to ensure that there are enough trained professionals to carry out the new-style fire risk assessments, as there is a chronic shortage of this expertise at present. We have also said the Government should not make councils and other freeholders responsible for issues beyond their control.

## Non-Domestic Rating (Public Lavatories) Bill

The Non-Domestic Rating (Public Lavatories) Bill seeks to provide 100 per cent business rates relief for standalone public lavatories in England and Wales. We support the measures in the Bill, and we will be working with parliamentarians on the legislation when it returns to Parliament in the autumn.

“The discretionary schemes delivered through local authorities have helped to save thousands of companies from bankruptcy and protected millions of jobs.”

**Tim Farron MP**  
LGA Vice-President and Liberal Democrat  
Spokesperson for Housing and Local Government



# Parliamentary inquiries

We provide evidence to the various parliamentary Select Committees, All-Party Parliamentary Groups and other bodies that hold inquiries into policy areas of interest to councils. These present a valuable opportunity to put forward councils' concerns and interests to MPs. Since June 2019 we have contributed to more than 70 parliamentary inquiries including on the long-term delivery of affordable and rented housing, broadband, the Environment Bill, Domestic Abuse Bill, the progress of English devolution, social care funding and workforce, remediation of buildings with dangerous cladding, as well as a variety of inquiries relating to the COVID-19 pandemic including education and children's services, domestic abuse, homelessness and food supply. Our evidence to inquiries often forms part of the recommendations to Government contained in the committees' final reports.

## Key highlights this year include:

### Published reports

- LGA Chairman, Cllr James Jamieson, and Chief Executive, Mark Lloyd, gave evidence to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee's inquiry on how local government is responding to the COVID-19 crisis, and the challenges in doing so. In the session Cllr Jamieson and Mr Lloyd welcomed the £3.2 billion of funding that had been announced at that time, but said that more will be needed. They also highlighted the key role councils are playing in the crisis, including on business support, PPE, homelessness and death management. In their correspondence with the Government on the emergency response to COVID-19, the Committee has raised many of the issues covered by our evidence including highlighting financial pressures and our concerns about an increase in demand for services.
- Cllr Antoinette Bramble, LGA Deputy Chair, gave evidence to the Education Committee's inquiry on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). In the Committee's final report, report on they our concerns around funding for these services. They also highlighted that the shortfall in funding contributed to the failure on the parts of schools and local authorities to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.



“Some local authorities in England have made early intervention to address childhood adversity and trauma a priority. However, the Government in Westminster have not yet seized the opportunity.”

**Baroness Donaghy**  
Labour Peer

- Cllr Richard Watts, Chair of the LGA Resources Board, gave evidence to the Treasury Committee’s business rates inquiry, where he highlighted that any reform of the system should have particular regard both to the need to maintain the total income for local authorities, and to keep the link between individual authorities and the current and potential new businesses in their areas. In their final report, the Committee supported our position that the Government should ensure the business rates system maintains the total income for councils.
- Cllr Richard Watts also gave evidence to the Public Accounts Committee inquiry into local authority commercial investments, highlighting that councils make commercial investments for a variety of reasons, including to shape local places through regeneration. Cllr Watts also made the point that councils undertake such investments to address some of the financial challenges they have faced over the past decade and that many of these challenges remain in place. In their report, the Committee noted that making investments in order to protect council finances had been encouraged by national government and that MHCLG should work with LGA to disseminate good practice about transparent and inclusive decision making.
- Mayor Philip Glanville gave evidence to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee’s inquiry on the implications of the Government’s Resources & Waste Strategy. The final report supported our calls for decisions on the type and frequency of waste collections to be made at a local level. The Committee also called for Government to provide further information on the funding that councils will receive to meet these additional burdens. Our engagement work was highlighted in the Government’s response which made clear that it will ensure the costs of new duties on local authorities are properly funded.
- Mayor Philip Glanville also gave evidence to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee’s inquiry into long term social and affordable rented housing. The Committee’s report on building more social housing listened to our calls for tens of thousands of social homes to be built every year, and for this to be supported by an increase in funding for councils, and reform to Right to Buy. We also supported the Committee’s recommendation that the Government works with the LGA to ensure Right to Buy does not lead to a reduction in social housing.
- Cllr Judith Blake, Chair of the LGA’s Children and Young People’s Board, gave evidence to the Education Committee, on the impact of COVID-19 on education and children’s services. She highlighted the role of councils in ensuring more pupils have been able to safely return to school. Cllr Blake also said the pandemic had compounded the financial constraints facing councils and could result in the loss of important early intervention services. She called for the uncertainty around councils’ financial positions to be addressed as soon as possible.

- In our evidence to the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee's inquiry on the impact of COVID-19 on DCMS sectors, we highlighted the challenges many leisure centres will face reopening. Following this, the Committee recommended that DCMS's Sport Working Group must work with local councils to ensure necessary funding is in place to preserve leisure centre facilities and that this must be done with urgency so they are fully operational in August 2020 to provide crucial fitness opportunities for children during the school holidays.
- We submitted evidence to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee inquiry on food supply during COVID-19. It was pleasing to see the Committee highlighted our concerns that food security and food waste are significant problems that must continue to be addressed, particularly amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which has exacerbated financial pressures on numerous households, especially disadvantaged residents.
- The Home Affairs Select Committee's report on 'Home Office preparedness for Covid-19: domestic abuse and risks of harm within the home' noted our concerns about the reduction of referrals to children's social care since 'stay at home' guidance was issued and about the importance of staff involved in safeguarding having access to personal protective equipment. It also supported the calls in our written evidence to ensure domestic abuse services are adequately funded and the importance of recognising the impact of lockdown measures on people affected by abuse.
- We submitted evidence to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee's inquiry on the impact of COVID-19 on homelessness and the private rented sector. In their interim report on protecting rough sleepers and renters, the Committee recommended that MHCLG should work with the LGA and the National Housing Federation on a scheme to boost the immediate availability of appropriate supported housing, by providing targeted grant funding for councils and housing associations to acquire properties. Our evidence on No Recourse to Public Funds conditions and Right to Buy receipts were also referred to in the report.
- The House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee published its report 'Universal Credit isn't working: proposals for reform'. The report called on the Government to make substantial changes to universal credit in order to protect the most vulnerable. The Committee recognised councils' roles as service providers to claimants and identifying complex needs. The report recommends that the Government must do more to recognise and fund the impressive networks of local support and advice that are supporting the hardest to reach claimants. The report also recognised the LGA's 'Work Local' programme to improve employment and skills services.
- The Public Accounts Committee supported our calls for a clear long-term strategy for the sustainable supply of PPE to be published, in their report on NHS capital expenditure and financial management.

“My appeal to the Secretary of State, if he is serious about tackling health inequalities, is to back local authorities with the resources they need.”

**Rushanara Ali MP**  
MP for Bethnal Green and Bow



## Inquiries still in progress

- Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Chair of our Community Wellbeing Board, provided evidence to the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee inquiry on healthy ageing. Cllr Hudspeth referenced the importance of taking a life-course approach to promote healthy ageing and highlighted some of the innovative work of councils and the LGA's sector-led improvement offer. Cllr Hudspeth also referenced some of the challenges councils have faced as a result of reductions to the public health grant.
- Cllr David Renard, Chair of LGA's Economy, Environment, Housing and Transport Board, gave evidence to the Economic Affairs Committee follow-up inquiry on building more homes. In the session, Cllr Renard said that local authorities are keen to deliver as many homes as they can over the coming years and pointed out that a large number of permissions are not being built out by developers, despite councils approving more planning permissions over the last few years.
- Cllr Richard Kemp, Deputy Chair of our Community Wellbeing Board, provided evidence to the APPG Loneliness inquiry into the role of local authorities in tackling loneliness. Cllr Kemp highlighted the work of councils to ensure people are connected to key services and have access to support and advice. The evidence was an opportunity to

highlight that addressing loneliness can only be done at the local level and that councils have a key role to play in this, because they own most of the assets where community action could take place, such as parks, libraries and schools.

- The LGA's Deputy Chief Executive, Sarah Pickup, provided evidence to the Health and Social Care Committee's inquiry into preparations for COVID-19. The evidence was an opportunity to outline the collaborative work between councils, providers, the NHS and Government departments and gave examples of local issues and actions. It was also an opportunity to talk about the need for parity of esteem of social care workers compared to NHS staff, especially in terms of access to PPE and testing. Ms Pickup also provided evidence to the House of Lords Public Services Committee as part of their inquiry into the lessons from Coronavirus. The session was an opportunity to reiterate the importance of national government ensuring sustainable funding for local government, so that councils can continue to deliver high quality services. In the session, Peers also heard about the LGA's sector-led improvement work and noted how councils have been sharing good practice on what works throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

“In a period of huge uncertainty, private investment and consumer spending will fall and only the state can provide confidence. Huge uncovered financial losses in both the public and the private sector also need to be made good, not least the dire situation of local government. In short, a major stimulus package will be essential to get the economy going again.”

**Lord Kerslake, Crossbench Peer**  
LGA President



“I also welcome the Government having yesterday introduced Clause 78, allowing for the remote meeting of councils. As many noble Lords have noted, that is crucial for their functioning in the coming weeks and months.”

**Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle (Green)**  
LGA Vice-President

- Cllr Ian Hudspeth gave evidence to the APPG on Coronavirus as part of the Group’s inquiry looking at how to ensure that lessons are learned from the UK’s handling of the pandemic. In the session Cllr Hudspeth briefed the APPG on the vital work of local government leading their communities, the issues that councils had faced responding to Coronavirus and the need for upcoming policy announcements to ensure councils have financial certainty, sustainability and devolved powers so that they can continue to lead their communities.
- Simon Williams, the LGA’s Director of Social Care Improvement, discussed the unequal impact of Coronavirus with the Women and Equalities Committee inquiry. The session specifically focused on Care Act easements and the provision of care during the pandemic. Our evidence highlighted that councils are committed to doing all they can to ensure that people in our communities who need care and support can access it. Mr Williams updated the Committee that only eight councils out of 152 enacted easements, and most of those for a very short time, or for only a single specific service, but recognised the concern that the prospect of the easements has caused amongst those who use care services. The session was also an opportunity to highlight that years of under-funding, coupled with rising demand and costs for care and support, have combined to push adult social care services to breaking point.

# Debates and questions

Each week that Parliament sits presents the LGA with opportunities to brief parliamentarians on local government issues. This is often achieved through briefing for Prime Minister's Questions, Opposition Day, Backbench Business, general or Westminster Hall debates in the Commons, debates in the Lords, or the tabling of Parliamentary Questions. Questions to Secretaries of State and Ministers during department questions also provide a chance to highlight our policies and priorities in areas like council finances, adult social care, children's services, housing, local government powers and economic growth.

We are in regular contact with parliamentarians from all sides of the political spectrum, providing information, evidence and advice so they are able to accurately represent local government priorities in their discussions. Since June 2019 we have produced 88 parliamentary briefings highlighting the priorities in our campaigns and helping to illustrate the effects of national policy changes on local communities. This is equally the case in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords, with the LGA quoted in both. Through this work we are able to ensure national government recognises and understands the challenges councils face in delivering for their residents, and that steps are taken to address any issues as a matter of urgency.

## Key highlights from the year include:

### Funding for local government

- In Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government Departmental Questions, the Government pledged billions, and a series cash flow measures, with the aim of ensuring councils have sufficient resources to cover additional demand caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Announcing the funding, Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick MP (Conservative, Newark), committed "to back councils with the financial resources they need as we work together in this national endeavour against Coronavirus".
- At Prime Minister's Questions, Leader of the Opposition, Sir Keir Starmer MP (Labour, Holborn and St Pancras), quoted our analysis of council finances which found that local authorities will have a shortfall of £10 billion in 2020/21.
- LGA Vice-President and Chair of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Clive Betts MP (Labour, Sheffield South East) quoted our analysis of council lost income due to COVID-19 during an Estimates Day debate on MHCLG departmental spending.
- During the debate on the Local Government Finance Settlement 2020/21, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick MP, confirmed that the Settlement would include a £49.2 billion funding package for local councils, this includes an extra £1.5 billion for children and adults social care. The Secretary of State also announced that £40 million would be redistributed to local government, following increased growth in business rates income.

- LGA Vice-President, Andrew Lewer MP (Conservative, Northampton South), used our Business Rates Avoidance Survey Report 2019 to ask what steps the Government is taking to protect revenue from business rates for local authorities. In response, then Minister for Local Government and Homelessness, Luke Hall MP (Conservative, Thornbury and Yate), welcomed the survey and promised to work with us to evaluate its findings.
- Lord Stunell (Liberal Democrat) asked a series of questions on the impact of COVID-19 on business rates and what engagement the Government was having with the LGA.
- During a debate in the House of Lords on COVID-19 and the financial sustainability of local government, Crossbench Peer, Viscount Waverley, praised the work of the LGA and said the pandemic had been a tough episode in the history of local government. He asked the Government to address the outstanding funding and for more autonomy for councils.

## Adult social care, health and wellbeing

- In an Opposition Day debate on adult social care, LGA Vice-President Helen Hayes MP (Labour, Dulwich and West Norwood) raised our cross-party work on reforming the adult social care system, and the then Shadow Communities Secretary Andrew Gwynne MP (Labour, Denton and Reddish) highlighted our research on adult social care funding

pressures and workforce challenges. In response, Minister for Care, Helen Whately MP (Conservative, Faversham and Mid Kent), recognised the urgency and importance of adult social care reform and referenced the Government's intention to bring forward plans to address this.

- In Health and Social Care departmental questions, then Minister for Care, Caroline Dinenage MP (Conservative, Gosport) highlighted our analysis of the increase in funding for adult social care.
- Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Prevention, Public Health and Primary Care, Jo Churchill MP (Conservative, Bury St Edmunds), highlighted our work on co-ordinating advice and support on COVID-19 to the adult social care sector.
- At MHCLG questions, Tim Farron MP (Liberal Democrat, Westmorland and Lonsdale) called on Government to use the LGA's green paper on adult social care as a basis for any reforms.
- In a debate on the COVID-19 response, Baroness Thornton (Labour) referenced the LGA's calls for urgent reform of adult social care and urged the Government to outline a timetable for reform before Parliament's return from recess in September.
- In the Second Reading of the NHS Funding Bill, LGA Vice-President, Andrew Lewer MP, used our briefing to call on the Government to provide the same long-term certainty for social care and public health funding.

“But think of those millions who cannot access the internet and must wait for their local museums, galleries and places of historic interest to reopen, so many of which are funded by local councils, spending more than £1 billion on sustaining these discretionary services. The Local Government Association is calling for the essential emergency schemes to continue past the immediate crisis so that their communities can once again enjoy what makes life worth living.”

**Baroness Healy of Primrose Hill**  
Labour Peer





“At the local level, councils have been working hard supporting vulnerable people to access food throughout the pandemic, and we have heard a lot about supermarkets but should not overlook the essential role of local shops, providing an estimated 600,000 deliveries per week in their communities.”

**Baroness Tyler of Enfield,**  
Liberal Democrat Peer

- In a debate on the Coronavirus Bill, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Lord Bethell (Conservative), thanked the LGA for its engagement with the Government on the drafting of the Bill.
- In a debate on health inequalities, Feryal Clark MP (Labour, Enfield North) paid tribute to us for raising the challenges that councillors are facing, as well as using our briefing to highlight that almost every single function of local government has an impact on the outcomes for local people.
- During a debate on children's mental health week LGA Vice-President, Preet Kaur Gill MP (Labour, Birmingham, Edgbaston), highlighted our analysis of the number of children needing social services' help each day and said that councils were having to cut early intervention services.
- Former Minister for Children and Families, Michelle Donelan MP (Conservative, Chippenham), highlighted the Government's review of the special educational needs and disabilities system in response to a question from Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP (Labour, Slough) who referenced our report 'Have we reached a tipping point?'
- During a debate on early years interventions, Baroness Tyler of Enfield (Liberal Democrat) highlighted our analysis of the funding gap facing children's social care and called for further funding in the Budget and Spending Review.
- LGA Vice-President, Baroness Eaton (Conservative) highlighted our report on profit making and risk in independent children's social care placement providers in a written question to the Government.
- Shadow Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and LGA Vice-President, Steve Reed MP (Labour, Croydon North) highlighted our analysis of the pressures in SEND services. In the same debate, Munira Wilson MP (Liberal Democrat, Twickenham) said that high-needs funding was one of the most serious financial issues facing councils.
- During an Estimates Day debate on Department for Education (DfE) funding and support for disadvantaged and left behind children, David Simmonds MP (Conservative, Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner) called for better calculation of local funding formula for early years, alternative provision and SEND schools.

## Children, education and schools

## Places to live and work

- In the Second Reading of the Fire Safety Bill, Sir Mike Penning MP (Conservative, Hemel Hempstead), Layla Moran MP (Liberal Democrat, Oxford West and Abingdon) and Abena Oppong-Asare MP (Labour, Erith and Thamesmead) all used our briefing to highlight our concerns on the shortage of fire-engineering experts, and disparities between the fire safety order's concept of a responsible person and the proposals for an accountable person and a building safety manager in the Government's "Building a Safer Future" consultation.
- Baroness Healy of Primrose Hill (Labour) used our briefing to highlight that councils spend over £1 billion a year on supporting cultural services in a debate on museums, galleries and historic buildings open to the public, affected by the restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In a debate on net zero targets and decarbonising transport Shadow Bus Minister, Matt Rodda MP (Labour, Reading East), called on the Government to empower all local authorities to consider both franchising and re-municipalising bus companies to improve services around the country.
- In an Opposition Day debate on homelessness, Clive Betts MP, praised the work of the LGA in the pre-legislative scrutiny of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. He said "The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 is the only Act to have involved pre-legislative scrutiny of a private Member's Bill by a Select Committee, and the benefits of that were shown by the involvement not only of the hon. Member for Harrow East (Bob Blackman MP, Conservative), who introduced the Bill, but by that of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, the Government, Crisis and the Local Government Association. They produced an Act that is good in so many respects, as it concentrates on the prevention of homelessness, while also dealing with the issues faced by those who are not a priority for housing provision,

but who still need appropriate advice and assistance." He also used our briefing to promote the LGA's recommendations on funding.

- In a debate on food supply during the COVID-19 pandemic, Baroness Tyler of Enfield and Baroness Jones of Whitchurch (Labour) used our briefing to highlight that councils have been working hard supporting vulnerable people to access food throughout the pandemic.
- We briefed Lord Bird (Crossbench) ahead of his oral question on publicly funded libraries. In response to his question, Lords DCMS Minister, Baroness Barran (Conservative) highlighted our work on the Libraries Taskforce.

## Strong local democracy and supporting councils

- Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Lord Greenhalgh (Conservative), highlighted our 'Be a Councillor' campaign to encourage a more diverse range of people to stand as councillors to represent our numerous and diverse local communities, ensuring that local decision making is robust and well-informed.
- We briefed Parliamentarians ahead of debates on International Women's Day. In the briefing we highlighted the LGA's sector-led improvement work, including our 'Be a Councillor' campaign and our work on Civility in Public Life.
- Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford (Conservative) highlighted that the Department of Health and Social Care has been working with local government on a sector-led improvement programme of work focused on the implementation of the carers Act duty for carers.

- Lord Shipley (Liberal Democrat) and Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle (Green) echoed our calls for further English devolution in a Lords debate. Baroness Eaton also highlighted our joint report with Localis and asked whether the Government would consider the recommendation that the Treasury and MHCLG consult councils on identifying the most popular options for local levies to create new fiscal freedoms.
- Former Minister for Women, Victoria Atkins MP (Conservative, Louth and Horncastle) highlighted the LGA's Return to Social Work campaign in Women and Equalities questions.
- Daniel Kawczynski MP (Conservative, Shrewsbury and Atcham) highlighted our sector-led improvement work on adult social care in Shropshire County Council.

## Sustainability and climate action

- The Minister of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park (Conservative), highlighted our work to ensure people better understand the waste duty of care.
- We briefed MPs ahead at the Second Reading of the Environment Bill. Ruth Jones MP (Labour, Newport West) used our briefing to call for more powers to be given to councils to tackle air pollution.
- Baroness Eaton asked what assessment the Government has made of our report 'Local green jobs—accelerating a sustainable economy recovery,' published on 11 June, which highlights that at least 1.18 million low-carbon jobs need to be created in England by 2050 to meet the Government's net zero commitment. In response, Minister for BEIS, Lord Callanan, said the Government is determined to seize the once-in-a-generation economic opportunities of the net zero transition.

“Local councils are ensuring that communities get the support they need. I know this from the work that has taken place in Bradford: they are the government on the frontline. Will the Right Hon. Gentleman confirm that the Government will meet their promise to fund whatever is necessary and fully compensate local councils for all the costs and loss of income related to the COVID-19 crisis, and not just provide the funding already announced, which only partially covers what the councils have already spent?”

**Naz Shah MP**  
Shadow Minister for  
Community Cohesion



# Events

We host a variety of events each year as part of our engagement with Parliament, the political parties and those who are independents or crossbenchers. These events are a forum that allows for discussion over local government's shared priorities, whether it be to discuss council finances, a climate smart economic recovery, the environment, adult social care and children's services, housing or the LGA's sector-led improvement work, our conversations with parliamentarians are vital in helping us promote the full range of issues councils bring to us. This year we have worked differently as the nation has adapted to living with COVID-19, holding a series of virtual cross-party briefings on a variety of policy priorities. Before the pandemic broke, we also held a variety of briefings for our Vice-Presidents, a 'drop in' session for new MPs joining the House after the general election and a variety of roundtables.

## APPG on Devolution

We re-launched our All-Party Parliamentary Group on Devolution in May 2019. The LGA has supported the Devolution APPG since 2015 as the Group seeks to promote an open forum for discussion on the need for a UK-wide devolution settlement. Andrew Lewer MP (Conservative, Northampton South) was confirmed as Chair of the APPG. The APPG holds a series of targeted meetings throughout the year to encourage discussion and debate, as well as practical, and achievable, policy solutions, providing an opportunity for engagement between the LGA, parliamentarians and Government ministers and officials.

## Parliamentary reception 2019

In June 2019 we hosted our popular annual parliamentary reception, which puts representatives from local government in the same room as Ministers, MPs and Peers from all parties. Our former Chairman Lord Porter was joined by then Minister for Local Government, Rishi Sunak and the Labour leader in the House of Lords, Baroness Smith of Basildon. The reception was a chance to celebrate the best in local government and to discuss the challenges we need to address in order to ensure that councils continue to deliver high quality public services.

“Indeed, it is not only me asking questions about the role of local government; the sector itself, including the Local Government Association, is constantly challenging itself to do better for all the people it serves.”

**Viscount Younger of Leckie**  
Conservative Peer



## Party conferences 2019

As with previous years, in the autumn of 2019 the LGA ran a busy, well-attended and highly informative programme of events at the party conferences. These provide a valuable opportunity to showcase the positive work and campaigns the LGA undertakes on behalf of its membership. Our programme of events focussed on what was needed in the Queen’s Speech to turn our #CouncilsCan report into a reality. More broadly, the conferences also provide us with an opportunity to engage with stakeholders, including businesses, charities and think tanks.



“Our system is more centralised than that of any other developed country. To change that, the Government will need to reduce the power of Westminster and Whitehall by devolving significant power to localities to prioritise their spending... we should move quickly to a place-based approach to strategy and budgeting, starting with next year’s comprehensive spending review.”

**Lord Bichard**  
Crossbench Peer, LGA Vice-President

# LGA President Lord Kerlake

In an especially challenging year, I am proud to have once again undertaken the role of President of the Local Government Association. I and the other Vice-Presidents are incredibly grateful for the work of the LGA, while all of us who work in Parliament know and appreciate the hard work councillors and their officials put in every day to deliver vital public services. The LGA is frankly an authoritative and well respected advocate in both Houses. Your Association represents the views of its membership on a collective, cross-party basis which ensures councils' are listened to in the corridors of Parliament and Whitehall.

As highlighted in this report, a series of challenges, including the outbreak of COVID-19, have altered Parliamentary proceedings significantly this year. The impact of the outbreak also affected councils across the country, with them having to support an increasing number of residents as they find themselves in social and economic hardship, adding pressure on our already stretched local services. In turn, the LGA has responded quickly and thoroughly. Their work in response to COVID-19 has been nothing short of impressive – from their daily bulletins detailing the impact of Government announcements on local government, to their numerous select committee submissions and appearances at inquiries launched in response to the pandemic – they continue to demonstrate that we can rely on them to represent local government to the highest standard.

I know that speaking from other Parliamentarians that the LGA's briefings are also some of the best in the businesses and help Parliamentarians across the Houses prepare for their contributions to policy and legislative debates. Even in the crisis, we have still been able to rely on them for timely and accurate material ahead of debates, Bill readings and more. I do hope everyone at the LGA and in local government knows how much their support means to parliamentarians and for my part I would like to say thank you to you all. I look forward to continuing to work with Vice-Presidents and parliamentarians from across both Houses as we look to the year ahead.



**Lord Kerlake**  
LGA President

# LGA Vice-Presidents

**Lord Adebowale**

Independent (Crossbench)

**Mike Amesbury MP**

Weaver Vale, Labour

**Baroness Bakewell  
of Hardington Manville**

Liberal Democrat

**Lord Bassam of Brighton**

Labour

**Lord Beecham**

Labour

**Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

Independent (Green)

**Lord Best**

Independent (Crossbench)

**Lord Bichard**

Independent (Crossbench)

**Lord Bishop of St Albans**

Independent (Crossbench)

**Clive Betts MP**

Sheffield South East, Labour

**Bob Blackman MP**

Harrow East, Conservative

**Baroness Couttie**

Conservative

**Baroness Eaton**

Conservative

**Tim Farron MP**

Westmorland and Lonsdale,  
Liberal Democrat

**Baroness Greengross**

Independent (Crossbench)

**Baroness Grey-Thompson**

Independent (Crossbench)

**Helen Hayes MP**

Dulwich and West Norwood, Labour

**Simon Hoare MP**

North Dorset, Conservative

**Wera Hobhouse MP**

Bath, Liberal Democrat

**Baroness Howarth  
of Breckland**

Independent (Crossbench)

**Baroness Janke**

Liberal Democrat

**Dame Diana Johnson MP**

Kingston upon Hull North, Labour

**Baroness Jones  
of Moulsecoomb**

Independent (Green Party)

**Preet Kaur Gill MP**

Birmingham, Edgbaston, Labour

**Lord Kennedy of Southwark**

Labour

**Ben Lake MP**

Ceredigion, Independent (Plaid Cymru)

**Andrew Lewer MP**

Northampton South, Conservative

**Earl of Listowel**

Independent (Crossbench)

**Julia Lopez MP**

Hornchurch and Upminster, Conservative

**Tim Loughton MP**

East Worthing and Shoreham, Conservative

**Earl of Lytton**

Independent (Crossbench)

**Catherine McKinnell MP**

Newcastle-upon-Tyne North, Labour

**Jim McMahon MP**

Oldham West and Royton, Labour

**Layla Moran MP**

Oxford West and Abingdon,  
Liberal Democrat

**Neil O'Brien MP**

Harborough Oadby and Wigston, Conservative

**Mark Pawsey MP**

Rugby and Bulkington, Conservative

**Baroness Pinnock**

Liberal Democrat

**Steve Reed MP**

Croydon North, Labour

**Baroness Scott of Needham Market**

Liberal Democrat

**Lord Scriven**

Liberal Democrat

**Andrew Selous MP**

South West Bedfordshire, Conservative

**Lord Shipley**

Liberal Democrat

**Baroness Smith of Basildon**

Labour

**Lord Smith of Leigh**

Labour

**Lord Storey**

Liberal Democrat

**Wes Streeting MP**

Ilford North, Labour

**Baroness Thornhill**

Liberal Democrat

**Lord Tope**

Liberal Democrat

We would like to pay tribute to Baroness Diana Maddock, who sadly passed away this year. A former councillor, Diana was a champion of local government in her roles as our Vice-President, and as her the Liberal Democrat Party's spokesperson for Local Government and Housing. We thank Baroness Maddock for her public service, and remember her vital contribution.





"Local government deserves enormous praise for the hard work that it did in helping to restore this country's public finances to a sustainable state."

**Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP**  
Chancellor of the Exchequer

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We consider requests on an individual basis.