

## **Local Government Innovation Taskforce Members Biographies**

### **Councillor Kate Haigh (@katehaigh)**

Kate is Leader of the Labour Group on Gloucester City Council. She is also the South West Regional Representative on LGA Labour Group and a sub to Safer and Stronger Communities Board.

Kate has been a Councillor for Matson and Robinswood ward since 2007. Prior to that, she studied Politics at Lancaster before a career as a Civil Servant and IT professional as well as being active in PCS union. She now works in a local Academy as an Exams Officer.

### **Councillor Simon Henig**

Simon has been Leader of Durham County Council since 2008, guiding the council through its transition to unitary local government. He played a key role as the council reshaped many of its structures, including the creation of Area Action Partnerships to promote local decision making across the county. In the last two years Durham's AAPs have developed a national reputation for their use of participatory budgeting, with thousands of residents voting on how to spend amounts of up to half a million pounds locally.

In 2013 Cllr Henig led his party to a much increased majority and a council group of 94, the largest in the country. Regionally Cllr Henig serves as vice-chair of the Association of North East Councils and remains a Principal Lecturer in Politics at the University of Sunderland. Nationally he is Labour's lead councillor for Culture, Tourism and Sport at the Local Government Association, a member of the party's National Policy Forum and recently became the first chair of the Association of Labour Councillors.

### **Sir Steve Houghton CBE**

Sir Steve has been an elected member of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council for 25 years and Leader of the Council for 17 years. He has a Masters degree in Local Governance from the University of Birmingham. Previously, Sir Steve led a Government Review into the role of local authorities and partnerships in tackling long term unemployment and worklessness, which published in 2009.

Sir Steve holds a number of positions including Chair of the Barnsley Local Strategic Partnership; Chair of SIGOMA; Regional Peer of the LGA; and Non Executive Director, Barnsley Hospital Foundation Trust. He was awarded the CBE for services to Local Government in the 2004 New Year's Honours List and a Knighthood in 2013 in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

### **Sir Richard Leese (@SirRichardLeese)**

Sir Richard was born and brought up in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire. After graduating from the University of Warwick, he worked as a teacher in Coventry and as an exchange teacher in the USA before moving to Manchester to take up a post as a youth worker. He was employed variously in youth work, community work, and education research between 1979 and 1988, and was elected to Manchester City Council in 1984. He became Leader of the Council in 1996, having previously served as Deputy Leader (1990 – 1996), Chair of the Education Committee (1986 - 1990) and Chair of the Finance Committee (1990 - 1995).

Sir Richard's political interests include the links between economic development and social policy, developing open democracy and the place-making and community leadership role of local authorities; and the role of cities in creating a sustainable future. He has a number of additional responsibilities including Director of Manchester Airport Holdings Ltd, Chair of the Greater Manchester Low Carbon Hub, Vice Chair of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Chair of the North West Regional Leaders' Board, and Chair of the Core Cities Cabinet.

### **Mayor Jules Pipe**

Jules Pipe was re-elected as Mayor of Hackney for a third term in May 2010, having become the borough's first directly elected Mayor in October 2002.

Since Jules Pipe became Mayor, Hackney has seen the establishment of six new secondary schools, one of the fastest falls in crime in London, and the successful campaign to put Hackney on the tube map. Council Tax has been frozen for the past eight years, with no cuts to services, and is now below the London average. Jules was also at the forefront of Hackney's ambitious plans and aspirations for the borough's 2012 legacy. Jules was also elected as Chair of London Councils in May 2010.

### **Councillor Sharon Taylor (@SharonStevenage)**

Born and brought up in the new town of Stevenage, Sharon was elected to Stevenage Borough Council for the first time in 1997. She chaired the Policy Committee from 1998 and became Executive Member for Resources in 2000-2006, Deputy Leader in 2004 (retaining Resources portfolio) and Leader of the Council in 2006.

In 2004 Sharon was appointed to the Committee for the Regions by the Eastern Region. Until 2008 she held a senior management (civilian) post with Hertfordshire Constabulary. Sharon is Deputy Leader of the LGA Labour Group and Labour Lead on the Finance Panel. She is also PPC for Stevenage.

### **Councillor Anne Western (@AnneWestern)**

Anne Western has been an elected member of Derbyshire County Council since 1997 and became Leader of the Council in May 2013. Whilst in opposition (2009-2013), Anne was Leader of the Labour Group and prior to that was Deputy Leader of the Council (2004-2009) as well as the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children's Services. In 2013, Anne led the Labour Group back into power in Derbyshire with the biggest majority since 1997.