

2018 report & review





Foreword

The past twelve months have been a tumultuous period for politics in the UK, with an indecisive general election in June 2017 setting the tone for a year of uncertainty and continued political stalemate. But despite the continued torrent of cuts, Labour in local government remains a shining example of what Labour can achieve in power.

The local elections were a mixed bag for Labour overall, with 193 gains offset by 122 losses. A strong performance in London and some other big cities masked poor performance in some parts of England. It was great to see Labour taking control back in Plymouth, and gaining majorities in Kirklees and Tower Hamlets, but disappointing to have lost the leadership of Derby, Walsall, and Redditch. We also welcome Dan Jarvis into the local government family after his election as the first Mayor of the Sheffield City Region.

This year's Local Government Conference, held in Nottingham, was bigger and better than ever before, with a diverse range of debates and breakout sessions, and a great line up of speakers, including our leader Jeremy Corbyn. Our Next Generation training programme for ambitious and talented councillors has again produced a number of success stories, with graduates moving into leadership positions at councils across the UK.

Our role in showcasing the best of Labour in local government has again been made easy by the remarkable work of Labour councils and dedication of our hard working councillors. Whether finding radical and innovative ways to deliver services, or standing up for the most vulnerable in our society, it is Labour in local government that is demonstrating every day that our party has the competence and experience to deliver for our communities. We will continue to work hard to make sure this is understood throughout our party.

This year we have put extra effort into building links with colleagues in the Parliamentary Labour Party, the Leader's office, front bench, and a wide range of Labour backbenchers in both the Commons and the Lords. This summer we are launching Labour Friends of Local Government, which will create more opportunities to demonstrate the excellent work done by Labour in local government. A key part of our Parliamentary lobbying has been promoting the ideas set out by leading councillors in 'On Day One', which set out how a future Labour government could deliver more effectively by working with local government.

The biggest change for the LGA Labour Group has been the election of two new deputy leaders, Lib Peck (Lambeth) and Michael Payne (Gedling), to serve alongside our leader Nick Forbes (Newcastle Upon Tyne). We are pleased that every Labour council in England and Wales remains in membership of the LGA – helping ensure that Labour in local government has a strong voice.

This was my first year as Head of the Labour Group office, and I would like to thank all of you for giving me such a warm welcome, and to those who have given me advice and support in what has been a hugely enjoyable new role. This has been a year of big changes in the LGA Labour office team, with Uma Kumaran and Anthie Zachariou also moving on – though happily both remained in Labour's local government family, taking up new roles with the Mayor of London and Waltham Forest respectively. Our new arrivals Hannah Lazell and Lewis Addlington-Lee have made excellent starts to their LGA careers, and have formed a great team with myself and Martin Angus.

The year ahead should prove to be no less busy. With Brexit looming ever larger, the Government's neglect of the domestic political agenda is likely to continue. This is likely to mean further uncertainty to local government, with few signs of optimism that either the Fair Funding Review or the Spending Review will do much to improve the dire funding situation. It is vital that we step up our campaign, alongside our front bench and the Trade Unions, to oppose the government's continued austerity agenda which is harming communities up and down the country.

Looking ahead to next year's elections, there are a huge number of councils up for election, and many where Labour will be looking to make gains and take control. We intend to build on the Labour Party's much improved approach to working with local government on the local election campaign, and will be pressing for earlier identification of target seats and release of resources. Alongside this we will run an extended From Opposition To Power programme for opposition leaders, to help them shape effective campaigns to take control, and set them up for successful council leadership when they do.

We look forward to working with you to make this a successful year.



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Message from the Leader of the LGA Labour Group



Cllr Nick Forbes (Newcastle upon Tyne)

It's been another busy and successful year for the LGA Labour Group. In February we held our Labour Local Government conference, organised jointly with the ALC, welcoming over 400 Councillors to Nottingham. Our programme of events included plenary sessions on children's social care, housing, and party reform, and our fringe included events on air quality, women in local government, modern slavery and mental health. For the second year in a row we offered free places to newly elected councillors, and it was encouraging to see so many new faces in attendance.

In March we were joined in Parliament by leading councillors, MPs, and Peers as launched "On Day One", a collection of essays from senior council leaders which set out Labour in local government's priorities for the next Labour government. Topics covered in the essays included local government finance, housing, children and young people, devolution, welfare and accountability. On Day One is part of a wider dialogue within the Labour Party about the importance of local government in delivering for the many, and we will continue to push this agenda.

Cllr Lib Peck, Deputy Leader of the LGA Labour Group, is leading a Women's Taskforce examining how women in local government can be better supported. This is particularly timely in light of the sexual harassment allegations that have rocked Westminster and beyond, and given that 2018 is the 100th anniversary of some women getting the vote. I look forward to seeing the results of their work.

Adult social care continues to be an area of great concern to all in local government. LGA figures show that there will be a funding gap of £2.2bn by 2020, and urgent action is needed in order to ensure that funding for adult social care is sustainable. The Green Paper on adult social care is an opportunity to try and secure funding for the long-term. To avoid it suffering the fate of previous attempts, any reform of funding of social care must have genuine cross-party consensus.

Uncertainty persists about how local authorities will receive funding beyond 2020. The current situation, created by the government, leaves local authorities with little certainty around how to plan for service delivery after 2020. The government needs to act rapidly to ensure that councils are able to plan effectively, not just left until the last minute. I and other LGA colleagues will be raising this at every opportunity with the government and shadow front bench.

The local elections in May produced a mixed set of results for Labour. Congratulations must go to Labour colleagues in Plymouth, Kirklees, and Tower Hamlets for winning outright control of their councils. Many councils in London returned their highest number of Labour councillors ever, and Labour maintained our success in the major English cities. But we cannot ignore the loss of support we suffered in some non-metropolitan towns, and the challenge that this will pose for Labour in seeking to return as a party of national government. My congratulations go to all those who were elected, and my commiserations to those who stood and lost.



One major positive of this year's campaign was the extra focus and resources devoted to the local elections by the national Labour Party, which has long been a priority for both the Labour Group and our colleagues in the Association of Labour Councillors, and it is pleasing that we have been listened to. Much of the credit for this should go to Andrew Gwynne MP, our Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, who has brought real energy to both his front bench role and also his role as joint National Campaign Coordinator. We have built a positive working relationship with Andrew, and are delighted to have him fighting our corner as the champion of local government.

Away from local government, but not unrelated to it, is the Labour Party Democracy Review. This is a root and branch review of how the democratic structures of the Labour Party operate and looks at every part of the Labour Party. I am sure that many colleagues across local government will have made a submission to the Democracy Review, and I am sure that many of you will be highlighting the role that local government plays within our democracy – particularly that councillors are already strongly accountable to their local branches. Whatever the outcome, we will continue to work with colleagues across the Labour Party to ensure that we continue to be a thriving, democratic movement.

Message from the Leader of the Labour Party



Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP

“My time as a local councillor was one of the happiest and most fulfilling times of my life. And I know the great things that can be achieved by Labour councils.”



Although Labour is not yet in government at national level, we are running local authorities across the country and, with dogged determination and creativity, Labour councils are making huge differences to people's lives.

In the May local elections, we built on our result at the last General Election and increased the number of Labour councillors above our high-water mark of 2014. We offered people hope, and showed our communities that there is a real alternative to the current broken system. In those areas where we didn't do as well as I know we can, we will be working especially hard to win support in the coming months.

The Tories have devolved austerity to local councils – and areas with the highest levels of poverty have been the hardest hit. Labour councils are being forced by the brutality of Tory cuts to think of ever more creative ways to ensure that essential services are provided for residents.

In doing so, Labour councils are renewing the politics of municipal socialism for a new era. Part of developing this dynamic, radical local politics is Labour's creation of a Community Wealth Building Unit. This will help Labour local authorities to learn from each other, ensuring best practice in fighting austerity, and moving away from the failed neoliberal economics of the past.

We should not be afraid to be bold in our transition to an economy that is worthy of the 21st Century. Despite drastic Tory cuts, local authorities still have substantial economic and political leverage that they can use to help make our local economies and communities more democratic, more equal, and more inclusive at every level.

We must never forget that Labour's greatest achievement of the 20th Century, the National Health Service, didn't come from nowhere – it started off as a local initiative in the form of the Tredegar Medical Aid Society. The innovation of today's Labour councils will help to shape the next Labour government.

You can find examples of Labour councils doing amazing and radical things across the country. Whether it be forming local green energy companies, or starting a local bus company, or looking at the huge untapped potential of local co-operatives and other forms of workers' participation, Labour is innovating and making a difference in local government.

We are all aware the impact the housing crisis is having upon many in our communities, and all over our country. In order to help resolve this issue, Labour has launched a consultation document 'Housing for the Many', setting out our ambition to build 1 million genuinely affordable homes over 10 years, including the biggest council housebuilding programme for over 30 years.

As it becomes ever clearer that the experiments of PFI, PPP and outsourcing to failing companies are not the solution, Labour councils are leading the way in empowering people to take control of their lives and their communities.

Local authorities have an essential role as we move towards greater democratic public control, workers' participation, and co-operation in our economy. By using the powers of intervention we have, we can shield our local economies from record of failure we have seen under this Tory government, and lay the ground for a dynamic investment-led economy of the future.

A Labour government will work hand in hand with our communities, in order to regenerate our economy, and will invest in the necessary infrastructure to fully support this vital growth. This will enable the next Labour government to deliver social justice everywhere.

With a massively expanded membership, the Labour Party is becoming a genuine movement of people across Britain. Councillors are a central part of that movement, representing local communities that are bearing the brunt of Tory misrule.

We represent the power of people in the face of ever growing power of big money in our society. We must put people's everyday lives at the heart of our agenda, for the many, not the few.

The next Labour government will be transformative, but we don't have to wait until then. With Labour councils in power across the UK, we are making a difference now.



We need to take action to ensure that women in local government are able to carry out their work as councillors in a safe environment, and that women are able to progress to leadership positions within local authorities.

The revelations about sexual harassment and the level of sexism experienced at all levels of politics did not come as a surprise to the many women who have experienced sexism and sexual harassment, be that whilst working for a politician, or as an elected representative. However, these revelations shook the world of politics, including local government, and it is now up to us to ensure that the culture of Labour Groups is one where everyone is seen as an equal, and where demeaning behaviour, such as sexual harassment, is not tolerated and is dealt with swiftly.

The most recent set of local elections have left us with 26 of Labour Councils in England and Wales being led by women- when you think that we lead 118 councils, this isn't good enough. All metro mayors are men, and only one woman has been a candidate - Sue Jeffrey in Tees Valley in 2017, but we lost to the Tories. Both the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party nationally are men, and the Labour Party has never elected a woman to become Leader.

Not only do the Labour Party need to do more to ensure that we see more women in leadership positions at all levels, colleagues in local government also need to look closer to home and see what they can do to ensure that more women serve in Cabinet level roles and as Labour Group and Council Leaders.

In recognition of these challenges, the LGA Labour Group is establishing a Women's Taskforce which will look at issues affecting women in local government - starting with parental leave for councillors and the culture of Labour Groups. Whilst we are setting out to tackle these issues, we understand that they will not be sorted overnight, and that there are other issues that impact women's participation in local government, such as pensions. A working group of women councillors has been set up to look at these issues, but we want to hear the thoughts of as many women as possible to feed into this work.

I look forward to working with you all over the coming year, and to making some progress on this important issue.

Message from the Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government



Andrew Gwynne MP

Last year I was appointed as Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, following the General Election that saw Labour return more MPs to Parliament than in 2015. Before becoming an MP I served as a councillor on Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, so I know first-hand what a challenging yet rewarding job it is. I'm proud to lead the Shadow Communities and Local Government team in Parliament, who are fighting tirelessly with colleagues in local government to hold the Tories to account in Parliament. Every member of my team has either served as a councillor at some point in their career, or is still serving as a councillor.

Our local election results showed us winning even more seats than our watermark year of 2014. Labour took control of Plymouth, Kirklees and Tower Hamlets, and the Tories lost control of Trafford Council, their flagship council in the north. These set of results show that Labour is consolidating our performance in last year's general election, where we gained our largest share of the vote since 1945. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the Labour candidates and activists who worked tirelessly and congratulate those who were successful. I know that it is disappointing to fight an election and lose, but I also know that Labour will come back stronger.

The challenges facing local government are great, with eight years of Tory austerity having a disastrous effect on local government services and what can be delivered. Families face increased pressure on their finances leading to increased demand on public services, and demographic changes place greater pressure on councils to provide adult social care. Social care in particular is a big challenge for local authorities up and down the country. Back in 2012, Sir Merrick Cockell, the LGA's then Chairman, warned that by the end of the decade councils could be forced to wind down services unless we saw urgent action on the crisis in adult social care funding. Six years later, the crisis is even worse, with the funding gap now at £5.8 billion. We are now in a position where even if councils stopped filling potholes, maintaining parks and open spaces, closed all children's centres, libraries, museums and leisure centres, turned off every street light and shut all discretionary bus routes, they will not have saved enough money to plug the funding gap.

However, despite this, I am proud of the way that Labour councils are dealing with these challenges and defending their communities from the worst of austerity. In Liverpool, a Labour council is helping to tackle fuel poverty by setting up a new not for profit energy company – the "Liverpool LECCy" – to sell gas and electricity at a lower cost than other suppliers. Luton, Enfield, Barnsley, Islington



and Southampton have all set up new initiatives to create new jobs for local people. And despite Government proposals to cut school meals, Labour councils in Islington, Newham and Blackpool are making sure that no nursery and primary school pupils are learning at school on an empty stomach. These are just a few examples of the many ways that voting Labour locally has helped to protect the services that people rely on from Tory cuts.

I, Jeremy Corbyn and the Shadow Communities and Local Government team are committed to working with our Labour local government colleagues in local government to deal with and minimise the impact of austerity. It has been a pleasure working with you over the last 12 months, and I look forward to working with you over the next 12 months.

Message from the Mayor of Greater Manchester



Andy Burnham Mayor of Greater Manchester

It's three years now since the Leaders of the ten Greater Manchester councils signed a ground-breaking devolution agreement. Part of that agreement included the election of a Mayor for Greater Manchester. I was privileged to be elected just over a year ago, and it has certainly been a busy 12 months since.

The benefit of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority model is that all ten leaders – now all Labour leaders – are a central part of the policy and decision-making process. This means that together we develop policies that will have a beneficial impact on people across the whole of Greater Manchester, not just one part of the conurbation. That is why each of the ten leaders, along with the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime (Bev Hughes) and I, all have portfolios that reflect the different areas of policy responsibility.

But it has also enabled us to work collectively to bring our combined soft, as well as hard power, to bear on some of the key issues that are relevant across our City-Region.

Take rough-sleeping. I committed in my Mayoral Manifesto to eradicating the need for rough-sleeping across Greater Manchester by 2020. Working together with the Council leaders and others over the past year we have significantly improved our response.

We have built a community movement including charities and voluntary organisations, the faith and business sectors and the ten local authorities and other public services all working together. Across Greater Manchester emergency provision is opened as soon as the temperature hits freezing, we have secured funding for our innovative Social Impact Bond, a Trailblazer scheme and Housing First – all aimed at helping move people from the streets to accommodation – and vitally, providing the support services that are needed.

But it's not just in the area of rough-sleeping and homelessness that we are making progress. Working with our colleagues in Transport for Greater Manchester we have delivered half-price off-peak bus and Metrolink (tram) fares for all 16-18 year olds in GM. This is a step towards fulfilling my manifesto pledge to provide free bus travel to all 16-18 years across the City-Region.

We have established the first Youth Combined Authority, gender-balanced and with young people from across the conurbation. This isn't a shadow body – it has its own agenda and will be putting proposals to me and the leaders about a Greater Manchester Curriculum for Life and an Opportunity Pass to open up the job opportunities, and leisure, sporting and cultural activities to all young people in Greater Manchester.

Individually, each of our ten councils is doing great work and the Combined Authority structure affords us the opportunity to share best practice and join together. That is why, in March this year, Greater Manchester was recognised by the World Health Organisation as the UK's first age-friendly City-Region.



All of the progress we have made has been underpinned by a new approach to doing politics – involving people and organisations in the discussions and development of our policies. That's why we've held summits with the digital industries to write our strategy to become a leading digital City-Region, and with environmentalists, experts and industry at our Green summit as we prepare to achieve carbon-neutrality at least a decade earlier than the rest of the country.

It is this joint working with our ten council leaders and all parts of society that emboldens our ambitions and gives us the confidence that we will be able to achieve them.

But we want to do more. We are showing how we are making devolution work for our area but we could do so much more if we had additional powers devolved from Whitehall to Mayors and Combined Authorities. That's why political and business leaders from across the North of England are coming together in a Convention for the North, to speak as one to Government on the critical issues of transport, Brexit, skills and further devolution.

We have embarked on a devolution journey and in the same way as it was for London, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, this is just the beginning. The North is finding its voice, and that voice is only going to get louder.

Effective Opposition



Cllr Susan Woodward

(Staffordshire and Lichfield)



“What shall we say today?” rather than, “What shall we do?” This is the main frustration of being in opposition. We’re unable to deliver our own manifesto policies yet see Labour councils doing exactly that to such positive effect. We can be side-lined in our councils and struggle to get the information or support we need. However hard we work to highlight injustices or incompetence, the arithmetic reality is that we rarely win votes.

But in spite of the challenges, there are also real opportunities to make the difference in our localities; regionally and nationally, too. We challenge our administrations on the impacts of their decisions, particularly austerity cuts. We inform residents about unjust decisions made away from the public gaze – and can mobilise people power. We take an active role in scrutiny, suggesting improvements and mitigations. And we are usually far more visible and accessible to our electors than the other lot, whatever colour they are. As the late Dame Tessa Jowell said, “The good opposition challenges government decisions in a ruthless, disciplined way but also campaigns in a way that allows fires of protest to be lit.”

Support for all Labour councillors, including those in opposition, is a phone call away via the LGA Labour Office. The training opportunities that the LGA provides are open to all councillors in member authorities. The LGA offers a tailor-made Effective

Opposition course, maximising the opportunities we have and, for some, preparing the way to taking control. Go for it.

Too many of our Labour Groups are in opposition at present and Tessa also said, “The thing about opposition is you hope it’s not going to last too long.” We all look forward – and work hard – towards there being fewer. Whether Opposition Groups are on the cusp of control or waving lone red flags, we keep Labour flying in our communities.

From Opposition to Power



Cllr Tudor Evans

(Plymouth)



On May 16th 2016, the Conservatives took control of Plymouth City Council, having formed a Faustian pact with the three UKIP councillors to form a coalition. It was the worst birthday present I’d ever had. But as I blew out the candles on my birthday cake that evening, I made a wish that I’d be back in that Leader’s office in less than 2 years.

The confusion around the EU referendum affected our flow and, to be frank, didn’t galvanise a demoralised local party. With a fallow local election year in 2017, keeping our spirits up for that long was going to be difficult but our game was to keep busy with doorstep campaigning as the heart of our operation. That first year was painful for us, with not much to aim at.

Before long, we’d branded the Tory/UKIP marriage of convenience as BLUKIP, and it stuck and struck a chord, particularly with the communities who voted UKIP as an alternative to the Tories.

We kept up a massive programme of voter ID and leafleting, before and after the General Election. Our aim was to knock on every door in the two largest constituencies. Those thousands of conversations were to form the basis of our 2018 manifesto.

We latched on to service failure at a local level, but went big on the NHS. Our specific NHS focus was on local issues, like GPs surrendering their contracts, performance of the local hospital and collapse in NHS dentistry.

But it was playing up local council failure relentlessly that was at the heart of our campaign. It was plain that the failure of Tory/UKIP councillors to get a grip was a message, if we kept repeating it, and it was being reflected back on the doorsteps. There isn’t a better feeling in the world than to hear your messaging repeated on the doorstep, without prompting. We knew we were on to a winner.

Our success in the 2017 General Election on social media meant we were keen to use the Party’s Facebook “Promote” offer and we used it to the full. We built a team of enthusiastic and knowledgeable social media users, who created infographics and videos for all key target seats.

It worked for us, and we had a great night on May 3rd, winning against the odds and against the trend. If anyone wants to know a bit more, there’s a load of us in Plymouth who are ready to help!

LGA Improvement Support



Cllr Sir Steve Houghton (Barnsley)

One lesson I have learned over my many years in local government is that councils have to balance the books and manage services properly. Failure to do so lets residents down, and they won't forgive you if you get it wrong, no matter what your 'good' intentions are. Competence is the bottom line.

In truth, the basis for any election campaign has to have competence and honesty as its starting point. As a previous leader once famously said "you can't play politics with people's jobs and with people's services or with their homes".

Of course, it's getting more and more difficult to achieve our ambitions for the communities we serve as government cuts deepen. Tory-led county councils are now experiencing the cuts that Labour councils have been subjected to for the last eight years and are asking for help. The question is – have they taken the difficult decisions needed to reduce expenditure or are they waiting for a handout that's not likely to come?

The truth is that if any council fails, it damages the reputation of the whole sector. With austerity in local government set to continue we all need to think about what our roles are as councils and councillors in future, and how we can fulfil them.

The best help all councils can access is through the LGA improvement and support programmes. Learning from within the sector at professional and political levels is the only real sustainable way out of our current predicament. That, and a Labour Government.

The Regional Peer team that I lead are on hand to offer advice, support and encouragement to all Labour Groups, not simply in how to manage finances when budgets are decreasing year after year, but also how to make the most of opportunities change can bring – even in the current climate.

Corporate Peer Challenges and bespoke service challenges can provide a platform for not only balancing budgets but positive change, which benefits both the council and local residents. Despite the significant financial challenges that local government faces, our aim is always that Labour councils should be the best. We want to provide a strong platform our party can build upon, delivering on our promises for the communities we serve and paving the way for a Labour government.

I encourage all Labour Groups to utilise the improvement programmes on offer from the LGA, and to get in contact with your Regional Peer and see how they can support you. I also encourage councillors to apply to become a Labour Member Peer, and help us in keeping local government as the sector that is the best part of government public services.



Cllr Sir Steve Houghton
(Barnsley)

Lead Peer - North West Region



Cllr Bryony Rudkin
(Ipswich)

**Regional Peer - East of England,
East Midlands (Lower Tier),
South East**



Cllr Helen Holland
(Bristol)

**Regional Peer - South West,
West Midlands**



Cllr Clyde Loakes
(Waltham Forest)

Regional Peer - London



Cllr Graham Chapman
(Nottingham)

**Regional Peer - East Midlands
(Upper Tier), North East, Yorkshire
& Humber**

**If you have questions about peer work,
please contact Lewis Addlington-Lee -
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Cllr Alice Perry (Islington) & Cllr Nick Forbes (Newcastle Upon Tyne)



The last 12 months have been very busy for Labour's National Executive Committee (NEC). The sudden general election meant the years of work that usually go into selecting candidates and writing a manifesto had to be completed in weeks. We were proud of our role in drafting the 2017 manifesto, which showcased some popular policies pioneered by local councils and presented the country with Labour's positive vision for Britain to counter Tory negativity and gloom.

The NEC also oversaw a Leadership election in Scotland and a Deputy Leadership election in Wales. We said goodbye to General Secretary Iain McNicol, who has always been a good friend to local government, and welcomed new General Secretary Jennie Formby. We voted for Jennie and look forward to working with her to deliver the key priorities for the year ahead.

Priorities for the NEC following the snap general election last June have been:

- Preparing for another snap general election;
- Selecting Westminster Parliamentary Candidates in key marginal seats;
- Contesting local elections in May 2018;
- Improving campaign infrastructure, including digital campaign and community organising;
- Developing policies for national government, building on the 2017 general election manifesto.

The NEC also spent time reviewing internal processes and improving how Labour responds to complaints of sexual harassment, sexism, antisemitism, islamophobia, racism, homophobia, transphobia and other forms of abuse. Jeremy Corbyn and the NEC agreed there is no place for this kind of abuse in the Labour Party.

Jeremy Corbyn also asked Katy Clark to lead a review of party democracy. The democracy review is considering issues like:

- Party Leadership Elections;
- The composition of the NEC;
- Policy making;
- The role, accountability and transparency of regional structures;
- The functioning of associated bodies such as BAME Labour, Young Labour, Disability Labour and LGBT Labour;
- Membership engagement and recruitment;
- CLP governance;
- Strengthening links with trade unions;
- Developing the relationship between Labour's local authority representatives and local parties;
- Improving diversity at all levels within the Party harnessing the potential of social media across all aspects of Labour's democracy and political work.

Key asks from local government have included better representation for councillors at all levels of the party, more resources and support for local elections, accountability for ALC subs and more opportunities to share best practice and promote the good work of labour in local government.

Katy joined councillors for an excellent session during February's Labour Local Government Conference. Councillors can make submissions to the democracy review as individuals or as Labour Groups. **More information about the Democracy Review is available on the Labour Party website.**

In March, the LGA Labour Group launched a publication, 'On Day One', which included examples of how a Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour government could work together with councils to deliver for the many, not the few. The launch, which was held in Parliament, was well attended by MPs, Councillors and activists alike.

As NEC reps we have been working with the ALC and LGA to run "Be a Councillor" training sessions across the country. We also worked with Trade Unions like the GMB to deliver special training for shop stewards to encourage more trade union reps to become councillors. We have also been working positively cross party at the LGA with the Fawcett Society to identify and remove barriers that prevent women from standing to be councillors and obtaining leadership positions in local government.

One of our priorities on the NEC is to work to improve diversity of political representation at all levels, including supporting and selecting more candidates who are women, BAME, LGBT, disabled and working class. The 2017 intake of MPs was one of the most diverse ever and we need to work to continue that trend in local and national government.

The next general election could take place any time within the next four years. Whenever it takes place once thing is for sure: the thousands of Labour councillors will campaigning hard and working with local parties and national representatives to deliver for the many, not the few.



Children's Services

Children's services have seen a dramatic surge in demand in recent years, and as a result have moved up the agenda for local and national government.

The LGA revealed in January that a child is being referred to local authority children's services every 49 seconds. Councils have warned the government time and time again that ongoing funding cuts, including the £2 billion gap that councils face by 2020 in children's services alone, have left them struggling to meet the increased demand. If local authority children's services aren't given the injection of funding that is desperately needed, they will continue to struggle to give support that vulnerable children need.

Councils have worked endlessly to protect funding for essential children's services, but budget pressures from relentless Tory government cuts since 2010 have meant often facing the difficult choice of overspending to meet demand or making cuts to another essential council services. The funding gap must be addressed to ensure that children's services are protected, and continue to support the most vulnerable in society now and in years to come.



Local Government Finance

It was made clear in the Local Government Finance Settlement in the winter that there would be no respite for local government funding, and that councils are set to continue to face the brunt of the government's budget cuts.

The National Audit Office has reported that councils have experienced a 49.1 per cent reduction in real terms in funding from central government since 2010. Although the government announced an increase for the general council tax referendum limit to 2.99 per cent for 2018/19 and 2019/20, this goes nowhere near plugging the £5.8 billion funding gap that councils in England face by the end of the decade.

England is currently one of Europe's most centralised countries, because despite £1 in every £4 being spent on local government, councils are responsible for raising less than 10% in taxes. The fair funding review begins to understand the need to decentralise funding by promising 100% retention of business rates for councils by 2019/20. Whilst increasing the independence of council finances is a step in the right direction, the move towards business rates replacing Revenue Support Grant does not recognise that many Labour councils have a very low tax base and little ability to attract new rate-paying businesses, and often serve the most deprived communities with complex needs.

Local Government Conference 2018

In February 2018 we held our Labour Local Government Conference at the East Midlands Conference Centre. The conference, which is jointly run by the LGA Labour Group and the Association of Labour Councillors (ALC), was our biggest and best attended to date.

The conference saw a well-attended evening reception and dinner the night before where we were joined by Shadow Communities and Local Government Secretary, Andrew Gwynne MP and General Secretary of the Labour Party, Iain McNicol. We were pleased to welcome back to our conference the Leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn MP who gave the keynote speech.

Once again we had a majority of women speakers on the conference platform and as contributors in the breakout sessions. We had more stands in our exhibitors area than ever before, and were pleased to be joined by some new commercial partners, as well as welcoming back those which we had in 2017.

Breakout sessions covered a wide range of topics from clean air to social care, Brexit, women in leadership and fair funding for local government. We look forward to welcoming even more councillors and national politicians to our conference in 2019, which will be held at Warwick Conference Centre.








Local elections analysis

A year on from the extraordinary general election campaign which began with Labour's worst local elections results in living memory and ended with the Conservatives losing their overall majority, the polarised electoral landscape remains little altered. Had there been another set of local elections on June 8 last year, the outcome probably would have looked something like the results this May.

The 4,413 seats up for election this year broke down as follows:

Results summary	Seats won	Net gains or losses	Net changes in councils with new wards
Labour 	2,350	+69	-23
Conservative 	1,329	-8	-69
Lib Dem 	536	+64	-4
UKIP	3	-118	-13
Green	39	+8	-1
Independent	60	+5	-1
Other	84	-20	+9
Election Postponed	9		3
Total	4,413		-99

In total 553 seats changed hands, with Labour's 191 gains including 97 from the Conservatives and 40 from UKIP. Of the 122 Labour losses, 71 were to the Tories and 31 the Liberal Democrats.

Of the 150 local authorities with elections, 74 emerged with a Labour majority, unchanged from before the elections. There were three gains – in Kirklees, Tower Hamlets and in Plymouth where defections from UKIP had given the Tories a majority. However Labour lost its own majority in Derby, Nuneaton & Bedworth and Redditch which was gained by the Tories.

Overall the Projected National Shares of the vote showed Labour and Tories neck and neck on 35% of the vote, consistent with the polarised stalemate which has been depicted in most opinion polls over the last year. Many of the swings and seat changes originated from the collapse of the UKIP vote from the 17% which it was estimated to be in 2014. While the actual movement of voters from UKIP varied from area to area, this pattern certainly contributed to some of the Tories' better results and some of Labour losses, especially in the Midlands and North, matching the trends in last year's general election.

Labour achieved its highest share of the vote and the largest number of councillors and councils since 1971 in London with 21 of the 32 boroughs now having a Labour majority. However the Tories proved resilient in the councils where they might have been vulnerable to Labour, holding all of them and achieving net gains in Barnet and Hillingdon. They were less successful in their perennial struggles with the Liberal Democrats in Kingston-upon-Thames and Richmond-upon-Thames, both of which they lost. The Lib Dems made only modest gains overall with their 16% share of the vote little changed from where they have been since 2010, but they are slowly rebuilding their local representation in councils where they have been competitive in the past and remain well-organised.

These elections confirmed what we already knew about electoral trends in different parts of the country rather than told us anything new. Next year of course, the results have the potential to change the balance of the parties in local government as the Tories must defend thousands of seats won on general election day in 2015 and over 40% of all seats are up for election.

The LGA Labour Group



Executive Team 2017-18

Leadership team:

Cllr Nick Forbes (Newcastle Upon Tyne),
Leader Labour Group and Vice-Chair of
the LGA

Cllr Lib Peck (Lambeth),
Deputy Leader Labour Group

Cllr Michael Payne (Gedling and
Nottinghamshire), Deputy Leader
Labour Group

Cllr Simon Henig (Durham),
Chair Labour Group and Chair ALC

Cllr Simon Blackburn (Blackpool),
Chief Whip

Cllr Rishi Shori (Bury), Vice-Chair

Cllr Alice Perry (Islington),
Deputy Whip

Cllr Peter Box (Wakefield),
Deputy Chair LGA

Cllr Sue Murphy (Manchester),
Deputy Chair LGA

Cllr Sir Steve Houghton (Barnsley),
Lead Member Peer

Cllr Bryony Rudkin (Ipswich),
Regional Member Peer

Cllr Graham Chapman (Nottingham),
Regional Member Peer

Cllr Helen Holland (Bristol),
Regional Member Peer

Cllr Clyde Loakes (Waltham Forest),
Regional Member Peer

Regional Representatives:

East Midlands:
Cllr Alan Rhodes (Nottinghamshire)

Eastern:
Cllr Richard Henry (Stevenage)

London:
Cllr Clare Coghill (London)

North East:
Cllr Iain Malcolm (South Tyneside)

North West:
Cllr John Merry (Salford)

South East:
Cllr Sabia Hussain (Slough)

South West:
Cllr Kate Haigh (Gloucester)

Wales:
Cllr Aaron Shotton (Flintshire)

West Midlands:
Cllr Sue Woodward (Staffordshire
and Lichfield)

Yorkshire and Humberside:
Cllr Tim Swift (Calderdale)

LGA Board Representatives:

Cllr Richard Watts (Islington),
Chair, Children & Young People Board

Cllr Sir Richard Leese (Manchester),
Chair, City Regions Board

Cllr Linda Thomas (Bolton), Vice-Chair,
Community & Wellbeing Board

Cllr Simon Henig (Durham), Vice-Chair,
Culture, Tourism & Sport Board

Cllr Judith Blake (Leeds), Vice-Chair,
Environment, Economy, Housing and
Transport Board

Fiona Twycross AM (Greater
London Authority), Deputy Chair Fire
Services Management Committee and
Fire Commission

Cllr Judi Billing (North Hertfordshire and
Hertfordshire), Deputy Chair Improvement
& Innovation Board

Cllr Anne Western (Derbyshire), Deputy
Chair People & Places Board

Cllr Claire Kober (Haringey), Chair
Resources Board

Cllr Simon Blackburn (Blackpool), Chair
Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Cllr Ian Swithenbank (Northumberland),
Vice-Chair Audit Committee

Cllr Graham Chapman (Nottingham), Labour
Lead on Local Partnerships





Board reports



**Cllr Claire Kober
(Haringey)**

Resources

Over the last year the Board has continued to take a leading role in the LGA's work on local government finance, welfare reform, workforce and EU funding issues.

We continued to highlight the funding gap facing local services and to call for more appropriate funding in advance of a Spending Review in 2019, successfully secured an increase to the council tax referendum limit, an extra £150 million for adult social care, and stopped last minute changes to the New Homes Bonus. We held a fully booked local government finance conference, attended by the MHCLG Shadow Secretary of State and Andrew Gwynne MP. We also looked at recent government reviews of capital investment rules, successfully challenging some of the proposed new rules.

I continued to chair the LGA's Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Retention Task and Finish Group which looks in detail at the LGA's work on these two local government finance reforms and is making progress in seeking a local government consensus on these controversial issues.

The roll-out of Universal Credit and wider welfare reform continues to have significant impacts on our local residents. The Board continued to press Government to ensure that the role of councils in implementing welfare reform and, crucially, supporting disadvantaged households, is both adequately resourced and appropriately recognised.

We supported the work of the National Joint Council in creating a new pay spine that addresses the challenge the National Living Wage creates, and continued intensive work on the issue of sleep-in allowances. The Board oversaw the launch of a consultation exercise on a refreshed national workforce strategy, discussed the LGA's role in workforce issues arising from greater health and care integration, and assisted in the development of apprenticeship programmes.

The Board worked on the continuation of £5 billion of investment in local areas from the EU Structural Funds until 2020. We are also pressing the Government about the design of its replacement, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Our aim is to ensure that it will be fully funded, locally driven and will support existing infrastructure, enterprise, and social cohesion schemes.

We oversaw the facilitation of the set-up of a new local government insurance mutual as a financially beneficial alternative to the existing insurance market available to local authorities. Seventeen local authorities and the LGA have been working closely together to found the new organisation. I chaired regular meetings of Leaders and Cabinet Members from these local authorities.



**Fiona Twycross AM
(London Assembly)**

Fire Service Management Committee

The fire service and the challenges faced by Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) across the country came centre-stage in 2017 in the most difficult of circumstances. From discussing future building regulations in relation to the Dame Judith Hackitt review, to raising questions about resourcing with the fire minister, much of the focus of the LGA Fire Service Management Committee (FSMC) over the past year has been on the tragic fire in Grenfell Tower.

Among other key issues, the FSMC has been working on are:

- Fire service reform: Fire Vision 2024 was published in March 2018. This document has been developed by the FSMC in conjunction with the Home Office and Chief Fire Officers and sets out an ambitious vision for the fire service of the future including targets around diversity to ensure our workforce better reflects the community served. Alongside this, case studies from around the UK on recruitment and inclusion were published to show the best practice in increasing diversity.
- The new inspection regime: FSMC members have acted as a key liaison point with the new HMICFRS to ensure fire and rescue services are ready for the new inspection regime.
- Fighting cuts to the fire and rescue services: Government austerity continues to hit fire and rescue services across the country. Labour members have raised concerns about the resilience of the service with ministers and shadow ministers and will continue to lobby for a better funding settlement for the future.
- Police and Crime Commissioner takeovers: Recent announcements by the government approving hostile takeover bids of FRAs by PCCs have shown how shallow the commitment by ministers to full local consensus on PCC takeovers is. The FSMC is opposed to PCC takeovers and is grateful to the LGA for the support given to affected fire and rescue services in challenging hostile takeovers.
- LGA Fire Conference: Fire Conference this year focused on mental health issues and other issues of concern following the Grenfell Tower fire.

Members have also been involved in the work of several outside bodies and working groups. Their contribution has been invaluable in developing fire policy both inside and outside the LGA. I'd like to thank all members of the Labour Group on FSMC and on the Fire Commission for their contribution, particularly Cllr David Acton for his leadership over previous years.



Cllr Judi Billing (North Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire)

Improvement and Innovation

It has been a busy year for the Improvement and Innovation Board and a number of projects with which it has had very close ties.

A large number of councils are still struggling to improve their Children's Services and Adult Social Care offers under the most impossible financial circumstances that the government could have inflicted on the sector, with quality demands that show no understanding of the costs of meeting those needs. The recent presentation to our Board of the National Audit Office's analysis of funding cuts to the sector since 2010 really highlight the difficulties that the LGA and local councils are facing when it comes to Children's Services and Adult Social Care. However, there have been some tremendous successes in the performance support work of the LGA and considerably improved take up of Corporate Peer Challenges and leadership programmes of all kinds. It has however been the first year that we have been faced with the real possibility of financial collapse of some councils, as well as the continuing uncertainty of the effects of Brexit on the sector as a whole.

The Innovation Zone at LGA Conference highlighted many examples of good practice from participating councils and the sector's ability to remain cheerful and innovative is something of an astonishment to this particular board lead. I look forward to seeing this year's offering in Birmingham in July.

It has been my fourth year leading for Labour on the Improvement and Innovation Board and I would like to thank this year's Chair, Paul Bettison for stepping in with little notice at William Nunn's unexpected resignation. I would also like to thank LGA officers Will Brooks and Dennis Skinner for their continued commitment to this vital area of work and their constant determination to try new approaches, structures and delivery methods to ensure a fresh offer to meet the changing needs of the sector, councillors and officers alike. I seek to participate in a range of the Board's offerings and this year this has included delivery of sessions on the New Conversations toolkit, Effective Opposition, the Next Generation programme and a post-election day for new women councillors.

My grateful thanks to this year's splendid Labour team on the Improvement and Innovation Board – Sue Woodward, Joy Allen, Abdul Jabbar, Bob Price, Phil Davies, Tudor Evans, Amy Cross, Nicole Meardon and Colin Glover.



Cllr Judith Blake (Leeds)

Economy, Environment, Housing and Transport

Waste and recycling was a key area of work for the Board this year, as we have long lobbied for government to make the producers of waste take more responsibility. It was pleasing to see proposals finally announced for a deposit return scheme for single use drink containers, but responsibility for the scheme must fall on the producers themselves, and consideration has to be given to any potential impact on the viability of council kerbside recycling collection services.

The Board also reached general agreement that there needs to be much more focus on reducing the amount of packaging waste produced in the first place, rather than solely concentrating on trying to increase recycling.

Another significant area of environmental policy where ministerial action is lacking of course is air quality. It is hugely concerning that the government has had to be dragged back to court over and over again because their proposals for tackling nitrogen oxide emissions from polluting vehicles are inadequate. Facing a national public health emergency, ministers have effectively abdicated responsibility in attempting to push the onus for taking action on to local authorities. The Board through the LGA has made it clear we need national fiscal measures to encourage the uptake of low-emission vehicles, as well as a scrappage scheme, to mitigate the impact on vehicle owners who will be worst affected.

The Board focused on fire safety in high rise buildings following the tragic events at Grenfell last June. The shock and despair many councillors felt was compounded when the Secretary of State referred to a "crisis of trust" in local government when commenting on the fire at the LGA conference just a few weeks later. It was hard to believe the contempt shown here in tarring the whole sector with the failings of one single Tory council.

The Board's work on housing and ensuring safety and proper standards post-Grenfell since June has been firmly focused on pressuring government to ensure what needs to happen to make buildings safe happens. Of course for many councils the cost of installing sprinkler measures in high rise council properties is not immediately affordable, so Labour's national campaign for government to meet the cost is something we should all be fully behind.

Having witnessed the devastating effects of flooding on residents and businesses first hand just a few years ago, I was also keen to ensure the board had the right approach to lobbying government to properly fund flood defence infrastructure. DEFRA has announced a review of flood defence funding for post 2021 and this year the board agreed the need to push for capital and revenue flood defence funding to be devolved in to a single, place based pot to take account of local needs and priorities.



Cllr Linda Thomas (Bolton)

Community Wellbeing

For years local government has been warning of the impact that the demographic change will have on the health service and social care, with the elderly living longer, often with chronic conditions. This has been a key focus for the Community Wellbeing Board this year.

Many notable speakers have attended the Community Wellbeing Board this year, including Barbara Keeley MP, Shadow Minister for Social Care who attended our pre-meet to speak to Labour members about local government priorities for social care and the work that Labour is doing in this area.

The Community Wellbeing Board covers a broad remit, looking after issues relating to the wellbeing of adults, including lifelong learning, community cohesion, asylum and immigration, and of course adult health and social care. Health and social care has dominated the work of the board this year because of the crisis that social care faces. Since 2010, the government have refused to deliver the root and branch decisions necessary to secure the long-term sustainability of social care provision. Instead, the sticking plaster solutions that they have offered have resulted in leaving the social care system with an overall funding gap of £2.2 billion by 2020.

Integration between health and social care was seen as a solution by this government – however, this new system hasn't been properly funded. Better Care Funding is transferred NHS money, and the Adult Social Care Grant wasn't new money – just the New Homes bonus rebranded. The latest funding solution by the government is to give councils the option to increase council tax by 6% over 3 years. It was expected that integration would result in not as many hospital beds being required, but because of the population increase of older people, it has been impossible for the NHS to reduce the number of beds used.

Public health is another area that local government has responsibility for – and whilst prevention is better than cure, funding cuts to public health budgets are making it harder for councils tackle public health issues such as sexual health.

Thanks to all of my colleagues on the Community Wellbeing Board for their work and support this year. It is encouraging to see so many Labour colleagues from across the country tackling the challenges that are faced in this area and doing so creatively and positively.



Cllr Sir Richard Leese (Manchester)

City Regions

Skills and employment have been at the core of the Board's work, the year starting with the launch of Work Local, the LGA's proposals for a locally accountable employment and skills service at last year's Annual Conference. We have continued to push this with meetings with Ministers from both DfE and BEIS and have integrated it into our work on Local Industrial Strategies.

The Board has generally welcomed the emphasis on place in the Industrial Strategy White Paper and is contributing to the long overdue LEP review with a particular emphasis on boundaries and overlaps, accountability, and the role of local authorities. We have also raised concerns about the lack of clarity about how Councils, outside Mayoral Combined Authorities, will play into the development of local industrial strategies. Given the emphasis on improving productivity, we have also been clear that skills, including apprenticeships, aligned to local labour market analysis are fundamental.

Continuing work on devolution has three strands. The first is in respect of Brexit and seeking to ensure that repatriated powers are not simply vested in Westminster, but wherever possible or devolved to localities. The second and third assume that there are unlikely to be any great initiatives around devolution whilst Brexit legislation dominates the parliamentary timetable and that there is time to explore innovative solutions. They are to look at the practicalities of delivering new approaches to fiscal devolution and developing a better understanding of how devolution is perceived at citizen level. In particular we have commissioned detailed modelling on devolution of all or part of income tax and a local tax on tourism.

We have also looked at how we can strengthen subnational approaches to trade and investment policy and the potential for Councils to play a bigger role in marketing their own distinctive offer within national and pan-regional frameworks, taking account of the development of, for example, Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine.

Finally we have been looking at a range of issues to do with City Centre and Town Centre management. This builds on work already done by Core Cities and looks in particular at where councils and police need new regulatory powers around issues such as taxi licensing and moving traffic offences. However the biggest concern shared by all members of the board is on the growth in street begging and rough sleeping and the need for new tools to tackle these.



Cllr Anne Western (Derbyshire)

LGA People and Places Board

The People and Places Board is chaired by Cllr Mark Hawthorne from Gloucestershire, and covers the non-metropolitan areas of England and Wales. The board membership comprises mainly county and district councillors with a few unitary members, and as such is predominantly Conservative. The political balance is 14 Conservative, 4 Labour, 2 Liberal Democrat and 2 Independent.

The board works collaboratively with the other boards, notably the City Regions Board and the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board.

The main focus of the past 12 months has been the development of a Post-Brexit England Commission, examining the likely impact of Brexit on non-metropolitan economies, and setting out the case for greater and appropriately funded powers and flexibilities for non-metropolitan England. This will look closely at the actions needed to face the challenges this will pose, as well as other challenging factors, such as changing demographics. The intention is to produce an Interim Report for the LGA Conference and a number of regional roadshows will take place, the first two being in Exeter and Nottingham in May.

In partnership with the City Regions Board, the People and Places Board has established a Skills Taskforce to take forward its Work Local proposals with the buy-in of stakeholders, decision makers and influencers, nationally and locally. Most recently, representatives of both Boards met with the Rt. Hon Anne Milton MP, Minister for Skills and Apprenticeships to discuss Work Local and secured a strategic political and operational relationship with the DfE on post 16 skills.

In addition to this, the Board has continued to lobby for improved digital connectivity for residents and businesses in rural areas. The Board is also working on the Industrial Strategy and the LEP Review panel, commissioned by BEIS.

I would like to thank the Labour members of this board, Leigh Redman, Vince Maple and Azhar Ali, ably supported by Lesley Williams and Alan Waters.



Cllr Richard Watts (Islington)

Children and Young People

For Labour councillors working to ensure every child has a good start in life is fundamental to our political values. Every top tier council in the country is struggling with the financial pressure on children's services. Councils have been hit by the double whammy of major funding cuts at the same time as significant increases in demand for the most expensive children's services. Our main priority as a Board this year has been to make the case to Government that councils need more funding to keep children safe in their area.

LGA work has shown that Councils will have a £2 billion funding gap in children's services by 2020. The Board has commissioned a detailed financial analysis of the pressures facing Children's Services departments across the country, which will clearly show there is simply not enough money in the system. We have built an alliance with a range of charities and campaign groups to make the case that the system is underfunded. Labour councillors have been at the heart of the LGA's Bright Futures campaign that sets out both the request for more funding, hand-in-hand with a positive vision for how we can support children to have the best start in life possible.

The Board has succeeded in significantly increasing national media attention on the funding crisis facing Children's Services. We have also persuaded the Government to fund the LGA to support Councils to improve their children's services offer.

The Bright Futures campaign has also highlighted the problems with CAMHS services across the country. CAMHS services are vital. The majority of adult mental health conditions are identifiable in childhood yet the Government's much heralded new national target is to only treat one third of young people in need. The Board, working with colleagues from the Community Wellbeing Board, has made the case that local councils are ideally placed to provide preventative CAMHS services, but that this work needs to be properly funded.

Labour on the LGA strongly believes the school system should be accountable locally to parents, and the democratically elected local representatives. Councils don't want to run schools directly, but we are best placed to oversee the local school system to ensure it works for everyone. We've continued to argue that local councils need more powers to meet our current legal responsibilities around place planning, supporting hard-to-place pupils and ensuring every child has a good school place available. We've strongly argued that Councils should be able to force academies to expand to meet need, be able to start new schools and oversee every school's finances.





Cllr Simon Blackburn (Blackpool)

Safer and Stronger Communities

Labour members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board have been incredibly effective in managing this year's workload, and pushing those points of most concern to Labour councils.

Public safety has dominated Board's work in the last year. With terrorist attacks in Westminster, Manchester, Southwark, Islington and Hammersmith and Fulham, councils have been at the forefront of the emergency response and in preserving community cohesion. I want to pay tribute to the councillors and council staff who led the local response to these atrocities.

In order to reduce the potential for such incidents in the future we have lobbied ministers and officials to focus as much on tackling the far right as other forms of extremism, the need to place work to prevent terrorism in a safeguarding context and for councils to have greater powers to address illegal schools and ensure home school prepares children for life in a multi-cultural country. We've also run a series of leadership essentials courses to enable councillors to work more effectively across this agenda.

Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower the LGA lobbied for a review of building regulations and fire safety, while working with the then DCLG to help councils identify whether they had combustible cladding on their tower blocks. The interim report from the building regulations review reflected all the key changes we believe need to be made to ensure high-rise residential buildings are safe in the future, and we have been involved in the working groups advising on the recommendations to be included in the final report. We also lobbied for funding to cover the costs of the work councils are doing to identify private high-rise buildings with combustible cladding. Having secured an additional £1 million for the most affected councils we will continue to push for more funding, and for changes to the regulations to ensure councils have the powers they need to force building owners to take action where they are not being cooperative.

Alongside this work we published guidance and held regional workshops on the role councils can play in tackling modern slavery – special thanks go to Cllr Alan Rhodes for his commitment to this issue.

We lobbied for funding for preventative programmes to reduce knife and other forms of serious violence. We argued for investment in perpetrator programmes and wrap around services, as well as powers to enable victims to remain in their own home as a means of addressing domestic abuse while also supporting refugees. We secured three years of further funding for the National FGM Centre – a joint project between the LGA and Barnardo's to tackle this and other harmful practices.

We pushed for a reform of taxi licensing laws and worked to establish a national database of refusals and revocations of taxi and PHV licences. We continued to push for a reduction in fixed odds betting terminal stakes.



Cllr Simon Henig (Durham)

Culture, Tourism and Sport

Labour councils and councillors continue to work hard in the face of year-on-year austerity cuts in continuing to promote the arts, culture and sport across the country, work which has become even more critical as we approach the uncertainties of Brexit.

Issues discussed and promoted by the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board this year have included a study of the impact of culture-led regeneration across the country, a number of discussions on sport and physical activity and promotion of events to celebrate the centenary of some women gaining the vote in 1918. The Board has also continued to support Leadership Essentials courses in sport and culture at Warwick which provide an opportunity for portfolio holders across the country to meet and exchange best practice, which becomes ever more important as government austerity continues.

For a fourth successive year the LGA Culture Tourism and Sport annual conference was held in a Labour run authority, with Hull hosting a well-attended event in March, following up the city's highly successful year as UK City of Culture 2017. There are many Labour councils up and down the country with a proud record in the arts, culture and sport despite the impact of government austerity since 2010. These authorities are sharing best practice with other authorities to ensure that culture, tourism and sport continue to play an important part in communities up and down the country.

Can I thank all of the Labour members of the board for their continued hard work throughout the year: Faye Abbott (Coventry), Muhammed Butt (Brent), Richard Henry (Stevenage), Brigid Jones (Birmingham), Terry O'Neill (Warrington) and Alice Perry (Islington) as well as our substitute member, Guy Nicholson (Hackney).

Can I also thank Martin Angus and all colleagues in the LGA Labour group office for their continued support.





Read the LGA Labour Group publication 'On Day One'



Written by leading Labour councillors, 'On Day One' sets out how an ambitious programme for how a future Labour government, led by Jeremy Corbyn, could deliver more effectively by working in partnership with local government.

With a foreword from Andrew Gwynne MP, and an introduction from Cllr Nick Forbes, the booklet has eleven essays exploring key policy issues, including:

- Sharon Taylor (Stevenage) on how Labour could reap the rewards of investing in local councils
- Richard Watts (Islington) writing on how Labour in government can ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive
- Judith Blake (Leeds) about the role of devolution in boosting local economies
- Rishi Shori (Bury) on why Labour should give councils the power and freedom to deliver the homes we need
- Amy Cross (Blackpool) setting out how councillors are the most accountable politicians in the party and freedom to deliver the homes we need

|| If the next Labour government wants to deliver immediate and visible change for the many, not the few then the fastest and most direct route lies through local government. With sufficient funding and greater freedoms local councils can generate economic growth, build new homes and strengthen communities.

Cllr Nick Forbes, Leader of LGA Labour Group



|| The future of our country cannot be formulated by politicians in Westminster, but needs to be built in partnership with local leaders and local people.

Andrew Gwynne MP,
Shadow Communities and Local Government Secretary



'On Day One' is available on the LGA Labour website

**Hard copies can be ordered from -
lewis.addlington-lee@local.gov.uk**



Training and support for Labour Councillors

The LGA Labour Group has provided a range of training and support to Labour councillors during the past year and will continue to do so in the year ahead. In particular our training has focused on:



Next Generation 12

Cllr Dhanisha Patel
Bridgend County Borough Council

In November 2015 I was elected in a by-election to represent the Ogmere Vale Ward, on Bridgend County Borough Council and in May 2017, before I'd hardly lost my training wheels, I was appointed Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Future Generations.

I applied for the Next Generation programme, as it offered the space not only to develop skills relevant to being a Cabinet Member, but also because it offered the opportunity to do so with fellow party members who understood the impact and role of the wider party on the work we do in local government.

In my short time as a backbencher, I attended a similar Leadership Academy with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), and feel that the Next Generation Programme built on the foundation provided by the WLGA Leadership Academy.

I was a bit apprehensive about taking part in a programme based in England and the relevance it would have to a Cabinet Member in Wales, as we do things a little differently in Wales. However, I was pleasantly surprised and felt that I should have known that professional and personal development transcends regional boundaries, and the issues faced by local government are similar across the board albeit, in Wales we have been fortunate to have a Labour government who has valued and where possible, protected local government from the onslaught of Tory austerity. Being the first participant from Wales, I highly recommend other members from Wales apply.

The programme brought together Cabinet Members and Deputy Leaders from local authorities across England and (now) Wales with experienced tutors to create something unique. The programme itself was challenging from the outset. We were required to do an impromptu speech, draft manifesto pledges, deliver presentations, introspect, sing and we even had homework! But, the personal growth, implementable techniques and support network I gained was more than a reward. As the programme spans a number of months, and coupled with the fact that there is never a dull moment in Local Government, I was able to learn from real and live situations.

The cohort of participants was one of the most inspiring parts of the whole Programme, and I spent a lot of time in awe of them. Outside of the course, we have developed friendships and a support network. We ask each other for advice on plans, projects and politics (the results come back quicker than Google), we celebrate each other's successes and we share the occasional selfie.

Having completed the Next Generation programme, I feel more confident and am able to see that I am an effective leader.



Be a Councillor

Cllr Amy Cross
Blackpool Council

In the past year the LGA Labour Group has continued to work with the Labour Party and affiliated organisations on the 'Be A Councillor' project. Events have been held in different regions and at Labour Party Annual Conference. Many people have attended events to hear from Leaders and councillors and discuss the reality of what is involved in being a Labour councillor.

I have worked with the LGA Labour Group to deliver some of these events. In addition to sessions this year we also booked stands to exhibit at some of the regional Labour Party conferences and events. These were well worthwhile, often speaking to over 100 people in a day. We also managed to get a number of the parliamentary front bench to engage with the campaign and help promote it. Along with Martin Angus, from the group office, I worked on the stand at the North West Regional Conference where we had lots of interest and good conversations with members about the role of councillors. I also staffed the stand at the Welsh Labour Party Conference with Cllr Matthew Dorrance from Powys County Council.

The Labour Group has continued to specifically target under-represented groups. The group office held an event for BAME women in the North West and hopes to hold similar events in the year ahead. The Labour Group office is currently in the process of refreshing its Be A Councillor booklet which is full of advice about standing to be a Councillor and the process around selections.

If you would like further information on 'Be A Councillor', please contact Martin Angus (martin.angus@local.gov.uk) in the LGA Labour Group Office.





News from The Association of Labour Councillors



The Association of Labour Councillors (ALC) is a Labour Party affiliated organisation with the aim of enabling Labour in local government to speak with one unified voice and effectively lobby and input into the national Labour Party structure. The ALC executive has been an important voice in the creation of Labour Party local government policy since its creation in 2013 and will continue this role moving forward.

Following elections held during the summer, last year's Annual Conference saw the newly elected ALC executive begin their two year term. We would like to place on record our thanks to Caitlin Bisknell (East Midlands), Lib Peck (London), Alison Evison (Scotland), Helen Holland (South West) and Carol Dean (West Midlands) for their work and support they have given over the last two years. We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome to all our new executive members and those re-elected. Simon Henig and Judi Billing were re-elected as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively by the new executive.

September saw the ALC submit a motion to Annual Conference expressing heartfelt solidarity and support to the community impacted by the tragic events at Grenfell, and paying tribute to the hard working first responders who did such an outstanding job in the face of unimaginable conditions.

The ALC held its sixth dedicated Local Government Conference with the LGA Labour Group in February. We had over 400 councillors gathering to discuss a range of issues important to local government, with new councillors once again able to attend for free. The day had plenary sessions on Children's Social Care, Housing, local government and the Party Democracy Review – thank you to Katy Clark and Claudia Webbe who took questions from councillors on the Democracy Review. We also had keynote speeches from Jeremy Corbyn MP, Andrew Gwynne MP and Cllr Nick Forbes in the main hall. The ALC put on two breakout sessions, including a session with Mind on mental health support for councillors. This session is part of a wider focus the executive will have on the issue of councillor wellbeing. South East representative Vince Maple has taken the lead on this and there will be more information in the coming months, including a session at Annual Conference in September.

March saw the launch of Labour's local election campaign with a national event held in Trafford with Jeremy. We would also like to thank Anna Hutchinson in her role as acting Executive Director, Elections & Stakeholders and Andrew Gwynne MP for the support they have given to local government and the ALC Executive over the past year.

At this year's Annual Conference in Liverpool you will again have the opportunity to visit the dedicated ALC Lounge, which serves as a place for Labour councillors to drop by, meet the ALC executive, hold small

meetings and showcase Labour local government and all we have to offer. There will also be information on the programme of events that the ALC put on at conference for councillors, including training, policy discussions and of course the ALC Reception.

The Association of Labour Councillors will continue to pursue and deliver a programme of bespoke training and delivery of best practice designed specifically for councillors. In the last year we have launched new support materials for new councillors and for Labour Groups who have council by-elections upcoming in their area. A lot of work has also gone into refreshing and significantly improving our online content. The new local government section on the main party website was launched in May last year, featuring a new and much improved councillor only hub, which brings together all the support we offer to councillors and Labour Groups in one place. Visit www.labour.org.uk/councillors to find out more. This year also saw the first Levy report, which was sent out to Labour Groups from the General Secretary in September. If you have any thoughts on how we can improve, please contact the Local Government Team on councillors@labour.org.uk.

In addition, all of our Labour councillors continue to have access to legal insurance, support and representation on standards and legal matters when they need it. You can access support by calling our Local Government lawyer, Frances Randle on 0870 890 3778 or by email at frances.randle@steelandshamash.co.uk.

Members of the ALC will once again get to have their say on electing important position in the party to represent local government. Both the two local government positions on the NEC and four elected local government NPF representatives are up for election this summer. All councillors get to vote in this and the timetable is below.

Local government NEC & NPF elections timetable

- 22nd June at 5pm - Closing date for receipt of nominations
- 25th June at 12 noon - Deadline for candidate statements
- 26th July - Ballots begin to be distributed
- 30th August - Close of Ballot
- Results will be announced before Annual Conference



ALC Executive Team 17-18



Regional Rep - North

Cllr Simon Henig (Chair)
Leader – Durham County Council



Regional Rep - West Midlands

Cllr Jackie Taylor
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council



Regional Rep - Eastern

Cllr Judi Billing
Leader – Hertfordshire Council Labour Group &
Deputy Leader – North Hertfordshire Council
Labour & Co-op Group



Regional Rep - Wales

Cllr Anthony Hunt
Leader – Torfaen Council



Regional Rep - East Midlands

Cllr James Dawson
Leader of the Labour Group – Erewash Borough
Council



Regional Rep - Yorkshire and Humber

Cllr James Lewis
Deputy Leader – Leeds City Council



Regional Rep - London

Cllr Clare Coghill
Leader – London Borough of Waltham Forest



NEC Local Government Rep

Cllr Nick Forbes
Leader – Newcastle City Council



Regional Rep - North West

Cllr Amy Cross
Blackpool Council



NEC Local Government Rep

Cllr Alice Perry
London Borough of Islington



Regional Rep - Scotland

Cllr Maureen Devlin
South Lanarkshire Council



The Labour Group Leader of COSLA

Cllr David Ross
Fife Council



Regional Rep - South East

Cllr Vince Maple
Leader of the Labour Group – Medway Council



Member of the Welsh LGA

Cllr Aaron Shotton
Leader – Flintshire County Council



Regional Rep - South West

Cllr Leigh Redman
Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset County
Council



NPF Local Government Representative

Cllr Angela Cornforth
Royal Borough of Greenwich

LGA Labour Group

The LGA Labour Group exists to fight the corner for Labour councillors at a national level, both within the cross-party Local Government Association and with the Labour Party at Westminster. The Group provides a strong voice for Labour councillors and acts as a platform for ideas and argument for all those committed to an effective localist element to Labour politics and policies.

The LGA Labour Group has good working relationships with the Parliamentary Labour Party and the Labour Party Head Office, and holds frequent meetings, events and workshops with Labour councillors across the country.

We influence policy and political decisions through communications, publications and regular meetings between our leading members and senior national politicians.

The LGA Labour Group office, based at 18 Smith Square.



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