

# POLICY DIGEST, August 2017

This digest presents a summary of the latest policy developments at a national and regional level of strategic relevance to Northumberland and highlights Government announcements of relevance to local government. This issue covers period from Monday 31 August to Friday 1 September. Previous and subsequent editions are available at [www.northumberland.gov.uk/policy](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/policy).

Policy Development	Action	Lead
<b>PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY</b>		
<b>Local public services 2040</b> This report, from the Social Market Foundation, sets out to understand what factors could affect the future of local public services over the next two decades and what new roles for local government could exist by 2040. The challenges come at a time when the sector already faces huge financial pressures. The report shows that employment in local government has fallen by a quarter or 800,000 employees between the start of 2010 and 2017. Meanwhile, analysis reveals that local government net borrowing has been increasing since 2013/14. The last time local government ran a fiscal surplus – with revenue exceeding expenditure – was in 1996. In the 2016/17 fiscal year, local government net borrowing stood at £8.6bn. <a href="http://www.smf.co.uk/publications/local-public-services-2040/">http://www.smf.co.uk/publications/local-public-services-2040/</a>	For information	
<b>New opportunities for councils to benefit from growth (1 September 2017)</b> Councils are being encouraged to join forces and put forward proposals to retain the growth in their business rates income as the Secretary for Communities and Local Government Sajid Javid announces new pilots. From April 2018, pilots across economic areas will be able to retain 100% of the growth in income raised locally through business rates, responding to council calls to reduce local government's dependence on central government. Findings from this tranche of pilots will then help develop options for local authorities to retain more of the money they raise in the future. Proposals will need to promote sustainability and collaborative working to promote growth and councils working together to 'pool' their business rates, particularly groups of districts who are proposing to work with their county, will be viewed more favourably. The government is also keen to spread the pilots across the country, with a focus on rural areas, to ensure that more can be learnt about the scheme in different places. The deadline for proposals is Friday 27 October.	Officers to consider submitting a bid	Alison Elsdon, Director of Corporate Resources

## PLACE SHAPING

### Councils share £75 million for major road improvements (1 August 2017)

Councils in England have been awarded funding to refurbish bridges, improve junctions and boost flood defences as part of a multi-million pound government investment announced by Transport Minister Jesse Norman. Nineteen projects across the country will receive a share of £75 million of government investment for essential road maintenance. Local authorities were challenged to put forward schemes which could make a real difference to road users. Winning projects include junction improvements, repairs and resurfacing, flood resilience measures, bridge and viaduct refurbishment, and improved drainage. These improvements will cut congestion, reduce journey times and improve reliability, as well as helping to support local businesses and boost economic growth. In Northumberland £5 million for crucial maintenance will repair and strengthen key routes for the rural and regional economy, giving a boost to tourism by making it easier for visitors to reach destinations such as Hadrian's Wall World Heritage site and Northumberland National Park.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/councils-share-75-million-for-major-road-improvements>

For information

Paul Jones,  
Director of Local  
Services and  
Housing Delivery

### Funding boost for local authorities to transform local communities (1 August 2017)

The government has launched a £54 million package to transform local communities and release land for thousands of new homes. The package comes as part of a new cross-government partnership to make smarter use of government-owned property. DCLG's £45 million 'Land Release Fund', launched in partnership with the Cabinet Office and Local Government Association's One Public Estate programme, will ensure local councils release some of their unused or surplus land for housing. This will help to meet the ambition to unlock enough council-owned land for at least 160,000 homes by 2020. Councils can now bid for funding for land remediation and small-scale infrastructure, which will help bring sites forward for housing that would not have otherwise been developed.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/funding-boost-for-local-authorities-to-transform-local-communities>

Officers to consider  
submitting a bid

Paul Jones,  
Director of Local  
Services and  
Housing Delivery

### Government to extend Green Flag Award for 5 more years (23 August 2017)

The government will renew the Green Flag Award licence making sure that Britain's best parks and green spaces will be recognised and rewarded for another 5 years, Parks and Green Spaces Minister Marcus Jones has announced. For 20 years, the Green Flag Awards have been recognising the best of outdoors spaces in the UK, allowing visitors to easily find quality parks and other green spaces to enjoy and setting standards for park managers across the country. Many parks have won the award, but winners also include more unusual spaces such as social housing developments, cemeteries, canals, and shopping centres. The awards are run on behalf of the government by Keep Britain Tidy, an environmental charity that campaigns for people's right to live and work in a place of which they can be proud.

For information

Paul Jones,  
Director of Local  
Services and  
Housing Delivery

<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-extend-green-flag-award-for-5-more-years">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-extend-green-flag-award-for-5-more-years</a>		
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<b>ECONOMIC PROSPERITY</b>		
<p><b>Universal broadband to reach every part of the UK (30 July 2017)</b></p> <p>Homes and businesses from all parts of the UK are set to benefit from universal high speed broadband, Culture Secretary Karen Bradley has announced. BT has put forward an offer to voluntarily provide this service across the country, which would largely be delivered by Openreach. The offer has been received after the government committed to introduce a Universal Service Obligation (USO) through regulation to give every home and business in the UK the right to request a high speed connection of at least 10 Megabits per second (Mbps). That's the speed that will meet the typical needs of a family for them to be able to stream films, carry out video conferencing and browse the web at the same time. The BT proposal would mean many premises will receive substantially more than 10Mbps - homes and businesses are also expected receive connections more quickly than could be delivered under a regulatory approach. The Government will now consider this offer alongside a consultation on the regulatory USO - which has also been launched.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/universal-broadband-to-reach-every-part-of-the-uk">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/universal-broadband-to-reach-every-part-of-the-uk</a></p>	Officers to consider responding to the consultation	Alison Elsdon, Director of Corporate Resources
<p><b>£35 million of innovative employment schemes to benefit thousands of disadvantaged people (1 August 2017)</b></p> <p>Thousands of disadvantaged people and long-term jobseekers to receive specialist support to get back into work through 6 new pilot schemes. The schemes will be developed and delivered by 6 combined authorities in partnership with the government. The specialist tailored support is expected to help over 18,000 people – including disabled people and older people – tackle long-term barriers to work and in-work progression. Up to £28 million has been committed by the Department for Work and Pensions for the schemes. They include: a 'Health and Care Sector Progression Academy' to train social care workers in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough; an 'early intervention' scheme in Sheffield to prevent people from long-term unemployment; and a new business-led training hub for modern work skills in the Tees Valley</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/35-million-of-innovative-employment-schemes-to-benefit-thousands-of-disadvantaged-people">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/35-million-of-innovative-employment-schemes-to-benefit-thousands-of-disadvantaged-people</a></p>	For information	Geoff Paul, Director of Planning and Economy
<p><b>£15 million Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund to boost region's tech, creative and cultural industries (4 August 2017)</b></p> <p>Towns and cities across Northern England will be able to bid for a share of a new £15 million fund to help build a lasting regional legacy from the Great Exhibition of the North, Culture Secretary Karen Bradley has announced. Projects could include opening a new tech start-up centre or renovating live music venues and should increase opportunities for people to experience, benefit and contribute to culture and creativity. The Northern Cultural</p>	Officers to support and facilitate eligible projects to bid	Nigel Walsh, Culture, Heritage & Libraries Manager

<p>Regeneration Fund will make grants of up to £4 million available to support major culture and tech capital projects. The fund will build on the impact of next year's exhibition and help pave the way for future investment in the Northern Powerhouse. The Great Exhibition of the North will be held in Newcastle and Gateshead next summer. Set to be the biggest event in 2018, the £5 million government-funded exhibition will showcase the best of Northern art, design and innovation. The immersive free exhibition will engage communities and businesses from across the region, and promote the bustling and thriving area to the world.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/15-million-northern-cultural-regeneration-fund-to-boost-regions-tech-creative-and-cultural-industries">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/15-million-northern-cultural-regeneration-fund-to-boost-regions-tech-creative-and-cultural-industries</a></p>		
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## HEALTH & WELLBEING

<p><b>Only 1 in 10 MPs in England believe the social care system is fit for purpose for the UK's ageing population</b></p> <p>Only 1 in 10 MPs in England (10%) believe that the current social care system is suitable for the UK's ageing population. And 86% of MPs in England believe a cross-party consensus is needed for a lasting settlement on health and social care. That's according to a new poll of 101 MPs of all parties representing constituencies in England commissioned by Independent Age, the older people's charity. In response, Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Chairman of the Local Government Association's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "It is encouraging to see so many MPs across all political parties recognising the need for action to find a sustainable solution to the adult social care funding crisis. The extra £2 billion for social care over the next few years is a step in the right direction, but it is only one-off funding which reduces each year. Vital services caring for elderly and disabled people still face an annual £2.3 billion funding gap by 2020, which will continue to grow. It is absolutely critical that the Government brings forward its Green Paper on the future of social care and works with local government leaders to address the issue of long-term funding and also create the conditions necessary to ensure the development of the right kind of care and support services. We strongly support a cross-party consensus on adult social care and councils are firmly committed to making this happen. With councils facing further funding pressures and growing demand for support by the end of the decade and beyond, this is the best way to ensure we will find a solution that ensures our future generations enjoy a care system which doesn't just help them out of bed and gets them washed and dressed but ensures they have dignified and fulfilling lives."</p> <p><a href="https://www.independentage.org/news-media/press-releases/only-1-10-mps-england-believe-social-care-system-fit-for-purpose-for-uks">https://www.independentage.org/news-media/press-releases/only-1-10-mps-england-believe-social-care-system-fit-for-purpose-for-uks</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/councils-respond-independent-age-mp-poll-social-care-funding-crisis">https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/councils-respond-independent-age-mp-poll-social-care-funding-crisis</a></p>	For information	Vanessa Bainbridge, Director of Adult & Community Care Services
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## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

<p><b>Children's social care at breaking point, council leaders warn (9 August 2017)</b></p> <p>Children's social care is being pushed to breaking point, with growing demand for support leading to 75 per cent of</p>	For information	Cath McEvoy, Director of
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<p>councils in England overspending on their children's services budgets by more than half a billion pounds, council leaders warn. New analysis by the Local Government Association, which represents more than 370 councils in England and Wales, reveals that in 2015/16 councils surpassed their children's social care budgets by £605 million in order to protect children at immediate risk of harm. Councils have faced an unprecedented surge in demand for children's social care support over recent years, which is showing little sign of abating. The LGA is warning that the pressures facing children's services are rapidly becoming unsustainable, with a £2 billion funding gap expected by 2020. Unless urgent action is taken to reduce the number of families relying on the children's social care system for support, this gap will continue to grow.</p> <p><a href="https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/childrens-social-care-breaking-point-council-leaders-warn">https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/childrens-social-care-breaking-point-council-leaders-warn</a></p>		<p>Children's Social Care</p>
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