

POLICY DIGEST, October 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 2 October to Friday 28 October. Previous and subsequent editions are available at www.northumberland.gov.uk/policy.

Policy Development	Action	Lead
PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY		
Beyond Devolution At this key moment in the trajectory of the UK, this report from the Local Government Information Unit's (LGIU) Local Democracy Network asks what the future has in store for local democracy. Convened throughout 2017 and comprised council leaders, chief executives, academics and experts from across the public sector, the Network has taken an in-depth look at some of the bigger questions around governance and developed collective ideas from local government as to how they might be answered. In this final report, it makes the following radical recommendations: a Mayor's' Senate should be established, giving directly elected mayors from individual and combined authorities a firm constitutional role, shaping Brexit and scrutinising legislation; a Local Finance Commission, led by local government, should carry out systematic review of how local areas are funded based on the expertise, knowledge and experience of local leaders; a Constitutional Settlement should be pursued in order to provide a framework and consistency over the roles and responsibilities of central and local government; and an immediate Devolution Reboot to continue devolving power to the cities and regions of England. https://www.lgiu.org.uk/report/beyond-devolution-the-final-report-of-the-local-democracy-network/	For information	
Opportunities for Public Procurement Post-Brexit Over the last 10 years the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) has been at the forefront of progressive policy thinking and action around public procurement. In this time there has been significant shifts in cultures and behaviours amongst local authorities and other anchor institutions around procurement – however, in the context of Brexit, there is a real opportunity to mainstream more progressive approaches. In this paper, CLES outlines the key opportunities for procurement post-Brexit. In particular, the need for 'beefed up' social value focused legislation at the national level,	For information	Alison Elsdon, Director of Corporate Resources

together with the need for locally defined social outcomes frameworks and processes at a local level, which are framed by a desire to inherently link the cycle of procurement to local circumstances. https://cles.org.uk/our-work/publications/opportunities-for-public-procurement-post-brexite/		
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PLACE SHAPING

Building Connected Communities

While the pressure to deliver housing numbers is rising, this report from the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) cites that it is increasingly important that there is a conversation about what sort of places we build. The research, in partnership with the Ramblers, shows that local authorities want to build places that encourage walking and active travel, but developers do not always share these priorities. Many councils feel the mismatch is a challenge in achieving their goals.

<https://www.lgiu.org.uk/report/building-connected-communities>

For information

Geoff Paul,
Director of
Planning and
Economy

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Prime Minister announces review to tackle detention of those with mental ill health (4 October 2017)

Prime Minister Theresa May has announced plans for an independent review of mental health legislation and practice to tackle the issue of mental health detention. There have been concerns that detention rates under the Mental Health Act – passed more than 3 decades ago – are too high. The number of detentions has been rising year on year. Last year on average there were 180 cases a day where people were sectioned under the terms of the act. The Mental Health Act sets out rights and obligations that govern when and how the state can detain and treat someone in relation to their mental illness. It includes specific provision for individuals in contact with the criminal justice system. The review will be chaired by Professor Sir Simon Wessely, a former President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. It will seek to address concerns about how the legislation is currently being used, and give recommendations for improving practice in the future. The review will look at existing practice and evidence. It will consider the needs of service users and their families, in order to tackle injustices and improve how the system supports people during a mental health crisis. Following consultation with stakeholders, Sir Simon will produce an interim report identifying priorities for the review's work in early 2018, and develop a final report containing detailed recommendations on its priorities, by autumn 2018. The review is part of a set of measures to improve mental health provision and tackle what the Prime Minister has described as the 'burning injustice' of mental illness.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-announces-review-to-tackle-detention-of-those-with-mental-ill-health>

For information

Vanessa
Bainbridge,
Director of Adult
& Community
Care Services

The state of health care and adult social care 2016/17

For information

Vanessa
Bainbridge,
Director of Adult

<p>This year's State of Care report – published by the Care Quality Commission – shows that thanks to the efforts of staff and leaders, the quality of health and social care has been maintained despite very real challenges and the majority of people are receiving good, safe care. However, it also warns that the health and social care system is at full stretch and struggling to meet the more complex needs of today's population, meaning that maintaining quality in the future is uncertain. The report sets out our analysis of the quality of health and social care across the country based on the first full round of rated inspections covering almost 29,000 services. It shows that as of 31 July 2017, 78% of adult social care services were rated good as were 55% of NHS acute hospital core services; 68% of NHS mental health core services and 89% of GP practices and that many services originally rated as inadequate have used the findings of our inspections to make changes and improve their rating. But, there are also clear warnings from the changing nature of demand – increasing numbers of older people who are physically frail, many with dementia, more people with long term complex conditions – all of which is placing unprecedented pressure on the system. In acute hospitals, this means more people waiting over four hours at A&E; more planned operations cancelled, and people waiting longer for treatment. In adult social care, the number of beds in nursing homes has decreased across most of England and domiciliary care contracts are being handed back to councils because providers say the funding is insufficient to meet people's needs.</p> <p>http://www.cqc.org.uk/news/stories/most-people-are-getting-good-safe-care-future-quality-precarious</p>		<p>& Community Care Services</p>
<p>DCLG: Adult social care – Government response to the Select Committee report</p> <p>The Government has responded to the Select Committee's two reports earlier in 2017 concerning adult social care. It states that the Government remains committed to the vision of improved person-centred care and the closer working between health and social care which this requires. It intends to consult on options to improve the social care system and to put it on a more secure financial footing, supporting people, families and communities to prepare for old age, and address issues related to the quality of care and variation in practice. It will provide further details on the next steps on social care in due course.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-government-response-to-the-select-committee-report</p>	<p>For information</p>	<p>Vanessa Bainbridge, Director of Adult & Community Care Services</p>
<p>LGA responds to social care spending figures (25 October 2017)</p> <p>Responding to new figures from NHS Digital which shows that the annual spending by local authorities on social care rose by £556 million in 2016/17 to £17.5 billion, Cllr Linda Thomas, Vice Chair of the Local Government Association's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "These figures show that while councils are doing all they can to protect adult social care services, the increase in demand and cost for services is only adding to the huge pressure they are already under to support older and disabled people, keeping them at home living independently in the community, and out of hospital. Social care faces an annual funding gap of £2.3 billion by 2020. It is vital that the Government sets out in the Autumn Budget how it will address the social care crisis and deliver long-lasting reform that meets the needs of adults of all ages needing social care. The social care council tax precept and the £2 billion announced for social care in the Spring Budget were steps in the right direction but these one-off measures are by no means adequate in securing a</p>	<p>For information</p>	<p>Vanessa Bainbridge, Director of Adult & Community Care Services</p>

long-term sustainable funding solution. Councils also need to be given the freedom and flexibility to invest in social care where it is most needed if the money is to be effective.” https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/lga-responds-social-care-spending-figures		
Funding for supported housing for older people to encourage building new homes (31 October 2017) A tailored approach to protect and encourage the supply of a wide range of supported housing has been set out by government. All long-term housing will remain in the welfare system and a proposed ‘sheltered rent’ for sheltered and extra care housing will keep rent and service charge at an appropriate level, protecting the housing needs of older and vulnerable people. Local areas will be taking a bigger role in providing short-term and emergency housing through a ring-fenced grant to local authorities by April 2020, allowing vulnerable people to access secure accommodation without worrying about meeting housing costs at a difficult point in their lives. The grant will be underpinned by a National Statement of Expectation setting out how local authorities should plan effectively for provision in their area. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/funding-for-supported-housing-for-older-people-to-encourage-building-new-homes	For information	Vanessa Bainbridge, Director of Adult & Community Care Services

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE		
New education and skills measures announced (1 October 2017) The Education Secretary Justine Greening has announced a series of measures to place education at the heart of the government’s ambition to provide opportunity for all and ensure we are building the skills needed to secure the nation’s prosperity. The announcements will build on the government’s record of driving up standards in education – with 1.8 million more children in good or outstanding schools than in 2010, more rigorous qualifications and fairer funding for schools, backed by £1.3 billion of additional funding. The measures announced relate to: help for students; getting great teachers in the schools that need them most; tackling inequality and boosting opportunity across the country; and building the next generation of skills our economy needs to thrive in a modern, post-Brexit economy. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-education-and-skills-measures-announced	For information	Andy Johnson, Director of Education and Skills
A country that works for all children This paper produced by the Association of Directors of Children’s Services Ltd (ADCS) explores the impact of different initiatives and policies on children’s lives and outcomes, touching on child poverty, welfare reforms, the impact of austerity across the breadth of children’s services, including schools, and early help. The paper calls for a marshalling of resources across the various government departments, a reaffirmation of the value of preventative services and the establishment of a cross-government review to understand better the reasons for, and links between, rising levels of child poverty and demand for children’s statutory services. http://adcs.org.uk/general-subject/article/a-country-that-works-for-all-children	For information	Cath McEvoy, Director of Children’s Social Care
Bright Futures – getting the best for children, young people and families	For information	Cath McEvoy,

<p>This Local Government Association (LGA) paper sets out seven clear priorities for coordinated action across the public, community and voluntary sectors, which we believe will help drive the improvement necessary to consistently offer the brightest future for children and families. Making sure all children and young people can have the bright future they deserve is a key ambition of every council. But our children's services are under increasing pressure - facing a £2 billion funding gap by 2020.</p> <p>https://www.local.gov.uk/bright-futures-getting-best-children-young-people-and-families</p>		Director of Children's Social Care
<p>£20 million improvement programme for children's social care (12 October 2017)</p> <p>A multi-million pound government initiative to improve the lives of vulnerable children and families has been announced by Robert Goodwill, Minister for Children and Families. In a speech to the National Children and Adults Services (NCAS) conference, Minister Goodwill announced up to £20 million for a new programme to help all councils improve their services – with a sharp focus on making sure those at risk of failure can make vital improvements. The programme will give councils the tools they need to build stronger services for our most vulnerable children. This includes: tailored peer support for local authorities, bringing in more councils to the successful Partners in Practice programme; and the testing of 'Regional Improvement Alliances', made up of neighbouring local authorities. Alliances will see councils challenging each other on standards, agreeing local improvement priorities, and sharing best practice, in order to deliver more for children and families.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/20-million-improvement-programme-for-childrens-social-care</p>	For information	Cath McEvoy, Director of Children's Social Care
<p>Corporate parenting, the local offer and personal adviser support (16 October 2017)</p> <p>The Government is seeking views on draft statutory guidance for local authorities on both applying the corporate parenting principles to care and pathway planning and extending the personal adviser duty to care leavers age 25. The consultation also includes an illustrative local offer for care leavers and accompanying guidance on the local offer for local authorities. Comments and views are requested by 27 November 2017.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/corporate-parenting-the-local-offer-and-personal-adviser-support</p>	Officers to consider feeding comments into the consultation	Cath McEvoy, Director of Children's Social Care

Northumberland

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