

# POLICY DIGEST, April 2015

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 6 April and Friday 1 May. 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>		
<p><b>The cost of the cuts: the impact on local government and poorer communities</b></p> <p>This report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation provides the most up-to-date national picture of the scale, nature and distribution of the cuts to council budgets currently available. Using four case study councils to assess the impact of cuts, it provides new evidence of how the cuts have affected people and services by drawing on interviews with staff and service users, analysis of council reports and budget data, focus groups with frontline staff and service users and job shadowing with frontline council staff. It also explores how the strategies adopted by the case study councils have evolved or been adapted as the austerity drive has continued.</p> <p><a href="http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/cost-cuts-impact-local-government-and-poorer-communities">http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/cost-cuts-impact-local-government-and-poorer-communities</a></p>	For information	
<p><b>Demystifying data – the data revolution and what it means for local government</b></p> <p>This paper released by New Local Government Network (NLGN) warns that if councils fail to understand and harness the power of data they risk making themselves irrelevant to their citizens. Data is at the heart of the better running of all modern public services but councils are not yet taking full advantage of the data assets they hold or of the information it could give them if used properly. The paper sets out the challenge local authorities face in learning to properly utilise local data, but equally sets out the vast scale of the opportunities doing so affords them. Properly understood, data will help local authorities to make huge savings as they are able to target their services much more effectively. But they will also be able to use this data to bring inward investment and put themselves at the centre of the data driven economy. On this basis, NLGN argue that data is not just a financial asset, but equally that it is the key that unlocks council's ability to fully integrate and transform the services they offer local people to truly develop the full potential of their places.</p> <p><a href="http://www.nlgn.org.uk/public/2015/councils-at-risk-of-becoming-irrelevant/">http://www.nlgn.org.uk/public/2015/councils-at-risk-of-becoming-irrelevant/</a></p>	For information	Alison Elsdon, Head of Corporate Seervices

<b>PLACE SHAPING</b>		
<p><b>Right to Move: statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local housing authorities in England</b></p> <p>The Autumn Statement 2013 announced the government's intention to introduce a Right to Move for social tenants who need to move to take up a job or live closer to work. To give effect to the Right to Move, the Government has introduced regulations to prevent local authorities applying a local connection test that could disadvantage tenants who need to move across local authority boundaries for work related reasons. This new statutory guidance on social housing allocations is intended to assist local authorities to implement these regulations, and to ensure that social tenants who need to move for work related reasons are given appropriate priority under the local authority's allocation scheme.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-move-statutory-guidance-on-social-housing-allocations-for-local-housing-authorities-in-england">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-move-statutory-guidance-on-social-housing-allocations-for-local-housing-authorities-in-england</a></p>	For information	Karen Ledger, Head of Planning and Housing
<p><b>Transport for the North: A blueprint for devolving and integrating transport powers in England</b></p> <p>As momentum builds behind the 'Northern powerhouse' agenda, IPPR North provides a blueprint for an integrated transport system that could transform the North's economic prospects. In this report the case is made for an enhanced Transport for the North body with the necessary powers to maximise the economic, social and environmental performance of the north of England by ensuring that it has the most effective forms of connectivity within and between its constituent parts, and extending out into national and international networks and markets. It offers a detailed blueprint for how the region can create a more productive and competitive economy, and a transport network that is more accessible, accountable and environmentally sustainable.</p> <p><a href="http://www.ippr.org/publications/transport-for-the-north-a-blueprint-for-devolving-and-integrating-transport-powers-in-england">http://www.ippr.org/publications/transport-for-the-north-a-blueprint-for-devolving-and-integrating-transport-powers-in-england</a></p>	For information	Geoff Paul, Director of Planning, Economy and Housing
<b>ECONOMIC PROSPERITY</b>		
<p><b>Power, People and Places: A Manifesto for Devolution</b></p> <p>This manifesto from ResPublica seeks to position the needs of Britain's Key Cities at the forefront of the devolution debate, advancing the argument that midsized cities are the 'missing multipliers' in the current drive to generate both economic growth and public service transformation. As a consequence it argues that they should be the next level for, and focus of, place-based devolution deals. It also argues that the multiplying effects of concentrating diverse economic activity in one place are not determined by a fixed notion of scale. As such, it makes no economic sense to restrict devolution solely to big cities; all cities, regardless of size, can and should benefit from devolution.</p> <p><a href="http://www.respublica.org.uk/our-work/publications/power-people-and-places-a-manifesto-for-devolution-to-britains-key-cities/">http://www.respublica.org.uk/our-work/publications/power-people-and-places-a-manifesto-for-devolution-to-britains-key-cities/</a></p>	For information	Geoff Paul, Director of Planning, Economy and Housing

<b>HEALTH &amp; WELLBEING</b>		
<p><b>What happened to poverty under the Coalition?</b></p> <p>This report presents the New Policy Institute's estimates of the latest headline poverty statistics for the United Kingdom, for the financial year ending in March 2015. Starting with the latest published poverty statistics, for 2012/13, we have estimated the combined effects of the changes that have taken place since then in the size and mix of the population, the levels of employment and earnings, as well the value of benefits and tax allowances. The conclusion is clear: poverty in the UK is rising once more; it is rising among all age groups; and it is also deepening.</p> <p><a href="http://npi.org.uk/publications/income-and-poverty/what-happened-poverty-under-coalition/">http://npi.org.uk/publications/income-and-poverty/what-happened-poverty-under-coalition/</a></p>	For information	



Northumberland County Council

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