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Thursday | 6 December | 2018 | £3.45

CIPFA U-turn on traffic light index

By Chris Mahony

Controversial plans to rate councils' financial sustainability using traffic lights have been watered down by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

CIPFA backed down on its plans for a weighted index following an outcry from parts of the sector that feared the creation of league tables and councils being named and shamed.

However, CIPFA will publish a traffic light rating for councils' depletion of reserves, which will indicate how quickly a local authority would exhaust its funds based on the draw-down during the previous three years.

The financial resilience tool, which will include a number of indicators, will not be published in the first year but CIPFA plans to be more open in subsequent years – after working with councils, other partners and stakeholders to 'achieve a joint sector approach'.

CIPFA highlighted the lack of relevant data currently available and pledged to explore more forward-looking metrics. It will also publish national aggregate statistics from its index, which will highlight the percentage of



Rob Whiteman:
CIPFA will continue with a traffic light system relating to council reserves

local authorities facing significant financial risk.

A paper summarising the consultation responses and detailing the next steps read: 'CIPFA now aims to provide a tool with a group of indicators able to illustrate the trajectory of an authority's financial position within the context of each authority's own comparator tier or nearest neighbours group.'

Referring to the dropping of the proposed traffic light index, the paper added: 'This measure was criticised for the inevitable degree of subjectivity underpinning the

weighting and the general hostility to the ranking that was implied.'

Asked if the changes represented a major watering down of the proposals, a CIPFA spokeswoman said: 'Following consultation with the sector, we accept that a single weighted index has very definite limitations and runs the risk of over-simplifying the variety of circumstances of individual authorities.'

Welcoming the discarding of the index, Cllr John Fuller, chairman of the District Councils' Network and vice-chairman of the Local Government Association's

resources board, said: 'Local government is too complex to be measured by an overly-simplistic approach which is pregnant with unintended consequences.'

CIPFA chief executive Rob Whiteman said: 'Local government has faced unprecedented financial challenges in recent years that are likely to persist well into the next decade. Because of these challenges, we are now approaching the point where a number of well-run councils will only be able to deliver core statutory provisions in order to balance the books. We are

also seeing a significant number of authorities draw down upon their reserves in an unsustainable manner.

'The difficult financial situation that many authorities find themselves in is not helped by the weakness of public audit systems in place. Without suitable audit processes, often those at the helm of local authorities are able to listen only to the advice they like. Indeed, the Section 141 notices of this year are an example of the failure of the current public audit processes to identify risk.

'It is against this background that CIPFA has taken a leadership role in the public interest and devoted resources to the development of the index. And now, following the feedback we have received, we have modified and strengthened the tool so it will be even more helpful for local authorities with deteriorating financial positions.'

www.themj.co.uk/finance



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COMMENT

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An independent view of finances is crucial

It seems the world is suddenly waking up to what everyone who reads *The MJ* already knows – local government is a bit short of cash.

After years of depleting resources, it feels like the national media has finally perked up and taken an interest in the fact the services are unsustainable – and it's not just the bin collections that will suffer.

It can only mean one thing: we are on the verge of a provisional local government finance settlement – not to mention the fair funding review consultation.

This new-found interest in the local public purse strings may have been bubbling for a while, but hats off to authorities like East Sussex CC, which has stuck its head above the parapet to make the public aware of how bad the picture really is. The latest Local Government Ombudsman's report title says it all – *Under Pressure*.

For those who hoped for a financial lifeline in the event of a full collapse, you only have to look at Northamptonshire to see it is not forthcoming.

The soon-to-be abolished county has not been given a bailout, just a much-needed licence for creative accountancy.

It's hardly an ideal solution and not a path others would wish to follow.

James Brokenshire has stated he will not force local government reorganisation when the so-called sunset clause expires. He may invite councils that fail to become unitaries.

It is perhaps unsurprising that CIPFA received little support for its plans to publish a resilience index, highlighting the authorities closest to the edge of the fiscal abyss.

While I understand the reluctance for local government – the fear of being 'named and shamed' in a league table – I still believe the resilience index is an important tool, not because I am a journalist in search of a good headline.

Lobbying towards the provisional local government finance settlement is not the end, it is just the starting point. With the final settlement, budget-setting and the Spending Review all on the horizon, an independent view of finances is crucial.

If local government wants to lobby, transparency is key. Publishing the overall percentage of councils at financial risk is a start. Let's hope the Spending Review removes the need for further action.

PEOPLE

Catherall to retire in the spring

Blackburn with Darwen BC chief executive Harry Catherall has announced he will retire at Easter, after 40 years in local government.

The chief executive – who saw his council named local authority of the year in *The MJ Awards* – will hand over the baton to his deputy, Denise Park, who has worked with him at the council for 21 years.

Mr Catherall said he considered his role a 'real honour'.

He said: 'I'm grateful I've been part of something special, spending so much time working with very talented people who are fully focused on aiming high for Blackburn and Darwen.'

While he said the past decade had been 'tough' due to cuts, the council continued to invest in growth, including the Cathedral Quarter development, which had been delivered 'against all the odds'.

VOTER ID

Braintree resident plans legal challenge to mandatory voter ID

Ministers could face a fresh electoral challenge to their plans for mandatory photo ID at polling stations.

Neil Coughlan, who lives in one of next year's 11 trial areas and says he has no photo ID, is crowdfunding for a legal challenge to the trial. Mr Coughlan lives in Braintree, one of four areas where voters will

be asked to either show one form of photo ID or two forms of non-photo ID in May's local elections.

The Electoral Reform Society (ERS) used the launch of his crowdsourcing campaign to urge ministers to scrap the plans.

The ERS pointed to a QC's advice in the summer that the introduction of mandatory photo ID would need a parliamentary

debate and legislation.

Accusing the Government of using 'ministerial diktat' to impose the trials, ERS policy and research director Dr Jessica Garland said: 'There is overwhelming civil society opposition to the Government's plans to put up barriers to voters. Now it appears that the Government may have to defend

their disastrous proposals in the courts.'

She said that ministers should instead focus on electoral funding rules that 'leave us open to significant interference from those with deep pockets, with analogue-age rules on political funding and a lack of transparency in online political advertising'.

SCRUTINY

Sunak urges councils to back guidance to let scrutiny flourish

By Dan Peters

Rishi Sunak has called for scrutiny to receive a 'strong commitment from the top' of councils amid warnings about the risk of further Whitehall intervention.

Speaking ahead of the publication of new Whitehall guidance on scrutiny, local government minister Mr Sunak admitted that it 'may not often be the subject that often grabs the headlines' but stressed the importance of establishing a 'positive and open organisational culture' in which the practice could flourish.

Appearing at a Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) conference, Mr Sunak said: 'It's very important that the people on scrutiny committees get access to the information they need to do their job properly.'

The guidance is expected to identify a clear role and focus for scrutiny, ensure that officers are free to give impartial advice, and encourage councils and the public to engage.

However, despite a debate about whether scrutiny reports should be submitted to full council or the executive, the guidance is not expected to be prescriptive.



Rishi Sunak: There will be an emphasis on information flow

Mr Sunak added: 'I've heard both things. It's right that scrutiny should be independent from the executive and the wider council should be aware of what scrutiny is doing.'

'There will be an emphasis on

information flow. The bar for withholding information [from scrutiny] should be pretty high.'

Also appearing at the conference, CfPS chair Lord Kerslake, warned that the pressure on resources created a 'real risk' that councils would cut the scrutiny function.

He said: 'We see examples where the lack of effective scrutiny has created severe organisational and service failings. I've never been to a good council that doesn't do scrutiny well.'

'We cannot deny the scale of the challenge that local government currently faces. This situation cannot hold indefinitely. The risk for the Government is that if it doesn't create sustainability for local government finance it will find itself intervening in more councils.'

President of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, Jo Miller, said: 'There is a fear at times that both audit and scrutiny can be a little bit terrifying. I come from an authority where I have to answer awkward questions. We all have to do that.'

www.themj.co.uk/scrutiny

The top stories on themj.co.uk last week:

- Local government hits out at Dawes
- Ten of the best
- Ireland steps down as Lincs chief
- MHCLG 'not expecting another Northamptonshire situation'
- Northants can use capital to plug finance gap, says Brokenshire
- Allied Healthcare winds up council contracts
- EXCLUSIVE: Top 10 most productive councils revealed
- Let's develop a Team Midlands approach
- Pay rises to swallow extra £650m for care
- Tributes for 'inspirational' former chief executive

Authorities praised but SEND slammed

By Martin Ford

Ofsted has criticised councils over their provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) but praised local authorities for progress on children's services.

The watchdog's annual report revealed that Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission inspected 68 out of 152 local areas and, of those, 30 were required to provide a 'written statement of action,' indicating 'serious failings'.

At this week's launch event, the national director for education at Ofsted, Sean Harford, claimed that councils' leadership and their ability to identify SEND children were more problematic issues than lack of any funding.

He added: 'They [parents] go to great lengths to get a plan for their children. If local authorities are spending £500,000 on tribunals to avoid giving plans, I don't think it's funding.'

Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman said: 'Something is deeply wrong when parents repeatedly tell inspectors they have to fight to get the help and support that their child needs. We need to do better.'

Education minister Lord Agnew of Oulton last week said the Government was aware of local authorities reporting concerns about the cost of supporting children with SEND, adding: 'We are monitoring local authority spending decisions in this area



Amanda Spielman: Where savings have been found – mostly in preventative and youth services – they are a false economy, as they only serve to push demand downstream

and are keeping under review the overall amount of funding for this support.'

Ms Spielman acknowledged the financial pressures facing local authorities compared to the rest of the public sector and warned of the unforeseen consequences of cuts.

She said: 'Our concern is that, where savings have been found – mostly in preventative and youth services – they are a false economy, as they only serve to push demand downstream.'

Ms Spielman said local authorities should be given credit for improving children's

services, with 43% rated as good or outstanding – up from 36% last year – 45% requiring improvement and 13% inadequate, according to the annual report. Seven councils remained rated as inadequate after re-inspections.

Ms Spielman said: 'The improvement in local authority performance should be acknowledged because there often appears to be a public perception that local authorities are failing children.'

www.themj.co.uk/ofsted

BUSINESS RATES

Business rates reform vital to high street survival, MPs told

The reform of business rates is essential to saving high streets, the country's top retailers have told MPs.

The Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee also heard that a tax on internet traders was needed to level the playing field with their bricks and mortar counterparts.

The head of public affairs at Marks & Spencer, Tony Ginty told the committee: 'The business rate system is not sustainable in the long-term – it is broken, it's a disincentive to investment. The system needs to be reformed, the problem is no-one can identify or agree what the nature of that reform would look like.'

Mr Ginty praised the international effort to look at taxation of internet multinationals.

'We may have to wait for the work the OECD does, in the meantime I don't think it's unreasonable for individual

governments to want to do something in terms of levelling the playing field,' he said.

However, he urged a model taxing services rather than sales to avoid double taxing those with a high street presence.

The chief executive of Sports Direct, Mike Ashley, suggested a model of a 20% sales tax for operations that conduct more than 20% of their business online, encouraging companies to maintain or expand high street operations.

Proceeds would go to councils, enabling initiatives such as free parking or foregoing business rates that are invested in properties.

'Mainstream high streets are already dead, on the bottom of the swimming pool. We have to tax the internet for the good of the high street,' Mr Ashley said.

www.themj.co.uk/business-rates

inbrief

Leaders neglected by Brexit
City leaders are ambitious to take on more responsibility but Westminster politicians' focus on Brexit means their needs are not being adequately represented nationally, new research has found.

The survey published this week by think-tank Centre for Cities and design and engineering consultancy Arup discovered that 84% of the elected leaders of the UK's largest urban areas felt their needs were not sufficiently represented at the national level while just 22% rated their relationship with Government ministers as 'positive'.

Fund for disabled candidates
Disabled people will be supported to run in council and mayoral elections through a £250,000 fund announced this week by equalities minister Penny Mordaunt.

The Local Government Association and Disability Rights UK (DRUK) will oversee applications to the fund, which will run from next month to March 2020.

Threat to redraw LEP map
Impatient ministers may use county council boundaries to redraw the map of local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) where areas hit deadlock on removing overlaps, *The MJ* understands.

Communities secretary James Brokenshire has previously threatened to withhold the shared prosperity fund (SPF) from areas that fail to remove LEP overlaps.

A consultation on the SPF had been expected this month but this is highly likely to be delayed if the Government loses a crucial House of Commons vote on prime minister Theresa May's EU withdrawal agreement next week.

District wants 147 councillors
Buckinghamshire's district councils have called for the new county unitary to have 147 councillors.

A statement from the four districts said each of the current 49 county wards would each need three councillors to 'deliver proper local democracy'.

It read: 'While a large council this is a significant reduction from the current 236 [councillors] on the county and district councils.'



New category for *The MJ Awards*

A new category, Corporate Director of the Year, has been added to *The MJ Awards 2019*, making a record 18 categories altogether.

Sponsored by Odgers Interim, the category recognises this important role and welcomes examples of dedication, commitment and ability by members of the local authority's top tier. Entries should be submitted by the chief executive and/or leader.

The deadline for awards entries is 1 February 2019.

See our website for full details awards.themj.co.uk

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On the web – more stories to check out at themj.co.uk:



News
Nearly 80 council leaders have called for an emergency cash injection to avoid the 'catastrophic collapse' of authorities.

Opinion
Another week of Westminster guessing games is time wasted for people living and working in cities, says chief executive of Centre for Cities Andrew Carter.



News
A senior Conservative councillor faced with cutting most non-statutory services says national politicians escape the political fallout because cuts largely hit a relatively small group of people. Cllr Keith Glazier, leader of East Sussex CC, said his council was now consulting on a 'core offer' which would largely only protect statutory services.



Opinion
The West Midlands has learned to replicate the success of Greater Manchester – boosted by the cross-party appeal of Andy

Street as a 'highly effective' Mayor, says director of the Midlands at Mace Simon Dale.

News
At least 160 youth centres have closed since 2016, a report based on Freedom of Information Act requests by Unison claims. The union says the figures, based on responses from 101 councils, represent a serious

false economy as youth centres help prevent crime, anti-social behaviour and misuse of drink and drugs – all of which result in higher public spending.



FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Northants sets 2.99% council tax

By Chris Mahony

Northamptonshire CC's draft budget proposes a council tax increase of 2.99% for next year after ministers agreed the county could use up to £70m of capital receipts to plug funding gaps.

The commissioners sent in to rescue the failing authority asked for the capital spend dispensation to build a more stable financial base. Half of the £70m will be used to tackle the 2017/18 deficit and another £20m will boost the council's depleted reserves.

However, council leader Cllr Matt Golby insisted the draft budget and 'accompanying medium-term plan' were not just about cuts.

He spoke of 'targeted investments' to allow the county to 'make significant savings in our running costs while at the same time transform our services to better meet demand'. This includes

investment in care homes and children's homes to reduce 'costly external placements'. That will help deliver £42.9m in proposed revenue savings.

Cllr Goldby added: 'The budget confirms the savings already outlined and then builds on this work. It shows how we will get the basics right, stabilise our finances and then, by working shoulder to shoulder with our partners and with communities, begin to confidently move services towards the future.'

Local government secretary James Brokenshire's approval of the capital dispensation follows the first report from the commissioners sent in to salvage the council. It identified more serious financial challenges than previously, saying: 'The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy analysis exposed the financial position to be considerably worse than the council had anticipated. It concluded that the

potential deficit for 2018/19 would be in the range of £60m to £70m.'

The report blamed 'dysfunction' under the previous management regime for the financial difficulties but noted that 'positive cultural changes' promoted by a new chief executive and new finance director 'have started to take effect'.

The Government described the capital dispensation as 'a significant step' and emphasised that the capital funds could only be used for transforming services – not routine service delivery.

Mr Brokenshire also welcomed the financial stabilisation plan recently agreed by Northamptonshire.

Separately, Mr Brokenshire launched a two-month consultation over plans for two unitary authorities in Northamptonshire.

He also announced that elections in Northamptonshire, due in May 2019, will be delayed by a year following a request from all the councils involved.

CHIEF EXECUTIVES

Protest over chief's departure

A full Lewisham LBC meeting was suspended for 20 minutes and the public eventually excluded as councillors discussed the cost of replacing chief executive Ian Thomas.

In October, the council announced Mr Thomas would leave at the end of the year – just eight months after he took up the post. The protestors voiced opposition to Mr Thomas' departure. A council spokesperson said the decision to ask Mr Thomas to stand down reflected a change in direction by Damien Egan, who became mayor as the new chief executive took up his post.

Councillors agreed last week that Janet Senior, executive director of resources, will formally become interim chief executive when Mr Thomas leaves the council on 31 December.

Several councillors questioned why they and the public were not being given the full costs of replacing Mr Thomas. Cllr Alan Hall said the audit panel he chairs should be provided with details of the likely costs of replacing the chief executive. A council spokesperson said individual employment matters are not considered by the audit panel.

COMPANIES

Allied aims to soothe councils' fears after takeover



● **SOLACE** is advertising for a head of policy to aid the organisation's overall commitment to supporting local government leaders in the sector.

● **Cornwall Council** seeks a service director for education and early years to join the authority's highly rated children's service.

● **Epping Forest** is on the lookout for a new chief executive on up to £120,000 to help deliver the council's long-term vision.

● The **East Suffolk** 'super district' is looking to fill three key roles – chief financial officer; head of customer services and communications, and head of housing and tenancy.

For these and other posts, see [The MJ Jobs, starting on p27](#)

Allied Healthcare has attempted to reassure councils of its long-term future following its takeover.

The company has been acquired by CRG (Care Resourcing Group), securing its future following weeks of uncertainty, during which a number of councils transferred to other providers.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) issued a Stage 6 notification last month, warning councils that it could not guarantee that Allied Healthcare would be able to operate its services and that they should begin contingency planning for the transfer of services.

Despite being granted an extension of funding until 21 December, the company was unable to secure financing and said the CQC announcement had led to the loss of some of its 84 council contracts.

Allied issued a statement on Monday appealing for councils to retain its services.

It read: 'Despite this positive news, Allied Healthcare understands that a number of local authorities and CCGs are still considering proceeding with their



Allied Healthcare is reassuring councils of its long-term future following its acquisition by CRG (Care Resourcing Group)

contingency plans, which would see them transfer services to another provider or bring services in-house.

'With long-term financial arrangements in place and a clear commitment to the continuation of high quality services, Allied Healthcare would urge local authorities to consider the potential disruption that

could be caused by transferring services, particularly at this time of year.

'CRG is confident that under Allied Healthcare's new chief executive officer, Narinder Singh, all stakeholders can be reassured that there will be no break in service.' Allied's 6,500 employees will be unaffected by the takeover.

'Don't throw out the rule book,' warns Ombudsman

By Martin Ford and Michael Burton

Councils have been warned not to let budget squeezes and disruption caused by change programmes land them in trouble with the Ombudsman.

In a new report, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, Michael King has told councils not to 'throw out the rule book' because of a lack of staff 'when redesigning services in the face of budget and resource pressures'.

The report, *Under Pressure*, is based on nearly 40 case studies in which the Ombudsman has identified 'systemic problems stemming from councils changing the way they provided services'.

The Ombudsman, Michael King, said: 'While I appreciate the challenges councils are dealing with, we cannot make concessions for failures attributed to budget pressures and must continue to hold authorities to account. Some of the pitfalls to avoid when redesigning services include ensuring changed services continue to meet statutory levels and timescales, or making sure discretionary powers are not replaced by a one-size fits all approach.'

He added: 'The way councils have adapted and innovated in the face of huge challenges is to be admired. But the lesson from this report is for councils to get the basics right and not throw out the rule book when working under pressure.'

It follows an earlier LGO report that highlighted a surge in complaints over charges for social care. The Ombudsman pointed to the 'stark reality' of financial pressures playing a role in the 9% increase in complaints about charging, totalling 325 – two-thirds of which have been upheld.

Mr King said: 'Assessment and care planning, and how care is paid for, remain some of the biggest areas of complaint. Even more concerning is that the issues we see



Michael King: councils must get the basics right in dealing with financial pressures

demonstrate a shift from one-off mistakes to problems with whole systems and policies, or procedures being incorrectly applied.

The figures are published in the Ombudsman's adult social care annual review, which revealed a record high of 3,106 complaints in 2017/18, compared to 1,156 in 2010/11.

Cllr Ian Hudspeth, chairman of the Local Government Association's community wellbeing board, said: 'The number of complaints since 2010, which includes people who privately fund their care, has increased but, as the report acknowledges, this may reflect the fact more people are comfortable raising concerns because providers and councils are listening and learning.'

'The stark reality is that the quality and choice of care homes and home care, and people's experience of social care, will likely

get worse, unless immediate action is taken to plug the funding gap.'

Over the past year, the Ombudsman made 274 recommendations to authorities and providers to improve procedures or undertake staff training – a 19% increase on last year.

Glen Garrod, president of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), said: 'The report acknowledges that councils are operating under huge pressures and financial challenges and that this is now being reflected in some of the complaints seen. It is also important to note that the report welcomes how councils and care providers have worked with the Ombudsman to improve services and complied with recommendations over the past year.'

www.themj.co.uk/local-government-ombudsman

inbrief

Scots back Brexit vote

Council leaders in Scotland have backed the call for a second Brexit referendum.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), where it was argued a 'People's Vote' was necessary to avoid a constitutional crisis.

COSLA president, Cllr Alison Evison also warned against a no-deal scenario, saying: 'A People's Vote is a practical way to get out of the constitutional crisis we are in.'

Councils get building powers

Councils have been given the power to strip unsafe cladding from private residential buildings over 18 metres tall.

Communities secretary, James Brokenshire, said councils will be able to recover costs from building owners and would receive financial help from the Government if required.

The Government is also banning combustible materials on new high-rise homes, schools and hospitals.

Somerset council tax claims

The Government 'effectively bribed' Somerset CC to freeze its council tax for six years and left the county to 'suffer the consequences,' leader Cllr David Fothergill has said.

Cllr Fothergill acknowledged the county had accepted additional funding from the Government that matched what would have been raised by council tax increases.

Somerset has been identified as one of the counties that could follow Northamptonshire CC to the edge of financial collapse and has made in-year cuts of millions of pounds in recent months. The leader repeated calls for both additional financial support from Whitehall and certainty around funding for the next five years.

Milton Keynes' SEND praise

Milton Keynes Council and its partners have been praised for their joint working on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Partners are 'united in their ambition' for children in a bid to achieve the best outcomes, a joint inspection by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission found.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Treasurers plea for more SEND funds

Council treasurers have made an urgent plea to ministers to tackle soaring special needs costs.

Funding has not kept pace with new burdens and soaring demand for services for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in recent years, says a letter signed by Society of London Treasurers president Gerald Almeroth and John Betts, president of the Society of County Treasurers.

They ask education secretary

Damian Hinds and local government secretary James Brokenshire for more funding and a review of the Children and Families Act 2014, accusing the Department for Education of creating a 'tidal wave of demand'.

The letter says: 'Much work is being done by all councils to jointly share ideas and best practice to try and minimise demand and costs, but this isn't going to be anywhere near

enough to recover the position.'

Mr Almeroth and Mr Betts say shortfalls in funding for the high needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) has led to deficits being carried forward on balance sheets – 'with no prospect of these positions being improved'.

They point out since the introduction of the Children and Families Act 2014 there has been a 35% increase in education and health care plans.

A recent survey found 94% of county councils are expecting a deficit on their high needs block this year, totalling £250m.

The letter adds: 'Significant work is being done to try to manage this additional demand and rising costs, but this is not sustainable going forward and is rapidly creating a financial crisis in some councils.'

www.themj.co.uk/childrens-services

LOCAL AUTHORITY ETHICAL COLLECTIONS CONFERENCE

in response to the Treasury Select Committee Report highlighting improvements in local authority debt collection practices

7th February 2019
Churchill War Rooms
London
 Conference starts **10am**

Join us to debate changing best practice in the sector and sample live demos of the latest in collections technology.

Rushanara Ali MP, member of the Treasury Select Committee, will talk about the findings of the report. You will also hear from leading experts in the charity, financial regulation and local government sectors.



An Expert Panel chaired by Heather Jameson (editor of the MJ) will debate the issues faced by councils in their treatment of the most financially vulnerable and how they can rise to the challenge of 'leading by example' as highlighted by the Treasury Select Committee.



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INVESTMENT

Halted ice rink project gets extra £550,000

An extra £550,000 has been invested in a permanent ice rink by South Cambridgeshire DC after buried explosives were discovered during construction.

The council had already agreed in September 2016 to provide a £1.85m loan to Cambridge Leisure and Ice Centre (CLIC) for the new venue, which is being built on the edge of Cambridge.

Building work on the site, which is being leased by Marshall of Cambridge to CLIC, began a

year ago but was halted following the discovery of 194 World War II grenades, increasing the cost of the project.

Up to 25 new jobs are expected to be created by the rink, designed to meet requirements for hosting international ice hockey matches.

Cabinet member for finance, Cllr John Williams, said: 'We thought long and hard about whether we should grant this additional funding. However, we all want this ice rink to be a



South Cambridgeshire DC invested an extra £550,000 in a permanent ice rink

fantastic facility that our residents can enjoy for many years.

'On the basis of an independent assessment of the project so far, we understand the additional

funding will enable the ice rink to be completed to the exacting standards required and then go on to become a valuable community asset.'

TRANSFORMATION

Authorities need role in driving urban regeneration

Councils need to be given a powerful new role in driving the transformation of Britain's urban centres into the greener, high-tech 'smart cities' of tomorrow, according to a new report by think-tank, Localis.

In particular, they need a mandate to form consortia, both with each other and with private sector companies – especially energy network providers – in order to be able to develop a future urban environment that works well for all groups of people in society.

In its report *Smart Cities: Fair Investment for Sustainable Growth*, Localis defines the goals of what it calls 'the smart city agenda' as the improvement of the 'liveability and sustainability' of our urban environment.

This agenda involves 'pushing cities to use modern technology' in order to develop cleaner and more efficient transport including electric vehicles, and energy distribution systems, while also reducing soaring air pollution, which is already at an illegal level.

'Long-term strategic thinking is required in cities and their wider city regions to ensure everyone can benefit from the upcoming change,' the report said.

'Neighbouring local authorities need to work together and with the private sector to ensure the various initiatives amounting to a smart city transformation are co-ordinated and work for everyone in the area,' it said.

The success of smart cities will 'depend entirely on co-ordinated collaboration,' especially in the rollout of their energy distribution smart grids. Here, 'collaboration must be between local government and energy network providers,' it said.

COMPANIES

Energy firm sale will boost council's coffers



Victory Energy Supply will be sold in a bid to recoup some of the money already invested in the aborted project, estimated to amount to between £2.8m to £4m

By Martin Ford

Portsmouth City Council is to sell its energy company before it has taken on any customers. Victory Energy Supply was set up by the then-Conservative administration last year before political control changed hands to the Liberal Democrats, who decided not to press ahead with the company.

After being asked to reconsider its initial decision by opposition Labour and Conservative councillors, the cabinet has again voted to drop the operation.

It will now be sold in a bid to recoup some of the money already invested in the aborted project, estimated to amount to between £2.8m to £4m, depending on negotiations over contracts that have already been signed.

The cabinet decided to abandon the company in August after it was found 50,000 customers would need to be signed up within the first year, increasing to 144,000 after five years, and would take three years to return a profit.

Since then, more information has been made available that had 'substantially reduced the financial risk the council will be exposed to,' according to a report to the cabinet.

Independent estimates of the expected investment return had been revised up from £2.5m to £22m after five years, and earnings of £33.9m over 10 years, while offering Portsmouth residents lower tariffs than the 'big six' energy suppliers.

However, in less favourable scenarios, an investment of up to £19.2m over a four-year period could be required from the council.

Council leader, Cllr Gerald Vernon Jackson, told the meeting: 'We are not willing to take that risk'.

Victory Energy will now be put on the market, but the council is yet to attach a price to the fledgling firm.

The report said: 'At this stage, it is not possible to determine a likely value for a sale should it be possible.'

'Realistically, a sale could result in an overall loss to the council of between £1.7m and 2.3m.'

private
sector
view

with
Penna

By Julie Towers

I often say recruitment is an art and a science. The science is important. I advocate rigorous assessment and due diligence to test suitability, experience and capability of candidates; but it's the 'art' that is more important in my view.

It is the work we do to test 'fit' – will they work well with stakeholders and particularly members – where the key to success lies.

I know this because we see candidates who are successful in one organisation and then move to another where they are not. It is therefore clear to me that it is a poor fit with context, values and people that usually leads to their demise.

To assess true fit requires senior employers, particularly members, to be highly personally involved in the process

Using more strategic and deep-dive assessment we can test capability and competence to a detailed level. Through due diligence and referencing, we can check claims of delivery vs reality and through interview and interaction we can check broad fit with the agenda.

To assess true fit requires senior employers, particularly members, to be highly personally involved in the process. It is only through honest dialogue about values, style, expectations and objectives that employee and candidate can really assess their mutual suitability.

So, as a recruiter, I'm keen to advocate truly open and honest conversations, particularly between leader/mayor and prospective chief executive officer/managing director.

These conversations often need to walk the wire of politeness and probity and can be uncomfortable, but if they ensure that candidates and client can confidently walk away or move forward, I think they are worth it.



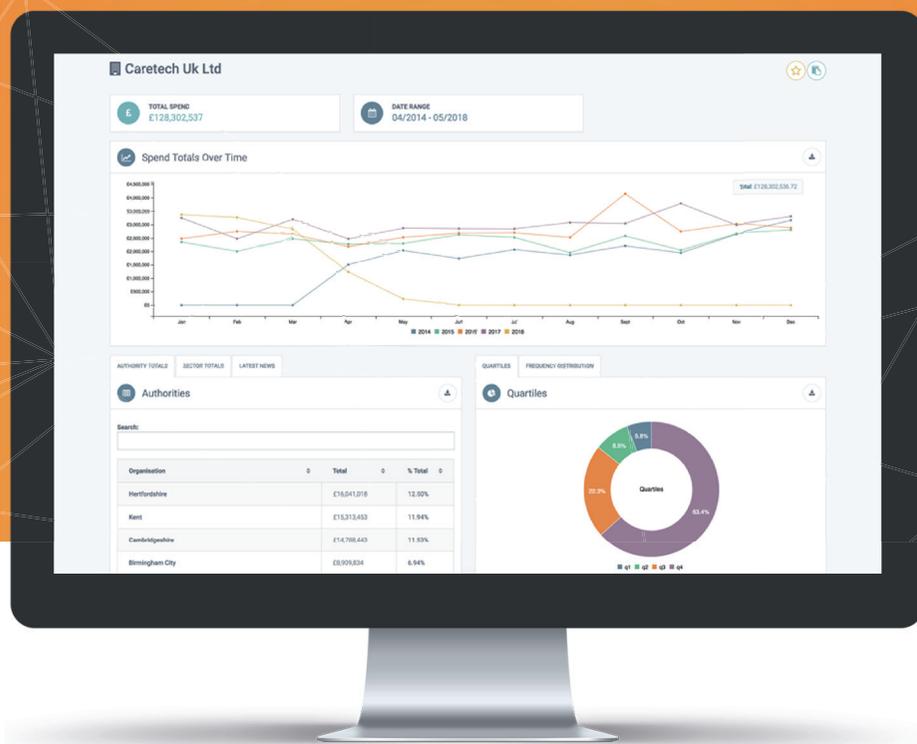
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PENSIONS

Authorities may face 7% hike in pensions bill

Councils employing teachers and fire service personnel could be facing a hike in pension contributions equivalent to a 7% of the wage bill for those employees in 2019.

The extra financial burden will arise because of the Government's expectation of a weaker economic outlook for the UK, and the impact this will have on the public sector's Defined Benefit Pension Schemes.

This is because any weakening in performance of Defined Benefit schemes poses a direct liability to employers, who have to increase their contribution to such schemes in order to maintain their ability to provide the final pension value.



Councils employing fire service personnel and teachers could face a hike in pension contributions

However, the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is unlikely to suffer greatly. It is robust, being fully-funded and – with some £280bn across 89 funds in England and Wales – is the fifth largest

scheme in the world.

Jeff Houston, secretary to the LGPS Advisory Board, said the LGPS will be advised by its own actuaries in the New Year on any potential impact. But he warned: 'There could be

difficult consequences for local authorities employing teachers and fire staff.' The impact could be around 7% of the wage bill, he added.

The concern arose from the Budget in October. Chancellor Philip Hammond reported he was cutting the Treasury discount rate – an actuarial term referring to the expectation of future investment returns – for pension schemes from 'inflation +2.8%' to 'inflation +2.4%'.

Mr Houston said: 'In times like this, when we are in a period of austerity, people see this as making defined benefit schemes more expensive, because the risk is all on the employer.'

The Government is expected to make a further announcement on the matter in the New Year, including whether or not the Treasury might contribute toward the extra cost.

money matters

By Tony Kirkham

At Newcastle City Council we have just launched our medium-term plan for consultation. *Shaping our future together* sets out the council's priorities and how it will provide public services over the next three years.

This is against a backdrop of great political and economic uncertainty, which makes it very challenging. But waiting for a period of stability seems even more risky. It precedes external drivers such as the provisional grant settlement; the Green Paper on Adult Social Care; the Spending Review and the Fair Funding Review, to name a few.

As part of our consultation I met with the voluntary sector for the fifth year running and have answered many questions about our financial position and the assumptions we have made – but not this year. Perhaps we have reached a general acceptance that local government finance no longer has any certainty.

One question they did ask was why so many of our reductions were in supporting the less well-off. Isn't this where we need to be spending more? It feels quite stark, but the reality is this is where most of our current expenditure is – supporting people who need help. So, if we need to reduce expenditure sooner or later, these areas must contribute towards balancing the budget.

The voluntary sector has devoted a lot of time to supporting people, so seeing that investment eroded year after year is a difficult thing for it to accept. By having a constructive dialogue about issues early on, we can work together to minimise the impact. However, there is a feeling we should invest more in prevention which will save money in the long run.

We can only hope that prevention will be a big part of the Adult Social Care Green Paper, the Spending Review and the Fair Funding Review – or that period of stability we wish for will never come.

Tony Kirkham is director of resources at Newcastle City Council

SCOTLAND

Cuts put Scots on 'cliff edge'

By Mike Yuille

Scottish councils are on a financial 'cliff edge' due to continuing cuts in public funding by both the Scottish and UK Governments, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) has said.

The warning comes after last week's report by the Audit Commission, Scotland's public spending watchdog, which said that councils are digging into their savings and reserves in order to balance their books.

COSLA's Resources spokesperson Cllr Gail Macgregor said: 'The commission's assessment is correct...there is no room left for manoeuvre. We really are at a cliff edge and our core budget is under real threat.'

Ms Macgregor said that COSLA has lobbied for years to try to get a fair settlement for the essential services councils deliver.

'We hope that the Government listens to the stark warning contained within the report and funds local government and the essential services councils provide in their budget on 12 December,' she said.

The commission, in its annual financial report, said councils face many challenges, with continuing pressure on finance due to the increasing demand for their services against the backdrop of tighter budgets

It said funding in 2017/18 from the Scottish Government reduced by 2.3% in real terms. This reduction had been offset by increases in council tax and councils' fee income.

But councils were still having to make cuts to public services in order to fund increasing demands in education and social services it said.

The commission reported that all 32 of Scottish councils had raised their council tax charges in 2018 in order to manage their growing funding shortfall. Most councils had applied the maximum 3% increase.

This compares with 24 councils raising charges during 2017.

The commission said councils had done 'a good job' last year in managing resources.

But it warned councils will face further funding cuts and that they will have to make further savings, while finding ways to meet service demands.

BUSINESS RATES

Law change proposed to aid struggling businesses

The Taxpayers' Alliance is proposing changes in local government law to help prevent 'unfair' business rates from damaging struggling businesses.

In a new paper called *Business Rates Reform*, the alliance said: 'Business rates are seen by commercial enterprises, large and small, as the tax on business that is the least fairly applied, and most in need of reform.'

It points to the 'sheer scale' of rates compared with rental values, rising from 34.8% on introduction in 1990/91 to 49.3% in 2018/19.

It also says that rates are based



'Unfair' rates are hurting struggling businesses

on out of date information, and take no account of the financial circumstances of the business on which it is levied. 'Corporation tax, by contrast, is assessed on the profits...and falls on those businesses in a position to pay it.'

As a solution, the alliance

calls for changes to the Local Government Finance Act 1988 in order to empower the Valuations Office Agency and Tribunal to include economic circumstances as a ground for appeal.

Specifically, the alliance said that 'a material fall in prevailing

rental values' should be considered for appeal, as this would reflect prevailing economic conditions for the time. Currently, this is not included in the list of 'material change of circumstances' that can be considered.

'This will benefit companies of all sizes adjusting to changing market conditions, while enduring excessive overheads from both business rates and rents that are too slow to adjust,' it said.

'Making such a change to the Act by statutory instrument would be administratively straightforward,' it added.



director's chair

Michael Burton,
Editorial Director,
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 @MJMikeBurton

Don't throw out the rule book with the bath water

Hot on the heels of warnings about councils buckling under financial pressures, comes a complaint from the Local Government Ombudsman, that bane of jobsworths.

Budget cuts, staff shortages and change upheavals are making services less responsive as corners are cut while the rule book is in danger of being 'thrown out.'

Much of the public welcome less red tape and the general direction of travel for councils is to be more entrepreneurial and less risk-averse – and therefore more likely to put the rule book to one side.

But in his report, *Under Pressure*, this week Michael King, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, says this means some vulnerable service users are getting a raw deal. It cites examples where staff shortages have meant occupational therapists being unable to assess a person's home, delays of months in processing homelessness applicants and delays to housing benefit claims.

However, a scrutiny of some of the cases highlighted in the report simply shows councils claiming staff shortages to obscure incompetence and lack of common sense. As regards

the many complaints over assessing care needs, the urge to save money too often overrides the rights of the applicant. Councils are stuck between a rock and a hard place, but try telling that to someone applying for home care who is fobbed off by a seemingly unresponsive and callous bureaucracy driven by the need to cut costs, often contrary to its own rules.

Like all complainants, the Ombudsman is both a nuisance and an asset. He points out weaknesses in a council which can be rectified in the same way that an angry complaint to a utility, a bank or a supermarket helps their organisations remedy defects which otherwise they may have missed. The Ombudsman report this week tries to understand the predicament of cash-strapped councils and their need for transformation but its message is clear: don't lose the focus on the frontline. After all, we have yet to come across a change programme whose mission statement was to make its services worse and life harder for its most vulnerable residents.

• *My book, The Politics of Austerity: A Recent History, is out in paperback now, published by Palgrave Macmillan*

LETTERS

Adult social care's £650m illusion

Geraldine Nosowska
 Chair, British Association of Social Workers

We note with concern your story about how the Government's additional £650m for adult social care will go no further than to cover the needed rise in the National Living Wage for care workers (*The MJ News*, 29 November).

The British Association of Social Workers hears every day from social workers about the reality of children, adults and families living with austerity, and the lack of resource to adequately prevent harm and promote wellbeing.

Recent research from Bath Spa University highlights the stress on the workforce of high demand and limited resources, and the sad consequence that many are leaving our public services.

We support calls across the public sector for adequate funding for children's and adults' services. Preoccupation with other matters has delayed the cross-party and public debate that is needed.

While the Prime Minister states that austerity has ended, its effect will persist



The chancellor's Budget boost for adult social care comes under fire

unless this discussion happens and a sustainable social contract is agreed. This must take into account the inequalities across our country and ensure redistribution of resources from wealthier parts to those that experience deprivation.

Social workers can provide good evidence of the need for better funding and of the most effective ways to use resources in partnership with people to promote their wellbeing.

The British Association of Social Workers will continue to campaign for the time and working conditions to provide relationship-based work with children and adults because this is the vehicle for improving the lives of our citizens. We will also continue to call for wider contextual change to reduce poverty, enable a dignified

income and allow preventative work to happen.

The public cannot be allowed to believe that the Government is providing adequate funding to meet the needs of children, adults and families in our communities.

As a public sector we can all join voices with those who have lived the experience of services to ensure that the hand-to-mouth nature of funding is clearly understood.

Paper cup to bail out a sinking ship

Jon Richards
 Unison head of local government
 The MJ's research highlights this Government's abject failure to grasp

how deep austerity still bites. The £650m 'Budget boost' is a sticking plaster that does little to help solve the ongoing crisis in social care. The meagre handout is the equivalent of providing a paper cup to bail out a sinking ship.

The promised cash will be swallowed up instantly by next year's rise in the National Minimum Wage. It will do nothing to address the sector's desperate need for substantial, above inflation pay rises.

Recent research, for example, by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) concludes that local authorities would need at least £450m to ensure that care staff receive a wage that covers the real cost of living.

The money will not end the exploitation of workers, nor halt their exodus for jobs with better pay and conditions. And it falls far short of the amount needed to ensure the vulnerable and elderly no longer have to endure unmet care needs.

This is a Government prepared to spend billions on those with the most, but not on those with the least and who continue to be penalised by austerity. The tax cuts announced in the chancellor's Autumn Budget are set to cost the Government an eye-watering £2.7bn next year. Yet ministers appear to be in denial about the state of social care, which becomes ever more desperate as each day passes.

Should it ever be published, the long-awaited Green Paper must go further than offering a stop-gap budget increase.

Otherwise, the real cost of neglecting service users and the social care workforce will be felt for decades to come.

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Established 1893 as *Municipal Journal*. Published by Hemming Information Services, a division of Hemming Group Ltd. 32 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SS
 E-mail: initial.surname@hgluk.com Tel: Switchboard 020 7973 6400 Fax: Editorial 020 7973 4686 Northern Sales: 01625 614000
www.themj.co.uk Annual subscription: £140, ISSN 0143 4187 © Hemming Media 2018 Printed by Wyndeham Grange Ltd

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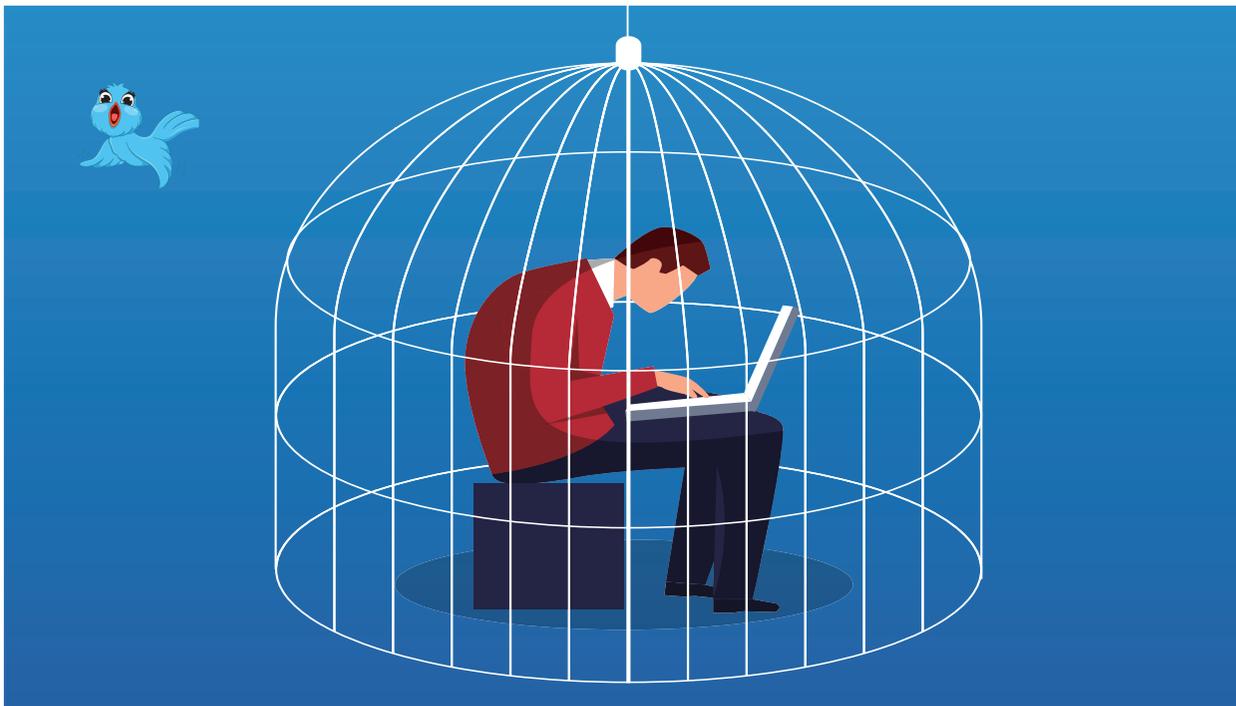
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Be wary of good intentions

New Year's resolution: however nasty social media might get, don't let's lobby for even more powers for Facebook, Twitter or the Met Police to brand what is difficult as hate, argues **Claire Fox**

I love Christmas. It is a cheerful time and an antidote to this year's febrile political climate.

While Labour shadow chancellor John McDonnell may not want to be mates with those he disagrees with, most of us will enjoy banter, turkey and mince pies with family and friends across the political, religious and even Brexit divide.

For those of us lucky enough to have holidays, we can all have what author Julia Hobsbawn calls a 'techno-Shabbat' – a period to escape the trolls and bile.

While I may relish a hate-free digital detox, I fear we have become overly preoccupied by online hate, often at the expense of open debate. This has recently been a talking point in local government.

Look at the furore about former councillor Gareth Fairhurst's Facebook post, in which he called Wigan MBC chief executive Donna Hall a 'bitch'. Unpleasant, no doubt, but is it really an example of 'pure misogyny and hatred', as described by Jo Miller, president of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE)?

Surely, such overblown hyperbole, calling someone a woman-hating bigot, is more likely to ratchet up disputes rather than making political discourse more civil. Ms Hall herself commented: 'Online hate is unacceptable and all the evidence shows women in public office receive the bulk of it'. Not quite.

A few years ago, academic research from the University of Sussex and Demos revealed that women are just as likely to be abused online by other females and I can testify that some of my most foul-mouthed trolls are women.

Solutions proposed to stamp out hate are troubling. Condemning Mr Fairhurst, Greater Manchester deputy mayor, Beverley Hughes,

tweeted: 'This kind of hatred against women should be a hate crime and we must press the Government to bring in that change.' But a plea to readers of *The MJ*: please, no more laws to criminalise speech. There has been a recent tsunami of police activity on social media threatening citizens to watch what they say or retweet.

The instant rebuttal service of fellow tweeters has facilitated a more informed debate about the Brexit withdrawal agreement

For those who imagine this might mean silencing only the most extreme hate speech, beware of ever-elastic definitions.

The Metropolitan Police website's definition is more Orwellian than reassuring: 'A hate incident is any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone's prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender. Not all hate incidents will amount to criminal offences, but it is equally important that these are reported and recorded by the police.' Such an expanded, subjective classification means that if anybody dubs something a hate crime, it is.

More online policing may unintentionally result in hemming-in debate. Sadly, this puts me at odds with *The MJ*'s editorial line: 'We should not have to legislate to restrict free speech, but if social media firms fail to protect users then there may be no choice'.

This recent editorial argued that Facebook

should step up and deal with the bullying of public figures online. But should local government really trust multinational social media organisations to police political discourse

Twitter has just shut down Canadian feminist Meghan Murphy's account and forced her to delete her tweets for 'violating our rules against hateful conduct' because she tweeted 'men aren't women'. As writer Kenan Malik concluded in *The Observer*, if we accept Ms Murphy being labelled a hater, 'there would seem to be little one could say on most difficult issues that could not also be construed as hatred'.

New Year's resolution: however nasty social media might get, don't let's lobby for even more powers for Facebook, Twitter or the Met Police to dub the difficult as hate. Rather, let's acknowledge the democratic positives of social media.

In recent weeks, the instant rebuttal service of fellow tweeters has facilitated a more informed debate about the Brexit withdrawal agreement, allowing those far beyond the Westminster bubble access to all sides' analysis. Democracy has been well served by the forensic take-downs of every clause and nuance in a major constitutional change. Politicians may look us in the eye and say one thing, but the useful accompanying commentary of tweeters dissecting the detail means we cannot be taken for fools.

Be wary of good intentions that may end up turning social media platforms into sanitised, anodyne safe spaces, or worse, places where shouting 'hate speech' shuts us all up.

Here's to a hate-free Christmas, but a censorship-free 2019. ■

Claire Fox is director of The Academy of Ideas

soapbox



By **Claire Kober**

These are troubling times. Across the globe the rise of populism, protectionism and nationalism is only too evident, while at home the number of recorded hate crimes has more than doubled in the last five years.

In many respects our country is becoming more tolerant, but this is not true for everybody. Religious minorities – particularly Muslims and Jews – have seen rising levels of abuse, intimidation and threats.

It is against this backdrop that earlier in the week London hosted the Sara conference on women and anti-semitism.

The conference takes its name from the matriarch of the Abrahamic faiths, but Sara was also the name Jewish Nazi victims were forced to adopt if their name sounded 'non-Jewish' in origin.

Research published to coincide with the conference suggests that while incidents of anti-semitism are increasing across the board, Jewish women are increasingly coming under dual attack. Abused for being women and abused for being Jewish – the inter-sectional hatred is clear.

Glancing at the Twitter feeds of prominent Jewish women – and in particular those who are also politicians – gives you an insight into the scale of the issue. But it's not only Jewish women and it's not only social media.

In my corner of north London, in many respects one of the most 'tolerant' places in the country, in recent times there have been several incidents of Muslim women having their hijabs ripped off.

Troubling times, yes, but what's the point of raising this here and what should local government be doing?

I personally worry that there's an overuse of the language of 'tolerance' that suggests there should be a more managerial-style response to the problem, rather than a political one. To me, the calls for tolerance suggest a neutrality that understates both the scale of the problem and the strength of response required.

The issue is also not a geographical one – social media has changed that forever. To be tolerant is to be complicit.

There are many councils that are leading the chorus which is starting to drown out the voices of hatred threatening our local communities – but more need to join them. ■

Claire Kober is director of housing at Pinnacle Group and former chair of London Councils

plugged in



By Paul O'Brien

Sometimes the simplest questions are the hardest to answer and that definitely applies to Brexit. I was recently asked what I thought the impact of Brexit would be on local government frontline services and after a pause and a few caveats, I was able to give an answer which sounded something akin to the famous Donald Rumsfeld response about 'known knowns and unknown unknowns.'

We already know the devaluation of the pound following the referendum has increased the cost of UK imports like construction materials for housing and highways, plant and equipment for fleet, refuse and grounds maintenance; food ingredients for school meals and even chemicals and cleaning supplies for janitorial responsibilities. In terms of the workforce, we know there has been a reduction in the numbers of European workers in services like homecare, with shortages rising to 400,000 by 2028 if freedom of movement goes, according to a recent IPPR report. We also know we badly need housing and the building industry is struggling to find skilled staff. What we don't yet know is whether a final deal will exacerbate this further.

In terms of treaties, legal requirements, regulations and standards, if the UK wishes to continue to trade with the EU 27 then it is likely in the short to mid-term that there will be a requirement to adopt or closely mirror existing policies around climate change, health and hygiene, procurement and workforce matters. An example of this is those authorities which have responsibilities for ports and harbours. Can we remain a point of entry for goods and produce to Europe if we are not in alignment with EU rules?

Another unknown is the impact on the UK economy. The Prime Minister and chancellor have both signalled an end to austerity. Now is the time for local government to push the case for significant additional investment in the Spending Review to help grow local economies and make them more resilient. The sector has shown that when it comes to delivering in difficult times it is second to none.

A final thought – given the uncertainty at Westminster and around the country, it may be worthwhile placing local authority election teams on standby in case of another referendum or General Election. Who knows what's around the corner? ■

Paul O'Brien is chief executive of the Association for Public Service Excellence

ASYLUM SEEKERS

Redefining the rules about resettlement

As Andy Burnham threatens to withdraw Greater Manchester from the asylum resettlement scheme, he has ignited the debate about the dispersion of refugees, arguing that responsibility needs to be spread with 'fairness' across English authorities. But forcing councils to take on more families without more funding will only make the problem worse, says the sector. **Hiba Mahamadi reports**

Last week, Andy Burnham caused a stir at a select committee inquiry when he threatened to pull Greater Manchester out of the asylum resettlement scheme.

Mr Burnham, who is the Mayor of the combined authority, said the North West accommodates a quarter of all asylum seekers in England, of which 17% are in Greater Manchester. He added that more than 200 English authorities out of 326 are not accommodating any asylum seekers, and the resultant pressure on those who are, is just too much to bear.

When home affairs committee member John Woodcock asked whether he understood that his threat to withdraw could collapse the entire system, Mr Burnham stood his ground.

You can't make people stay where they don't want to. They will eventually move'

'There needs to be a fairness across all English regions. Everyone needs to understand that this is a national responsibility. If that means the cost goes up, because the cost of housing in other parts of the country is greater, then that should be done,' he shot back.

Under the Government's asylum accommodation scheme, a handful of private providers are given contracts to rehouse them. But contractors tend to choose those areas where the cheapest accommodation is available, resulting in pressure in those areas already under significant distress. This includes not just Greater Manchester, but also Birmingham, the rest of the West Midlands, and the Wakefield and

Humber area.

Mr Burnham complained that the Home Office is choosing to 'dump' families on councils that don't have the resources to help them. According to him, Greater Manchester has been ringing councils asking them to take on more families, which is something the Government should be doing instead.

Responding to this assertion, the immigration minister Caroline Nokes later suggested the Government might consider making accommodation mandatory for all councils.

But to propose this as a solution seems to miss the point councils have been trying to make, the sector has warned.

Forcing councils to take on more families – without additional funding – will exacerbate the problem, not solve it.

'If the Home Office mandates that an asylum seeking family needs to be sent to Westminster or Kensington & Chelsea, then clearly the Home Office is also going to be paying the cost of the rent in these areas,' says Cllr David Simmonds, chairman of the Local Government Association's (LGA) asylum taskforce.

'The reason they don't do it, is because they don't want to pay. It's not that they've asked those councils and they've said no. It's simply that the contractors will only place the people to make a profit on accommodation by housing them in the cheapest possible location.'

Councils want the Government to understand that resettling asylum seekers, in the truest sense of the word, requires much more than just a house. There are other costs that need to be met – like paying for children to go to school, paying GPs to provide health services, helping adults find work, all of which is necessary to turn the individuals into productive members of society.

Mr Burnham called out the 'arrogance



of central government', the way it feels justified in striking deals with private providers, completely ignoring local authorities, who are ultimately responsible for the wellbeing of asylum seekers.

For example, in Glasgow, one housing group threatened to evict refugees and put them up in a hotel. Speaking at the inquiry, the leader of the city council Cllr Susan Aitken said this announcement was made without any prior discussion with the council. It was a difficult situation for them because it is the authority's responsibility to ensure that a certain standard of housing is maintained for these individuals.

This lack of communication between private providers and local authorities is common across the country, according to Paul Wheeler, director of the Political Skills Forum.

He says often councils don't even know that families are moving to the area until they show up because private providers don't feel the need to let the council know.

Mr Wheeler adds that the Government's plans to make the accommodation of asylum seekers mandatory on councils is less important than making the financial incentive greater.

He points out: 'You can't make people



The North West accommodates a quarter of all asylum seekers in England, of which 17% are in Greater Manchester

stay where they don't want to. They will eventually move.' When they do move to another area, that council will need the funds to care for them.

Making this mandatory also doesn't make much of a difference because looking after unaccompanied young people is already a statutory duty on councils, Bournemouth's director of children and adults services, Sue Ross, points out.

Bournemouth is one of the councils that isn't struggling with accommodating asylum seeking children. Ms Ross credits this success to the council's strong relationship with the voluntary sector.

The authority works with the International Care Network to provide supported accommodation, which means that the council does not have to use its own fostering resources or resort to the more expensive independent fostering agencies to find placements.

Bournemouth BC is 'very lucky' that the town has a large network of community organisations who have all chipped in to help the young people settle down, including the local mosques and Bournemouth football club. This means that Ms Ross finds it easy to work within the budget provided by the Home Office.

Not all councils are lucky though, and some would argue that the voluntary sector should not have to step in to do

'The contractors will only place the people to make a profit on accommodation by housing them in the cheapest possible location'

what is essentially the Government's job.

Cllr Simmonds is working with the Home Office as it draws up new contracts. He is adamant that this time around, the Government should calculate the hidden costs of accommodation to councils and reimburse them for it. At the committee inquiry, Cllr Aitken mentioned that Glasgow City Council was reimbursed £1.67m from the Home Office for supporting 230 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, but it actually spent more than £4m in care and support.

He also hopes to see the contracts drawn up in co-operation with local authorities so that they can point out potential problems before they arise.

Working in co-operation with local

government and providing enough funding, instead of dictating to it, is how the Government's Syrian resettlement programme worked. And it is why councils across the country have cited it as a success.

But even as local authorities are speaking up about the pressures they are under in resettling refugees, they acknowledge that done in the right way, it can help to revitalise communities, particularly where depopulation is an issue. Vacant housing is used, school placements are filled, and employers can fill in unoccupied positions.

Ms Ross at Bournemouth BC adds that one of the 'biggest professional thrills' for her has been to watch asylum seeking children socialise with the local care leavers, share experiences, and to learn from each other. She says it is important to point out that there are success stories, and her council is one of them.

While Bournemouth's success isn't shared by councils across the country, the acceptance of their moral responsibility to care for vulnerable individuals, is. They now want the Home Office to adopt the same mindset.

'The Government needs a more moral approach to this issue,' Mr Burnham said last week. 'It should be a national effort to continue our tradition of welcoming people and giving them safe haven.' ■

districtview



By Allen Graham

This has been a year where there have been uncertainties for all districts, and I have no doubt this will continue into 2019 and beyond as we strive to second guess the Fairer Funding Review, the impact of Brexit and adjust to the automation revolution.

As we near the close of yet another dramatic and busy 12 months, it is apparent that while there remains a national debate regarding the levels of demand placed upon acute services within the public service, there is also a continuation of pressure being placed upon other, often unseen staff, who have to manage increasing complexity and expectation.

As we at Rushcliffe host an enquiry to adopt our Local Plan part two, I have been reflecting upon the amount of preparation and work that has been provided by a small team of dedicated planning policy officers. Their perseverance and attention to detail is often underestimated.

At the same time as the 'goose is supposed to be getting fat', the golden goose in local government is getting thinner as we prepare for the loss of the revenue support grant.

As we try to plan for the future our stretched finance staff professionally carry on being creative and resilient and I often think as we gear up for the finance settlement, they are being asked to complete a complex jigsaw with several of the pieces being hidden by mischievous family members.

However, despite all the challenges, I remain amazed to see how everyone pulls together to achieve the best possible outcomes for our communities. This is never more evident as we approach Christmas. The behind-the-scenes inspiration and energy that is invisible to the public brings the festivities to life, while work such as our refuse staff collecting donations for a local homeless charity continues to protect the most vulnerable.

It makes me proud the way our communities and communication teams produce some magnificent events, while our customer service teams work tirelessly to resolve complex problems.

One thing is certain: the world rolls on and the Christmas season is upon us once more. ■

Allen Graham is chief executive of Rushcliffe BC

Co-production – the way forward for our youth

Kate Pieroudis outlines how the Social Care Institute for Excellence is developing a plan to make co-production more recognisable in services for children and young people – and to spread good practice

When our former chair, Lord Bichard, opened proceedings at the House of Lords this time last year, he was at pains to point out that he wasn't launching a new report. At the parliamentary event he wanted to hand over to a young person who had contributed a great deal by being on an expert working group which informed the report. So that young person was the one who launched the report.

The initiative was about looked after children and mental health and the expert group's central involvement is a really good example of co-production.

The recommendations from the report went straight to two government departments to help steer the way they are dealing with mental health and looked after children. Powerful stuff.

Co-production has moved on from tick-box exercises where people were 'consulted' at a roundtable event and then their views were sometimes taken on – but often not

You might have heard of the word 'co-production' and up until recently it's often been associated with adult services. Co-production can be hard to define but it's about people who use services and carers working with professionals in equal partnership towards shared goals. In practice this means people who use care and support services and carers have a proper say in how those services are designed, run and evaluated.

It has moved on from tick-box exercises where people were 'consulted' at a roundtable event and then their views were sometimes taken on – but often not. So, to give you an example of where we've been supporting an area with making co-production a reality, let's head to Oxfordshire. There they have set up a co-production board and a group of co-production champions who are promoting and supporting the concept into reality. The champions are made up of people who use services, carers, council staff, professionals from health and social care, and voluntary sector organisations who are learning and working together to make change happen.

Co-production takes time but the aim over three years is for people in Oxfordshire to feel that services are improving. The focus is on using vital 'lived experience' rather than merely numbers and data. Everyone's contribution is valued and seen as equal. Good co-production embraces innovation and diversity, people

finding new perspectives and, in the long run it can save money as services start to meet people's needs. Vitally, the changes that come about are more meaningful and sustainable because people have been given choice and control in shaping something.

There is a lot of great co-production in children's services already (although it tends to be called 'participation'), like the fact every local authority aims to have a Children in Care Council, which can provide children in and leaving care with an opportunity to voice their experiences of the care system and to improve the services they receive. Lots of local areas also have young advisors to their directors of children's services. A great example is Doncaster, where advisors are involved in interviewing potential new members of staff and presenting at Trust events. At the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), to support the development of the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care, we helped to set-up a panel of 20 young people aged 13-24. They provided input on key decisions, including the initial research priorities and how young people should be involved, using creative methods such as art, photography and *Dragons Den*-style presentations. Young people were also involved in recruiting the centre's chair and executive director.

There is lots to learn from adults' co-production that can be used in co-production with children and young people and vice versa; so in the coming months SCIE is bringing together its experience of children's co-production and years of leading practice in co-production with adults to develop a plan to make the process more recognisable in services for children and young people. We'll be spreading good practice and finding ways to support organisations in this endeavour.

When Lord Bichard introduced the young woman so that she could launch our report in the House of Lords, it fitted in perfectly with the tone of the event and the initiative.

Our aim is for practice like this to become routine; so children and young people are fully included in the care and support services they access and in turn so that meaningful co-production happens and is a routine way services are created and improved. ▸

Kate Pieroudis is co-production development manager at the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)

More on co-production at SCIE
<https://www.scie.org.uk/co-production>
What Works Centre for Children –
<https://www.scie.org.uk/children/what-works-centre>



'We can't

Investing in strategies that reduce childhood poverty is an efficient economic policy as well as the right thing to do, says president of the Association of Directors of Children's Services, **Stuart Gallimore**

This year's National Children and Adult Services (NCAS) conference in Manchester was a great, but rare, opportunity for professionals across the sector to share best practice and discuss the challenges we face each day.

As in previous years, local authority funding and demand pressures, in both children's and adult services, featured strongly on the programme, but there was an intensity in these discussions that hasn't previously been there. In my speech I took the opportunity to warn of a system under greater pressure than ever before, much more than it was designed to cope with.

As any good engineer will tell you, the more pressure there is in a system, the more likely it is to go wrong, despite the hard work and dedication of the people working within it.

Unlike previous years, there are now a growing number of reports which provide yet more compelling evidence of the challenges children, families and communities are facing and calls on government to properly fund our vital



go on as we are'

services in order to offer help and support to all of those who need it. I shared headline findings from one such report – *ADCS Safeguarding Pressures Phase Six* – in my speech.

Our research evidences a surge in demand for our services over a 10-year period; the number of initial contacts made to children's social care has increased by 78%, referrals by 22%, the number of children in care by 24% and the number of children being subjects of child protection plans by 87%. Some increases are over and above that which we could expect from growth in child population alone.

Investing in strategies that reduce childhood poverty is an efficient economic policy as well as the right thing to do

Councils are legally required to spend on statutory child protection where there is need, even if the funding envelope within which we're working has been cut in half in recent years. Small pots of time limited funding fall short of the long term, sustainable core funding strategy that children's services need.

The role of poverty in driving families to crisis came through loud and clear in safeguarding pressures. Nearly two-thirds of all children living in poverty live in working households; rising costs of living; poorly paid and insecure

work; and poor quality housing as well as changes and delays to benefit payments, only add to the stresses and strains that families face.

It was fitting therefore that as the conference ended the United Nations special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights published his report on this topic.

Following his visit to parts of the UK, professor Philip Alston said poverty was 'obvious to anyone who opened their eyes' – from the immense growth in foodbanks with long queues outside and the increase in homelessness, to children arriving at school hungry and poverty of access to opportunities. You could be mistaken for thinking the report describes one of the poorest countries in the world, not one of the richest.

Believe it or not there are still some sceptics out there, who, despite all the evidence to the contrary still deny the link. Let me be clear, poverty is very real, it sets children up for a lifetime of disadvantage. It must be treated as a public health issue. If this damning report isn't enough to trigger some soul searching and a change in approach to policy and to funding, then will anything ever be?

Investing in strategies that reduce childhood poverty is an efficient economic policy as well as the right thing to do. It's time for all four countries that make up our nation to have a child poverty reduction strategy. England does not. We can't go on as we are, the stakes are too high. ▀

Stuart Gallimore is director of children's services at East Sussex CC and president of the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) for 2018-19

Riding the public sector transformation wave

With local government operating on £15.7bn less in 2020 than it did in 2010, increasingly it seems the sector is a plane running on fumes in the fuel tank. But then we have #OurDay. Trending number one in the UK and fourth in the world, with 33,000 tweets and 10,000 contributors, it is clear that local public services are run with passion and determination.



Dr Andrew Lamer is chief executive of the Improvement & Efficiency Social Enterprise (IESE), which supports public sector transformation

That passion for local public services is evident in the way the sector continuously looks for innovative ways of working. For five years we have been conducting research on how local public services have been and how they plan to be transformed. In 2013, more than 80% of council's emphasis was on service improvement, learning the lessons of the industry and applying lean techniques to our services. Today that emphasis has dropped dramatically, and in 2018 the three top categories of service transformation are: building community capacity to meet its own needs; a more commercial approach to balancing the bottom line, and a digital approach to service delivery.

The waves of transformation – from service improvement, to customer centric approach, to building community capacity – have combined efficiency with improvement of outcomes

This doesn't mean the efficiency work of the past has now gone. The fundamental disciplines of understanding costs and managing resources have not disappeared. Rather, efficiency has evolved with an understanding we can have greater effect by addressing the needs that, if left unmet, convert into demand for public service. These waves of transformation, from service improvement, to customer centric approach, to building community capacity have, combined efficiency with improvement of outcomes.

We have turned these waves of transformation into a model, linked to a bank of examples from across the UK, and tested it out with councils over the last year. Councils have found the model to be effective in testing their next wave of transformation in delivering a more commercial approach or delving deeper into the lessons they will need to apply in delivering transformation. From understanding how best to apply digital to the changing role of members, there are important differences to take account of in each successive wave of transformation.

The model will continue to evolve ensuring that the latest experience is taken into account. Currently we are seeing the emergence of a more mature commercial approach that also builds community capacity, resident and local business. We are launching the results of this research with some practical actions that councils can take at Lords on 17 December, and judging by the interest that passion to innovate continues unabated. ■

For more information visit www.iese.org.uk

This column is brought to you by 
The public sector transformation partner

Breaking down the

A recent survey of local authority chief executives and directors by *The MJ* and BT found strong cultural resistance to transformational change among their management teams. The issues were discussed at a round table with senior local authority staff in the Midlands. **Heather Jameson** reports on the key conclusions

Local government has seen unprecedented change in the past decade and there is no sign it will end soon. From service redesign to digital disruption, the ongoing pace of change is rapidly increasing.

In a recent exclusive survey by *The MJ* and BT (see *The MJ*, 1 Nov), organisational culture was seen as the key issue to get right when it comes to implementing digital transformation – and middle managers were seen as the biggest block. At a joint round table dinner in the Midlands, *The MJ* and BT asked local government chief executives and directors about their experiences of implementing change.

What was clear from our debaters was just how much transformation – digital or otherwise – has already taken place amid the shrinking resources and expanding issues facing local authorities.

As one of our guests says, there has been on-going change for a long time, and staff are now asking ‘what next?’ It has become the new normal, but the constant churn of ideas can be counterproductive.

‘The amount of change we have gone through has made us receptive to change but there’s a bit of fatigue now. Part of my concern is how do we keep the pace of change going?’ asks one debater.

But for another, more change is not always the answer. ‘We all get into this cycle that we need to keep changing. When do you as an organisation say “let’s embed what we have got?”’ The answer is clearly not another short-term transformation plan. One of our guests explains they have moved away from two-to-three year plans to five year plans – and banned the word transformation as it has become ‘toxic’ adding: ‘We are not going to mention transformation anymore. It’s going to be a constant evolution.’

We hear about one council where the cabinet members are keen to get things moving and suggest there needs to be another big idea, only to be told by the chief executive that they didn’t need another idea, just to finish what has already been started. ‘It’s like that old joke,’ one senior officer says, ‘don’t talk to me about change, I’m too busy.’

While our senior staff are ‘passionate about change’, it is not always as readily accepted among staff. As our survey shows, middle managers are often the biggest

block to digital transformation. One debate participant says: ‘A former colleague of mine used to refer to middle managers as “permafrost”...but they can be defrosted,’ we hear. Someone agrees: ‘In my experience of involving middle managers, they are resisters.’ Another participant says middle managers are often from a specialist service background and unused to a corporate approach.

But there is some sympathy around the table for middle managers. ‘It is the hardest job in the organisation. If you impose things on them without engagement, of course they will rail against it.’ Another says: ‘It is up to the senior team to make sure middle management are on board.’

They are caught between the demands of the senior managers and the needs of frontline staff, squeezed in between and expected to deliver the impossible. We agree that the resistance of middle managers is, in reality, a failure of senior leadership to bring them on board.

Not all negativity is resistance to change, either. For senior managers, coming up against barriers may feel like a block but it is often just asking the hard questions that will need to be answered. That doesn’t mean they are resisting change, it may just be striving to understand how the new world will work.

It’s clear that all staff need to understand what is changing and why in order to have buy-in. They need to be involved in the decision making and they need a simple question answered ‘what does it mean for me’.

The real path of least resistance is to engage staff at all levels. ‘If we don’t enable and we don’t involve people in change, you can forget it.’ It is about taking people on a journey. And if digital technology makes it easier for people to do their job, they will embrace it.

Part of the issue of digital transformation is that not everyone will have a place on the journey. One council round the table accepts some roles will disappear and is engaging with staff to find a route out – and looking at apprenticeships spanning all ages, not just for young people.

For another, it is about working with the unions, not against them. They have found it is often about protecting the terms and conditions of staff who are staying, rather than hanging on to jobs.

With all this change to frontline jobs and middle managers, the senior teams don’t get away with it either. Everyone’s job has altered with the change in technology and austerity, even those at the top of the organisation.

Culling the senior management teams was a financial imperative, but the cuts have gone too far and some senior teams are now ‘too small to function’ and there is no capacity. Bringing in consultants may be a quick fix but we hear stories about consultants using off-the-shelf solutions that they assume will work because it has been tried and tested elsewhere. As we all know, different solutions work in different places, and not all local authorities are the same.

And with the large amount of churn in senior staff that is becoming more common, there is an impact on change programmes. Staff are asking ‘why should be bother when everyone moves on in two-three years’, it is suggested.

One debater says their council has given senior officers ‘reverse mentors’, staff from lower down in the organisation to help them understand what all this change feels like. But beware.



‘The worst thing to do is bring groups together and ask them what they think and then you ignore it. If people think they are being listened to, they will be more open to change.’

The conversation turns to branding, with councils often using labels like ‘commissioning council’ or ‘co-operative council’ to explain what they are trying to achieve.

One of our senior officers tells the round table of a council where the chief described his authority as a ‘horses for courses council’ that commissioned where it needed to, and enabled where it needed to. When asked if there was a strategy for that he said: ‘No, we just do it.’ Another debater commented: ‘If you are running an organisation with different offshoots, what brands keep them together? That’s when culture comes in. It is all about embedding a culture to which staff can relate. If you get that right people will sometimes understand difficult decisions, even if these impact on them.’

One of the cultural changes in recent years has been smart working and allowing people to work from home – or remotely elsewhere. It has been a success, cutting desk space and costs and making it easier to hire for some of the

Round table participants

Jennifer Brake	Service director of strategy and change, City of Wolverhampton Council
John Henderson	Chief executive, Staffordshire CC
Angela Probert	Chief operating officer, Birmingham City Council
Ricky Ricketts	Regional director, BT, Midlands and East of England
Adam Truelove	Account director, BT, Midlands and East of England
Michael White	Partnership director, local government and health, BT
Michael Burton	Editorial director, <i>The MJ</i> (chair)
Heather Jameson	Editor, <i>The MJ</i>

barriers to change



harder to recruit roles where the Midlands competes with London-based jobs.

But for one authority, there has been a shift. Staff don't

Key findings from *The MJ/BT survey into organisational change*

79% of senior council directors think organisational culture is critical to implementing digital transformation

86% have experienced some or a lot of cultural resistance to change

69% say cultural resistance has disrupted their transformation plans

71% say their staff don't see the need for change

62% say their staff don't understand technology

88% say resistance to change comes from middle management

71% believe it is up to the chief executive to manage the problem

always want to work in the isolation of their own home, so they are providing desks in libraries and other buildings as a result – all part of the digital revolution.

There are some easy answers for bringing staff on board – even the elusive middle managers – but what about elected members? One debater says: 'I'm finding members really resistant to change. They are very anti.'

For the politicians, it needs to be related back to what citizens need – and they need to see results. They work differently, and as one guest puts it: 'The officers are rational. We deal with statistics. Members deal with stories.'

With all this digital change, we are reminded of a key fact: 'You don't save a penny on digital until you switch off the analogue.' There is always a risk when you opt into a new system: 'The danger is you get a great idea just after you have refreshed your system.'

With the technology moving forward so quickly, when is the optimum time to buy? 'Part of this agenda is about risk appetite. Do you wait until you have the full picture before you make a decision?' someone asks. The answer that comes back is simple: 'You can't wait.' ▶

Commentary on the round table by Ricky Ricketts, regional director, BT, Midlands and East of England

I was delighted to share an evening discussing opinions with such influential and inspirational people. No surprises that whatever the barriers to growth we identified were, the answer was simple – consistent leadership. Sustainable change will only happen if all stakeholders truly believe in a shared purpose. At BT it is our purpose to deliver measurable value to public sector organisations in the Midlands and the East of England so we can help to make lives better for their citizens.

The panel also vehemently agreed that technology does not alone bring change – it enables the change you want to achieve. Nobody wakes up saying I wish I had an app and then designs it, but they do say 'I wish I had a quicker and more convenient way for our citizens to communicate with us and book services.'

We have a goal to be the public sector communications partner of choice for the region by the end of 2023 and look forward to turning those change projects into reality, utilising the technologies that are available today and those we will jointly develop for tomorrow.

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ACHIEVING A SMARTER DIGITAL FUTURE

Smart Cities

Most local authorities are aware of the Smart City concept but there is a mixed picture on implementation says the latest survey from The MJ and BT

Survey finds councils embrace Smart City but only a quarter are implementing it

Virtually all local authorities are aware of the concept of Smart City/Smart Place but only just over a quarter have a strategy actively underway, a third are developing one and over a third have no plans according to a survey of council directors by The MJ and BT.

The top priority areas for the application of Smart City are technical services like traffic management, street lighting and energy along with community safety and measures to help independent living for the elderly.

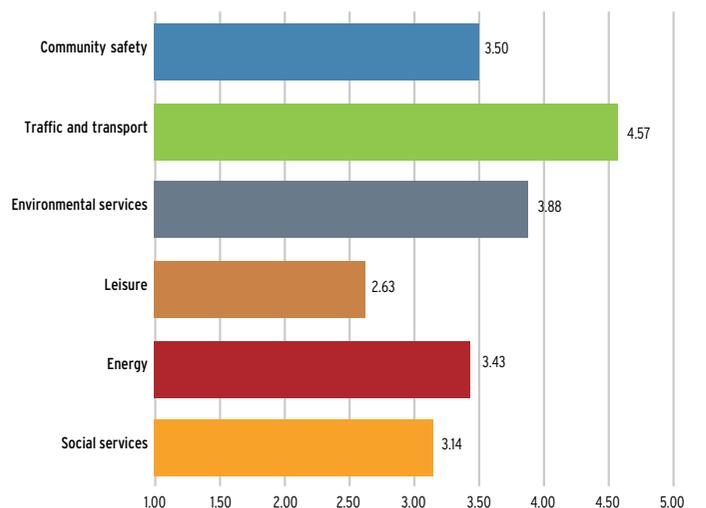
A Smart City is one that uses the latest technology and broadband for such initiatives as sensors, connected devices and real time analytics to solve its challenges, and plan a better environment for the future. An ideal Smart City has been described as one where every person can access real-time parking information, where urban parks offer free wi-fi and where rubbish collectors know when recycling bins are full.

An overwhelming 91% of respondents to The MJ/BT survey say they are familiar with the concept of Smart City/Smart Place but 36% admit they do not have such a programme in their local authority area. However 27% say they do have a strategy and a further 36% say it is 'under development' meaning almost two thirds have some form of Smart City programme either underway or being planned.

Three quarters of respondents who have a Smart City strategy say it is led by the local authority and a quarter say it is a joint venture with the private sector. An overwhelming 90% say it is part of a wider digital transformation strategy.

Even among those 27% who do not have a strategy, 80% are considering one. Of the 20% who are not, half say it is down to lack of funds, and a quarter say it is down to a lack of a private sector partner.

For those who do have a Smart City strategy, traffic management is the service most respondents prioritise followed in descending order by environmental



If Yes, what services are prioritised in your Smart City strategy? (1= low priority; 5 = top priority)

services, community safety (such as CCTV), energy, social services and leisure.

Respondents were asked for more detail within these six service areas. For traffic and transport respondents named congestion management, parking, passenger timetable information and passenger and staff safety as services most likely to be smart-enabled. For environmental services it is air quality, flood management, waste management/flytipping, then the state of roads and paths.

Within community safety the top areas cited by respondents as being most eligible for being smart-enabled are anti-social behaviour, security in open spaces, safety for lone workers and counter-terrorism. For energy priority areas named were vehicle charging,

smart lighting, power supply management and metering. For leisure respondents named internet access, mobility/cycle schemes, demographic analysis (for pinpointing customer usage) and parks management while in social services it is services to help the elderly live independently in their homes such as monitors for assisted living, personal location monitors and also safety for lone carers.

Respondents were asked to name those service areas where they felt the greatest savings might be made through a Smart City programme. The most popular answers were traffic congestion management, independent living for the elderly (such as the provision of monitors), smarter lighting and measures to reduce anti-social behaviour. ●

KEY FINDINGS:

- 91% of respondents are familiar with the Smart City concept
- 36% have a Smart City strategy
- 75% say their strategy is led by the council
- 89% say it is part of a wider digital transformation strategy
- Traffic and transport are the key priority areas for Smart City

Source: The MJ/BT survey

Surveillance solutions from BT: *A local authority case study*



Rugby World Cup kicks off surveillance conversion in Gloucester

By 2013, Gloucester City Council were old hands at public space surveillance. Their camera network and control room was nudging 15 years old. But as the equipment slipped into old age, it became more difficult to find replacement parts for it. And as the system increasingly needed more maintenance to keep it in action, costs began to rise. So the surveillance system wasn't in the rudest of health when the big news broke: Gloucester would be host city of the 2015 Rugby World Cup.

'BT delivered the project on budget, in a very tight timeframe, and worked closely with us throughout to deliver a system that's perfect for what we need'.

Gloucester City Council spokesperson

Gloucester enthusiastically embraced its host city status. With the realisation that in autumn 2015 the city would be abuzz with sports fans from around the globe, Gloucester City Council knew it had to act fast.

The failing analogue CCTV service would not be up to the job of keeping thousands of visitors safe for the six weeks of the tournament. As well as putting on several matches at the Kingsholm stadium, the city would be hosting teams and their entourages from some of the 20

nations competing for the Cup.

A wholesale replacement of the existing system was not financially viable. The council was keen to make the most of what they'd already got by upgrading the entire system to a digital solution.

That's where BT came in. They got their heads together with the city council to work out what they needed, not just to make a success of the Rugby World Cup, but to create something that would benefit everyone in Gloucester for years to come. What BT came up with was an innovative solution that laid the foundations for Gloucester becoming a 'smart city' (a city that uses technology to help authorities run public services in a canner fashion from a central control room).

Although Gloucester City Council was wary of busting the budget, which meant an upgrade rather than an across-the-board replacement, this didn't hobble its ambitions. Under a five-year fixed-price managed service contract, BT delivered a beefed-up system including:

- An upgraded IP fibre network.
- New high definition digital cameras.
- A state-of-the-art control room.

- An IP video-management system.
- High definition video storage platform.

Because BT based the design on the city's existing surveillance and control infrastructure, the council was able to avoid the disruptive civils normally associated with such large-scale projects, neatly sidestepping unnecessary dents in the city's coffers.

In a first for the UK, BT also used the CCTV infrastructure as the location for a network of wi-fi access points. This blanketed the city centre, the park, and the route up to the rugby stadium with free public wi-fi. The service shares the transmission infrastructure with the CCTV right back to the control room, where it connects to the BT wi-fi service platform.

BT say: 'Residents and visitors alike love it. We're not just saying that; we've got the proof. Over the past three years, the number of people signing into the wi-fi through the Gloucester-branded landing page has increased every month. It's a similar story for the volume of data passing over the network.'

As more authorities move from sodium street lighting to LED, older video cameras fail to make the cut. In the lower light produced by LED, cameras default to black and white, with grainy, low-definition images that are just too noisy to have any value.

This was the situation in Gloucester, where the control room was in the dark about what was happening on the streets at night. So when the council commissioned BT to upgrade their CCTV, it recommended digital HD cameras, which can capture high-quality colour images in low light.

The public wi-fi network isn't just a crowd-pleasing legacy of the Rugby World Cup. It's also positioned the city to take advantage of the Internet of Things, the collection of networking and data collection technologies driving the creation of smart cities

across the world. Gloucester City Council will be able to use the CCTV infrastructure for much more than straight public surveillance. Social inclusion, retail, tourism, public health, local business services, and the environment will all benefit from the smarter decisions that a connected city makes possible.

And the increased and widespread efficiencies will keep the council's finance folks happy, to boot.

'Gloucester is a smart city run by a savvy council,' says BT. Because it bundled the CCTV, control room, and wi-fi together as a combined project, the council reckoned it brought it all in for around £90,000 less than if it had opted for a series of separate initiatives.

By piggybacking the wi-fi onto the surveillance network at the same time, it was also able to deliver a higher-quality service than might otherwise have been possible.

Gloucester City Council were more than pleased with the outcome. 'We're delighted by the effectiveness of the new high-definition CCTV system and our upgraded control room. It's making a huge difference to the safety and wellbeing of our residents,' said a spokesperson. ●

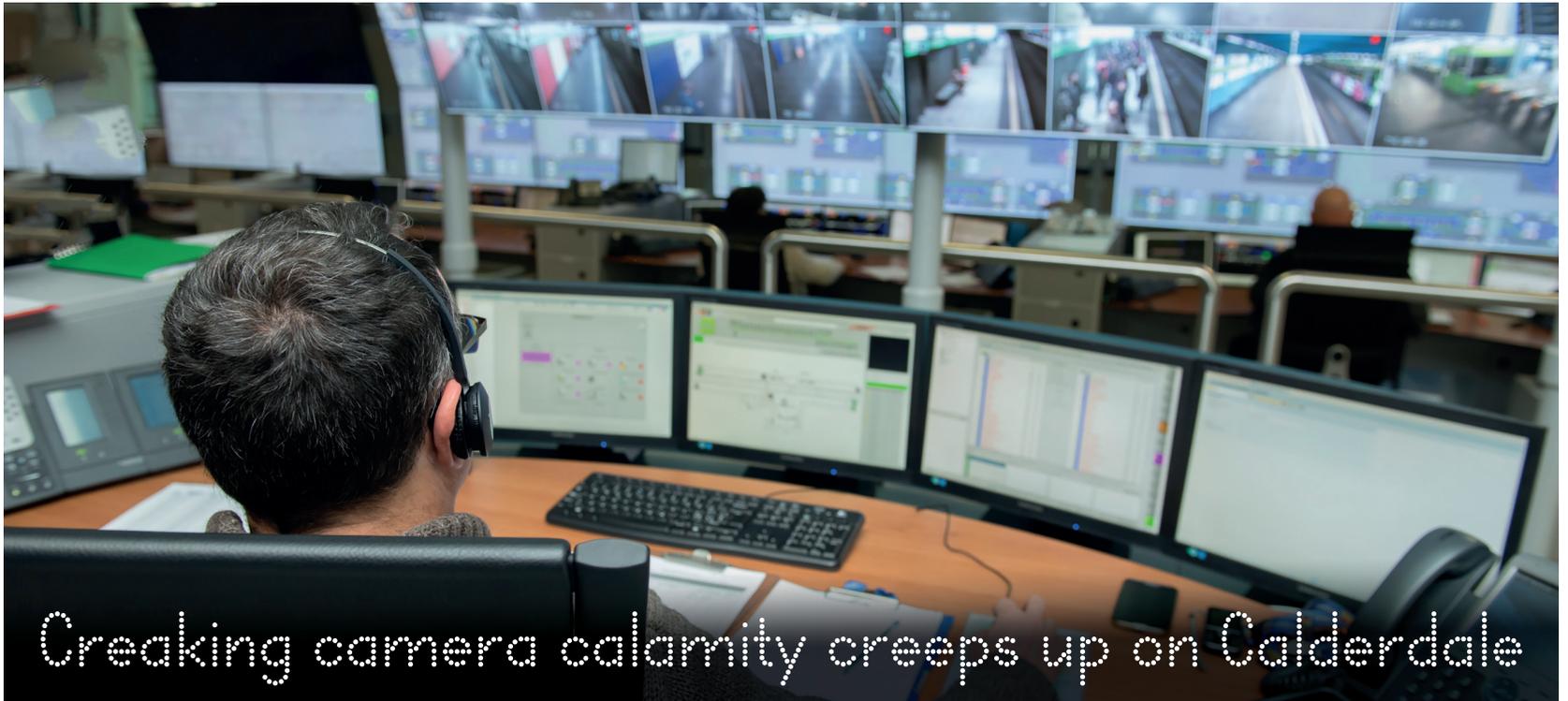
If you want to know more about BT surveillance solutions, its dedicated brochures are:

There's more to surveillance than meets the eye: an introduction to surveillance solutions.

Safety and security in motion: surveillance and public transport.

Stop crime in its tracks, secure convictions in court: surveillance and the police.

For more information visit: [head to bt.com/surveillance](http://bt.com/surveillance) or contact 0800 032 0025.



Calderdale MBC realised it needed to replace its old surveillance system, which it had been relying on to keep citizens safe & reassured since 2003.



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- Cameras with powerful zoom facilities that deliver HD-quality CCTV images while using less power and with improved night vision.
- Better recording abilities.
- More effective community safety, as they've been able to expand the geographic reach of the network with high quality image capture.
- Reduction in ongoing costs.
- Cheaper procurement costs through using a framework agreement.

Calderdale MBC's 15 year-old system was not just old hat, it was unreliable. Cameras and recording equipment needed constant and costly attention to keep them in working order.

But perhaps the most pressing problem was that the council had already pushed the system to its limits: it couldn't be expanded any further. That meant the council couldn't install new cameras to cover public spaces that were not even on the map back in 2003.

To procure a new surveillance system, Calderdale MBC turned to a Crown Commercial Services framework agreement with Virgin Media Business (VMB). VMB in turn contracted CCTV services through Surveillance Solutions from BT (under its previous name, BT Redcare Surveillance).

BT was keen to make sure that Calderdale didn't run into similar expansion-restricting problems in the next 15 years, so it completely upgraded all of the analogue circuits to digital, giving the council flexibility to expand the system easily and comprehensively.

As usual with its customers, we, BT, fully project-managed planning, delivery, installation, and training of the solution:

- We replaced all cameras with new Bosch HD Mici IP (digital) cameras.
- We provided a new umbrella portal using Physical Security Information Management (PSIM) software, which brings different CCTV and security systems together into a single user interface.
- We installed a new Bosch video storage platform, capable of HD recording; LED video screens; and an IP flexible virtual matrix.
- We're continuing to provide full maintenance and service.

How Calderdale's CCTV pays its way

Investing in a modern surveillance system is a revenue opportunity.

It's not just about watching stuff on screens; it can also help you cut costs and generate revenue.

Calderdale MBC know this. Because its command and control centre can integrate multiple disparate surveillance systems, it doesn't just run its public services, it supplies services to the private sector.

Controlling over 100 cameras for Pennine Housing (a social housing association) and providing out-of-hours CCTV coverage for The Woolshops Shopping Centre is helping to mitigate the costs of the public system.

Although it is dealing with different third party camera systems, plus, in the city centre, its own Bosch camera network, Calderdale's Qognify PSIM platform integrates them into a single Graphical User Interface (GUI).

Because the systems all look the same to the operators in the control room, Calderdale can easily manage surveillance for other organisations.

Points of view

Although Calderdale manages its surveillance system for the usual activities: catching criminals red-handed, traffic management, keeping a watchful eye on large scale events, and so on, like many local authorities they also have local challenges to counter.

Advanced flood warning

Following the catastrophic flooding in the region on Boxing Day 2015 when the rampaging river Calder burst its banks, Calderdale MBC recognised an urgent need for better flood defence monitoring.

BT had the ideal solution: the Minicam, a small, wireless, highly portable camera that you can deploy very rapidly indeed. The council is now using these cameras at strategic locations along the Calder, remotely monitoring prime flood areas. If the floods return, it can quickly assess the scale of the problem and react appropriately, fast.

One of the clever things about the re-deployable camera approach is that the council can switch them to other locations easily. Which is exactly what it did when the Tour De Yorkshire whizzed through the area and when the BBC's Antiques Roadshow rolled into town. Then, when the events were over, the council was able to return the cameras to their previous locations by the river without any hassle.

Something else that caught the eye of the council was BT's in-vehicle surveillance solutions. Calderdale snapped up four in-vehicle mobile cameras for use in one of their liveried vans, which they're using for ad hoc surveillance activities out in the community. Because Calderdale uses encoder technology to live stream video from the van directly back to the control room, it doesn't have to waste time recording footage on-site that it then has to manually deliver back to HQ. It all happens in real-time, which is a real boon. ●

For more information visit: bt.com/surveillance or call 0800 032 0025





From Safe to Smart.

How traditional CCTV can enhance your Smart Cities plan

Building and running a smart city means you can make the right decisions quickly and react faster, redirecting resources to where they'll be most effective. With security at the heart, make your city more attractive, your services more efficient, and your communities more personal to your citizens and visitors. Make it smart, make it secure.

The survey results indicate that two thirds of respondents already have or are developing a Smart City agenda. With budgets under constant pressure, can existing CCTV infrastructure provide part of the solution and save money?

Traffic and transport, environmental services and community safety are high priorities for a smart cities agenda and CCTV probably already monitors key areas. There is great interest in managing congestion and providing real time information on the availability of parking and public transport. Traffic data is central to this vision as it provides both immediate

information on congestion, but also builds up into a larger picture of patterns of journeys taken.

Today highways departments can get a measure of traffic volumes in an area by deploying temporary traffic counting devices on a road or conducting a manual survey. This gives a view of the number of vehicles passing a location for different times of the day, but this data cannot be used to inform smart city systems because it isn't real-time and doesn't give any insight on journey patterns.

A CCTV operator can already get a sense of traffic conditions or bus locations as part of the normal job monitoring the screens. However without automated analysis, video data is not an ideal solution for a smart city because it is both subjective and a manual process. CCTV can do a lot more than merely record moving images and modern upgrades allow the tracking of vehicles and people through clever object and person recognition allowing real-time information on the time taken for a given journey across a city. This intelligence combined with live air quality data offers the possibility to optimise traffic congestion management both for the motorist and those sharing the road environment.

As our transport movements evolve with our changing work and leisure lifestyles, it is important to maintain this live information and not rely on historic data. To obtain the best information on transport patterns may require additional sensors beyond existing CCTV locations. Fortunately, lower cost cameras such as those supplied by BT to Transport for Greater Manchester are available that can be mounted on, for example, traffic lights and require little more than a connection to the existing power together with secure Wi-Fi or 3/4G data services.

Secure the information to prevent data breach

Irrespective of the types of sensors deployed, it is important that they can all share data securely and

reliably. This can be done with a BT umbrella portal which brings different CCTV and security systems together. Hacked cameras could be used to extract video from the network for nefarious purposes that could present a significant privacy threat to the citizen. Encryption of data across the network is a good defence against this risk, but changing the encryption keys on a device mounted high up requires a further level of secure automation. Existing CCTV locations connected by fibre networks offer some protection but they should still be reviewed to see if encryption is required. Extracting data from fibre-optic cables is perfectly possible; existing fibre encryption devices will suffice until BT's quantum key fibre encryption product is available.

Smart city automation needs reliable data

Remember the integrity and availability of the data on this network is paramount. Missing or fictitious vehicle transport information could wreak havoc on systems e.g. automated traffic light management and ultimately lead to gridlock. Video data is less vulnerable, but ultimately the overall security of a smart city network could be compromised by any vulnerable device. It is imperative that every new device or camera is secured to protect the whole community. A perimeter firewall security control around the sensor network will not suffice. Instead a more holistic approach is required that protects data, wherever it happens to be in the network at any given time.

Control and protect access to data

There is potential to produce a vast amount of data that will move quickly across different applications;



what purposes. I and other security writers, often list insider threat as one of the least understood risk. It is where one of your employees deliberately accesses and leaks sensitive data and often ranks alongside any external cyber threat in its importance. To counteract this threat, the authentication and authorisation controls mentioned above and full auditing should also apply to any data access by an operator.

A CCTV operator requires full access to the video feed, but personal data automatically extracted from it and other sensors should undergo secure anonymisation before storage. A cryptographic hash of a vehicle registration together with some ephemeral data e.g. hour of day would be sufficient to track a journey across town and build traffic patterns without leaving an indelible record of whereabouts. Public trust is paramount if they are going to support the smart city agenda and not view it as a Big Brother surveillance program.

Central to this is good data security, backed up with rigorous controls and ethical operations. A data breach is more likely without these controls and this could seriously erode the required public trust.

An investment in existing CCTV to upgrade cameras to high definition with night vision, underpinned by a full digital network, brings many advantages to the city and its people. Citizen safety is immediately improved.

The network can also provide a foundation infrastructure for other Smart City sensors allowing the data to be brought together in a single portal with secure shared advanced analytics. Other Smart City applications can then benefit from this intelligence without compromising security. ●

Mike has over 25 years' experience in IT, predominantly in systems integration and business transformation. His specialism extends across a broad spectrum of technologies from networking and service optimisation to information security. During his career Mike has worked with a range of government and private sector organisations to help them develop secure IT solutions.

Mike is enthused about the power of communications to transform the world we live in, enabling both speed and democratisation of information sharing. He believes that security is at the heart of this, protecting information we care about and providing trust that data we hold is genuine.

During the past 10 years Mike was responsible for the architecture and design for a complex communications service that provided security across multiple government departments.

This has involved all elements of the delivery lifecycle, through design, delivery and service management. This lead role gave Mike the insight to take strategic decisions that reconciled the customer, commercial and security requirements. His judgement on information security is often sought by customers and he has developed trusted relationships with customers.

He has witnessed the rise of malicious attacks on networks from the origins of the Internet to today's highly engineered targeted attacks. The growth of cloud computing brings many business benefits but introduces new issues to keep the data secure. Continual innovation is required in security protection, and Mike continuously develops and adapts his knowledge of effective defence strategies.

Mike is a member of the Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET) and a Chartered Engineer (CEng). He graduated from University of Newcastle upon Tyne with an Honours degree in Computer Science. Living in Northumberland, Mike spends time on his sports, family and love of Italian cars.

cloud providers with artificial intelligence solutions making sense of it all. The authentication and authorisation controls to access the data are central to restricting what people and systems can access and for

Mike Pannell is CTO Cyber Security, BT Major Business and Public Sector

Mike Pannell describes how security can be at the heart of a Smart City programme



A winning approach to care and health

St Helens MBC and its partners have addressed the pressing challenges of rising health and care demand and falling budgets with a programme that this year made it a winner in the Care and Health Integration category in *The MJ Awards 2018*

By 2037, it is estimated that the number of people aged over 80 in St Helens will have tripled. The borough has distinct challenges that are also increasing pressure on services such as falls, mental health and high numbers of children with disabilities or who are vulnerable and need care. But while demand is increasing, funding is decreasing across all its public services which has resulted 'in an unprecedented sustainability challenge for the borough,' according to the council's award submission.

The council and its partners realised two years ago that action had to be taken. If it was not, a deficit of £101m was forecast by 2020/21. They realised that health, care and community services were part of a fragmented system which operated almost independently of each other. To address the challenge, a borough-level response was required, and in 2016 the people's board was created. Combining the statutory duties of the community safety partnership and the health and wellbeing board, the new people's board extends beyond typical health and social care partners to include organisations across other public and third sector bodies. The board then agreed a mission statement: 'Improving people's lives in St Helens, together, by tackling the challenge of cost and demand.' Under its auspices the council, the clinical commissioning group, other NHS organisations, housing, voluntary sector and other partners including the police, fire service, healthwatch and probation began to explore how to deliver an integrated local care system.

The result was the St Helens Cares programme, which is now driving this new collaborative, place-based approach to deliver the borough's local care system.

Its specific aim is to save at least £80m across the system by 2020 by integrating commissioners and providers, promoting community resilience, creating one St Helens 'front door.' As Sarah O'Brien, the council's strategic director, people's service and accountable officer for the CCG, says: 'We want everyone to wear a St Helens Cares lanyard and it doesn't matter where you come from.'

To deliver these objectives, a multi-organisational design and delivery team has been established for 18 months and the St Helens Cares partners have contributed £1.6m in investment to drive the programme forward, in particular to fund the team.

St Helens Cares has created one integrated business intelligence team for the entire system including health commissioners, providers and the council, hosted by the acute trust. As the award entry states: 'This provides one version of the truth, with arguments, disputes and duplication removed. A single dashboard reporting the impact of integrated and collaborative provision via improved outcomes and finance savings across the system, re-enforces the benefits of, and maintains the pace and momentum of, collaborative working.'

There are obstacles with the integration of staff from



Presenter Alan Johnson, Cllr Derek Long, Geoffrey Appleton, Cllr Gill Neal, Ann Marr, Mike Roscoe, Cllr Marlene Quinn, Cath Fogarty, Professor Sarah O'Brien, Michelle Wood, Caroline Barlow, Glen Garrod (ADASS) at *The MJ Awards*

different organisations such as workforce culture, IT systems, terms and conditions, expectations and standards. This has been overcome with dedicated resources for the following key enablers: workforce, IT, IG, finance, estates, comms and engagement.

St Helens Cares has seen improvements in early intervention with voluntary sector contracts pooled instead of the previous complex system of multiple contracts. There is a 'front door' to one access point into services called Contact Cares staffed by a multi-disciplinary team comprising care managers, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and general nursing. Streamlined referral management systems allow people to be directed to services appropriate to meet need.

Within the four localities of St Helens, services are being wrapped around the individual, closely linked to GP practices. The council, the acute trust and the CCG have agreed to split the funding three ways to implement an integrated health and care record. Risk stratification is targeting resources most effectively, on the basis that 20% of its population consumes 80% of resources.

There is now one provider that delivers acute and community nursing around localities for individuals who have multiple conditions to identify innovative, cross-organisation solutions

High numbers of people attending A&E were previously causing the greatest pressure in the system. A frailty strategy has helped co-ordinate services for frail and elderly with a specialist geriatric assessment service and more appropriate early interventions. A hospital avoidance car is now the first responder to 'green' ambulance calls, resulting in a 34% rate of conveying an individual to hospital compared to a 71% conveyance rate following a visit from an ambulance. The financial savings are £99,317 to date. An improved discharge lounge means patients free up beds earlier on the day of discharge, allowing new patients access to in-patient beds. Additional social work, reablement and transport capacity

in A&E, has ensured that delayed discharges are minimised and was particularly crucial over the difficult winter period leading into 2018. Over 70% of people who fall end up in A&E but in St Helens the rate is only 20%.

Council leader Cllr Derek Long says: 'The fact we're able to surmount unavoidable hurdles that bureaucracy throws up is down to trust. We've all got stakes in making this work.' Council chief executive Mike Palin adds: 'Our difference was the concept of democracy. Members had to understand not to tell organisations what to do but all organisations also had to listen to members.'

The award submission concludes: 'St Helens is taking an innovative, place-based approach to addressing the challenge of managing cost and demand in its health and social care services. Through a bespoke whole community approach, St Helens is developing its own unique local care system and delivering real benefits to residents at the same time as achieving more efficient use of resources.'

Judges said: 'The council has risen above local challenges due to the strength of its collaboration, shared vision and ambition for the local population. The creation of a genuine single health and care management team, the use of a strategic people's board, and the way the council has started to implement its vision on the ground is truly impressive. Judges also liked the way the collaboration extends beyond health and care to include housing, the police, fire service and probation.'

<p>Care and Health Integration St Helens MBC</p>	
<p>Finalists: Bexley LBC; Bradford City Council; Great Yarmouth BC; South Norfolk Council</p>	
<p>Highly commended: North Tyneside MBC; Salford City Council</p>	
<p>Commended: East Riding of Yorkshire Council; North Lincolnshire Council; Tameside MBC</p>	

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS 2019
THE MJ

The MJ Awards 2019 has launched – see p22-23 and visit awards.themj.co.uk for details

Let's rebuild support for our

Something is not right in the state of the relationship between local government and the voluntary and community sector – yet the importance of a productive collaboration has never been greater, argues **John Tizard**, the newly-elected chair of the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action

While local government and the local voluntary and community sector (VCS) are different, in truth, they have much in common.

One is part of our democratic system of governance and the other is at the heart of civil society. Councils have statutory duties to serve communities, while the other voluntarily serves communities.

Both are being financially squeezed as a result of austerity and rising demand for their services – and they wish to do their best to protect, serve and support communities.

They are, in many senses, interdependent – but they are failing to recognise this, especially local government.

Let's consider the bleakness that increasingly has become the reality in so many places across the country. Local authorities are struggling to meet even their basic statutory duties. Local authority and NHS services increasingly are unable to meet demand.

Critical services such as mental health, Sure Start and other family and child support services are being cut. The impact of the Government's so called 'welfare reforms' including the role out of Universal Credit are leaving individuals and families destitute.

Crime is rising in many places. Homelessness and rough sleeping are both rising. Society cohesion is being stretched and in too many cases it is breaking. The litany of social failure and social hardship is actually much longer than this short version.

It is bleak and even when local authorities wish to respond they are constrained by their lack of finance and other resources.

When a local authority cannot or chooses not to respond it is often informal spontaneous social action or more organised VCS groups that step in.

The list of such interventions will be familiar to local government leaders. For example, local VCS groups played and continue to make a very important contribution after horrendous incidents such as the Grenfell Tower fire.

Such social action is as invaluable to communities as it is to local authorities. Without it the pressures on authorities are even greater.

Social action and VCS activity is not and should never be a substitute for a properly funded and active state at local and national level. They can complement and nudge the state, not replace it. But when I speak to local government officials and leaders and ask who their key stakeholders are, too infrequently I do not hear the words 'the voluntary sector' or 'the community sector'. This is sad to put it mildly.

Regrettably the very austerity that is causing so much damage to communities is also often driving wedges between the two sets of organisations. Even more regrettably these wedges have been made bigger by local authorities seeing the VCS simply as contractors or being there to step in when the public sector steps aside.

These approaches undermine partnership and trust. Similarly, when the VCS criticises and campaigns against local authority decisions, especially cuts driven by central government, it should be careful not to deny local government's financial constraints and its many competing pressures on diminishing resources.

It is crucial there is good and effective dialogue between local authorities and the local VCS. Traditionally local infrastructure bodies such as councils of voluntary services (CSVs) and their equivalent have been the interlocutor and, in many places, this remains the case. Such VCS infrastructure bodies, of course, play a much greater and wider role than simply being communication channels between their members in the VCS and local government.

A strong, vibrant local VCS benefits from the support of effective local infrastructure organisations. Usually this comes in the form of advice, capacity-building, brokering alliances and partnerships between local groups – providing a collective voice to local government and the wider public sector, and sometimes supplying shared services. Such bodies nurture local civil society.



Collaboration between local government and the VCS is needed now

Local infrastructure bodies can support the VCS to contribute to the strategic deliberations of local government, to understand the impact of their policy and service interventions, to place shaping and to assist local authorities to better understand the social conditions and pressures and community needs in their places.

Sadly, over the last few years, and again not least because of austerity-inspired cuts, some local infrastructure bodies have been forced to close and others have had their capacity greatly diminished. This decline in number and capacity is deeply disabling for local authorities and their communities.

When I speak to local government officials and ask who their key stakeholders are, too infrequently I do not hear the words 'the voluntary sector' or 'the community sector'

Council support for local voluntary and community sector infrastructure bodies has been seriously eroded. And, in too many places, it has ended. This is tragic and short-sighted, is not in the interests of local authorities and has been deeply damaging to the VCS and, in turn, local communities.

In my opinion, local VCS infrastructure bodies should be fully accountable to their members rather than to local



voluntary bodies



more than ever; (below, left) the Grenfell Tower fire highlighted the vital contribution these groups can make at important times

government or any other part of the public sector. It is a strong reason why no local authority should put its support for local VCS infrastructure bodies out to competitive tendering.

They should respect the right of local VCS bodies to establish their own infrastructure bodies. There are examples where local authorities while contracting have recognised that they may be letting the contract – but are not beneficiary of the contract – so have involved VCS organisations in the contracting process. This is fine but second best to allowing the sector to determine its infrastructure body and to support this body through grant-aid.

Of course, not every local infrastructure body is effective, representative, accountable to the local VCS or well governed. In such circumstances, I recognise it will be difficult if not impossible for a local authority to support such bodies. Even so, this does not provide cover for a local authority to cease its support for and engagement with the VCS and local infrastructure bodies.

VCS and infrastructure bodies must be willing to convince local government to support local infrastructure. However, in so doing, they should be careful about their choice of language and their actions. This is about persuasion, not attack. It is not about entitlement either. It also requires evidence and commitment.

Local VCS infrastructure bodies and the wider VCS would be well advised to demonstrate their respect for, and understanding of, local government's democratic

legitimacy. They should acknowledge local government's financial crisis and what this means for policy and budgets. They can do all of this without compromising themselves or forfeiting their ability and right to challenge and campaign, even against a local authority.

We need a new dialogue between the VCS and local government at the national and the local level. We need to be building alliances not least in demanding that central government end austerity and adequately fund local government and other local services.

I have recently been elected by local VCS infrastructure bodies to become chair of their national organisation NAVCA. One of my election pledges was to work to improve the understanding and relations between the VCS infrastructure bodies and local government and between NAVCA and the national local government bodies.

It is in the mutual interest of local government and the VCS and more fundamentally in the interests of communities across the country for these relationships to be strengthened and where necessary revitalised. Having been a joint council leader, and as a citizen and social activist I know how important and mutually beneficial these relationships can be. ▸

John Tizard is an independent strategic advisor and commentator on public policy and chair of the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) – the membership body for local voluntary sector support and development organisations in England

Partnerships – it's time to come together

Haydn Scarborough, Business Development Director of ENGIE UK discusses how we can bring partnerships together

What a year it has been – with an ageing population, a reduction in central funding and a deteriorating infrastructure, the extraneous pressures on local government have reached a tipping point. Within this context the sector continues to argue that strong and vibrant communities need investment beyond that required for provision of only statutory services. In a world where rising demand and growing complexity prevail, the public and private sectors need to re-imagine what is possible, to bring about positive change in delivering outcomes that address society's most urgent needs.



The year has seen some dramatic sector headlines, with Northamptonshire, Somerset, Norfolk, East Sussex, Surrey and Lancashire County Councils all being put in the spotlight, matched by the collapse of Carillion and concerns regarding other outsourcing providers. All this may lead some to believe that the public sector, and those who work predominantly alongside it, is in crisis.

Trusted and agile collaboration underpins successful outcomes

Crisis may be one headline, growing challenges another. Whichever you prefer, one thing is certain – transformational change in how services are managed and delivered is urgently needed. Change based on understanding priority outcomes is needed now to address the growing catalogue of national pinch points.

Clearly defined needs and a mutual understanding of the expected outcomes by all stakeholders should be the foundation on which all services and projects are agreed and delivered. There should be shared measures of success embedded in the early thinking of service commissioners, with a heavy dose of flexibility built in to any contractual terms. Agreements around partnership working should recognise, embrace and allow for the fact that parameters, demands and needs change over time, that risk and reward needs to be shared and that a race to the bottom is not the solution.

Trusted and agile collaboration underpins successful outcomes. Successful relationships require co-design, shared knowledge, honest assessment of both risk and cost of delivery, a common goal and a true understanding of why selected services or projects need to be delivered rather than how.

What will a post-Brexit Britain look like? No one knows, but one thing is for sure – we desperately need a new way of thinking, of working and of delivering the outcomes that shape place, economies and communities.

When we are facing uncertainty, it's imperative that we join forces. We've seen first-hand how collaborative working, partnerships and shared risk can deliver. A joined-up approach enables good quality housing provision, economic growth and transforms services for the benefit of all. ■

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When two become one

Amid high profile reorganisation battles, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney DCs have calmly and quietly merged to become the first ‘super district’. **Heather Jameson** talks to East Suffolk chief executive Stephen Baker about the journey



Stephen Baker (pictured) is set to be the main man at the new East Suffolk Council; (top right) the council's Riverside HQ; (bottom right) the council's Melton HQ

After a decade of shared services and joint working, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney DCs will finally become one ‘super district’ in April next year. They will be East Suffolk Council.

The merger will mark more than ten years in post as a shared chief executive for Stephen Baker, who took on the dual role in April 2008. Come 1 April, he will be back to running just one local authority as all the staff, offices and now councillors finally come together.

‘In East Suffolk, we are creating the biggest district council in the country, with a quarter of a million residents,’ Mr Baker explains. ‘The merger is underway, everything has been done in parliament, it is going to happen. But it is what is going to happen in the next five to ten years that really matters.’

May will see the council's first elections, taking the number of councillors down from 90 across the two existing districts to 55 in the new authority.

Mr Baker says it was a remarkably easy to achieve the merger given the consensus – unlike the difficulties associated with more conventional reorganisations which require scrapping layers of local government.

He describes collaborative working as ‘part of our DNA’ across the whole of Suffolk, between the district, county, health sector and other partners.

While other authorities have been caught up in merger battles, East Suffolk has cut costs by sharing services, and continued to work in partnership with the county.

‘The members wanted it and we were pushing at an open door.’

‘It sums up what has made this part of the work successful. The members decided it was the right thing to do. They said: “The officers have all merged and so should we”.

‘This is logical. It is the next step. It's financially sound but it enables us to speak more powerfully for

our communities, to the Government, to the LEAs,’ Mr Baker says. ‘The representation is going to be much stronger than two district councils – and that is already happening.’

There will be new governance structures, to ensure councillors remain in touch with the communities. ‘When we did the consultation, the only downside was that the public said they liked having us close.’

‘There’s a local culture – a stoicism – people just get on and do it. That’s what the council is like. We just quietly get on and do stuff. But we deliver.’

As a result, community partnerships will be developed with councillors, parishes, the voluntary sector and other partners to create key forums for councillors to work with their communities – and, in essence, maintain the local connections which are critical to districts.

They are ‘massive infrastructure projects’ that will boost the local economy dramatically, too, including a new power station and a bridge crossing at Lowestoft, and brownfield sites identified for redevelopment and to meet the local housing needs.

Brexit may be a dominant issue across the whole of the country, but it is potentially a ‘big opportunity’ for East Suffolk, which is considering the options for expanding the port at Felixstowe to accommodate people struggling with queues at Dover.

It is just the start, the council's chief tells *The MJ*, as the whole council is poised for a change. ‘We want to continue to be very innovative,’ he says. With BT's

research and development headquarters, Adastral Park, on the doorstep the council is ‘inspired’ to think digitally. ‘We are pushing hard at the online agenda.’

When it comes to e-government, he is keen to push the boundaries. Under the current rules, all decisions made by a council require the councillors to be present, an archaic rule that doesn't fit with modern local democracy.

Mr Baker asks why votes can't be taken remotely. With the increasing use of remote conferencing in the private sector, local democracy is lagging behind when it comes to accessing meeting through technology – something he would love to see changed.

The county is a mixture of urban, rural and coastal communities, each with their own challenges and opportunities. There are areas of outstanding natural beauty sitting alongside areas of deprivation. ‘All of human life is here.’

Mr Baker says there is a ‘quality of place’ and a quality of life on the east coast that you don't get elsewhere. He is currently recruiting for three senior posts at the council, covering housing, finance and communications – and he says the county has a lot to offer.

‘If you want to walk on the beach you can. If you want to walk inland, you can. If you want to see top notch art or culture, you can...if you are after heritage, we have that coming out our ears.’

‘There’s a local culture – a stoicism – people just get on and do it. That’s what the council is like. We just quietly get on and do stuff. But we deliver.’

‘The morale is brilliant because people feel they are in a council that wants to do things and move on,’ Mr Baker says. ‘I can see lots of councils looking at sharing. What I don't understand is why they haven't.’

The MJ Jobs – p27

Chief executives

Blackburn with Darwen BC chief executive **Harry Catherall** has announced he will retire at Easter, after 40 years in local government.

He will hand over the baton to his deputy, **Denise Park**, who has worked with him at the council for 21 years.

Mr Catherall began his local government career aged 16 at Tameside MBC before working at Stockport MBC and joining Blackburn with Darwen in 1997.

He said: 'I'm very proud that Denise is taking over the role. She is an outstanding and talented individual, with all the qualities needed to manage the council through its next phase.'

Council leader, Mohammed Khan, said: 'Harry has very high standards – he's extremely hard working and determined. I've worked very closely with him and I will really miss his open and honest approach. He has our full respect and we wish him a happy and long well-deserved retirement.'

Greenwich LBC's interim chief executive is set to land the job on a permanent basis.



Harry Catherall

An appointments panel meeting last week recommended that **Debbie Warren** be appointed to the role, which she has held on a temporary basis for more than a year.

Formerly the council's director of finance, Ms Warren stepped up to the chief executive role following the retirement of her predecessor, John Comber in August 2017.

The decision was due to go before members last night.

Directors

Bournemouth, Christchurch and



Denise Park

Poole (BCP) Council is set to appoint its first directors.

The senior appointments committee has put forward the recommendations following an internal recruitment process.

The committee has recommended that **Kate Ryan**, currently Poole BC's strategic director of place, is appointed to the role of director of environment and community and **Bill Cotton** is recommended as director of regeneration and economy, having served as executive director of environment and economy at **Bournemouth BC**.

Julian Osgathorpe will take up

the role of director of resources. Mr Osgathorpe is currently seconded as director of the BCP programme and executive director of corporate services across Bournemouth BC and Poole.

Jan Thurgood has been recommended for the role of director of adult social care. She is currently the strategic director of people at Poole.

The recommendations will be taken to the BCP shadow authority on 19 December.

West Midlands Combined Authority has appointed **Tracy Walters** as its head of human resources and organisation development.

Ms Walters previously worked in higher education for Lancaster University and has a background in both local and central government, working on transformation programmes and in equality and diversity.

She is also a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and is studying for an Institute of Leadership & Management level five qualification in coaching and mentoring.



Darra Singh

Central government

Darra Singh has been appointed by home secretary

Sajid Javid to investigate the use of DNA testing on immigrants.

The Home Office wrongly forced immigrants to supply DNA as part of visa applications and illegally rejected some applicants who refused to comply.

Mr Singh, who is Ernst & Young's government and public sector lead, has been tasked with conducting an independent assessment on the Home Office's response and efforts to address the issue.

Members

Tributes have been paid to

former **Shropshire Council** member **David Lloyd** in the wake of his death.

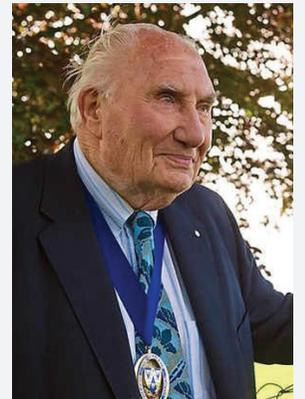
Mr Lloyd's local government career began in 1977 when he was elected to Shropshire CC, before going on to sit on Oswestry BC in 2003 and Shropshire Council in 2009, standing down in May 2017, aged 85.

He held the position of leader of Oswestry BC, chair of Shropshire Health Authority, speaker and deputy chairman of Shropshire Council, and was an honorary life Governor of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society.

Mr Lloyd received an MBE for his work with the National Farmers' Union during the foot and mouth outbreak of the 1960s and became an Honorary Alderman of Shropshire Council last year.

Council chairman, Cllr Ann Hartley, said: 'It was a privilege to have known and worked alongside David Lloyd and I was deeply saddened to hear the news of his passing.'

His family followed in his footsteps in public service, with son Mark serving as chief executive of the Local Government Association and



David Lloyd

granddaughter Abi Pemberton, working in Shropshire's children's services.

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Epping Forest District Council Chief Executive

When your patch is predominantly rural and yet it is served by eight London Underground stations, you know you're dealing with somewhere that's a little out of the ordinary.

It's one of the reasons Cllr Chris Whitbread, leader of Epping Forest District Council, believes the local authority offers 'a chance to be part of something quite special' to whoever becomes its next chief executive.

More than half of the district's population lives around its southern border with Greater London but the vast majority of Epping Forest is made up of market towns, villages and green spaces like the ancient woodland that it takes its name from.

In common with many areas in and around the capital, demand for development land is high and the district has huge potential for growth. But with 93% of its area being designated green belt, accommodating the need for more homes, commercial space and infrastructure while protecting its natural assets is something of a balancing act.

When the council submitted the district's Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate in September, planning portfolio holder Cllr John Philip described it as 'without doubt the most complex project we have ever undertaken'.

He added that the Plan 'acknowledges the need for change and growth while protecting the most precious things we love about our district and makes it the place in which we wish to live'.



The Plan is expected to deliver 11,400 homes by 2033 and the new chief executive will have the challenging task of ensuring it's taken forward to eventual implementation, says Cllr Whitbread.

But they will be joining a new-look council that's geared up to embrace growth and invest in the district.

Earlier this year Epping Forest District recruited a new leadership team of strategic and service directors as part of a shake up in its senior management and wider transformation. It's all about 'providing strategic capacity to support the council's programme', says Cllr Whitbread, in order to

ensure new developments are used as a lever for greater investment in local infrastructure.

Guiding the workforce through this period of change will be a key task for the new chief executive and his team

The leadership team will be on hand to support the new chief executive across every aspect of the council's business.

That includes guiding an exciting pipeline of developments. The district's proximity to London

combined with great connectivity and high standard of living bring huge demand for growth.

For example, Epping Forest is a partner with East Hertfordshire and Harlow councils in a garden town development. It will create an urban extension for Harlow that includes parts of the district and will pave the way for around 15,000 homes.

The council has committed significant resources for new housing since it restarted its council house building programme in 2014. It's a reflection both of its drive to provide much-needed housing and also the local authority's strong financial position and willingness to invest.

Last year it opened the £30m Epping Forest Shopping Park in Loughton, which is now fully let and is creating jobs and an income stream for the council.

The council is now working on plans to redevelop its civic base and relocate to new offices that will form part of a wider development in Epping alongside a community leisure centre, a swimming pool and potentially a new cinema and shops.

As well as making the most of the local authority's assets, the new council accommodation will also

help to accelerate a shift towards smarter and more flexible working practices.

Guiding the workforce through this period of change will be a key task for the new chief executive and his team, says Cllr Whitbread, and he believes the successful candidate will be joining at the perfect time.

'The district is already doing well but there's so much potential to take it further,' says Cllr Whitbread.

With strategic and service directors in place, we need the new chief executive to bring leadership and direction to the team. It will be someone who really wants to play an active role in taking the district forward.

'They will really believe in the local area and its potential. One of the strengths of the acting chief executive is his local knowledge – so we need someone who is really going to get to know the area and build a high profile.'

He adds: 'We've made a lot of changes that have brought a new dynamic to the council.'

'That's why we want somebody who will come to the role with real enthusiasm and energy who can lead the team and take Epping Forest forward.' ■



Chris Whitbread – Leader, Epping Forest Council

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Chief Executive ● up to £120k

To find out more and to apply, visit www.eppingcx.co.uk or contact Steve Guest or Terry McDougall at Solace in Business for a confidential discussion on 020 7976 3311.

Closing date: 4 January.



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As England's offshore energy capital and Norfolk's top seaside resort, Great Yarmouth is an excellent place to live and work – and the newly-formed senior management team are working successfully with colleagues, members and our partners to deliver for businesses and communities.

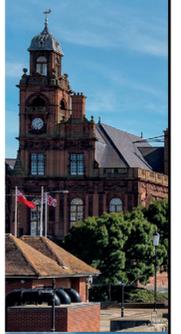
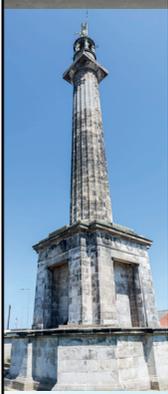
These **three exciting senior roles** – in HR, finance and corporate governance – will lead crucial teams supporting the whole council, contributing in their different ways to vital projects and services that are helping the borough to make the most of the area's major opportunities for economic development, regeneration and inward investment.

The borough is at the forefront of £39bn of energy investment over the next 20 years, including in offshore wind and gas platform decommissioning, and has a rich cultural heritage with a flagship tourism economy worth more than £625m each year.

While enjoying the special lifestyle that Norfolk has to offer, nestled between the Broads National Park and miles of stunning coastline, Norwich is just a short drive away and London is just two hours away, with connections due to be further enhanced through a £120m investment in a new Third River Crossing.

Great Yarmouth is a really exciting and dynamic place to work, with huge opportunities ahead – so if you are as ambitious as we are then we can offer you a varied and challenging role in the team, with opportunities for professional development and career progression.

We offer a friendly working environment with attractive terms and conditions, including generous holiday entitlement, flexible working, relocation package (where applicable) and membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme. Find out more and apply at gybc.engageats.co.uk For an informal discussion, call **Julie Cooke** on **01493 846267**. The council operates an equal opportunities policy. **Closing date: Wednesday, December 12.**



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For a confidential discussion please call our retained Penna consultants: Jo Cumper (for the Head of ICT and Digital) on 07925 894863, and Amanda Riley (for the AD Community Services) on 07710084020.

Closing date: Monday 7th January 2019.

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East Suffolk - leading the way

Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils have enjoyed 10 years of successful shared partnership working; delivering services to over 250,000 people in east Suffolk. With our organisations becoming one of the very first single 'Super District' Councils in April 2019, you could not be joining at a more exciting time. We are looking for three dynamic and experienced strategic thinkers to help us deliver change and cement our position as one of the country's most progressive public sector organisations.

Permanent positions based in either Melton (near Woodbridge) or Lowestoft - relocation package available

Chief Financial Officer Up to £74,291 pa*

A commercially-focused professional is required to lead our finance team and deliver a progressive efficiency programme for our organisation. You will also be the Council's Section 151 Officer and lead on the delivery of our medium-term financial strategy and commercial strategy.

Head of Customer Services and Communications Up to £63,678 pa*

We are seeking a talented innovator to manage all aspects of the Customer Services and Communications functions. You will drive our use of digital technology to deliver services for residents and exploit new communication channels, to better engage with customers, residents and businesses.

Head of Housing and Tenancy Services Up to £74,291 pa*

You will be a highly experienced housing professional, driving the strategic direction and leadership of all aspects of our service. This includes effective management of 4,500 council-owned homes; leading our self-financing development programme, Private Sector Housing and Homelessness Teams.

* Pay review pending.

To apply for any of these positions, please go to: www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk and click on 'Jobs'. For an informal discussion, please call Stephen Baker, Chief Executive on (01394) 444378. Closing date for all posts: midday, 2 January 2019. Interview dates: w/c 14 January 2019.



Suffolk Coastal & Waveney District Councils



in partnership
eastsuffolk.gov.uk

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This is a rare opportunity to join us at a senior level, developing and delivering a programme of research, analysis and communications to support local government leaders in representing the sector. You'll work across a rich range of issues – growth to social care, education to Brexit – and will engage with a stimulating and impressive group of stakeholders, including chief executives, peers in the field, select committees and senior civil servants.

We're offering unusual visibility and autonomy, so you need to demonstrate exceptional competence and intellectual capability. Your professional standards must be of the highest order, and your track record of achievement in a fast-moving political environment will illustrate your deft and rigorous approach to complex issues. Finally, you need to bring organisation and project management skills commensurate with a role at this level.

Visit www.solacepolicyteam.co.uk to find out more, or for an informal discussion please call Steve Guest on **020 7976 3311**.

Closing date: 7 January 2019.



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Consistently recognised as one of the UK's most desirable places to live, Horsham District has a great deal to offer to all who live, visit or work here. Due to internal promotions and retirements, the following roles will be available in the New Year.

Head of Leisure and Culture

£52,288-£56,555 pa

Closing date: 17 December 2018 – Middy

Democratic Services Manager

£36,153-£39,960 pa

Closing date: 2 January 2019 - Middy

Senior Electoral Services Officer

£29,055-£31,401 pa

Closing date: 2 January 2019 - Middy

Scrutiny & Committee Support Officer

£19,819-£28,221 pa (pro-rata 18.5 hours pw)

Closing date: 2 January 2019 - Middy

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Or contact our Practice Lead Jon Houlihan

jon.houlihan@gatenbysanderson.com

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Luke Judd, Partner

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14th May—16th May 2019



Hilton Birmingham Metropole



Service Director Education & Early Years

£ competitive

This decisive leadership role offers the opportunity to join Cornwall's highly rated Children's Service and shape the next stage of our development. Our innovative, integrated vision for Cornwall's children offers a new way of working which will transform the impact of schools and education, and will in turn transform outcomes for our children.

You'll lead on the full span of education accountabilities across Cornwall, promoting productive relationships with our schools, driving up educational attainment and improving opportunities for disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs. While it's essential that you're completely at home presenting to school leaders, success in our new integrated model will require you to perform in a range of settings and will demand closer working with social care and NHS colleagues. That's why we're looking for someone who truly believes in the benefits that integration brings, and who can make their own mark as they shape the fundamental role played by schools and education in our integrated **One Vision**.

Strong applicants may have held a headship in the past, but another professional route in education may also offer the perspectives and insight we seek. Flexible, open-minded and with strong relationship and influencing skills, you'll be able to demonstrate a track record of impactful leadership across education, social care and health. And, with exposure to all of these areas, there couldn't be a better grounding for career progression than the experience that this role offers.

Visit www.leading-cornwall.co.uk to find out more, or contact David Weir (07391 565064) or Hannah Malone (07843 662487) at Tile Hill for a confidential discussion.

Closing date: Friday 4 January 2019.



With around 1.2 million residents and an economy worth £35.9bn a year to the UK, we're expecting Hertfordshire's population to grow by 175,000 people over the next 12 years, creating new demands on our infrastructure and resources.

Director of Resources Competitive Salary

The appointment of our serving Director of Resources as our new Chief Executive creates an exciting opportunity for an ambitious Finance professional with exceptional abilities to join our highly regarded corporate leadership team. Your ability to be a s151 officer and lead a broad resources brief, ensuring that transformation happens at pace whilst taking the workforce with you on a new change journey, will determine your success.

As a County Council we have fully embraced good growth and want to ensure that we

deliver sustainable benefits for our residents and businesses. Just 30 minutes from central London, we want to raise Hertfordshire's profile and capitalise on the opportunities available by providing strong leadership of place including working collaboratively with local partners, government, GLA and other stakeholders to enable the delivery of high quality new homes and infrastructure.

We are looking for a high calibre professional with the confidence to support our Chief Executive and Leader to deliver on some critical agendas for the County Council. With accountability for Finance and corporate services, Transformation, and Libraries, your passion to lead and embrace change will set the standard for the rest of the County Council.

Chief Legal Officer Competitive Salary

This is a key post within the Resources

Directorate and will underpin our collaboration with partners such as land owners, developers and District councils. We want to be known as an organisation that is open for business.

Our new Chief Legal Officer will work closely with every Department, responding to new ideas with creativity - identifying options and choices to achieve excellent commercial outcomes whilst ensuring the very highest standards of governance.

Our legal service is well respected and looking to play an even greater role within the council and beyond and we are looking for a passionate, highly experienced and influential legal professional to lead the service into the future. As the County Council's Monitoring Officer, you will pride yourself on your standards of governance and probity but above all, you will enjoy thinking outside the box to help us deliver our ambitions.



For a confidential discussion about either role, contact Penny Ransley on 020 7426 3962, Zoe Thompson (Resources) on 0113 205 6094 or Tim Hills (Legal) on 0113 205 6085 or visit leadinghertfordshire.com Closing date for both posts: 21 December 2018.

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Metropolitan
Borough Council 

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REGENERATION AND
ENVIRONMENT**

Competitive salary

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**Director Corporate Resources
& Section 151 Officer**

Salary up to £120,000



We've got big plans for Somerset. It's a beautiful and vibrant place and we're ambitious about how it can grow. Our vision is focused on improving people's lives through innovative services that create a thriving and productive County, resilient and compassionate communities, successful partnerships, and support to those who need it most.

To underpin this vision we have taken, head on, the challenge of balancing our budgets for this year and next. Councillors and officers have made and will make some difficult choices as we know that operating within our financial means is essential. Based on our reframed finances, we have realistic and exciting plans for delivering our services.

We're seeing our social care services emerging as national trail-blazers and we've made big improvements in our children's services with more to come. Relationships with partners across the region are strong and constructive and we're working with businesses, the voluntary sector and Government on a range of exciting projects.

Reporting to the Chief Executive as the Authority's Chief Finance Officer, you will already have senior finance

experience in a local government setting and will be able to slot in to a dynamic and creative Senior Leadership Team. You'll be in the thick of it when it comes to delivering priorities and driving us forward, providing analysis and advice to the Chief Executive, directors and elected members.

Somerset is a fantastic place to live and work - home to Exmoor National Park and a whole host of beautiful landscapes, towns and villages. We really believe this is a great opportunity in an exciting organisation and we'd be delighted to give the right candidate a warm Somerset welcome.

Further information is available at www.gatenbysanderson.com/job/GSe49063 or for a confidential discussion with our recruitment partners GatenbySanderson, please contact Jo Boardman on 07834 030501 or Dawn Faulkner on 0121 644 5703. Closing date: Friday 14th December 2018 at 10am



Shaping Reading's future.



Recently named the second-fastest growing city in the UK, and already a regional powerhouse, Reading's forward momentum is remarkable. Road and rail connections are excellent, with access to the motorway network, Heathrow, central London and the City; and this will only improve when Crossrail arrives in 2019.

Around an already thriving retail heart, our new Abbey business quarter has opened up a hidden heritage gem in the middle of Reading, and we're committed to enhancing our cultural infrastructure. We've the 7th highest employment rate in the UK, the working population is the 6th most well-educated, and the average weekly salary is 18% above the national average. Extensive new housing of all tenures (including through our own housing company), and a flourishing university complete the picture for inward investors.

We're proud that the Council, through our Team Reading approach, is driving much of this transformation. Despite having delivered £80m of savings so far, we're on track to achieve a further £43m of efficiencies by 2020. We plan to deliver a £122m capital programme to provide new school places, homes, transport infrastructure and investment. Our new children's services company - Brighter Futures for Children - launched last week, and we are determined to ensure that our growth is good growth: low carbon, sustainable and - most important of all - to the benefit of local people.

These two roles are going to be instrumental in continuing our impressive trajectory. Visit www.teamreading.co.uk to find out more, or contact Steve Guest at Solace in Business on 020 7976 3311 for a confidential discussion. Closing date: 14th January 2019.

Executive Director
Economic Growth &
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Assistant Director
Digital Transformation to £92k



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We now have two fantastic opportunities, working as part of our Departmental Management Team, to develop our commercial opportunities and support our ambitions.

Assistant Director, Public Space

Up to c.£96k

You will take full responsibility for Waste, Parks and Green Spaces, Transport Services and Leisure and Culture. This is a great opportunity to help shape and improve these critical place-based services and existing partnerships. You will bring exceptional operational and contract management experience, as well as an ability to think commercially and innovatively to ensure that we continue to deliver the best services for our residents.

Assistant Director, Public Protection

Up to c.£96k

You will deliver strong strategic leadership across Parking Services, Safer Merton, CCTV, as well as through our unrivalled shared Regulatory Services Partnership with the London Boroughs of Wandsworth and Richmond. With outstanding engagement skills to raise our profile through community and stakeholder partnerships, you will lead strong commercial and digital initiatives to bring new opportunities across the Borough and beyond. Most importantly, you will ensure that community safety remains central to all that we do.

For an informal discussion about these exciting roles, please contact our consultants at Penna: **Helen Anderson** on 07936 329908 or **Ben Cox** on 07809 374692.

For more information and to apply, please visit www.mertonjobs.com

Closing date: 14th December 2018.



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Do you have responsibility for planning your council's next recruitment campaign?



The MJ's sister website delivers both quality and quantity of response at a cost effective rate for all vacancies with salaries from £15K- £75K.

Here is a small sample of those advertising this week on www.localgov.co.uk

Vacancy: Graduate Planning Officer
Location: Rugby Borough Council
Salary: £20,541 - £23,111

An opportunity has arisen within the Development and Enforcement Team for a Graduate Planning Officer. You will be based in Rugby Town Centre in Warwickshire within a Borough of over 100,000 population which is expected to grow by 30% by 2035.

Vacancy: Senior Policy Officer
Location: Camden London Borough Council
Salary: £40,028- £46,431

Extremism is one of the greatest challenges the country faces and local authorities have a core role to play in building communities that are more resilient and tackling the harms extremists cause. As the specialist Advisor, you will contribute to the development of relevant policies and procedures

Vacancy: Senior/Principal Highway Network Management Officer
Location: Bristol City Council
Salary: £30,746 - £37,107

With a proven record of working in a Network Management role covering the areas of streetworks, roadworks, temporary events, and works coordination, you will work closely with other areas within the Council's Transport Service, to ensure projects and promoted works are carried out with minimal highway disruption.

Vacancy: Head of Planning
Location: Cheltenham Borough Council
Salary: Up to c£60,000 per annum

Great planning and development is vital to our vision for the Borough. We need a customer focused, strategic, creative and proactive planning service to help catalyse growth and shape tomorrow's Cheltenham.

Vacancy: Assistant SEND Officer
Location: Brent Council
Salary: £25,746 - £27,342 per annum (pro rata)

This is an exciting to join a busy, committed and motivated team responsible for the assessment and review of children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) in Brent.

For advertising enquiries contact
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A brief selection of Bexley Council vacancies

**Assistant Team Manager –
 Youth Offending Service**

**Senior Social Worker /
 Approved Mental Health Practitioner**

**Social Worker – Children with
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**Social Worker Mental Health /
 AMHP**

For more opportunities with this
 council please visit:
<https://jobs.localgov.co.uk/>



Say hello, wave goodbye

Nick Cole looks back over hiring trends in the sector in 2018 and makes some predictions for 2019

So, where did 2018 go? For us, and I am sure for the other major players in local government recruitment, the year both went in a flash and interestingly, felt a bit like 2008. Yes, 2008; you have to go back a decade to remember the last time the market felt this buoyant.

For those of you who in 2018 have read my *R&R* articles or blogs, you will know that my insight pieces focus on four things – pay, digital, collaboration and skills shortages. So, as we say goodbye to this year and wave hello to 2019 here are my thoughts on key trends we have seen and what next year might hold.

Pay

Private sector pay far outstripped that of the public sector in 2018 making it harder for local authorities to attract talent from outside of the sector at a time when commercial experience, skills and acumen are needed more so than ever.

Reliance on market supplements may solve that hard to fill role today but this is not a sustainable solution to longer term talent attraction and pipelining, retention and promotion. This will only get worse in 2019 if the continued demand for senior managers and leaders continues.

The long-gone role of assistant chief executive seems to be making a return in the form of the chief operating officer

Indeed, if candidates continue to be faced with job choice, appointment process will be tougher, longer to deliver, with shorter shortlists and a greater likelihood of non-appointment because of 'buy-back'.

Digital

Digital was the most talked about subject in 2018 appointments we managed and we fully expect this to continue throughout 2019. While putting forms on a council website

or enabling citizens to request or transact basic services online is now the norm, the sector is a long way from embedding a cultural and organisational mindset that is digital by default and shaped by citizens.

There are few candidates in the sector with the digital strategy

development and citizen engagement experience currently in demand and those from the private sector are reluctant to make a cross-sector move.

Expect recruiting to these roles to be tough in 2019.

Collaboration

We have seen a growing number of joint health and social care commissioning roles in 2018 and expect this to continue throughout next year.

Again, there will be limited fields for appointments of this nature, particularly if you are an authority of significant scale looking to attract someone already at the level and with NHS experience as well.

The new combined authorities have taken some of the best chiefs in the market and there will continue to be demand for heavyweight regeneration candidates in both new and existing organisations focused on housing growth and collaborative place-based leadership.

Skills shortages

2018 saw continued candidate shortages in finance, legal, highways, planning, education and social care and there is no sign of this changing in 2019.

The long-gone role of assistant chief executive seems to be making a return in the form of the chief operating officer – a non-finance corporate role designed to enable transformational change and commercialisation in the

organisation. Such roles are highly appealing to the market and pulling well.

There are still mixed views on the pros and cons of the twin-hatted Joint DASS/DCS model and good candidates are few and far between; interim is often the default position.

So, more of the same in many ways from our perspective. The impact of the Budget on some parts of social care and lifting the housing cap should generate further demand, but our sense is that the general uncertainty surrounding peri-Brexit economic conditions and long term local government financial sustainability will continue to cloud the sector and present challenges around attraction and retention. ■

Nick Cole is director, local government at Veredus



War of words

A civil war has arisen within the Labour Party ranks on the familiar battleground of Twitter.

In fact, it was the resumption of a 563-year-old civil war, sparked by the seemingly innocuous celebration of Lancashire Day by shadow local government minister Andrew Gwynne.

LGA's Labour political adviser celebrated by posting a photo of himself with Mr Gwynne expressing their disgust over a box of Yorkshire Tea, reigniting the War of the Roses in the process.

Demands followed from the eastern side of the Pennines demanding a 'hard border' between the counties, to which Mr Angus responded: 'We're building a wall and Yorkshire is paying for it.'

Mr Gwynne followed up with the helpful reminder: 'The last Yorkist to fall foul of the Lancastrians ended up buried in a car park. So watch it.'

The deputy leader of Leeds City Council, James Lewis replied: 'In [King] Richard's case, preferable circumstances to being ruled by Lancastrians...even if the car park was in the East Midlands.'

Leicester City Council is yet to weigh in.

Nice little urner

According to *The Times*, the nation faces the diverting possibility of a trial arising from the sale of two 18th century urns. The question is: will the judge and jury steer more towards Morecambe and Wise or the romantic poets?

The Court of Appeal has ruled that Stratford-on-Avon DC can force the owner of a listed manor home to recover the urns, sold for £55,000 in 2009, or prosecute him for breaching a planning enforcement notice. Following that ruling, the manor house owner, Marcus Dill, turned to that age-old weapon of the outraged upper classes, a stiff letter to the editor of *The Times*.

He complained that the urns were chattels and had been wrongly classified as part of the manor house (and therefore listed)



Trouble is brewing: A cheerful Andrew Gwynne celebrates Lancashire Day

by inspectors 'during Michael Heseltine's Modern Domesday survey in the 1980s'.

With Mr Dill claiming the urns were sold to an unknown buyer abroad and therefore rather difficult to recover, a judge and jury may soon be taking inspiration from those other 1980s throwbacks, Morecambe and Wise. We would direct their attention to Eric's placard reading, 'Hands off this little Ern'.

Alternatively, given the manor house's location, they might instead look to Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. But would the following lines favour the council or Mr Dill?

What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?

For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd

A burning forehead and a parching tongue.

Brains of Britain

We can only hope that the London School of Economics has no plans to open a northern outpost anytime soon.

Dr Neil Cummins, associate professor of economic history at the LSE, suggests the North/South divide is due to a brain drain that began more than 200 years ago. His theory is based on research into internal migration between 1837 and 2006 and a genealogical

study of some 277,000 people.

Given the dominant role of the great northern and the Midlands cities and their hinterland towns, in both the Industrial Revolution and the British Empire, the finding might come as something of a surprise. Even Dr Cummins admits that he doesn't know what kicked off the process.

However, northerners not feeling their usual sunny selves on hearing the news might take a little pride in another of his findings. It appears there may have been a sort of micro-imperialism going on: the northerners may have actually conquered the southerners to form a new social elite. Dr Cummins found that those living in the South with proud northern names (presumably including old staples such as Arkwright and Sidebottom) were wealthier than those with southern names still living in the South throughout most of the 20th century.



A Christmas message from Santa (30 March 2019)...

Apologies for my late arrival. My elves' timetable was recently reorganised by someone called Chris Grayling and as a result my sleigh arrived two months late.

Then I got held up at immigration. Apparently, as I don't earn £30,000 a year, I'm classified as low-skilled. The customs man told me: 'We've got enough bleeding Santas. The shopping centres are awash with them at this time of year. Go back to where you've come from. And take those elves with you. We've got homegrown Britons to pick our cabbages. We don't need elves.' Which explains why there are no cabbages on the shelves.

Once I had explained that I am in fact a highly skilled Santa and my elves have certificates in gift wrapping they reluctantly gave me a one-year visa, but told me in no way was I to attempt to become a barrista in a coffee shop as 'they're British jobs for British people'.

They also insisted on inspecting my sleigh to check it wasn't diesel, otherwise they wouldn't let me anywhere near the Mayor of London's zero-emission zone. I explained it was powered by magical reindeer.

It's just as well they let me through. I have an inordinate amount of presents this year to give as a result of something called Universal Credit in which poor families get benefits on the never-never meaning they never get them...

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The management journal for health and care

December 2018

PM's £3.5bn boost to community health will just 'match demand'

By Paul Dinsdale

An extra £3.5bn funding boost for primary and community services to reduce bed-blocking announced recently by the Prime Minister is likely to just keep pace with demand according to health experts.

Theresa May announced what No 10 hailed as 'a major new investment in primary and community healthcare – worth £3.5bn a year in real terms by 2023/24 – which builds on the existing NHS budget for these services.' It added: 'This represents a historic commitment to ensure a growing share of overall NHS spending for primary medical and community healthcare.'

But Nuffield Trust senior policy analyst Sally Gainsbury said: 'This additional money amounts to annual increases that are broadly in line with the 3.4% overall that the NHS in England is getting over the next five years. That means far from representing a shift in funding towards out-of-hospital services, this money will simply allow GPs and community services to keep up with demand over the next five years. That's important, but it means the new money is not going to lead to a significant change in the way that people experience healthcare.' She added: 'Even if this money did represent a major boost to primary and community services, there are serious questions about whether the NHS has the right staff in the right places to carry this out.'

The Prime Minister said: 'Too often people end up in hospital not because it's the best place to meet their needs but because the support that would allow them to be treated



Theresa May's major investment in primary and community healthcare is worth £3.5bn a year by 2023/24

or recover in their own home just isn't available. That's why I'm announcing a major boost in funding for community healthcare, which will give more patients a genuine and high-quality alternative to hospital. The new approach we're setting out today will mean more people can leave hospital quicker, or avoid being admitted in the first place – which is better for patients and better for the health service.'

Health secretary Matt Hancock said that 'the Prime Minister and I are determined to ensure more people are able to receive care in their communities or at home, taking

the pressure of our hard working NHS staff. This additional funding of £3.5bn a year by 2023/24 demonstrates our commitment to primary and community healthcare, capable of relieving the burden on our hospitals over the coming years and revolutionising the way high-quality care is delivered for our most vulnerable patients.'

Simon Stevens, chief executive of NHS England, promised that community health services would 'get a growing share of the growing NHS budget' as part of the NHS Long-Term Plan.

The existing staffing shortfall of 100,000 could reach almost 250,000 by 2030 and pose a 'major risk' to the NHS Long-Term Plan health experts warn.

Critical and lasting shortages in the healthcare workforce mean that the forthcoming NHS Long-Term Plan risks becoming an unachievable 'wish list' of initiatives to improve the health service say the King's Fund, Nuffield

Staffing shortfall 'could reach 250,000' in 12 years

Trust and Health Foundation.

Their briefing paper, *The health care workforce in England: make or break?* draws on a new forecast of the staffing gaps emerging in the 1.2 million-strong NHS workforce. It predicts an increase in NHS staff shortages from over 100,000 at present to almost 250,000 by 2030, warning that this could mean

that over one in six health service posts are short of an appropriate staff member by the end of the next decade. The three organisations warn that these shortages could be over 350,000 if the NHS continues to lose staff and cannot attract skilled workers from abroad.

They say that even before the £20.5bn funding increase was

announced the NHS could not recruit the staff it needed 'because of an incoherent approach to workforce policy at a national level, poor workforce planning, restrictive immigration policies and inadequate funding for training places.'

Funding for education and training fell from 5% of health spending in 2006/07 to 3% in 2018/19, the equivalent of a £2bn drop.

INSIDE: Exclusive interview with Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership's chief officer See p6-7

comment



By Michael Burton

A new report from the King's Fund warns that life expectancy improvements are 'grinding to a halt,' with little or no improvement in how long people live with illness and disease since 1990. The gap in health outcomes between rich and poor is also widening again and the Fund's report says that life expectancy for a woman living in Wokingham is 17 years more than a woman in Manchester. Obesity rates, especially for children, are among the worst in the developed world.

The answer, says the Fund, is in more attention on public health and prevention, promoting wellbeing and good health. It also recognises the influence of environmental factors like pollution, housing, poverty, education and transport. Much of this is in the local authority area of responsibility which is why the Fund also calls for a reversal of cuts to council public health budgets which are set to fall by a quarter between 2014 and 2020. It was typical of the lack of joined-up Government that a good idea, namely to transfer public health back to councils in 2013 because of their wider remit, was hobbled by arbitrary Treasury cuts.

The NHS is expert at treating illness, poor at trying to reduce ill health in the first place. For example, some health areas have been piloting lung checks for ex-smokers aged between 60 and 75 to spot respiratory conditions early before they require expensive hospital treatment and care.

Dealing with public health and prevention is always going to be a mix of stick and carrot, of Government legislation and nudging about lifestyle and diet.

But councils, through their leisure centres and parks, have been able to promote exercise, through their streetscene improvements, reduced pollution and increased cycling or through planning influenced the siting of takeaways.

The question is whether ministers have the will to make difficult decisions using tax and regulation to really make a difference to the nation's health.

Michael Burton is editorial director of Health MJ
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People in deprived areas 'have multiple conditions by their 60s'

By Paul Dinsdale

People in the most deprived areas in England are likely to have two or more health conditions at the age of 61, 10 years earlier than people in the least deprived areas, according to findings by a health research body.

The study by the Health Foundation found that around 14.2 million people have two or more conditions, which accounts for nearly a quarter (24%) of all adults living in England. It said over half (55%) of hospital admissions and outpatient visits and three-quarters (75%) of primary care prescriptions are for people living with two or more conditions.

The study said the number of people living with multiple conditions is expected to continue to grow, and estimates this will lead to an increase in total hospital activity of 14%, at

a cost of £4bn, over the next five years. It warns that 'a sustainable NHS will need to improve both the quality and cost-effectiveness of care for people with multiple conditions'.

It also finds that people with four or more conditions have almost three times as many primary care appointments per year as people with one condition. But, despite their more complex needs, appointments are, on average, only 14 seconds longer, reflecting current pressures in general practice, which need to be addressed.

The research shows that almost a third (30%) of people with four or more conditions are under 65 and this percentage is higher for people living in socio-economically deprived areas. The study said: 'This highlights that living with multiple conditions affects a broad range of people and is not always related to old age. Improving care for multiple conditions requires action across

the NHS and other sectors, not only in services targeting older people.'

Sarah Deeny, assistant director of data analytics at the Health Foundation, said: 'Nearly one in four people living in England have two or more health conditions which may lead to poorer quality of life and a greater risk of premature death, and this number is expected to grow. To care for people living with multiple conditions effectively, it is critical that the NHS long-term plan identifies the complexity of their needs.'

'People's health is a result of a wide range of social determinants including their quality of housing and education, where they live, access to good quality work and affordable food. To address the fact that people living in deprived areas are more likely to have multiple conditions, cross-Government action is needed to tackle the underlying causes of ill health.'

Obesity management 'lacks psychological support'



BPS said obesity is not a choice or due to an individual's lack of willpower, but due to a 'complex combination of biological, social and psychological factors'

A lack of psychological support for people trying to lose weight is undermining efforts to tackle the UK's obesity crisis, according to the British Psychological Society (BPS).

At a time when almost two-thirds of adults in the UK are classed as being overweight or obese, the BPS is calling for an end to patchy access to psychological support through NHS weight management services.

In a briefing paper, the BPS said that obesity is not a choice or due to an individual's lack of willpower, but due to a 'complex combination of biological, social and psychological factors'. It said there is evidence that providing psychological support for people who are overweight or obese to help them change their behaviour is 'just as important as advice about diet and physical activity'.

Although current NICE guidelines stress the importance of people being able to access psychological expertise through NHS weight management services, the BPS says many NHS weight management services do not provide this support.

In a briefing paper, *Understanding Obesity: The psychological dimensions of a public health crisis*, it outlines the important role that psychologists have in helping to reduce levels of obesity in the UK.

Chief executive of the BPS, Sarb Bajwa, said: 'There is a real gap in the provision of weight management services that means many people are not getting the psychological support they need to reach or maintain a healthy weight. For many, the mantra of 'eat less, move more' just isn't enough to tackle the barriers they face to a healthier lifestyle.'

Nine councils win funding for digital innovation

Biometric devices measuring anxiety triggers for people with autism and personal devices for carers are among nine social care digital support projects which will receive extra funding from NHS Digital and the Local Government Association (LGA).

Among other projects to be funded are online financial self-assessment and tools for checking benefits, and an app for social care providers, enabling them to collate important employment information to improve the care worker recruitment process.

The Social Care Digital Innovation Programme, commissioned by NHS Digital and managed by the LGA, gave power to councils to create digital pilots to improve frontline practice, allowing integration across adult social care.

Earlier this year, 12 councils were awarded £20,000 each in the first 'discovery' phase of funding, to investigate local challenges that could be addressed using digital technology, with funding of around £700,000. The successful councils are: Bracknell Forest Council, Havering LBC, Isle of Wight Council, Lincolnshire CC; Nottingham City Council; Shropshire CC, Stockport MBC; Sunderland City Council; and Wirral MBC.

James Palmer, programme lead for the social care programme at NHS Digital, said: 'These are really exciting proposals and I am looking forward to seeing the outcomes. We will be sharing learning from the projects, with a view to these blueprints supporting other social care providers looking to innovate in the same area.'

Health MJ is produced by the publishers of The MJ as a monthly supplement.

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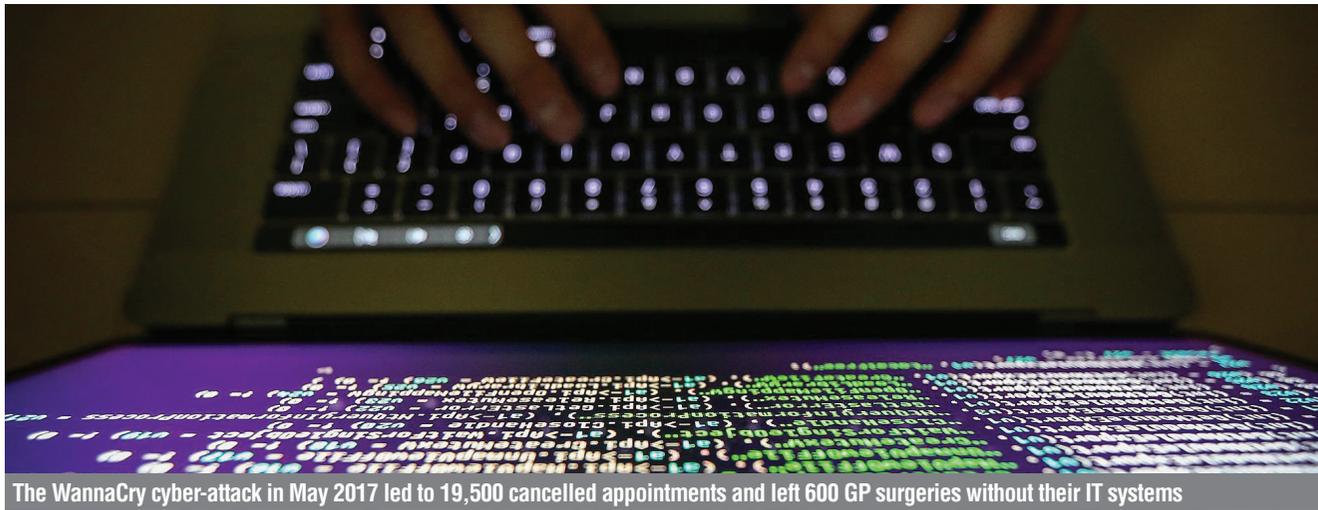
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More cyber-attacks on NHS systems ‘inevitable’



The WannaCry cyber-attack in May 2017 led to 19,500 cancelled appointments and left 600 GP surgeries without their IT systems

Health experts fear the NHS will be hit by another cyber-attack similar to the WannaCry ransomware outbreak that caused widespread disruption to hospitals and GP surgeries last year.

Poor leadership, budgetary constraints, deficient IT systems and a lack of qualified staff could lead to another attack on the health service, a healthcare conference was told.

Meg Hillier, MP for Hackney South and Shoreditch, and chair of the public accounts committee, which called WannaCry ‘a wake-

up call’ for the NHS, said that as well as a shortage of IT skills in the NHS workforce, there was an issue around leadership.

She said: ‘A chief executive has a lot of pressures put on them and it’s a challenge: what are you going to pay for? You don’t see any particular benefit for patients if you invest in a good IT system – it’s not a big enough issue and not an instant win in a world of winter pressures.’

She also said that many NHS staff do not trust their IT systems.

Ben Clacy, the director of development

and operations at NHS Providers, the membership organisation for NHS acute, ambulance, community and mental health services, told the conference: ‘I’ll always be terrified that an attack will happen again. We’re not doing enough to prevent that and there is more we can do.’

The WannaCry cyber-attack in May 2017 led to 19,500 cancelled appointments and left 600 GP surgeries without their IT systems.

Eighty-one NHS organisations were affected and five hospitals were forced to divert ambulances.

Deprivation in regions ‘leads to excess mortality among younger adults’

By Paul Dinsdale

A major study of mortality across England blames socio-economic deprivation for sharp rises in deaths among 22-to-44-year-olds living in the North of England.

The study, carried out by researchers at Manchester University, shows a ‘profoundly concerning’ gap in mortality between the North and South, especially in men.

Deaths from accidents, alcohol and drug poisoning increased nationally, but more quickly in the North, where deprivation tends to be greater and more widespread. Over three years between 2014 and 2016, 3,530 more men and 1,881 more women, aged between 25 and 44, died in the North than in the South from 2014 to 2016, based on relative population and age.

People aged 25-44 in the North were 47% more likely to die from cardiovascular reasons, 109% more likely to die from alcohol misuse, and 60% more likely from drug misuse, compared to southerners.

London had the lowest mortality rates, with North East England having the highest, even after adjusting for age, sex and socio-economic deprivation. Suicide among men, especially at ages 30-34, and cancer deaths among women were also important factors.

National cardiovascular death rates declined over the study period, though the North-South gap persists. The research was funded by the Wellcome Trust and the Health eResearch Centre.

Professor Evan Kontopantelis, lead author of the study in *The Lancet Public Health* journal, said: ‘Sharp rises in deaths from accidents, suicide, alcohol misuse, smoking, cancer and drug addiction appear to have created new health divisions between England’s regions and are profoundly concerning.’

‘These causes of death are all strongly associated with socio-economic deprivation and in our models two-thirds of the excess mortality in the North was explained by that. Alcohol for example, underpins the steep and sustained increase in liver cirrhosis deaths in Britain from the 1990s, when the North-South divide in mortality for those aged 25-44 started to emerge.’

Concern over shortages of flu vaccine for winter

NHS England has pledged that there will be enough vaccines for older and vulnerable people to be protected before the winter, following concerns about a shortage of supplies.

But doctors’ leaders said more guidance should have been given to GPs and patients to avoid disruption over the phased

delivery of supplies. Older adults are advised to get a flu jab by early December. This gives time for protection before flu starts to circulate, which is normally later in the month.

However, the staggered delivery of supplies of the over-65s vaccine from the manufacturer Seqirus to GPs and pharmacies has meant

some older patients have not been able to be vaccinated.

In one survey of 650 GPs, nearly 70% said there had been a shortage of this flu vaccine at their practice. Some GPs said they had to cancel appointments and others said it had created staffing problems.

But a spokesperson for NHS

England said that in the next two weeks, ‘100% of vaccines will have been delivered by the manufacturer to those surgeries and pharmacists who placed an order on time’. He said the public ‘can be assured that there is sufficient supply of the vaccine in stock for everyone to get protected ahead of winter.’

briefs



Older people’s mental health needs to be addressed

■ The ‘scandalous’ neglect of older people’s mental health care needs to be addressed in the NHS long-term plan, says the Royal College of Psychiatrists in a report.

Figures show the number of consultant old-age psychiatrists working in the NHS fell to 551 in 2018, down 12% compared with 624 in 2014.

The report also claimed there was evidence of discrimination in mental health care against older people, adding this was not ‘legally justifiable’. It noted the ‘failure of the Five Year Forward View to focus on the specific and distinct needs of older people sent a message that this was not an area that required resources or reform’.

■ A revised guide for charities in ‘plain English’ on fundraising is due to be agreed with the Fundraising Regulator.

The revised *Code of Fundraising Practice* will be a big improvement on the old one, said the charity Directory of Social Change (DSC), which helps charity fundraisers across the UK.

The guide sets out rules on face-to-face fundraising, as well as a ‘plain English’ review and wider streamlining of the Code.

DSC said charities need enough time to adapt to the changes and that the regulator should provide additional support as the new version is adopted.

It should also gather further feedback from practitioners through user testing of the new online version of the revised code, it said.

briefs

■ Four clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) in Cheshire have appointed a single accountable officer, ahead of a planned merger by 2020. Eastern Cheshire, South Cheshire, Vale Royal and West Cheshire CCGs have appointed Clare Watson as their single accountable officer.

She will take up the new role in January next year.

Ms Watson's appointment comes ahead of plans made by commissioners to formally merge by April 2020.

She was formerly strategic commissioning director for Tameside and Glossop CCGs.

In 2017, Eastern, South and Vale Royal CCGs were placed into NHS England's 'capped expenditure' programme due to their poor financial positions. In their latest finance reports, the two CCGs forecast a combined deficit for 2018/19 of £5.6m.



Figures show 5% of all traffic is caused by the NHS

■ Face-to-face hospital appointments could be reduced to 'save the environment', as figures have shown that 5% of all traffic is now caused by the NHS.

Health officials said the current model of hospital care is 'no longer fit for purpose' – warning of 'potentially painful, uncomfortable or disruptive' changes to come.

Professor Stephen Powis, medical director of the NHS said it was time to 'grasp the nettle' and cut thousands of unnecessary hospital appointments, and offer patients a slot via methods like Skype.

A report by the Royal College of Physicians suggested that face-to-face consultations should no longer be the default option. It recommends that patients should only be asked to travel to hospitals if there is a clear health benefit in doing so.

Number of children in care rises



Children in care figures have risen 4% on the previous year

An adoption charity says it is 'deeply concerned' that the children in care population continues to grow, following publication of the Government's latest figures.

The number of children in care after being removed from their parents because they were at risk of abuse or neglect has risen, amid concerns over the impact of austerity cuts and poverty on vulnerable families.

Latest figures show there were 75,420 looked-after children in England at the end of March, up

4% on the previous year. The number has increased steadily every year since 2008, when the total was around 60,000. The figures also show that abuse or neglect was the main cause for 63% of the children coming into care during the year.

Dr Sue Armstrong Brown, chief executive of Adoption UK, said: 'The care population is rising, in part because vulnerable parents are not being adequately supported. The outrage is that today, unlike in previous generations, we're well aware of the consequences of early childhood trauma on the life chances of the children, and the impact on those who care for them. We know we should be doing more to address their needs but this is still not happening.'

The Department for Education figures also show that adoption numbers fell 13% year-on-year to 3,820, well down from the 2015 peak of 5,360.

This is in line with a fall in the number of looked-after children with a placement order seen over recent years, which has almost halved from 9,590 in 2014 to 5,360 in 2018.

NHS 'appoints too many consultants of white ethnicity'



White trainee doctors are applying for fewer consultant posts at the end of their training than black and minority ethnic (BME) trainees, but are more likely to be shortlisted and offered a post, according to a survey.

The ninth annual survey by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) in England and colleges in Scotland on the outcomes for certificate of completion of training (CCT) holders within one year of gaining their CCT found an imbalance in success rates.

The RCP said that for several years in a row, the survey has found that CCT holders who describe themselves as being of white British ethnicity apply for fewer posts, but are more likely to be shortlisted and offered a post. It said BME women appear to be particularly disadvantaged.

The RCP and other

organisations are discussing how to respond to the findings. The RCP has informed NHS England about its work on workforce race equality and will work with the research team to share the survey's findings, better understand the issues and support this important project.

RCP president Professor Andrew Goddard said: 'These findings are a clear warning signal that we need to investigate further and take immediate action. It is imperative that we do everything we can to make sure the appointment of consultants is based solely on ability.'

'Our concern is to make sure that everyone has the same opportunity to reach their potential, and the best doctors are appointed to the right jobs. We believe this will lead to a much more diverse workforce that reflects the community it serves.'

Allied Healthcare sells off contracts

By Paul Dinsdale

A major UK home care provider, which supports 13,000 older and disabled people, is to transfer or sell all of its contracts to other providers, following financial problems.

In an unprecedented move, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) warned the company about its financial sustainability early last month. Since then, some local authorities have already taken steps to find new providers.

The company says it is working closely with councils to ensure there is no disruption to people's care. Allied Healthcare provides services such as preparing meals, washing and giving regular medication.

The CQC had issued a notice warning that it had serious doubts about the future of the company – the first time that the regulator had issued such a notice about the financial sustainability of a social care provider.

The regulator said it was concerned about the viability of services run by Allied Healthcare from the end of November and had warned councils to make contingency plans. It said the company had failed to provide adequate assurances regarding future funding and that there was a credible risk of disruption to services.

But a company spokesperson said that the CQC statement had 'negatively impacted' the firm, led to some customers transferring care services to alternative providers, and had disrupted staff retention and recruitment.



Allied Healthcare provides services such as preparing meals, washing and giving medication

A spokesman said: 'These developments have intensified the impact of the challenging environment within which we operate and come immediately prior to the Christmas period, when pressures on care providers are at their highest.'

The company said it was re-evaluating its long-term business plan and was exploring the sale or transition of services to alternative providers, including the transfer of staff.

It is understood that the company has now

been able to extend its credit by three weeks from the end of November.

Earlier this year, the company blamed low fees from local authorities for their financial concerns. Councils have warned of a £3.5bn shortfall in funding for adult social care by 2025.

The Government has promised a Green Paper on the long-term funding of social care by the end of the year, but several previous deadlines have come and gone.

Staffing crisis leads to closures of cancer units and kids' wards



Patients with cancer who would usually have surgery at the Queen Elizabeth hospital in King's Lynn, Norfolk, could face 80-mile round trips

By Paul Dinsdale

An increasing number of hospital units that provide cancer care and children's services are being forced to close because of a worsening staffing crisis, according to reports.

Some closures are leading to patients having to travel further to receive care as NHS managers decide to centralise more services in fewer hospitals in response to gaps in staffing rotas.

The trend has led to a warning by the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) that 'skeleton staffing' means patients are suffering.

'Every day brings fresh and devastating examples of patients paying the highest price for staffing shortages. There are no benefits to running the NHS on a skeleton staff and refusing to acknowledge this means the ultimate losers, as ward closures around England show, are patients,' said Dame Donna Kinnair, the RCN's acting chief executive.

Hospital units providing cancer care, services to children and rehabilitation to older patients are among those affected by an ongoing trend, which has been criticised as a 'slimming-down by stealth' of NHS care.

Patients with cancer who would usually have surgery at the Queen Elizabeth hospital (QEH) in King's Lynn, Norfolk, could face 80-mile round trips after the trust that runs the QEH said it was considering closing one ward and moving cancer surgery to Norwich, because it cannot attract enough nurses to work in the hospital.

Sir Henry Bellingham, the Conservative MP for north west Norfolk, said the move 'would be an admission of defeat on the part of the QEH and would seriously damage morale'.

A spokesman for the health union Unison said the loss of services would be 'a body blow'.

In an internal QEH memo leaked to the *Eastern Daily Press* newspaper, senior trust staff said: 'We currently face a situation

where, despite the decision the board took in September to flexibly close 12 medical and 12 elective surgical beds, we do not anticipate having the capacity to continue with our elective programme throughout the winter. This includes our elective cancer programme.'

In another case, New Cross Hospital in Wolverhampton is to start receiving extra patients as soon as the A&E unit at Princess Royal Hospital in Telford starts closing overnight in December.

The move has been caused by the trust's inability to find enough doctors and nurses to staff it safely.

Dr Rob Harwood, chair of the British Medical Association's consultants committee, said: 'The NHS is already chronically understaffed and this is impacting on hospitals and their ability to adequately staff departments and services. If a hospital can't fill rotas because it doesn't have the staff, then services are eventually bound to be compromised and patient care will suffer.'



Noise levels in hospitals 'can affect patients' recovery rates'

Noise levels in hospitals are getting worse, and affect patients' recovery rates, say researchers.

In the UK, 40% of hospital patients are bothered by noise at night, according to in-patient surveys. Noise from staff, machinery, trolleys and telephones are the main causes and patients may take longer to recover or choose to leave earlier when they are not fully recovered to avoid the noise.

High noise levels can also have an impact on staff performance and burnout rates.

Researchers from King's College London say noise levels in intensive care – where the most vulnerable patients are looked after – regularly exceed 100 decibels, which is the equivalent of loud music being played through headphones.

At this level, noise pollution has been implicated in the development of a condition known as intensive care psychosis – a form of delirium where patients experience anxiety, become paranoid, hear voices and see things that are not there.

Increased stress, greater pain sensitivity, high blood pressure, and poor mental health are also possible side-effects. It can lead to patients deciding to leave hospital before they are completely better, and some may be re-admitted later.

Coronary care patients treated during noisy periods were found to have a higher incidence of re-hospitalisation, compared with those treated during quieter periods.

'People leave early, and long after discharge the trauma remains. It puts patients off coming back,' said Dr Andreas Xyrichis, lead author of the report.

People in colder, darker climates 'drink more heavily'

People who live in cold climates with less sunlight are more likely to drink heavily, says a study.

Research from the US shows a link between average temperature, hours of sunlight and alcohol consumption. Data from 193 countries provided evidence that the climate contributed to a higher incidence of binge drinking and liver disease.

Senior author Ramon Bataller, associate director of the Pittsburgh Liver Research Centre, said: 'This is the first study that systematically demonstrates that worldwide and in America, in colder areas and areas with less sun, you have more drinking and more alcoholic cirrhosis.'

Alcohol is a vasodilator, relaxing blood vessels and increasing the flow of warm blood to the skin. Heavy drinking has also been linked to depression, which tends to be more prevalent when sunlight is scarce.

The study, published online in the *Hepatology* journal, used data from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Meteorological Organisation.

A doctor in Scotland, who contributed to the report, has called for restrictions in alcohol advertising during the winter months. Dr Peter McCann, medical adviser to Castle Craig Hospital, a residential drug and



Data provided evidence that the climate contributed to a higher incidence of binge drinking and liver disease

alcohol rehabilitation clinic, said: 'We now have new evidence that the weather, and in particular the temperature and amount of sunlight that we are exposed to, has a strong influence on how much alcohol we consume.'

This weather-related alcohol consumption is directly linked to our chances of developing the most dangerous form of liver disease – cirrhosis – which can ultimately end in liver failure and death.'

‘Trust is the key to making real changes in services’

Paul Dinsdale reports on latest developments at the pioneering Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership in an exclusive interview with its chief officer Jon Rouse

In April 2016, a region in England became a trailblazer in being able to take control of a combined budget for health and social care, in a move approved – surprisingly to some observers – by the then Chancellor George Osborne.

Ten boroughs in the Greater Manchester area were handed control of a £6bn budget for all health and social care services, and signed up to integrate services in a strategic way – the first time it had been done in England.

It took more than a year of planning and consultation on agreeing joint goals, and the joint commissioning began last year. Now the Greater Manchester Partnership says

that it is beginning to see the fruits of some of its labours.

The Partnership received another £450m for the transformation of services in the region, and this extra funding has allowed it to develop a range of different approaches to delivering services.

It says that it is now seeing improvements to the lives of the 2.8 million people in its catchment area.

‘We wanted to be able to take joined-up approach to health and wellbeing, preventing illness and treating people when they are ill, and we now have 10 joint commissioning boards in each of the boroughs, and they do 80% of the

commissioning,’ says Jon Rouse, chief officer of the GM Partnership.

‘In five of the areas, the council’s chief executive is also the chief accountable officer of the clinical commissioning group (CCG), and in all 10 areas, we have much closer integration of services in health and social care.’

One issue that was a particular concern, as it is in many other regions, was the interface between hospital discharge of elderly and vulnerable people, and providing social care either at home or in a residential setting. This has been a major problem for many NHS trusts and for many councils as budgets have been squeezed.

‘We have set up integrated care teams in each of the 10 localities and they work side by side to ensure that, when elderly or vulnerable patients are ready to go home, there is an appropriate package of care in place,’ says Mr Rouse.

‘When we began work on the Partnership, we had to ensure that all localities were

on board, and we had enthusiastic buy-in from all the organisations involved, which recognised the advantages of closer working and more integration of services.’

Mr Rouse says hospitals were working together ‘on a much greater scale’ to ensure that care was a consistent quality. In stroke care – which has an impact on places taken in residential homes – he says the region’s stroke centres are top-rated and the Partnership estimates that over 200 lives have been saved because of specialist care delivered. It is also above the average in England for hospital referrals and treatment within the 18 week national target.

The region now has an ‘urgent and emergency care hub’ which helps us monitor activity at all hospitals so it can predict and respond to high numbers of patients in A&E departments. However, in its annual report for 2017/18, it admits it was a ‘very challenging’ year for urgent and emergency care and ‘intensive’ work is continuing to make improvements.

Boosting early intervention through

Paul Gibson and Rachael Forbister report on how Sunderland has been forging ahead with a project to make every GP practice fully digital by 2020

Few would claim that technology offers a panacea for our growing social care crisis. But there is no doubt it can facilitate fundamental changes capable of transforming the way people are supported.

A report by Age UK recently revealed there were more than 341,000 avoidable hospital admissions in England last year among those aged 65 and over.

That equates to almost a thousand people a day entering hospital needlessly due to treatable conditions such as kidney and urinary tract infections. Overall, we have seen a 63% rise in the rate of avoidable admissions since 2003, according to the charity’s report.

If emerging health conditions or signs of deterioration had been picked up earlier, many of these people would have been kept out of hospital.

Ultimately, we all want an effective health and care system that keeps people healthy and enables those who are more vulnerable to manage long-term conditions at home or in their community.

And that is where digital technology comes into its own. If it is properly embedded, it paves the way for far quicker, more responsive and joined up services and enables us to shift the focus towards prevention and early intervention.

In Sunderland, we have been undergoing something of a technological revolution. The city was awarded vanguard status in 2015 and has been given extra resources by NHS England to develop new models of care with a particular focus on breaking down the barriers between different areas of the healthcare system.

By 2020 every GP practice in the city will be fully digital. This means everyone will be able to access GP services via multiple channels, have the option of video consultations with clinicians and access to a range of self-

care and remote monitoring solutions as standard.

It is called eConsult and is currently running as a pilot project ahead of a city-wide rollout from next year.

It gives patients access to a portal where they can answer a series of questions about their condition. This is then fed through to a GP who can either deal with it online or call them in for an appointment.

It saves time for the patient because they don’t have to come in for an appointment, meaning they are more likely to report what might be the early signs of a more serious condition rather than delaying. That means GPs can be more responsive – for example, by putting the person’s mind at ease or referring them to relevant support.

Feedback from GPs suggests it will not only enable them to assist more patients, but also help to tackle recruitment issues by giving doctors greater flexibility in their everyday work. eConsult also makes them mobile GPs who can work remotely and save a lot of time by accessing patients’ records while on home visits.

We have spent a lot of time building up the trust of GPs, social workers and other professionals around the sharing of data because it runs to the heart of effective digital working.

Professionals are understandably protective of the information they hold but there is no reason why data can’t be shared safely across the health and social care system. After all, if you are full informed about a person’s background you are better able to provide them with the best possible support and advice.

Vanguard status has enabled us to discuss how data sharing can work by bringing a strong focus to the digital agenda and, crucially, additional resources. We have involved a range of practitioners from the outset – for



eConsult is currently running as a pilot project ahead of a city-wide rollout from next year

example via a governance group – and we have been able to explore and do different things to demonstrate the difference technology makes.

The fact that City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust is one of 16 digitally advanced acute trusts being supported by NHS England to become an Acute Global Digital Exemplar has ensured this is a truly city-wide shift.

In terms of cancer care, it has improved preventive services in the region. In Manchester a mobile screening programme was piloted to help diagnose people with lung cancer early and by 2020 this will be available across the whole of Greater Manchester.

There is also a growing network of ‘cancer champions’ in local communities, who help spread the message about prevention, give advice about spotting the signs and the importance of having regular checks.

In social care, there is more joint working include improving the quality of care homes in 2017/18. The annual report says Greater Manchester is one of the most improved areas in the country, and fewer patients faced delays in being discharged from hospital.

The issue of homelessness can also be tackled more effectively as a region-wide body, it says. Working jointly with the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, the Partnership says it has been putting in place procedures

to improve care for homeless people. All hospitals in the region ensure that, where possible, patients with no accommodation are not discharged onto the street. Many more GPs are also taking homeless patients onto their lists.

Improving mental health services has also been a key goal. In July 2017, the Partnership invested £134m to improve provision, and nearly 60% of the investment was in services for children, young people and new mothers.

This year, it has launched a pilot scheme in 31 primary and secondary schools to provide mental health and wellbeing training to build confidence, coaching in key life skills such as developing self-esteem, lessons to improve creative thinking skills and coping strategies for life challenges. The plan is to roll-out this programme across Greater Manchester in the next two years.

Another two priority areas are dementia care and learning disabilities. A programme to support people with

learning disabilities is in its second year, assisting people with a learning disability to move out of hospital environments and resettle them into new homes with extra support. A 24-hour specialist support team is in place to work with community learning disability teams.

All of this would not have been possible without the new ‘devo-Manc’ structure being in place, says Mr Rouse.

‘I’ve worked in many different areas of the country, and on developing the Better Care scheme at the Department of Health, and I’ve never seen such an enthusiasm and community spirit as I have in Manchester. It’s helped by geographical cohesion of the region, with all localities being very tightly-knit as communities, but it is also very reliant on trust between different organisations, and individuals, and without that, you can’t introduce the changes you need,’ he says.

‘We’ve still got a lot more to do in some areas, but we’re well on our way to improving services.’

Adult care spending in England hits £21bn

The over-65s account for 71% of requests for adult social care support according to the latest figures from NHS Digital

New figures from NHS Digital show that local authorities in England received 1.8 million new requests for adult social care support in 2017/18, an increase of 1.6% on 2016/17 and equivalent to 5,100 new requests per day.

These requests were received from 1.3 million people; those aged 65 and over accounted for 71.6% of the requests. Similar to previous years, 77.1% of the requests originated from the community and 20.1% originated from a discharge from hospital.

Total expenditure on adult social care by local authorities in 2017/18 was £21.3bn (up £684m since 2016/17, a 3.3% uplift), however this includes capital charges and some of this expenditure is offset by income from other sources such as the NHS.

In 2017/18, gross current expenditure on adult social care (which accounts for spending by social care departments and also includes client contributions), was £17.9bn. In addition to the usual funding of adult social care through council tax and grants from central Government (such as Improved Better Care Fund), in the last two years, local authorities have been able to use an adult social care precept to raise additional funds. The additional adult social care precept in 2017/18 generated £552m. 147 out of 152 local authorities with adult social care responsibilities utilised some or all of this 3% precept in 2017/18.

Other findings in the annual report, *Adult Social Care Activity and Finance England 2017/18* include:

- Gross current expenditure by local authorities on adult social care was £17.9bn in 2017/18, an increase of £0.4bn or 2.3% in cash terms on 2016/17 (£17.5bn).
- 77.9% of total gross current expenditure (£14.0bn) was spent on long-term care (residential, nursing or community care), an increase of £369m or 2.7% on 2016/17 (£13.6bn).
- Overall, the number of people receiving long term care provided or arranged by local authorities has decreased each year since 2015/16, down 14,750 (1.7%) to 857,770 in 2017/18. The numbers of 18-64-year-olds in receipt of long-term support has increased for the second year in a row, up 7,360 (2.6%) to 292,380 since 2015/16, while the numbers of 65 and over in receipt of long term support has fallen for the second year in a row, down 22,110 (3.8%) to 565,385 since 2015/16.
- 58.6% of all people receiving long-term support are female. This increases further for those supported in a residential home (61.9%) and further still when considering those in a nursing home (63.4%).

The area of care which saw the largest increase in expenditure was long-term support, which increased by £369m to £14.0bn in 2017/18, an increase in cash terms of 2.7%.

The average cost of residential care for a person aged 65 and over per week was £565 in 2016/17, but has now risen to £604, while the cost of nursing care for the same age band has increased from £606 to £638 a week.

For those aged 18 to 64, the number of individuals in residential or nursing care are much smaller, but a similar effect can be seen with unit costs increasing, from £911 to £921 a week for nursing care and from £1,236 to £1,274 a week for residential care.

the use of technology



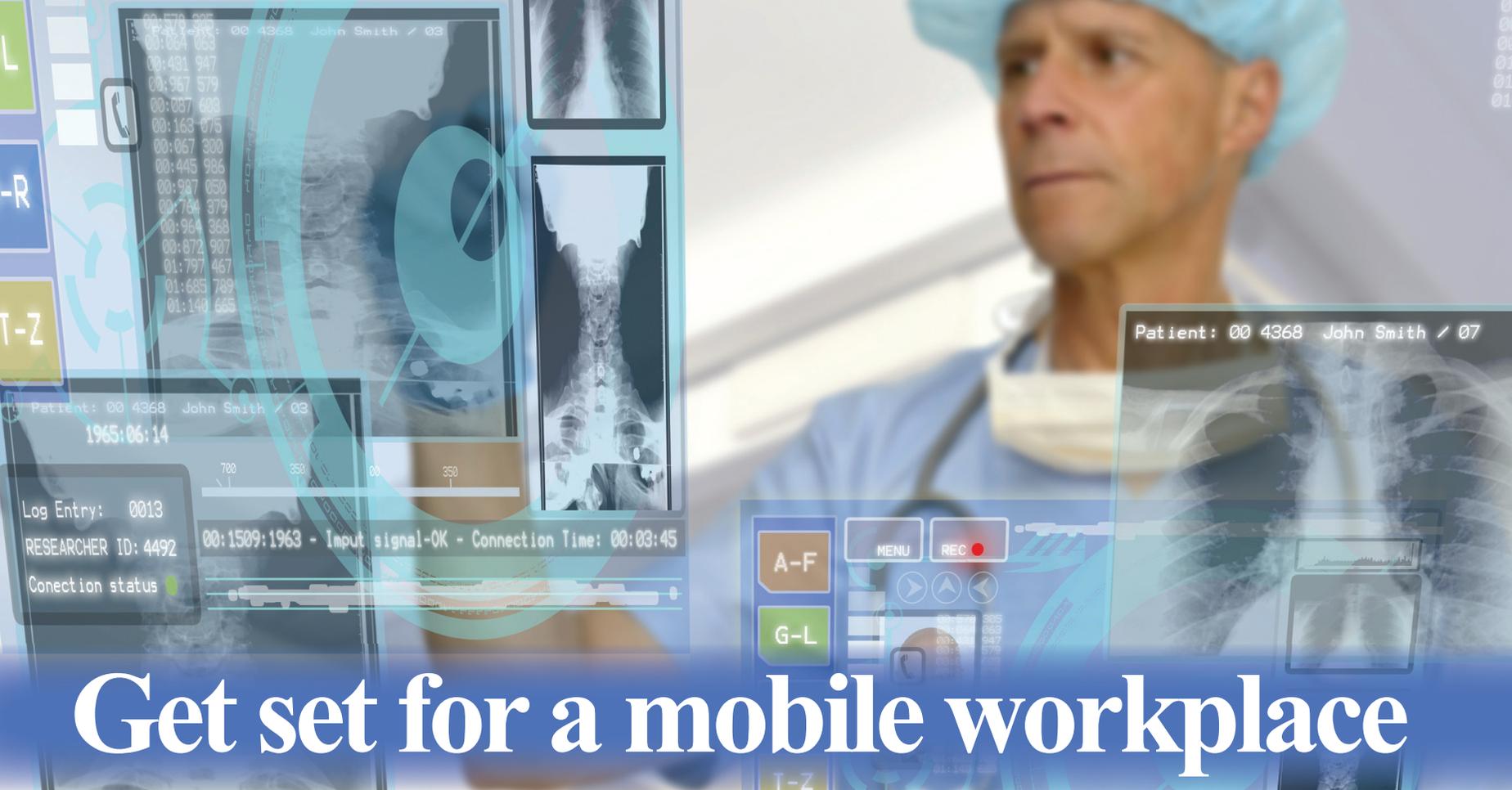
It’s early days but we can already see momentum building with many GPs and other professionals becoming digital champions. We are also working with various bodies and associations to normalise digital working by making it an integral part of health professionals’ training.

This is vital because many working practices are incredibly entrenched – it is always easier for people to

‘do what we’ve always done’ than to embrace change.

It needs to become second nature to not only use digital technology in day-to-day work, but also challenge why it is not being used.

Paul Gibson is head of informatics and Rachael Forbister is TECS programme manager at Sunderland CCG



Get set for a mobile workplace

Keiron Salt looks at the key digital possibilities and enablers for health and care starting with the potential of mobile computing and communication

In my previous article, *Long live the NHS!* (*Health MJ*, October), I described how the NHS leaders are advocating a ‘technological revolution’.

Matt Hancock, the secretary of state for health and social care, described his ambitions of ‘changing NHS culture to make it tech focused at every level. This will look to address the challenges of financial sustainability and quality of care in a context of increased demand and an ageing population. Care for an 85-year-old costs more than five times as much as an average 30-year-old.’

In this series of articles I will look further into some of the key digital possibilities and enablers, starting with the potential of mobility solutions (mobile computing and communication).

Care beyond the traditional settings

Care is no longer just delivered in hospitals and GP surgeries. It is delivered in the community, drop in centres, pharmacies and people’s homes.

In the future, certain care and tests will be delivered in say, supermarkets or opticians. An important segment of community care will be for our ageing population as demand increases in this demographic, combined with significantly higher relative costs. It provides the opportunity of keeping people out of hospitals with benefits to the individual and financial benefits to the NHS of preventing crises and avoiding costly and unnecessary admission to hospital.

Empowering the NHS professional

BT’s research looked at perceptions of digital transformation and how strategies are evolving with NHS chief information officers.

One key area identified was the ability to empower NHS professionals through use of mobile and mobility solutions. The research indicated that almost two-thirds of trusts have a mobile strategy, and 84% expect mobile adoption to increase over the next one-to-two years.

Care is incredibly information centric, so being able to access and update key patient information and access diagnostics in real-time at the point of care will support the clinician’s ability to make informed timely decisions. Improving the quality of time with the service user from an informed position and not about the patient reciting their previous medical history.

The broader NHS professionals are highly committed to do their best for patients but are under increasing pressure. The ability to flexibly support them whenever and wherever they work will boost staff satisfaction. It also provides the obvious time and cost savings of not being tied to a physical location.

Professionals should be able to benefit from colleague support regardless of location.

The ability to benefit from colleague support will also help health professional’s satisfaction. Being able to receive and share experience electronically via video

or chat from their mobile device supports the professional to deliver the best quality of care. For instance, collaboration through video and share high quality medical images with specialists to help diagnosis. This may be in community care or paramedics at the scene of an incident.

The public and staff have expectations of digital services, through their everyday use of consumer IT and in retail and banking.

Commercial organisations have realised benefits utilising mobility and collaboration technologies to be more efficient, reliable, cost less and provide a better experience for us all.

Preventative care for the citizen

Mobile technology, in combination with wearable technology, will become a key enabler to promote self-care and preventative care for the citizen, but also to support a sustainable NHS.

The combination of the latest consumer mobile phones, health apps, and sensors attached to a mobile phone offer increasingly sophisticated capability and importantly, lower cost for mass adoption. For instance, BT recently worked with the NHS to identify individuals with undetected heart conditions through ECGs from a mobile phone. This was then used in real-time to collaborate with specialists.

Devices with Internet of Things (IoT) sensors worn by patients can collect data on glucose levels, blood pressure, blood oxygen levels and sleep pattern. The connected

medical wearables can also check patients are taking their prescribed medicines and perhaps even administer drugs too in the future.

What technologies will enable this vision?

Many of the capabilities are available today to support this vision with the convergence of more powerful mobile devices, IoT/wearables, fixed and mobile connectivity, security, collaboration and field force automation will empower the professional and citizen.

As the scale, depth and frequency of information increases, then 5G offers a revolution of healthcare services.

5G-enabled capability will allow high-quality medical care, remotely and in real time. 5G combined with IoT sensors can further enhance patient care in the home.

Changing NHS culture to make it tech-focused at every level

To truly have an effect at every level of the NHS requires the empowerment of the health professionals and the citizens they care for.

Technology enables and brings increasingly powerful capabilities and flexibility for people in a mobile world. It must not be done in isolation and must embrace the cultural aspects of the NHS and be driven, applied, embraced and adopted by frontline staff.

This will unlock the powerful potential of empowering the NHS.

Keiron Salt is chief information officer, health, for BT

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