

POLICY BRIEFING

March 2019

Welcome to our NLGN Policy Briefing, exclusively for our members. This briefing collates the most interesting reports that we have come across over the last month.

We also ask NLGN members about the research and publications that they have found useful in their work. This month's issue features research recommendations from Rob Flynn, Information and Research Manager at Enfield Council. If you'd like to contribute to next month's briefing, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Sarah Lawson at slawson@nlgn.org.uk.

Our briefing covers reports across the following topics:

- Devolution, Growth and Industrial Strategy (p2)
- Public Service Reform (p5)
- Digital Technology (p8)
- Finance (p10)
- Employment and Skills (p11)
- Organisational Development (p13)

Meet our members

Enfield Council: Rob Flynn, Information and Research Manager

What particular challenge has your Council recently faced?

Tackling poverty is a key priority for Enfield Council. An important element of this is understanding who, why and how households are affected by poverty.

What research piece have you found helpful to tackle this challenge?

A series of research reports from Policy and Practice, and Trust for London (*Low Income Londoners and Welfare Reform*) have tracked Londoners affected by welfare reform. Enfield's participation in this analysis has helped to provide detailed and valuable insight into this cohort, which has informed the Council's understanding of their financial resilience.

Do you have any further reading you'd recommend on this topic?

A New Measure of Poverty for the UK (Social Metrics Commission, 2018)

■ DEVOLUTION, GROWTH AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

Cities in Action

Key Cities and New Local Government Network

The 24 mid-sized cities in the Key Cities Group have joined forces to seek closer policy collaboration with the UK and devolved governments. Closer collaboration would help all Key Cities, and other places across the UK, to build on their current progress and provide a considerable boost to their cities' and the UK's economic and social well-being. Key Cities propose to work more closely with the UK and devolved governments in areas such as: employment and skills; housing; connectivity; and young people's mental health support.

London, UK: Strengthening ties between capital and country

Centre for London

London is a global powerhouse and a powerful engine for the national economy, but its relationship with the rest of UK has become increasingly strained. Local leaders feel that the location of central government in Westminster and Whitehall leads to 'London-centric' national policymaking, and recent debates over the regional allocation of transport spending have exacerbated tensions.

Recommendations include:

- The Mayor of London should play a prominent role in further developing the emerging mayoral network and establish a UK Alliance of Mayors. This alliance would advocate for solutions to shared problems, and for further devolution in the UK.
- Central Government must commit to a major review of where power lies in the UK and appoint a Cabinet Minister for Devolution to oversee the process.
- Civil servants in Whitehall should be expected to undertake temporary 'job swaps' with local government officials, including London boroughs, to provide greater experience and insight into the challenges and opportunities faced by elected authorities beyond Westminster.

Cultural Cities Enquiry

Core Cities, Key Cities, Arts Council England and others

The Enquiry considered how the UK can radically increase the ability of its cities to use culture to drive inclusive growth. Recommendations include:

- Establish Cultural City Compacts to bring together local partners with a shared interest in maximising the civic role of culture, including business, universities, the NHS, local authorities, the cultural sector and LEPs. Compact partners will work together to create and deliver a plan to maximise social and economic benefits from a thriving cultural ecosystem.
- Cultural City Compacts should consider a range of portfolio approaches to cultural property assets. Where these retain public, community or cultural sector ownership of assets, returns will be recycled, enhancing the city's cultural ecosystem.
- Extend the national conversation on a Tourist Levy in Scotland to a UK-wide review of the merits of this approach.

A Modern Transport Infrastructure Strategy

Localis

Following a raft of government strategies for tackling air quality on a national scale – for instance the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (Defra's) Clean Air Strategy and the Department for Transport's (DfT's) Road to Zero strategy – this report asks what can be done locally as part of modern infrastructure strategies. Recommendations to strategic authorities (defined in the report as combined authorities and county councils) are:

- Each strategic authority should make cleaner air a strategic aim of their infrastructure strategy.
- As part of their infrastructure strategy, each strategic authority should identify their local infrastructure gap.
- Each strategic authority should review funding and financing options for the delivery of better infrastructure in their area. This should include private financing, local taxation and government funding.

The Economic Performance of Britain's Cities: Patterns, processes and policy implications

University of Cambridge, University of Southampton, Aston University, Newcastle University, and Cambridge Econometrics

Conducted under the Economic and Social Research Council's Urban Transformations Programme, the project on which this report is based examined various aspects of the economic evolution and performance of Britain's cities since 1971. This included categorising British cities into three distinctive groups: those cities that had grown faster than the nation ('pulling away'); those cities that had grown slower than the national benchmark ('falling behind'); and those cities that had 'kept pace' with the growth of the nation. Project findings include:

- To avoid the disruption and costs of constant institutional and policy change, continuity and stability in the governance and policy framework is critical to enable strategies to be set and refined, and the policy-mix sustained for at least 10-15 years.
- The governance and policy mix requires better alignment, co-ordination and complementarity between different policy fields and geographical levels (national, city-regional and city).
- Recognising that city governments alone struggle to influence economic evolution in cities, governance arrangements need to enable and incentivise collaboration and joint working between key actors in the public, private and civic sectors for the economic development of cities and their regions.

High Streets and Town Centres in 2030

House of Commons Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee

High streets and town centres can survive and thrive by 2030 if they adapt. This will require a shift from the retail focused activities of high streets and town centres today to new uses and purposes, which foster greater social interaction, community spirit and local identity and characteristics. With a properly planned strategic intervention led by the local authority, with the backing of local stakeholders and the wider community, we can redefine our high streets and town centres and ensure their long-term sustainability for future generations to come. The Committee's recommendations include:

- Strong local leadership should be one of the key criteria by which bids to the Future High Streets Fund are assessed. However, given the scale of the challenge and the fact that local

authorities are unlikely to be able to contribute many of their own resources to this work, the UK Government needs to increase funding available in the next round of the Fund.

- The complexity surrounding rate reliefs and the administrative burden they create for retailers should be addressed and an allowance, similar to an income tax allowance, should be considered.
- Local Plans must be living documents, regularly updated to capture and reflect changing trends, and must be forward looking, anticipating what will happen in five years' time. They should also be supplemented with dynamic strategies covering specific high streets and town centres.

Regional Funding After Brexit: Opportunities for the UK's Shared Prosperity Fund

Institute for Public Policy Research

IPPR's briefing outlines three challenges facing the UK following its forthcoming departure from the European Union: regional inequality; centralisation of power; and a lack of community voice. The report provides recommendations for how the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) could be designed effectively to tackle these problems. These recommendations include:

- Using the NUTS 2 level as the geographical measure for SPF analysis. (The NUTS 2 category is essentially a way of breaking down the EU into sub-national levels at the regional level. The NUTS Level 2 population generally falls within the range of 800,000 and 3 million).
- Combined and local authorities ought to be given devolved powers, enabling them to handle the funds from the SPF, as well as manage contracts and monitor and evaluate the progress of projects.
- A portion of the SPF should be earmarked (at least 20 per cent) to go directly to priority areas at the neighbourhood level.

SMEs and Productivity in the Northern Powerhouse: Interim report

Institute for Public Policy Research

Productivity is a measure of how effectively an economy uses the resources at its disposal. Raising the level of output per hour worked offers a route to improved wages and higher living standards. It is no surprise that improving productivity is central to the UK government's 2018 industrial strategy. Since the 2008 financial crisis, productivity in the UK has grown at a slower rate than in other developed countries. Within the UK, productivity rates in London and the South East are above the OECD and EU averages. However, productivity is markedly lower in the North and the Midlands, with further sharp divergences between sub-regions.

Raising the productivity of small businesses will play an important role in boosting the northern economy. In the north of England, 99.8 per cent of all businesses have fewer than 250 employees, 21 per cent employ between one and nine people, and 74 per cent are 'sole traders'. Like small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across the UK, these businesses tend to have lower rates of productivity than larger firms; companies that employ fewer than 10 people lag behind the national average rate of productivity by between 15 and 27 per cent. More productive SMEs are essential if the North is to achieve a dynamic and inclusive economy across the region.

The Community Paradigm: Why public services need radical change and how it can be achieved

New Local Government Network

Across the UK, public service workers are implementing radical innovations to respond to the challenge of rising demand. In this report, Adam Lent and Jessica Studdert argue that the common factor is the building of a completely new relationship with communities and networks. This is a relationship that rejects the hierarchical and transactional mindsets of traditional services models which all too often bypass people's assets and existing capabilities. Instead, it fosters collaboration between the public servant and citizen, sharing power and resources more directly with people, to embed prevention and ensure future sustainability. Combining policy analysis and insights from leading edge practice, *The Community Paradigm* sets out a completely new vision for the future of public services.

The report elaborates on three broad principles underpinning this paradigm: empowering communities; resourcing communities; and creating a culture of community collaboration. To achieve these principles, the Community Paradigm requires change on the part of central government, local government and the wider public sector. To that end, the report sets out four policy proposals:

- Unconditional devolution
- Participatory and deliberative decision-making
- Collaborative delivery
- Community commissioning.

Planning for New Homes

National Audit Office

This report is part of a series on housing in England, including *Housing in England: overview* (2017) and *Homelessness* (2017). It assesses how effectively MHCLG supports the planning regime to provide the right homes in the right places. Key findings include:

- Local authorities in four out of nine regions have seen an increase in the number of new homes needed in their areas.
- According to MHCLG's performance measures, local authorities are increasingly processing planning applications within target timescales.
- Some of the reported improvement in local authorities' performance might reflect a greater use of agreed extensions to timescales rather than increased efficiency.

Managing Money on Universal Credit

Citizens Advice

While Universal Credit may be working for some, there are a significant number of people who are having problems managing their money. Evidence from Citizens Advice shows that while changes introduced by the Government since 2017 have started to help people, they've only made a dent in the problem rather than fixed it. People face particular problems during the five-week wait for a first payment, but financial problems can last beyond this. Universal Credit is paid in rigid ways that make it hard for some to budget, leaves little financial wriggle room and deductions for debt repayments are common. Further changes are needed so that people are paid enough to live on and in a way which reflects people's lives and how they budget, including:

- Explore ways to get payments to people more quickly.
- Ensure Universal Credit provides enough to live on.
- Help people to budget by designing Universal Credit around real lives.

The Last-Time Buyer: Housing and finance for an ageing society

Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation

By 2040, the UK population is forecast to grow to 72.7 million, up from just over 65 million in 2015. The number of inhabitants aged 65+ is set to jump from 11.6 million to 17.7 million. Demographic analysis suggests that demand for accommodation could add the equivalent of two new towns, each with 100,000 homes, every year for 25 years. This research develops a tool for forecasting housing needs, and key findings include:

- The number of people set to live alone will increase by 30 per cent by 2040.
- Prices are strongly correlated with changes to the Dwelling Index in the medium to long-term. Future trends will increasingly be dictated by the impact of an ageing population. Pressure on prices will turn downwards in the 2020s as baby boomers die out, freeing up property.
- Population decline, mainly in northern cities, and growth elsewhere has fuelled imbalances between housing demand and supply, as well as social inequality. Within cities, changing shopping habits have created opportunities for redevelopment.

Childcare Survey 2019

Coram Family and Childcare

The Childcare Survey 2019 shows a mixed picture for families in Britain. Despite some improvements in the sufficiency of childcare, persistent gaps remain. And despite additional government investment in childcare which help some families, others are facing very high prices. Some parents are still worse off in work once they have paid for childcare, particularly in larger families or families with young children. The time from the end of parental leave to a child turning three and becoming eligible for funded childcare is a particular pressure point, as prices are highest and there is the least government support.

There are seven different ways that families can get support with their childcare costs, each with different eligibility criteria. While the support that is available is welcomed by many parents, the complexity of the system leaves parents at risk of missing out on the support they are entitled to. Childcare enables parents to work, keeping valuable skills in the workforce, and helps children do better at school, which can narrow the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers. Action is needed to make sure that every family is able to access high quality childcare that boosts children's development and enables parents to work.

Keeping Kids Safe: Improving safeguarding responses to gang violence and criminal exploitation

Children's Commissioner

British Crime Survey data suggests that there are 27,000 children in England who identify as a gang member and there are many children who are being groomed and exploited by gangs, but who would not identify as gang member. Just 6,560 gang members or associates are known to children's services or youth offending teams. On the whole gang members are highly vulnerable children with a range of factors increasing their risk of being drawn into gangs. Across the board data shows that

leading indicators – potential ‘early warning signs’ – of gang-based violence have been on the rise in recent years.

Many Local Safeguarding Childrens Boards have no information on the levels of gang activity and risk among children in their area. While there have been numerous Government initiatives in response to rising levels of youth violence, issues include the fact that there are too many small funding pots, all involving large amounts of bureaucracy, with none of the funding streams alone being commensurate with the level of need. Recommendations include:

- The Government needs to be clear that child criminal exploitation is a national priority and lay-out clear expectations for all the organisations working with children as to their role. While the Department for Education has put in place the structures to achieve this, the practice is yet to match the theory.
- The joint inspections from Ofsted, HMIC, the CQC and Probation Inspectorate have been invaluable in identifying what is needed in terms of combating child criminal exploitation. This report recommends that the joint inspections be rolled-out to all areas eventually.
- There needs to be a much greater focus on the early years within the Serious Violence Strategy. Specifically, the Department for Education should set a clear target for reducing the number of children beginning school with very low levels of development, along with a strategy for how this can be done, and introduce a national plan for improving SEND identification in the early years.

Ending Short Prison Sentences: An amnesty for prolific thieves and burglars?

CIVITAS

Since the New Year, the Justice Secretary David Gauke MP and Prisons Minister Rory Stewart MP have been making the case for ending prison sentences shorter than six months – except for violent and sex offenders. The stated aim is to reduce the numbers going to prison by tens of thousands a year, with those otherwise receiving short sentences instead receiving non-custodial punishments.

This report uses the latest Ministry of Justice statistics to explore the implications. Can tens of thousands more criminals receive non-custodial sentences without compromising public safety? The latest sentencing data suggests the government’s proposals would mean:

- The effective decriminalisation of shoplifting. Already just one in five shop thefts (21 per cent) led to a custodial sentence in 2017. If those sentenced to less than six months had received non-custodial sentences, the proportion would have been just one in 200 (0.4 per cent).
- The effective end of any chance of prison for drug possession – a charge often used by police against drug dealers when more substantive charges seem unlikely to stick.
- Non-custodial sentences for far more people carrying knives and firearms. For knife possession, the proportion avoiding prison would rise from 70 per cent to 83 per cent – with almost 1,200 more receiving a noncustodial sentence.

Skipping School: Invisible Children – How children disappear from England’s schools

Children’s Commissioner

Many parents who make a philosophical decision to home educate their children put a substantial amount of thought and dedication into providing their children with a high-quality education. But as this report shows, there are many other families who have ended up home educating for other reasons and are struggling to cope.

The Children's Commissioner's Office is calling for a number of measures including:

- A home education register – parents who are home educating their children should be required to register their children with the local authority.
- Advice and support for children and families – within three days of a decision being taken for a child to be withdrawn from school to be home educated, the local authority should visit the child and family to provide advice and support on alternative options, including other schools the child could attend.
- Greater oversight of children – council education officers should visit each child being home educated at least once per term to assess the suitability of their education and their welfare.

BEIS Public Attitudes Tracker Wave 28

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

The Public Attitudes Tracker (PAT) survey covers public attitudes towards Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) policies such as energy, climate change and workers' rights.

Key findings from the latest survey include:

- In December 2018, people were more aware of solar thermal panels (71 per cent), than other renewable heating systems (38 per cent were aware of biomass boilers, 33 per cent were aware of ground source heat pumps, and 27 per cent were aware of air source heat pumps).
- Nearly a fifth (18 per cent) of the public paid a lot of attention to the amount of heat they used in their home in December 2018, a similar proportion to previous waves.

■ DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Disinformation and 'Fake News': Final report

House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

This report sets out the findings of an inquiry on disinformation that ran for over 18 months. The inquiry covered: individuals' rights over their privacy; how their political choices might be affected and influenced by online information; and interference in political elections both in the UK and across the world by malign forces intent on causing disruption and confusion. Recommendations include:

- There needs to be increased enforcement of transparency in the digital sphere.
- Big tech companies must not be allowed to expand exponentially, without constraint or proper regulatory oversight.
- There need to be regulation to restore democratic accountability.

The Prince's Trust eBay Youth Index 2019

Prince's Trust

This year marks the tenth edition of The Prince's Trust Youth Index - which measures the overall happiness and confidence of young people throughout the UK. This latest research reveals that 16 to 25-year olds are feeling overwhelmed by pressure, not helped by the presence of social media distorting the perception of their own success. While social media can often be used as a positive tool, this report shows that nearly half of young people feel "inadequate" and more anxious about their future when comparing their lives to their friends on social media.

Reining in the Political ‘Wild West’: Campaign rules for the 21st century

Electoral Reform Society

With contributions from a number of prominent commentators, this report contains a strong focus on how the increasing use of online campaigning has exposed the many loopholes that can allow people to circumvent rules perfectly legally in the digital realm. The report contends how online political campaigning has effectively become an unbridled Wild West. Contributions of particular interest include those by:

- Steve Wood, Deputy Commissioner at the Information Commissioner’s Office, who discusses how the regulator is navigating the changing environment around the political use of personal data.
- Jacob Ohrvik-Stott, Researcher for Doteveryone, who reiterates their call for the establishment of an Office for Responsible Technology to address the challenges of the existing regulatory landscape.
- Josh Smith of the Centre for the Analysis of Social Media at Demos, who considers the future of political campaigning in the face of new and advanced forms of technology, such as AI and deep learning.

Switched On: Exploring the challenge of adequate digital access for all children and young people

Carnegie UK

This report brings together research and evidence about key issues related to digital inclusion, with a particular focus on children and young people. The paper describes the impacts of a lack of digital access, which have potential repercussions in many aspects of young people’s lives, including their educational outcomes.

The report summarises a number of existing policies and initiatives that exist to promote digital inclusion for vulnerable groups of children and young people. Carnegie UK highlights that whilst there are a range of overarching digital strategies at national level, digital is not necessarily reflected in the policies relating to the vulnerable groups who are most at risk. In conclusion, the report sets out a selection of case studies that provide encouraging examples of the way in which carefully designed interventions can make a real difference.

Educ-AI-tion Rebooted? Exploring the future of artificial intelligence in schools and colleges

Nesta

This report outlines the potential of AI tools in schools and colleges, and charts a path for the future that maximises the benefits and minimises the risks. Overwhelmingly, AI is characterised by its ability to accelerate, exaggerate and amplify issues that surround it – for both good and bad. While consideration of AI in other sectors – from weapons to healthcare – has entered both the public consciousness and government agendas, AI in education lags far behind. Despite minimal attention, AI education (AIEd) tools are already being used in schools and colleges in the UK and around the world. Policy recommendations include:

- Upstream public funding for AIEd research and development through Innovate UK. This funding should prioritise ‘teacher-facing’ and ‘system-facing’ tools, which are currently underexplored despite their high potential.
- Government should mobilise schools and colleges to form an EdTech test-bed to enable companies to test AIEd in real settings.

- The bodies responsible for governing AI and data should dedicate time and resource to considering the consequences of these technologies for education.

The Topol Review: Preparing the healthcare workforce to deliver the digital future National Health Service

This Review proposes three principles to support the deployment of digital healthcare technologies throughout the NHS:

- Patients need to be included as partners and informed about health technologies, with a particular focus on vulnerable and marginalised groups to ensure equitable access.
- The healthcare workforce needs expertise and guidance to evaluate new technologies, using processes grounded in real-world evidence.
- Wherever possible the adoption of new technologies should enable staff to gain more time to care, promoting deeper interaction with patients.

Genomics, digital medicine and AI will have a major impact on patient care in the future. A number of emerging technologies, including low-cost sequencing technology, telemedicine, smartphone apps, biosensors for remote diagnosis and monitoring, speech recognition and automated image interpretation, will be particularly important for the healthcare workforce.

■ FINANCE

Local Government Spending Committee of Public Accounts

Local authorities face enormous pressure: their financial position is continuing to deteriorate as demand for vital services increases. Over the last eight years, the government has cut the funding it gives to English local authorities by nearly half, while, at the same time, demand for critical council services has risen. Some councils are now in an extremely worrying position: overspending their budgets for social care; reducing key services; falling back on financial reserves; and increasingly relying on generating other sources of income, which comes with greater risks.

The MHCLG ('the Department') are relying on a short-term approach to a long-term problem. Overall spending by local authorities on services fell by 19.2 per cent in real terms between 2010-11 and 2016-17. The government has had to inject large amounts of additional funding to ensure that the local authority sector can keep going in the short-term: £1.4 billion in the 2018 budget. Yet disturbingly, there is still no sign that the Department has a clear plan to secure the financial sustainability of local authorities in the long-term. The Department continues to insist that the sector is sustainable but refuses to provide the evidence that Parliament and the public need to be assured that this is actually the case. The Department has rejected a number of the Committee's previous recommendations on these subjects.

LGiU MJ State of Local Government Finance Survey 2019 Local Government Information Unit

LGiU and The MJ have run the State of Local Government Finance Survey every January since 2012 to coincide with councils setting their annual budgets. The results give a snapshot of the key pressures facing councils and the impact of ongoing financial uncertainty on their communities. The

survey questions covered topics including income sources, confidence, service level spending and public trust. Key findings include:

- Eight in ten (80 per cent) councils say they are not confident in the sustainability of local government finance; none said they were ‘very confident’.
- 97 per cent of councils plan to increase council tax in 2019-20, three quarters by more than 2.5 per cent (the maximum increase without a referendum is three per cent in most places).
- Over half of councils (53 per cent) plan to dip into their reserves this year. Worryingly, 40 per cent of councils plan to use their reserves two years running.
- Children’s Services and Education is the top immediate financial pressure for the second year running (36 per cent of councils), ahead of Adult Social Care (23 per cent) which has historically ranked highest. However Adult Social Care is still under severe strain, being named as the top long-term financial pressure (37 per cent of councils).

■ EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

The Living Standards Outlook 2019

Resolution Foundation

The prospects for people’s living standards are a function of two things: the outlook for overall economic growth and the outlook for how different households will share in the gains of that growth. These two elements are in turn the product of both market-based and policy-driven developments. There is of course much uncertainty in both areas – especially in the current pre-Brexit setting – but casting forward as best we can is useful both to prepare for what might be about to come and to inform policy changes that might positively alter the outlook. This second dedicated annual Living Standards Outlook projects levels and distributions of household income growth up to 2023-24, based on current economic and policy forecasts. Key findings include:

- The Article 50 period (so far) – 2017-18 and 2018-19 – has not been a good one for household income growth. This report estimates that the median real non-pensioner income did not grow over this period. The Resolution Foundation awaits official survey data, but incomes in the bottom half may have fallen due to high inflation and the benefit freeze, amid the broader economic context of stalling business investment and continued policy uncertainty.
- There has been better news for households recently. Inflation has fallen, nominal annual pay growth is at its highest since 2008 (though still relatively low), and the employment rate has continued to increase over the Article 50 period.
- Child poverty is projected to rise by a further six percentage points by 2023-24, which (on existing data) would mark a record high, even surpassing the highs of the 1990s. The proportion of parents living in poverty is also forecast to hit a record high.

Closing the Regional Attainment Gap

All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility and the Sutton Trust

The attainment gap – the gap in school exam results between pupils from different social backgrounds – is one of the key challenges in our education system. Differences in school achievement act as a block on social mobility and have real consequences for the life chances of those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Children with poor vocabulary aged five are more than twice as likely to be unemployed aged 34. Such differences are not just social in origin, they are also geographical. Key findings from this report include:

- The attainment gap between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and their better-off classmates is substantial, across a range of different measures, and widens through the school years.
- Attainment varies substantially across the country, with London a particularly strong performer when it comes to both overall attainment, and the gap between those who are disadvantaged and those who are not.

Sorry, We're Closed: Understanding the impact of retail's decline on people and places Resolution Foundation

This report provides an in-depth study of the people and places affected by retail's decline by drawing on quantitative analysis and two focus groups carried out with a mixture of current and former retail workers. The Resolution Foundation's argument is that it is on these questions of 'who?' and 'where?' that policy thinking must now focus. Key findings of the report include:

- Overall, the share of employee jobs that are in retail has fallen from 10.8 per cent in 2003 to 9.5 per cent in 2018. But this has not translated into a significant reduction in the number of jobs in the sector.
- Retail's decline is broad based; retail's employment share fell in 72 per cent of local authorities between 2009 and 2017.
- Policy should focus on retail's leavers and on those places where employees leaving retail, or who might otherwise have entered, are most likely to struggle.

Teacher Labour Market in England – Annual Report 2019 National Foundation for Educational Research

The National Foundation for Educational Research's (NFER) first annual report on the state of the teacher workforce measures the key indicators of the teacher labour market and teachers' working conditions. The recruitment, development and retention of teachers and school leaders is a crucial underpinning for a successful education system. However, England's school system faces a substantial and growing challenge of ensuring there are sufficient numbers of high-quality teachers employed in schools. Key findings include:

- The secondary school system is facing a substantial teacher supply challenge over the next decade, which requires urgent action.
- One in five teachers (20 per cent) feel tense about their job most or all of the time, compared to 13 per cent of similar professionals.
- Teaching's traditional 'recession-proof' advantage over other professions has eroded over time due to a relatively strong graduate labour market. High job security for graduates outside of teaching makes it harder to attract them into teaching and retain them.

The Shorter Working Week: A radical and pragmatic proposal Autonomy

In a context of worrying trends, including job polarisation, the explosion of precarious forms of work, gendered inequalities and stagnating productivity growth, this report makes the case for a shorter working week. It contends that the transition towards a shorter working week is possible now, and is not an abstract utopia. Findings of the report include:

- There is no positive correlation between productivity and the amount of hours worked per day.
- There are strong indications that reducing the working week can help reduce air pollution and our overall carbon footprint.
- Non-work time is important for the improvement of our mental and physical health, and for a sense of wellbeing in general.
- Productivity should not be the burden of workers alone.

■ ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Improving Government Planning and Spending

Public Accounts Committee

Progress on improving government's planning and spending framework is an ongoing challenge for the Treasury and the Cabinet Office. Although some progress has been made, the committee remain concerned that planning and spending are treated as disparate, departments are not incentivised to plan for the longer-term, and they are repeatedly over-optimistic when planning for what they can deliver, by when and for how much. Unless action is taken to correct these issues, the government's long-standing problems of short-term thinking, sticking plaster funding and cost-shunting will persist, resulting in poorer quality, less sustainable and joined-up services. Recommendations include:

- By June 2019, the Treasury and the Cabinet Office should write to the committee with its action plan to fill the gaps in skills, experience and behaviours needed across the Treasury, Cabinet Office, functions and departments.
- When issuing guidance for the next spending review and future SDPs (single departmental budget plans), the Treasury and the Cabinet Office should require departments to show how their plans and funding bids deliver long-term, sustainable value for money.

Spending Fairly, Spending Well: Time for a radical overhaul of value for money and public audit

The Smith Institute

Concerns over the public's trust in Government and over how public services are funded, delivered and accounted for, are now centre stage in both Whitehall and Town Halls. Meanwhile Ministers and Whitehall are gearing up for the 2019 Spending Review and political leaders increasingly see the need for fiscal renewal. However, persuading the public to have confidence in the Government's spending of their taxes is essential to keeping the state fit, funded and functional. It is against this backdrop that David Walker and John Tizard are calling for a radical rethink about the impact of expenditure and how it is accounted for.

This report not only sets out the case for a more devolved, more accountable and more reliable system, but offers ambitious proposals for unifying the way public services are assessed to ensure they are delivering effectiveness, fairness and value for money. Tizard and Walker call for new agencies, including an independent Office of the 3Es (effectiveness, efficiency and equity), a change to the remit of the National Audit Office (NAO) and a new Public Interest Appraisal Unit.

Professionalising Learning and Development

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

In a world in which the nature of work, the workplace and workforce are changing at a relentless pace, organisations must respond to change. In the context of such rapid change Learning and Development (L&D) functions play a vital role. The transformation of organisations demands the transformation of L&D practitioners; however, many L&D teams are struggling to change. The report explores the key development needs of L&D teams. Key findings include:

- Organisations that develop the skills and knowledge of their L&D practitioners through planned continuing professional development see a significant positive impact on growth (21 per cent), productivity (12 per cent) and performance (15 per cent).
- 48 per cent of L&D practitioners are 'extremely concerned' with the lack of time they can spend on their own learning.
- Organisations that facilitate social and collaborative learning are twice as likely to increase learning access and flexibility, twice as likely to develop a positive learning culture, and four times more likely to facilitate continuous learning.