



December 2009

An early Policy Round-Up this month before the festive season begins. December's national political debate has been consumed by the [PBR](#). Yet the document perhaps of most interest to the local government community, was the [Smarter State](#) paper setting out reform of frontline public services. Good to see proposal building on the Total Place approach to join up more front-line funding, reduce ring-fencing and the number of national indicators.

With all best wishes for the festive season

1. Political

Shadow Chancellor George Osborne announces Conservative plans for an Office for Budget Responsibility to be up and running on a shadow basis in order to be able to publish forecasts at the time of an emergency budget held within 50 days of an election, should the Conservatives win. 8 December

Rosie Winterton gives a key note speech to a NLGN/LGC Conference on local economies. 9 December

2. Departmental

CLG

Councils to get a four per cent funding increase for next year. Local Government Minister Barbara Follett said that given the current level of inflation and resources made available in the settlement, the Government expects the average Band D council tax increase in 2010-11 to be the lowest for at least sixteen years. 26 November: [Click Here](#)

Funding has been provided to help of rough sleepers find homes in the private rented sector through the Small Grants programme. Through this, councils can help provide deposits so that rough sleepers are able to secure privately rented accommodation. 27 November: [Click Here](#)

Housing Minister John Healey has announced proposals for a second wave of eco-towns and pledged to double the money to a total of £10m to support councils in developing their plans. 1 December: [Click Here](#)

John Healey announced support for councils to plan and deliver new homes and green energy projects to power the country to a low carbon future. 1 December: [Click Here](#)

Local people will be able to demand their councils to take action on under-performing schools and hospitals, alcohol disorder, anti-social behaviour and other concerns under new proposals to give teeth to local petitions, announced Communities Secretary John Denham today. 2 December: [Click Here](#)

John Healey gives councils more flexibility in how they manage their waiting lists and called on councils to do more to tackle the myths and misunderstandings about housing waiting lists. 4 December: [Click Here](#)

Government gives a further £2.6 million to fifty more high streets through Real Help Now. 4 December: [Click Here](#)

John Denham re-affirmed the importance of the Prevent programme and set out measures to further improve its effectiveness. 8 December: [Click Here](#)

John Healey announces assessment of the government's drive to improve social housing stock. 8 December: [Click Here](#)

The Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) aims to give local people information about the standard of public services in their area how well councils and their partners are delivering the services that matter most to them. 9 December: [Click Here](#)

Cabinet Office

Today at the smarter government conference, the Prime Minister outlined plans for improving frontline services while getting better value for money for the taxpayer. He said there would be tough choices on spending priorities to help meet the commitment to halve the public deficit within four years. Putting the front line first: smarter government includes plans to cut inefficiencies and to use technology to help hospitals, schools and police forces get better value for money. 7 December: [Click Here](#)

Home Office

The policing white paper aims to make the police more accountable to the public and deliver significant cost savings by working better in partnership, improving efficiency and standardising procurement. 2 December: [Click Here](#)

DCSF

Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Ed Balls and Health Secretary Andy Burnham today announced the Government's acceptance of a radical package of recommendations from the [final Social Work Task Force report](#), to transform social work and public understanding of social workers' crucial contribution to our society. 1 December: [Click Here](#)

The Children's Minister, Dawn Primarolo, today announced that the Government will be taking further important action in three Local Authorities – Cornwall, Doncaster, and Rotherham – to improve children's safeguarding services in each of these authorities. 3 December: [Click Here](#)

Ed Balls today set out the support local authorities and schools will receive for school improvement totalling £900 million and including £315 million available for 1-to-1 tuition for pupils falling behind in English and mathematics as part of a package of measures to ensure every child can succeed. 4 December: [Click Here](#)

Ed Balls today welcomed the announcement by the Chancellor that more children are to benefit from free school meals with an extension of eligibility to free schools meals for lower income families, an extension of the free schools meal pilot to every region in the country, an investment of £140 million. 9 December: [Click Here](#)

DCMS

Licensing Minister Gerry Sutcliffe unveiled proposals to cut licensing red tape, which would make it easier for people to put on temporary events and lighten the workload for councils. 9 December: [Click Here](#)

BIS

Government welcomes Chris Rowlands' independent review into the availability of growth capital to small and medium sized businesses. 23 November: [Click Here](#)

£4.5 million increase in Government funding for apprenticeships and trainees in the engineering construction sector announced by Secretary of State for Business, Lord Mandelson said today. 1 December: [Click Here](#)

New national framework published – Partnerships for Growth – sets out plans to coordinate the work of RDAs and local authorities to promote the industries that will drive growth and pursue national priorities for skills, innovation, investment and enterprise. 10 December: [Click Here](#)

The Government announced today in the Pre-Budget Report that its successful guarantee scheme to support business loans will continue for another year. 10 December: [Click Here](#)

DfT

Local authorities throughout England will be given tough new powers to determine routes, timetables, fares and other aspects of bus services, Transport Minister Sadiq Khan announced today. 10 December: [Click Here](#)

3. Parliament

Written Ministerial Statements

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Mr. John Denham) set out changes to the Department for Communities and Local Government's Departmental Expenditure Limits for 2009-10. 24 November: [Click Here](#)

The Minister for Housing (John Healey) made an Eco-Towns Policy Planning Statement. 1 December: [Click Here](#)

The Minister for Housing (John Healey) announced provisional allocations for the second year of Housing Planning Delivery Grant (2009-10). 1 December: [Click Here](#)

The Minister for Regional Economic Development and Co-ordination (Rosie Winterton) made a statement regarding advice from the Boundary Committee relating to unitary proposals made by Exeter City Council, Ipswich Borough Council and Norwich City Council. 8 December: [Click Here](#)

Oral Questions

A series of topical questions were also put to the Secretary of State. 8 December: [Click Here](#)

New Select Committee Enquiries and Calls for Evidence

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, Subject: Beyond Decent Homes, 23 November, 7 December

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, Subject: Preventing Violent Extremism, 30 November, 14 December

4. Consultation

Department for Communities and Local Government Consultation: Changes to the capital finance system. 16 November: [Click Here](#)

Department for Communities and Local Government Consultation: Permitted development rights for small scale renewable and low carbon energy technologies, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure. 17 November: [Click Here](#)

Department for Communities and Local Government Consultation: Zero Carbon for New Non-domestic Buildings: Consultation on Policy Options. 24 November: [Click Here](#)

Department for Communities and Local Government Consultation: Guidance for local authorities on incentivising landowners to bring forward additional land for rural affordable housing on rural exception sites. 26 November 2009: [Click Here](#)

Department for Communities and Local Government: Listening to communities: seeks view on draft guidance setting out the key principles and requirements of the petitions duty, which requires local authorities to create a scheme for responding to the petitions they receive, and to comply with that scheme. 2 December: [Click Here](#)

Department for Communities and Local Government: Fair and flexible: draft statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England - Summary of responses to consultation. 4 December: [Click Here](#)

Department for Communities and Local Government: Creating a Single Equality Scheme for 2010-13 – Consultation. This consultation document is seeking the views of stakeholders on the possible priorities for our Department's first Single Equality Scheme 2010-13. 7 December: [Click Here](#)

Department for Communities and Local Government: Inclusion of efficiency information with council tax demand notices - Summary of responses to consultation. 8 December: [Click Here](#)

Department for Children, Schools and Families: Statutory guidance for local authorities and schools on Information Passports, Personal Learning Plans and the Core Entitlement for all pupils in Pupil Referral Units and other Alternative Provision. 10 December: [Click Here](#)

5. Other

Sir Jeremy Beecham is to step down next July as leader of the Local Government Association's Labour Group and as the LGA's vice-chair. 25 November: Society Guardian p6

Tens of thousands of civil servants may be moved out of London in a dramatic down-scaling of Whitehall under Labour plans to cut public debts and instil a culture of 'smarter government'. 26 November: [Guardian p1](#), Telegraph p16, Mail p4

PLEASE E-MAIL ANY FEEDBACK OR COMMENTS TO INFO@NLGN.ORG.UK

NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT NETWORK
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