



## MARCH 2010

So, Westminster is on the brink of election fever, as we break for the Easter holidays...

The election dry-run of the [Budget](#) left little to get wildly excited or exercised about (unless you are a cider drinker), although subsequent [agreement](#) by all Chancellor candidates that public sector cuts could be worse than those of Thatcher will have put dismay into local government hearts. While there was nothing on the future of grant allocations, the budget did at least further the debate around [Total Place](#), and particularly encouraging was the news that local areas would receive greater discretion over their budgets and the [focus](#) on invest-to-save approaches.

- NLGN was pleased by a number of success stories this month for our research having an impact on government thinking:
- o Communities Secretary John Denham and Environment Secretary Hilary Benn must have read our [Can You Dig It?](#) report before they announced [plans](#) to bring under-used and unloved land back into use as allotments.
  - o The CLG Select Committee took up a number of our recommendations from [Stronger Together](#) in their recent [report](#) on preventing violent extremism, and referenced our work extensively.
  - o And our recent paper [Don't Let On](#) on illegal sub-letting has influenced recent [announcements](#) on tackling this issue.

There is unlikely to be a policy round-up for April, as a likely purdah period will prevent government announcements, but we'll be back for a post-election round up!

Until then,  
Best wishes

## 1. Political

- Conservatives unveil 'Big Society' plans, 31 March: [Click here](#)
- Conservative Response to Budget: [Click here](#)
- Lib Dem's Response to Budget: [Click here](#)
- Lib Dem's Vince Cable 'wins' Chancellors debate: [Click here](#)

## 2. Departmental

### CLG

"Putting the Frontline First: Meeting the local government challenge" setting out ten steps for councils to protect vital frontline services in an era of tighter public finances, 1 March: [Click Here](#)

New plans for green homes will take place over the next decade, 2 March: [Click Here](#)

Housing Minister John Healey has announced plans for tenants with a new job offer to get Government help to find a new home, 4 March: [Click Here](#)

Community organisations are to receive up to £3.5 million helping them to purchase and refurbish existing properties for the benefit of their local communities, Local Government Minister Barbara Follett announced, 4 March: [Click Here](#)

The New Deal for Communities Experience: A final assessment - provides an overview of how well the Programme has met its objectives in terms of transforming areas, 4 March: [Click Here](#)

Housing Minister John Healey has announced £83 million to get building over 5,700 new and affordable homes stalled by the recession back on track, 8 March: [Click Here](#)

John Healey updates planning rules, granting nearly £10m to improve green skills and backing further progress by the "second wave" of eco-towns, 9 March: [Click Here](#)

New national statistics released show that despite the tough economic times, the number of those accepted as homeless is down by 72 per cent since 2003, 11 March: [Click Here](#)

John Healey announced changes to the country's building regulations to make our homes, shops and offices warmer and cheaper to run and take Britain a step closer to meeting our low carbon commitments, 12 March: [Click Here](#)

More students will be able to take up careers in town planning and help bridge the skills gap after Planning Minister John Healey confirmed an additional £1.8m to fund student bursaries for postgraduate training at 16 Universities, 15 March: [Click Here](#)

Housing and Planning Minister John Healey confirmed further reforms to the planning system, removing around 10,000 full applications to cut costs and red tape for businesses, saving up to £43m a year, 16 March: [Click Here](#)

Communities Secretary John Denham unveiled a £1m fund to help faith groups get their voices heard by Government and public bodies and help play their part delivering public services, 17 March: [Click Here](#)

Pubs Minister John Healey announced a 12 point action plan to give practical support to community pubs up and down the country, backed by £4million in government funding, 18 March: [Click Here](#)

Housing Minister John Healey launched a review to give a new boost to the regeneration of former coal mining areas devastated by the closure of the pits, at a conference in Doncaster, 19 March: [Click Here](#)

Housing and Planning Minister John Healey confirmed the new planning policy to make heritage assets the centrepieces of rejuvenated towns and cities, and protect the historic environment for future generations, 23 March: [Click Here](#)

### HMT

Budget announced, 24 March: [Click Here](#)

Report on Total Place accompanying the budget Total Place: A whole area approach to public services, 25 March: [Click here](#)

### Cabinet Office

The Office of the Third Sector has reported on the results of a number of local pilot surveys, commissioned to explore ways in which the views of smaller, unregistered third sector organisations could be gathered, 10 March: [Click Here](#)

A new short study, Inclusion Health, outlines how improvements in health care for the most excluded groups in society can be accelerated to ensure high quality services are available to all, 11 March: [Click Here](#)

Martha Lane Fox will become the UK's Digital Champion. She will help establish a new Digital Public Services Unit at the heart of Government in the Cabinet Office. The unit will drive departments to transfer their services to online channels, ensuring they are designed around the needs of people who need them most, 22 March: [Click Here](#).

### Home Office

The Home Secretary, Alan Johnson, has announced new measures, the 'Safe and Confident Neighbourhoods' Strategy, to ensure that police and local services work together to tackle antisocial behaviour, boost local confidence and keep neighbourhoods safe, 1 March: [Click Here](#)

The Home Secretary announced the roll-out of a new scheme that will improve protection for children. The child sex offender disclosure scheme gives members of the public a formal mechanism to make enquires about people who are in contact with children, 3 March: [Click Here](#)

### DCSF

Children's Secretary Ed Balls and Schools Minister Diana Johnson have published plans to implement all the recommendations in Brian Lamb's landmark review on special educational needs. This action plan will help create a higher skilled workforce able to respond to children's needs; more accessible information and advice for parents; and stronger accountability and redress when children do not get the support they need, 24 February: [Click Here](#)

Children's Secretary Ed Balls has confirmed that Local Safeguarding Children Boards will in future be required to produce clear and comprehensive executive summaries of Serious Case Reviews and set out in their annual reports what actions have been taken following SCRs, 17 March: [Click Here](#)

The Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Children's Secretary Ed Balls outlined a comprehensive "youth offer", pledging world-class facilities and activities for Britain's teenagers and young people - Local authorities should pool funding to secure these high-quality, cost-effective services, 23 March: [Click Here](#)

### BIS

Government offers £80 million support to boost creation of UK civil nuclear supply chain, 17 March: [Click Here](#)

Skills to fuel growth in key new industries: The government has launched key programmes to ensure the UK economy is supplied with the skills needed to fuel the growth of key new industries in the coming years., 17 March: [Click Here](#)

### DoH

Launch of the National Care Service, as debate over payment for care goes on: [Click here](#)

Older people needing care and support will benefit from new and refreshed local housing strategies that promote dignity, respect and choice, said Care Services Minister Phil Hope, 24 February: [Click Here](#)

### DfT

The Government wants to see access to cycle training for every child, creating a generation of new, safe cyclists according to Transport Minister Sadiq Khan, 22 February: [Click Here](#)

Irresponsible firms who allow their road works to overrun will face penalties of up to £25,000 a day - a tenfold increase on the current £2,500 maximum daily charge - under plans published by Transport Minister Sadiq Khan, 1 March: [Click Here](#)

Transport Minister Sadiq Khan issued a challenge to local authority and city leaders to be bold and innovative in developing transport strategies, 2 March: [Click Here](#)

Transport Secretary Andrew Adonis announced proposals which would revolutionise Britain's rail network by delivering an initial core high speed rail network linking London to Birmingham, Manchester, the East Midlands, Sheffield and Leeds, with trains running at up to 250 miles per hour, 11 March: [Click Here](#)

Councils will be given new ways of preventing and clamping down on Blue Badge abuse as part of a package of proposals for a radical overhaul of the scheme, Transport Minister, Sadiq Khan announced, 22 March: [Click Here](#)

## 3. Parliament

### Written Ministerial Statements

Transport Minister Sadiq Khan announcing the third tranche of performance-related payments from the urban congestion performance fund that will see the ten largest urban areas in England receive a further £19.7 million to study and address the causes of urban congestion, 24 February: [Click Here](#)

The Minister for Housing (John Healey) publishes proposals for: A Planning Policy Statement: "Planning for a Low-Carbon Future in a Changing Climate", A Planning Policy Statement: "Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment", 9 March: [Click Here](#)

The Minister of State, Department for Culture, Media and Sport (Margaret Hodge): "The Modernisation Review of Public Libraries: A Policy Statement" setting out policies for public libraries in England, 22 March: [Click Here](#)

### Adjournment Debates

Debate on the Third Sector and Government Working Together to Help Communities, 11 March: [Click Here](#)

### Oral Questions

Oral Questions to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, 3 March: [Click here](#)

### New Select Committee Enquiries and Calls for Evidence

CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES, Subject: Young people not in education, employment or training, 1 March: [Click Here](#)

Communities and Local Government's Departmental Annual Report 2009, and the performance of the Department in 2008-09, 5 March: [Click Here](#)

## 4. Consultation

Department of Children, Schools and Families: about the information Ofsted are required to notify to all local authorities in England and Wales when they take specific actions against providers of children's homes, residential family centres, fostering agencies, voluntary adoption agencies and adoption support agencies, 15 February: [Click Here](#)

Adult Social Care – this consultation by the Law Commission seeks views on proposals to reform the law relating to adult social care in England and Wales, 25 February: [Click Here](#)

Allowing Local Authorities to Sell Electricity – this consultation seeks views on a proposal to allow local authorities from across Great Britain to sell electricity generated by renewable sources, 5 March: [Click Here](#)

Improving Bus Passenger Services through the Regulatory Framework: This consultation seeks views on possible changes to the legal framework which applies to local bus services to provide greater effectiveness and improvement in service delivery, 9 March: [Click Here](#)

The future distribution of school funding: This consultation seeks views on proposed arrangements for distributing the Dedicated Schools Grant to Local Authorities from 2011-12 onwards, 15 March: [Click Here](#)

This consultation addresses the changes necessary to enable the UK to report to the European Commission on a revised approach to the landfill diversion targets. This includes setting out the new interpretation of the definition of municipal waste; revisions to the 1995 baseline and targets; and the reporting and monitoring obligations necessary to enable robust reporting against the targets to the European Commission at a UK level. 16 March: [Click Here](#)

Social Fund reform: debt, credit and low income households: This consultation aims to align the Social Fund with the Government agenda of financial inclusion and capability, to help support the most vulnerable towards greater financial independence, 16 March: [Click Here](#)

Multi-area Agreements with Duties: Consultation on draft statutory guidance: This consultation seeks views on draft statutory guidance relating to duties to cooperate included in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, 17 March: [Click Here](#)

Guidance to Local Areas in England on Pooling and Aligning Budgets: This non-statutory guidance is for local partners in England from all sectors who are seeking better ways of working together to deliver improved outcomes for local people, 17 March: [Click Here](#)

Public Consultation on Community Resilience Guidance: The documents include guidance for individuals and communities on how to prepare for emergencies and a strategic national framework for community resilience, 22 March: [Click Here](#)

Learning for young people in youth custody in England: This consultation seeks views on statutory guidance for local authorities in England to underpin their responsibilities towards education and training for young people detained in youth custody, 22 March: [Click Here](#)

## 5. Other

IDeA: Recruitment challenges in local government – the 2009 local government workforce survey identified jobs councils currently find most difficult to fill. This document presents this data alongside a document describing the national initiatives set up to address the top five occupational shortages, 23 February: [Click Here](#)

Council tax bills in England will rise by an average of 1.6 per cent to £1,194 per household in 2010-11, according to an analysis by the LGA, 24 February: [Click Here](#)

Oneplace National Overview – this report from the Audit Commission explains what the first year of comprehensive area assessment has revealed about how well the £200 billion spent on local public services is meeting people's needs, 25 February: [Click Here](#)

IDeA: Equality impact assessments, partnerships and local area agreements – detailed summary and key learning points from facilitated discussions that took place on the equality impact assessment support network. It sets out how a focus on tackling inequalities can be integrated into partnership working and how a 'geographical area' is an equalities strand in an equalities impact assessment, 25 February: [Click Here](#)

IDeA: "The social determinants of health and the role of local government" this is a collection of articles published assessing what local government can do to tackle the social conditions that lead to health inequalities, 3 March: [Click Here](#)

PLEASE E-MAIL ANY FEEDBACK OR COMMENTS TO [INFO@NLGN.ORG.UK](mailto:INFO@NLGN.ORG.UK)

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