

POLICY BRIEFING

August 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.

In our new series of briefings, we're asking NLGN members about the research and publications that they have found useful in their work. This month's issue features research recommendations from Gavin Handford, Director of Policy & Partnership at Croydon Council. If you'd like to contribute to next month's briefing, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Pawda Tjoa at ptjoa@nlgn.org.uk.

Our briefing covers reports across the following topics:

- Community Paradigm Read of the Month (p2)
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Meet our members

Croydon Council: Gavin Handford, Director of Policy & Partnership

What particular challenge has your council recently faced?

Like many councils across the country, Croydon is facing the challenge of rising demand, coupled with diminishing funding. But this must not lead to diminishing public services. We have a responsibility to provide the best services we can, and given the increasing demand on services, this responsibility applies now more than ever. As a result, Croydon has set out to make it easier for residents to get the support they need, at the earliest stage. We must recognise that our wonderfully diverse population also has a diverse range of needs.

What research piece have you found useful to help tackle this challenge?

NLGN's [Community Paradigm](#) thinkpiece has been really useful. Starting from the basis that public service delivery has developed over many years, it recognises that further change is needed to involve our communities in building collaborative relationships that create a preventative approach. At Croydon, we have implemented a new operating model that places communities at the centre of our service delivery. We want to help residents earlier and prevent problems becoming more serious, and ultimately more costly. We recognise that focussing on acute problems is unsustainable so our approach focuses on prevention and collaboration. The importance of community engagement and collaboration is seen in our locality based working, with community based partnerships enabling services and support to respond to different local needs. We have embedded this approach in how we work with, and provide funding to, the Voluntary & Community sector in Croydon.

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

I think NLGN's research on [Rebalancing the Power](#) is very interesting on creating successful relationships between councils and communities. I know many of us have read about the Wigan Deal, but this is still a great example of working with the community to agree change. For those that want a more academic take, Jocelyne Bourgon (2007) incorporated these ideas within a wider [New Public Administration Theory](#) that highlighted the importance of Democratic Citizenship. My team also recommend the IRISS paper on [place-based working](#).

■ COMMUNITY PARADIGM READ OF THE MONTH

A Citizen-led Approach to Health and Care: Lessons from the Wigan Deal

The King's Fund

Public services can get better results by 'working with' rather than 'doing to', drawing on the strengths and assets of individuals and communities to improve outcomes. This is known as an 'asset-based' approach and would require fundamental changes to the way services are delivered.

Since 2012, Wigan Council has transformed its approach to delivering local services, underpinned by the idea of a new relationship with the public that has become known as the 'Wigan Deal'. This has included working closely with communities, the NHS and other partners to develop a radical new approach to improving the health and wellbeing of local citizens.

The Wigan Deal is still a work in progress and should not be seen as a panacea – the approach will need adapting to local circumstances if adopted elsewhere. However, the journey that Wigan Council and its partners have taken contains some powerful insights, which could have a major impact if considered more widely in other local authorities, the NHS and in public agencies of all kinds.

■ DEVOLUTION, GROWTH AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

Cities in Action: Workplace automation

Key Cities and New Local Government Network

Automation will have different impacts on different types of places. Certain types of places, such as mid-sized cities, have a higher share of occupations in their workforce that are at risk of automation compared to other parts of the UK. This strongly indicates that the UK's most effective policy response to workplace automation will be place-based.

Key Cities' Economic Growth Commission recommends that the UK and devolved governments should work with mid-sized cities so that they become pilot areas for schemes designed to mitigate the risks and maximise the opportunities of rising workplace automation. Schemes to be piloted should include:

- Comprehensive skills devolution to mid-sized cities.
- The establishment of an All-Age Careers Service.
- The creation of an Automation Innovation Centre in one or more mid-sized cities.

The Future of Non-Metropolitan England

Local Government Association

The LGA's Post-Brexit England Commission sets out a series of recommendations on the future of non-metropolitan England. These include:

- Government should match the support available to the predominantly metropolitan local industrial strategy trailblazer areas with what it offers to local industrial strategy Wave 2 and 3 areas.
- Government should make sustainable rural growth a key priority for post-Brexit funding to help non-metropolitan areas drive productivity and support prosperous communities, whilst being mindful of the environment.

- Government should work with Ofcom to launch a rural mobile roaming scheme should 4G geographic coverage not reach 95 per cent by 2022.

Local Enterprise Partnerships: Progress review House of Commons Public Accounts Committee

The Committee welcomes the improvements to LEP governance and transparency, but remains concerned that LEP boards are not yet representative of their local areas and business communities and that local scrutiny and accountability arrangements are not strong enough considering the significant sums of public funding that LEPs manage.

The Committee's recommendations include:

- In the absence of national evaluation of the Local Growth Fund, MHCLG should use the performance data it receives from LEPs to build a national picture of what is working most effectively in boosting growth and use this to inform the design and plans for evaluation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- MHCLG should set out a clear timetable showing how it will meet the April 2020 deadline to resolve LEPs' overlapping geographic boundaries and indicate what action it will take if local authorities fail to agree on overlapping boundaries.
- MHCLG should set out how it is going to assess local capacity to scrutinise LEPs' activities and how it will facilitate LEPs' accountability to their local areas.

Mapping Gaps: Geographic inequality and productivity in living standards Resolution Foundation

The report presents analysis setting out answers to the following three issues: first, the extent to which levels of geographic inequality in terms of output have changed over time; second, how productivity differences affect people's living standards, and, third, how the UK compares to other countries in this regard.

The report concludes that pursuing a more equitable distribution of economic opportunities across the UK should be a priority, something that devolution can help deliver, if coupled with real economic leadership.

Local Productivity: The real differences across UK cities and regions Sheffield Hallam University

Although output per head in the cities, and especially in London, is well above the national average, once adjustments have been made for structural and labour market factors, there is little or no evidence that the cities are any more efficient at what they do than most other locations across Britain. There are big differences between places in output per head, but once allowances are made for commuting patterns, industry, occupational mix and so forth, the underlying variation in the efficiency with which goods and services are produced is really quite modest. By implication, workers do not seem to be any harder-working in some parts of the country than in others, nor, are their employers better at organising production in some places than in others.

The evidence in this paper does not support the view that large parts of Britain, especially the places with low GVA per head, are somehow inefficient locations. This should be a 'green light' for regional economic policy because it indicates that there is no obvious conflict between efficiency and equity. Supporting growth in North East England for example, or in South Wales or Merseyside, should not

therefore mean that the UK economy as a whole will be any smaller, because the evidence does not point to business in these places being carried out any less efficiently than elsewhere. The evidence here is that the UK's less prosperous areas are not inherently inefficient or unsuitable locations for business activity.

Transport Infrastructure in the South West House of Commons Public Accounts Committee

The Department for Transport (DfT) and Highways England aspire to upgrade the whole A303 road corridor to dual carriageway standard to improve connectivity and support economic growth in the South West. However, it is not yet certain that all eight road improvement projects needed to do this will go ahead. The region needs a properly integrated transport strategy, going beyond roads to incorporate rail, sea and air, but the bodies tasked with delivering this strategy are still very immature.

The Committee's recommendations include:

- DfT should set out how it will support and monitor the development of sub-national transport bodies in their efforts to deliver an effective integrated transport strategy for the South West.
- DfT should write to us by the end of December 2019 with an update on progress with the South West Rail Resilience Programme, how it is working to resolve any local disagreements and the latest schedule for completion.

Power and Prosperity: A strategy for the North to take control of its economy Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) North

The economy of the North of England is larger than all of the UK's devolved nations combined, and larger than that of many EU member states. It is also incredibly diverse, with different assets and industries distributed across the region. Despite this, the economy of the North also faces significant challenges, chiefly its low rates of productivity, job creation and job quality. These are issues, this report argues, that have been caused by decades of overly centralised industrial planning.

The author sets out to remedy this by advocating for a Northern Industrial Strategy. Whilst local strategies at a more devolved level will also be crucial, IPPR argue that on some issues, a 'pan-northern', region-wide approach will be necessary. Issues likely to fall into this category include regional transport, trade and investment and supply chain management.

UK Investment Policy International Trade Committee

While the UK has one of the most liberalised investment regimes in the developed world, there is still a need for some degree of regulation in respect of inward investment. Although the 2017 Conservative Manifesto expressed opposition to inward investment "driven by aggressive asset-stripping or tax avoidance", there has been no indication of action to implement this. The Government should set out what it considers to constitute economically harmful investment—and state how it plans to act against it.

The report recommends that the Government provide more clarity on how the balance will be struck between promoting and facilitating inward investment, on the one hand; and safeguarding national security, on the other. It must set out what the role of DIT will be in the envisaged new investment screening regime—as well as which Cabinet minister will take the ultimate decision on blocking an investment.

What Should be in the National Infrastructure Strategy?

Institute of Civil Engineers

The Government's National Infrastructure Strategy must take into consideration the ways in which infrastructure demand profiles are evolving and their complex interdependencies as 'systems of systems'. It is paramount that in doing so both existing and future infrastructure is considered. To be as effective as possible, the National Infrastructure Strategy should, among others considerations:

- Adopt the recommendations put forward by the National Infrastructure Assessment in full and demonstrate in detail how each will be delivered.
- Mandate the development of regional infrastructure strategies across England to ensure effective integration of infrastructure planning at multiple geographic scales.
- Include a robust plan for driving up the use of digital technologies and innovative approaches to infrastructure delivery, including: offsite construction, standardisation and design for manufacture and assembly.

The Consequences of "No Deal" for UK Business

Exiting the European Union Committee

The Government's own economic assessment shows that a "no deal" exit from the EU would be the most economically damaging outcome for the UK, with the effect most pronounced in the North East and the West Midlands of England, and the chemical, retail, food and drink and manufacturing sectors would be hardest hit. These findings are reflected in the recent statements from senior members of the Cabinet, including the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The Government's own analysis reinforces the Committee's previous conclusion that attempting a "managed no deal" cannot constitute the policy of any responsible Government.

Some have argued that a no deal exit would bring the EU "back to the table" and that the UK would secure a better deal as a result. This is, at best, a gamble. At worst, it could lead to severe disruption of the economy, pose a fundamental risk to the competitiveness of key sectors of the UK economy, and put many jobs and livelihoods at risk.

Immigration After May: What should the new Prime Minister change?

British Future and Social Market Foundation

Theresa May's Government was preoccupied with trying to meet the net migration target. With immigration policy largely focussed on reducing numbers, then later derailed by Brexit, there has been little detailed thought about how the UK might achieve an immigration system that is fit for the 21st century. Immigration will certainly be a priority issue for the next Prime Minister. Theresa May's successor will need to put in place an immigration system that works for employers, is fair to migrants and refugees and which also secures public trust and support. British Future recommends the following to help achieve these aims:

- Prioritise building public trust: do not over-promise then fail to deliver
- Invest in an immigration system that works and prioritise improving the performance of the Home Office
- Make immigration work at a local level

Building Beautiful Places: How planning policy can incentivise the building of places not just homes

Policy Exchange

This report considers the reasons why new residential developments often feel like a collection of houses rather than a real place. It puts forward a new policy approach that incentivises developers to propose and build housing schemes that are beautiful and diverse. In particular, the report argues that the Government should more precisely define what is meant by 'good design', as required by Chapter 12 of the revised National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF). It argues that such a definition will incentivise the building of beautiful places that bring new and long-lasting value to the local area, rather than relying on existing economic and social infrastructure.

The report's focus on building beautiful places does not belie the challenge of building beautiful homes that have greater resonance with public preference and the places they are built. Beautiful homes are a subset of the ingredients needed to achieve beautiful places. Nor does the need to build beautiful places belie the challenge of building at a pace the housing shortage demands. In fact, national evidence and the day-to-day experience of the local planning committees and development sites shows that building in ways that consumers and the local public find beautiful will help to quicken the rate of development.

■ PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM

Community Commissioning: Shaping public services through people power

New Local Government Network and Local Trust

This report seeks to re-define commissioning beyond this narrow focus on delivery of a service against an identified need and instead establish the principles and mechanisms through which a more open and empowering approach – community commissioning – could be established. It also seeks to provide a very practical guide to community commissioning, highlighting the key strategic decisions and methods public sector bodies should employ to hand some degree of commissioning power over to communities.

Recommendations include:

- The legal and regulatory framework around commissioning and procurement overseen by the Crown Commercial Service should be reviewed and reformed to require public sector bodies to engage service users and geographic communities in their commissioning and procurement processes.
- The UK's withdrawal from the EU should be used as an opportunity to rewrite rules around procurement to allow public sector bodies to easily communitise services.
- Government should encourage public sector bodies to establish 'community constitutions' that set out how they will work to support communities and establish processes that ensure power and authority rests with them.

Active Travel: Increasing levels of walking and cycling in England

House of Commons Transport Committee

Funding for active travel is too piecemeal and complex, and the Government has not given local authorities the certainty they need to prioritise active travel and make long-term funding commitments. The absence of ring-fenced or dedicated funding for active travel means there is no guarantee that

the £2 billion the Government has estimated will be spent on active travel this Parliament will actually be spent on increasing levels of walking and cycling.

The Committee recommends:

- The Department for Transport (DfT) should consult with local authorities on what additional powers might help them implement Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.
- DfT should review its existing suite of infrastructure design and planning guidance for local authorities, and how it supports the sharing of good practice, to ensure that local authorities are not unnecessarily inhibited from making the changes they need to in order to deliver their Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.
- On delivery of the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, DfT should publish figures on the proportion of each local authority's transport infrastructure budget which is spent on active travel.

Local Roads Funding and Maintenance: Filling the gap

House of Commons Transport Committee

Almost every journey begins and ends on local roads. The English Local Road Network (ELRN) is of critical importance in connecting people and driving economic growth. However, many people will not have to travel further than their local shops to see an extreme state of disrepair. The Committee identifies tension between central and local government—one of which controls the funding for maintaining the ELRN and the other that has responsibility for doing the work.

The Committee's recommendations include:

- The Department for Transport (DfT) should propose a front-loaded, long-term funding settlement to the Treasury as part of the forthcoming Spending Review so that local authorities can address the historic road maintenance backlog and plan confidently for the future.
- DfT should run an innovation competition to develop a platform that the public can use to make online reports about road condition direct to the relevant council and access real-time local road condition data.
- The Government should commission an independent review of local highway responsibilities, to evaluate whether current responsibilities sit at the right level.

Social Care Funding: Time to end a national scandal

House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee

After decades of reviews and failed reforms, it is not clear how another Green Paper is going to make progress on addressing the challenges in social care funding. With each delay the level of unmet need in the system increases, the pressure on unpaid carers grows stronger, the supply of care providers diminishes and the strain on the care workforce continues. Government action, rather than further consultation, is required.

The Committee's recommendations include:

- The Government should produce a White Paper, not a Green Paper, with clear and plausible proposals for sustainable adult social care funding.
- The Government must increase funding to restore levels of quality and access to those observed in 2009/10.
- The additional funding needed for adult social care should be provided as a government grant, distributed directly to local authorities according to an appropriate national funding formula,

which takes into account differences between local authorities in demand for care and ability to raise funds from local taxation.

One Year On: The LGA green paper for adult social care and wellbeing

Local Government Association

Securing the long-term future of adult social care and support should be a national priority, but without a green paper – which is only ever the start of a process of debate and deliberation towards more concrete proposals – it continues to be a national concern.

The LGA recommends that:

- The Government should publish its social care green paper before the House of Commons rises for party conference season on 14 September. This should include a proper consultation on funding options and be accompanied by a government-led and sector-wide campaign to raise awareness of what adult social care and support is, why it matters in its own right and what it could and should be with the right funding and investment.
- The Government should use the forthcoming Spending Review to close the projected adult social care funding gap, totalling £3.6 billion by 2024/25.

Health, Care and the 100-year Life

Social Market Foundation

A child born today has a one in three chance of living to 100. Increased longevity should be celebrated. However, it will bring a range of challenges for society. This is the first in a series of reports focusing on how the 100-year life may affect Britain's society, economy and public services. This report focuses on health, care and medicine.

The Social Market Foundation's recommends that:

- The Government should invest more into rehabilitation and reablement services for the elderly.
- People must be supported to make better decisions regarding their health. The NHS should focus on incorporating "teachable moments" into all interactions the public have with the health service. Ensuring people have the knowledge to improve their health is essential if we are to empower them to make better choices.
- The Government should expand the work being conducted by NHS Digital and the Good Things Foundation on social prescribing of digital skills.

Fixing the Care Crisis

Damian Green MP and the Centre for Policy Studies

Damian Green argues that the best model for social care is the pension system – a guarantee of a reasonable universal safety net, but with extra individual provision encouraged on top. Under these proposals, the state would provide a Universal Care Entitlement, which could then be topped up by private support for those who want it via a Care Supplement. The Universal Care Entitlement would be at a flat rate level of support adjusted for need, whether or not the care was provided at home or in a residential setting, and wherever the care home was located.

This would involve moving from the existing system – in which the state provides care via local authorities – to a nationally funded model, where the state pays this set amount for each week or month that an elderly person needs support. This would not end councils' involvement in delivering

social care, but would free them of a significant and increasing financial burden – as well as transform the incentives which currently prevent the construction of enough care homes and retirement housing.

Health on the Shelf

Royal Society for Public Health and Slimming World

By 2050 the number of adults with obesity in the UK will rise by 73 per cent to 26 million people. As well as the serious physical conditions obesity can lead to, people who struggle with their weight often experience stigmatisation alongside chronic issues of low confidence and poor self-esteem.

The report highlights the pressing need for a transformation in the way supermarkets promote products to their consumers and calls on retailers to adopt a set of key principles to apply to all major supermarket retailers, and on the Government to implement policy and incentives for industry to take the nation's health seriously. It recommends that the Government should enable business rate reductions for supermarkets and retailers who take health seriously and explore introducing a healthy rating scheme based on the proportion of healthy and unhealthy products stocked.

Building Regulations and Fire Safety: Consultation response and connected issues

House of Commons Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee

The Committee provides its response to the proposals set out in the Government's June 2019 consultation into reform of the building safety regulatory system and also outlines its views on the Government's wider work around building safety.

The Committee recommends:

- The Government should set a realistic, but short, deadline by which time all buildings with any form of dangerous cladding should be fully remediated.
- The Government should immediately extend its fund to cover the removal and replacement of any form of combustible cladding – as defined by the Government's combustible cladding ban – from any high-rise or high-risk building.
- The Government should be ambitious with the scope of the new regulatory regime from the outset, setting out timescales to bring different types of buildings within scope.

Modern Methods of Construction

House of Commons Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee

The Government has set an ambitious target to build 300,000 homes annually by the mid-2020s but constraints such as the shortage of skilled workers mean it cannot meet that target using traditional building methods alone. A significant proportion of homes must be built using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) if we are to meet the target to deliver 300,000 homes annually.

The Committee's recommendations include:

- Local authorities should increase rapidly the pace at which they build new social homes. They should further engage with housing associations which have already adopted MMC, in order to better understand best practice and explore the potential for more MMC use in the supply of social housing. Local authorities should also factor in whole-life running costs of social homes when tendering for building contracts.
- The Government should develop a digital database that records the design, processes and materials used in the construction of buildings.

- The Government should urgently set out a clear plan for the review of building regulations, including the whole suite of Approved Documents, and consider how they relate to MMC building.

Sale of Public Land

House of Commons Public Accounts Committee

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) will miss its target for releasing land for new homes by a wide margin. By the end of the programme, MHCLG estimates it will have failed to sell the land needed for 91,000 of the homes promised under the target, equivalent to 57 per cent of the overall target. Despite just 40,500 homes having been built since 2011, MHCLG's unacceptably loose definition of what constitutes a new home has artificially inflated the number of new homes that have been created.

The Committee recommends that:

- By October 2019, the Cabinet Office should write to the Committee to set out a clear strategy for how the government will meet the its proceeds and land for new homes targets.
- MHCLG should better define and justify what it means by terms such as 'homes' and 'new affordable homes'.
- MHCLG should write to the Committee by October 2019 outlining the actions it will take, and the tools it will use, to accelerate the number of homes built on the land released.

Getting Rents Under Control: How to make London rents affordable

New Economics Foundation

Since 2010, average private rents in London have risen more than three times as fast as average earnings, and in 2015/16 around a quarter of privately renting households in the capital spent over half of their income on rent. Affordability is far worse in London than the rest of the country, with the average private rent for a one-bedroom home in the capital now more than the average for a three-bedroom home in every other English region. A growing number of voices are calling for rent controls as part of the solution to London's housing affordability crisis.

Based on their analysis of models of rent control, the New Economics Foundation recommends that the following should be among the building blocks that form the basis of any rent control policy for London:

- A landlord and rents database should be established that is an open-access record of all landlords, their properties, and associated rents.
- An independent administrative Private Rented Sector (PRS) body should be established, which would design the rent control system, and subsequently administer the system, collect and hold the data required, and set the Desired Rent Level and the Private Rent Index.
- A system of enforcement mechanisms should be introduced that puts the onus on landlords and the state, rather than tenants.

Keeping Warm: The future of heat

Citizens Advice

The transition to low carbon heating in homes will not be cheap: it's going to add up to £10 billion a year to annual heating costs in the net-zero scenarios. Making homes more energy efficient will be crucial to offset some of these costs. It will require significant coordination across Government, with well-defined targets and actions.

Citizens Advice recommends:

- The Government should publish consultations on a fully costed plan to support the rollout of low-carbon heating systems and on a detailed heat decarbonisation strategy by December 2019.
- There should be legislation in the Energy White Paper to extend Ofgem's remit to include heat networks and establish a statutory consumer advocate for heat.

Universal Credit: Natural migration

House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee

The majority of claimants on existing benefits will move, or have already moved, to Universal Credit (UC) through a process known as “natural migration”, which usually happens when their circumstances change. For these claimants, there is no transitional protection. People naturally migrate to UC when they have a change in their lives which would require a new claim for a legacy benefit. There are a vast number of changes which can lead to natural migration. By contrast, there are very few which can end transitional protection under managed migration. This is because the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) deliberately selected the few circumstances in which to end transitional protection, whereas the natural migration process, by its own admission, was based on its own administrative needs.

The Committee recommends that:

- DWP should work with stakeholders, such as local authorities, to develop clearer and comprehensive guidance on when claimants need to move to UC and how this can affect different claimant groups. It should make this guidance publicly available. In addition, DWP should publish a comprehensive list of the changes in a claimant's circumstances which could lead to them needing to claim UC.
- DWP should make an ongoing payment to meet any shortfall in income for all households that lose out compared to the legacy system as a result of moving home outside of their local authority.

A Ten-year Plan for School and College Funding

House of Commons Education Committee

School and college funding is under growing pressure. Total school spending per pupil fell by eight per cent in real terms between 2009–10 and 2017–18. Per pupil funding for 2019–20 is expected to be similar to 2011–12 levels.

The Committee recommends that the Department for Education should:

- Develop a ten-year plan for education funding.
- Increase high needs funding for special educational needs and disabilities to address a projected deficit of at least £1.2 billion, and ensure any funding uplift takes proper account of the costs of providing Education, Health and Care plans up to the age of 25.
- Grant Ofsted the powers to conduct inspections at Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) level, and require MATs to publish more detailed data on their financing structures.

The Living Standards Audit 2019

Resolution Foundation

As things stand, the UK appears to be living through a period of both stagnant typical living standards and income falls for the poorest, with child poverty projected to approach record highs. The report presents the following conclusions: incomes are higher than in the past – but growth has been sporadic, and especially weak in recent years; strong increases in pensioner living standards are welcome, but the fortunes of households with children should be a key concern; increased employment has also played a key role in offsetting rising earnings inequality; and real hourly pay growth is the key driver of long-term progress.

The Resolution Foundation recommends that the Prime Minister should focus on strong productivity growth and rebalancing household incomes.

Serious Youth Violence

Home Affairs Committee

This report considers the rise in serious youth violence in recent years, including the key issues driving these trends, and whether the Government's response matches the scale of the problem. Police-recorded homicides have increased by over a third in the last five years, and knife offences have risen by over 70 per cent. The number of under-18s admitted to hospital with knife injuries also rose by a third between 2013–14 and 2017–18. A growing number of young males, in particular, are being murdered on our streets.

The inquiry has found that recent rises in serious youth violence are a social emergency, which must be addressed through much more concerted Government action at a national and local level. The research has concluded that the Government's Serious Violence Strategy is a completely inadequate response to this wave of violence blighting our communities. It contains no targets or milestones, few new actions, and no clear mechanisms for driving forward activity at a national and regional level.

Welfare Safety Net

Work and Pensions Committee

Since 2010, Britain's welfare system has undergone substantial reform. This has changed both the benefits available to claimants, and the levels at which those benefits are set. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) says that those changes are intended to encourage and incentivise work—rather than benefit receipt—and to alleviate and prevent poverty. But we have heard repeatedly in our recent inquiries that the Department's reforms are pushing some people not only into poverty, but into hunger and destitution. The "welfare safety net" is not fit for purpose for people living on the breadline.

The welfare safety net is about more than income, and more than DWP's policies. But DWP has a vital role to play in maintaining its integrity, simply because its decisions affect the incomes of so many households and particularly the poorest. Successive Governments have made huge savings from almost a decade of changes to uprating policies and freezes. The outcome, however, is an increasingly patchy safety net, which is failing to support some of those who need it most. The Department has made an important first step in committing to measure poverty differently. It must now stand ready to act on what it will find.

Raising the Roof

Institute of Economic Affairs

It is no coincidence that the United Kingdom has both the most centralised planning system of any large country in the democratic world, and one of the worst housing crises in the democratic world. Quite simply, the central planning of housebuilding does not work.

This report describes a radical programme to cut the Gordian Knot that is our centralised planning system. When this is put into action, some of which can be done incrementally, the United Kingdom will be able to undo its almost uniquely severe housing crisis. The report's recommendations include:

- Devolving some taxation would benefit local property markets.
- Declassifying non-functioning areas of the green belt would also release some of the most severe constraints on supply.
- Allowing still more local devolution of some planning powers, such as to the street and village level, would give the advantage back to smaller firms of constructors and architects.

Beyond the Net Migration Target

Onward

This paper proposes a robust and detailed framework for immigration control – one that ensures greater accountability to Parliament and the public, and ensures that government departments can no longer neglect their own contribution to controlling migration or generating domestic skills - and could sit alongside both the existing tier-based system or a points-based alternative. The report recommends that the next Prime Minister should:

- Replace the tens of thousands pledge with a detailed and transparent Sustainable Immigration Plan.
- The Government should present the Sustainable Immigration Plan to Parliament every year.
- Ministers should establish an Office for Migration Responsibility (OMR) to hold ministers to account.

Counting Lives: Responding to children who are criminally exploited

The Children's Society

The exploitation of children for criminal gain is, unfortunately, not new. Yet regular news stories of children affected by violence and crime highlight that as a society we are struggling to get to grips with the current context of threats facing children and young people. This report analyses what is meant by child criminal exploitation; what current methods of exploitation The Children's Society and its partners currently observe; and how responses across national and local organisations could be made more effective.

Understanding Local Housing Markets: Advice and guidance for local authorities

Local Government Association

The purpose of this report is to provide local authorities with advice and guidance on how to best understand the various complexities within their local housing markets in order to inform their decision making. Local authorities have a range of duties and wider interests in ensuring the most effective functioning of their local housing markets. They want to ensure affordable, appropriate, good quality housing for everyone in the community within successful and sustainable places. Therefore, a better

understanding of their local housing markets will empower local authorities to make decisions best suited to maximise positive added value in local markets.

This is especially timely as more local authorities are: developing interests in directly delivering new homes alone or in partnership, embedding housing as part of wider strategies for the health and well-being of individuals and places; building relationships with the reshaped Homes England or the Greater London Authority (GLA), and; taking forward new planning responsibilities within the new NPPF guided by the locally assessed housing need numbers.

■ DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Growing up Digital: What do we really need to know about educating the digital generation? Nuffield Foundation

This report seeks to examine the current evidence base and explore the apparent tension between technology as an object of study and technology as a teaching and learning aid. The purpose is to inform a future research agenda and suggest where further or new evidence might better support an informed view of curriculum and pedagogy to prepare school pupils for the world they live in and school leavers for the world they will shape.

The consequences and implications of the digital revolution for education have prompted much debate nationally and internationally among policy makers and educators. A shared conclusion is that the status quo is unacceptable. The report considers the issues of curriculum, pedagogy, teacher development and assessment, with comments on current practice, the evidence base (where it exists), and suggestions for the future research agenda.

The Future is Ours: Women, automation and equality in the digital age Institute for Public Policy Research

Automation – or the substitution of labour for capital – has triggered dystopian visions of mass joblessness, as well as utopian visions of a world with no work. Yet despite the growing capability of robots and artificial intelligence (AI), we are not on the cusp of a ‘post-human’ economy. Automation will produce significant productivity gains that will reshape specific sectors and occupations. In aggregate, however, these gains are likely to be recirculated, with jobs reallocated rather than eliminated, economic output increased, and new sources of wealth created. The problem, instead, is likely to be one of how income and wealth are distributed. Automation could create a ‘paradox of plenty’: society would be far richer in aggregate, but, for many individuals and communities, technological change could reinforce inequalities of power and reward.

This paper argues that automation presents an opportunity to narrow gender inequalities. An acceleration of automation could increase productivity and enable higher pay in currently low-paid roles dominated by women. New jobs will be created that could provide high-quality opportunities for women to take up. Automation could create a society of plenty, both financially and with more time for life outside of the workplace, which could relieve women of the ‘double shift’ of paid and unpaid work that many face, rebalancing unpaid work between genders. But a more gender-equal future will not happen spontaneously. Realising this opportunity will require a managed acceleration of automation, led by those who could be affected by it, including women. This report sets out four propositions for change based on this premise.

Digital Government
Science and Technology Committee

In 2011, the UK Government created the Government Digital Service (GDS) to sit within the Cabinet Office. It was created to implement the then Government's "digital by default" strategy. The core purposes of GDS were to: save money; centralise information via a single website; and improve the user experience of Government. In 2017, the UK Government announced its intentions to transform its operations in the Government Transformation Strategy, which sought to use technology to transform Government, making it more responsive to change and the needs of citizens, and putting more power into the hands of the citizen.

This report finds that data-sharing is key to ensuring that digital Government can be transformative. It enables departments to work together to produce efficient public services that work for the citizen, thus improving the citizen-Government relationship. It welcomes the Government commencing phase one of developing its National Data Strategy. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) should conduct an audit of data-sharing amongst Government departments to see where best practice is taking place, and identify which departments are particularly siloed. This audit should be completed and published in advance of the National Data Strategy being published in Winter 2020.

■ FINANCE

Local Finance Taskforce: A roadmap to a sustainable future
Local Government Information Unit

Local government, representing as it does a wonderful diversity of political and geographical contexts, rarely speaks with one voice. So it is all the more striking when one finds an issue that unites the sector in a single opinion. That issue is council funding. Putting aside the cuts that formed the wider public sector austerity drive, in which councils experienced a 49 per cent real terms drop in government funding, today's most pressing concern is uncertainty. The frightening reality is that, beyond 31st March 2020, English councils do not know where their funding will come from or, crucially, how much they will have in their account.

There were some clear areas of consensus on actions required, while other areas were identified as crucial but in need of further exploration. This report brings together these two strands into a set of recommendations for central government and a set of principles that should underpin the design of the future system.

The recommendations and principles lay out a road map for the future that is ambitious, yet achievable with the right political will. It acknowledges the real-world constraints we face and maps key decisions on to key government events and milestones. The report challenges the next Prime Minister to address council funding within his first 100 days in office.

Taxing Times: The need to reform the UK tax system
Institute for Government

Governments of all political colours are likely to face more calls over the coming years to increase public spending, as an ageing population puts additional pressure on publicly funded health and adult social care, and increases pension costs. It is going to cost more just to maintain the quality and scope of services that the state currently provides.

Yet the UK's current tax system is not up to the job of meeting these demands. Total tax revenues have remained broadly flat as a share of national income in recent years, and will come under pressure as economic trends undermine existing tax bases and the system struggles to capture revenue from new forms of potentially taxable economic activity. The current tax system is also not well designed, creating greater economic distortions and raising tax in a less efficient manner than it might.

However, important political and practical barriers stand in the way of making major change. If future governments are to grasp the need and opportunity for tax reform, it is important that we better understand these barriers and how to overcome them. This report sets out why tax reform is likely to become a pressing issue.

■ EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

The Recruitment Gap: Attracting teachers to schools serving disadvantaged communities The Sutton Trust

Schools serving disadvantaged communities experience greater recruitment difficulties, according to survey analysis of over 7,000 teachers in state-funded and independent schools in England, mirroring turnover statistics in administrative data. Furthermore, teachers in secondary schools serving disadvantaged communities are the most likely to say they will soon leave teaching and seem least attached to the profession. 55 per cent reported they would leave teaching if they could find a job that matched their salary.

To help address these issues the report sets out a number of recommendations for policy development, including:

- Schools serving more challenging communities need clearer guidance about how to create a working environment that can appeal to teachers who might not otherwise consider them.
- Spending pupil premium money on teacher wages and professional development may help disadvantaged schools to overcome their recruitment struggles.

Human Capital: Why we need a new approach to tackle Britain's long tail of low skills Onward

Britain has underinvested in its workforce. As a result, we have the highest concentration of low skilled workers in the developed world, a quarter of whom face a high risk of automation or industrial decline. If we are serious about healing the divisions at the heart of Britain's economy and politics, there is no better place to start than Britain's long tail of low skills. This report's recommendations include:

- Introduce a Retraining Tax Credit, targeted at low-skilled workers, to encourage firms to invest in human capital and boost productivity. This would cost an estimated £0.79–£0.87 billion per year and could train up to 1.5 million low-skilled workers over five years.
- The long-awaited National Retraining Scheme should be explicitly targeted at people whose jobs are at risk of automation and industrial decline.
- The Shared Prosperity Fund, due to be announced later this year, should be directed at local areas facing high levels of automation risk and industrial decline.

Who are Business Owners and What are They Doing?

Institute for Fiscal Studies

Business owners have been the fastest-growing part of the UK labour force since at least 2000. Between 2000–01 and 2015–16, the number of employees grew by 15 per cent, while self-employment (including those operating as a sole trader or as a partner in a partnership) grew by 25 per cent and the number of directors of companies with at most two directors more than doubled. The number of new businesses created in the UK between 2007–08 and 2015–16 was higher than in any other OECD country.

This is an important labour market trend and is often hailed as a success because small businesses and start-ups are commonly viewed as the engines of growth. This is questionable in light of evidence that the UK has a long tail of low-productivity firms. However, to date, our understanding of business owners has been limited because they are not well captured in traditional survey data sources. Learning more about this group is crucial for understanding labour market trends better and informing public policy as it relates to business owners.

The Future of Degree Apprenticeships

Universities UK

Universities UK has sought the views of trailblazers, employers, universities, and prospective apprentices and their parents to both highlight the positive impact and potential of degree apprenticeships and to consider where more needs to be done to make them an even bigger success. There is clear support for an employer-led system with strong partnerships with universities, but more needs to be done to make this a reality. The report's recommendations include:

- Government should invest in initiatives to support social mobility, lifelong learning, and growth in degree apprenticeships among underrepresented groups.
- The system should develop to meet current and future demand for higher level skills in area such as digital technology, management, and public services, to boost regional economies.
- Make it easier for employers to include a degree within their apprenticeships where they see it adding value to their business and to their apprentices, and streamline processes and reduce unnecessary costs in the system.

A 21st Century Skills System for Wales: Challenges and opportunities

Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) Scotland

Wales is at the centre of a number of significant disruptions likely to bring long-term changes for its people and economy. Some of these are global in nature, such as automation and technological change. Some affect the whole UK – most obviously, the uncertainty around Brexit. Others come from within Wales, such as the rapid increases in its older population, which we will see expand over the coming years. The report identifies ten key challenges and opportunities facing the skills system in Wales, to be addressed in the next phase of the project.

Able to Excel: The case for enabling talented, young, disabled graduates to realise their potential and reach the top
Demos

This report argues that both the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and its successor legislation, the Equality Act 2010 have not lived up to their promise. Therefore moving forward, a new, radical and enabling vision is needed. This paper outlines strategic solutions, which would help to bring about that change, both through identifying and removing the non-workplace related obstacles like inaccessible housing, and by driving change in the workplace, which emulates the welcome steps that some leading corporates are already taking. Together, these measures will kick-start the process of ensuring talented, young, disabled graduates have an equal chance to succeed and excel. It sets out a number of policy recommendations including:

- Implement a consistent and transparent reporting framework for organisations with over 250 employees with indicators on disability equality practices, including indicators on both process (the practices), and the outcomes (disability employment at different levels), especially as they relate to talented, young, disabled graduates.
- Establish a Disability Opportunity Board within the Cabinet Office with responsibility for designing and delivering a programme to create the right conditions to enable talented, young, disabled graduates to excel, realise their potential, and reach the top of their professions.

Understanding Primary Care Networks: Context, benefits and risks
The Health Foundation

Primary Care Networks (PCNs) are being introduced at a very difficult time for general practice. PCNs are groupings of local general practices that are a mechanism for sharing staff and collaborating while maintaining the independence of individual practices. NHS England has stipulated that networks should 'typically' cover a population of between 30,000 and 50,000 people (the average practice size is just over 8,000). There are likely to be around 1,300 PCNs across England. A single practice with a list size of over 30,000 can register as a PCN, and networks of over 50,000 will be allowed in some circumstances. Networks are expected to be geographically contiguous and co-terminous with local CCG and ICS footprints. The networks are part of a set of multi-year changes, supported by the new five-year GP contract published in January 2019.

Implementing the networks in the context of major pressures in general practice represents a risk for NHS England. For PCNs to meet the broader objectives of policymakers for primary care, they are likely to require, among others: funding, the promised workforce and meaningful monitoring, and a support offer for struggling networks. Underpinning all of this is the importance of building relationships to create meaningful collaboration. PCNs require practices to move beyond their traditional boundaries. Sharing financial resources can both generate and strain relationships, and practices will have to trust each other if sharing both staff and data is to benefit patients.

Strategic Leadership in the Civil Service
Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee

The Civil Service is one of the great institutions of state which underpins our political and constitutional stability. It has no separate legal personality, and is accountable to ministers and to Parliament, yet it must also provide for its own sustainability and governance. It must provide itself

with the leadership and capability which governments need, while remaining accountable to the government of the day.

Civil Service learning and development has undergone significant change since the closure of the National School of Government in 2012. Since then, a range of specialist academies have been established, reflecting the greater prominence of the cross-departmental Professions and Functions in the Civil Service. In addition, the Civil Service Leadership Academy and the National Leadership Centre have each been established to address leadership capability at more senior levels.

Drawing on the evidence of this and previous enquiries, the report recommends establishing a new institution, building on the Civil Service Leadership Academy, in a permanent location, capable over time of delivering the full spectrum of civil service learning and development, through residential courses. As part of the Cabinet Office, this would be the body to hold the key information about what learning and development provision is being made available, and for whom. It would fill gaps in provision and develop synergies with separate provision provided by departments and the academies. It should work alongside and support the new National Leadership Centre. This would also provide a space for Civil Service leaders to enable the Civil Service as an institution to become more mindful of itself, its values and ethos, and how to sustain its internal governance, as well as its capability.

Impartiality Matters

The Smith Institute

Impartiality, integrity and professionalism are the *raison d'être* of the civil service. It's been that way since the FDA trade union was founded a century ago. Our political system has of course changed dramatically since the coalition government in 1919, but the same core values continue to define the working relationship between the elected politicians and senior civil servants. Without them the civil service would struggle to maintain the highest standards of public administration.

Yet, in today's information age, where sentiment and opinion preoccupy both the mainstream and social media, public servants, and particularly senior civil servants, have become "easy targets" for some politicians and opinion formers. The Twittersphere all too often promulgates the notion that government officials are deliberately undermining the decisions of their political masters. The mythmaking also abounds in some quarters of the popular press, although there is little evidence to back it up. Indeed, parliament's Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee inquiry into the effectiveness of the civil service in 2018 could find no evidence of "civil service obstructionism" or "Yes, Minister" backroom manipulation. Instead of bias and blocking, the Committee found that civil servants often go "the extra mile" to support their minister.

This collection of essays – with contributions from insiders (civil servants and politicians) and outsiders (academics and commentators) - add up to a compelling defence of the importance of impartiality, which has made the UK's civil service one of the best in the world but which finds itself increasingly under threat.

Lost in Transition? The Conservative leadership contest and the confidence of the Commons

Policy Exchange

There is no reason to doubt that whoever is elected as the new leader of the Conservative Party should be appointed Prime Minister. The latter appointment follows inevitably from the fact that the leader of the Conservative Party is virtually certain to be the person best placed to command the confidence of the House of Commons at the current time. An exception is possible only in highly implausible circumstances such as, for example, if an enormous number of Conservative MPs resign

the whip so that the leader of the Labour Party could contend that he is in fact best placed to form a government.

In the event of a Vote of No Confidence that is so late that a No Deal exit could occur after the vote and before a new government could be formed after the resulting election, the relevant conventions are legitimately susceptible of two competing readings. These are that the Prime Minister should seek a further extension from the EU27 and alternatively that the Prime Minister should not seek such an extension. In these circumstances, it would be for the Prime Minister to decide where his constitutional duty lay. The only way to force a Prime Minister to seek an extension would be via fresh legislation, and there are very substantial difficulties in getting that enacted by the Crown-in-Parliament.

Change or Collapse

Nuffield Trust

The health and social care system in Northern Ireland has seen seven fundamental reviews setting out major changes of direction in the last twenty years. Each has delivered a similar verdict: the country needs to reduce its reliance on hospitals, centralise some services for a critical mass at a smaller number of sites, and focus more on prevention and keeping people healthy. The political vacuum in Northern Ireland is exacerbating chronic problems in taking difficult decisions. Although the civil service is doing its best to provide leadership, its role and culture limit what is possible. Without the legal powers and legitimacy held by a political leader, several very important processes of change face the end of the road. This is a lesson for services elsewhere in the UK which may also face a lack of stable government or a focus on constitutional issues. While politicisation has its problems, a lack of public leadership creates serious barriers.

Many people described a high degree of centralisation of power in health and social care in Northern Ireland. This is difficult to reconcile with the initiative and experimentation necessary for complicated change where the answers are not fully known. Centralisation, and the exposure of the service without political leadership, seem to foster a 'bunker mentality' culture where openness about problems and difficulties is discouraged, removing opportunities for the system to learn.

Project Fear

FREER

The UK public sector currently struggles to provide IT and project management. From NHS Records to the Emergency Services Network, and from the Disclosure and Barring Service to e-borders, the Government has been responsible for a litany of project management, delivery, and implementation failures stretching back over many years. On their own, these failures occasionally make the news – buried after the latest political intrigue and guaranteed to elicit no more than an eye roll from most. Yet each one of these failures matters: they represent a forgone opportunity to change, a promise to the public not being realised, or spending not achieving what it was intended to do.

The report proposes a five-point plan for project-delivery improvement, including:

- Ending the passivity at the heart of the civil service, by making departmental permanent secretaries fully accountable for project delivery.
- Formally linking senior civil-service remuneration to the achievement of project objective.
- Instituting a focus on project-management skills development within the civil service.