

A NEW DEAL FOR COUNTIES

CCN

COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK

CCN Business Plan & Work Programme 2018/19



CCN

COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK

Your Network

The County Councils Network (CCN) is the national voice for county councils and county unitary authorities, representing you and your councils on the national stage.

In total, the 37 councils that make up the CCN contain over 2,600 councillors representing 47% of the population, 26 million residents and 86% of land in England.

A cross-party, member-led organisation, CCN develops policy, commissions research and presents evidence based solutions to Government and other key influencers on behalf of counties.

To support transformation and the efficient delivery of essential public services we act as a network to share best practice, innovation, and ideas between councils.

Over the past few years, CCN has grown into a prominent, influential and nationally respected research and advocacy organisation; acting as the main voice for member councils to ensure counties have the powers and resources to meet the needs and aspirations of their residents.

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How to engage with CCN

Keep up to date with CCN:

Follow us on Twitter

 @CCNOffice

Follow us on LinkedIn

 County Councils Network

On our website www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk

On our YCM microsite www.yourcountymatters.org.uk

Dates for your diary:

28 March.....	CCN Council
24 May.....	Executive meeting
10 July.....	Executive meeting
27 Sept.....	AGM & Council
18 – 20 Nov	CCN Annual Conference

For more information on any of these events,
email countycouncilsnetwork@local.gov.uk

Foreword

During the past year, the County Councils Network have witnessed a period of challenge, change, and opportunity. We have articulated the views of our members and CCN is now recognised as the national voice for counties and one of the key representative bodies in Westminster.

On all the major issues, CCN has been at the forefront of the debate. From the fair funding review, to the recent local government settlement, to social care and housing reform, devolution and local government reorganisation; we are influencing the debate like never before.

How have we achieved this? CCN combines a willingness to constructively challenge Ministers and, through measured and solution-based campaigning, we present practical, evidenced proposals.

Our approach has landed well with Government. I believe that CCN has an excellent relationship with the Secretary of State, Sajid Javid and his new set of Ministers. But we haven't just been building relationships in Marsham Street; throughout the year we have met with Ministers from across Whitehall, and most recently, we demonstrated our growing profile with County and Rural MPs in delivering £166m extra funding for local government.

Looking ahead, it is these relationships with Ministers, MPs and wider stakeholders that we must harness as we consider the big issues facing local government. Building on our *New Deal for Counties* campaign we will ensure the county voice continues to be heard strongly, particularly in priority areas such as;

- **Fair Funding Review:** a fair, needs-led formula is undoubtedly our biggest priority. CCN will invest considerable resource in this, alongside continuing to highlight the extreme financial and demand-led pressures counties face.
- **Social Care Green Paper:** a sustainable long-term future for Counties is reliant on the Government delivering on its promised reforms to the funding of social care. We will undertake considerable work to influence the development of proposals and respond once published.
- **Housing & Infrastructure:** with housing the Government's biggest domestic agenda, it is crucial that counties position ourselves to secure a stronger role in planning and infrastructure at scale. This year, we will invest more resources in demonstrating our growing contribution in housing.
- **Strategic Authorities:** building on last year's reports with Respublica and Localis, we continue to argue for Counties as Strategic Authorities. We will demonstrate how our counties are already acting as Strategic Authorities in their areas and why, through devolution, we can do more to promote growth, deliver homes and reform public services.
- **Local Government Reorganisation:** CCN will support member councils with strong evidence, building on the ResPublica and EY reports, where they wish to pursue structural reform, as well as the county councils in Dorset, Northamptonshire, and Buckinghamshire as they transition to new forms of local government.

Supported by a hard working team in Smith Square, this document shows that CCN has continued our upward trajectory this year and sets out our plans for the coming period.

I hope you agree that this ambitious programme of work delivers extraordinary value-for-money and impactful representation for our members, and we look forward to your continued support this year.



Cllr Paul Carter, CCN Chairman



A QUICK GUIDE TO CCN

COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK

INFLUENCE

CCN helps influence and shape government policy through its research, public affairs work with MPs and stakeholders, and media presence; shaping Westminster thinking on the issues that matter most to our member councils, be they social care, economic growth or local government finance.

RESEARCH

CCN undertakes and commissions ground-breaking research to support our evidence based advocacy to government and the wider local government family. Recent high-profile work included research on social care, county economies, local government reorganisation & business rates.

SUPPORT

Alongside our national advocacy in Westminster, CCN provides a range of support services to member councils; from Councillor meetings and events, Policy & Strategy Group for officers, expert advice, to regular communications and briefings to member councils on national developments.

A COUNTY VOICE

CCN is the only national representative body who is dedicated to fighting the county corner. CCN is able to influence and advocate on behalf of counties in policy areas no other body can, such as county finance, while our networks shared characteristics are at the heart of all our advocacy.

CCN Governance

CCN is a cross-party, member-led organisation that encourages regular input from its members.

CCN Council, which sets out and approves the network's budget and programme of work, contains at least four members from each council.

CCN Executive, a smaller body of nominated councillors, oversee the delivery of the Work Programme.

The Management Committee and small team in Westminster oversee the day-to-day operations.

CCN Chairman

CCN's chairman is currently Cllr Paul Carter CBE, who is Conservative leader of Kent County Council. He is a highly-respected politician with over two decades experience in frontline politics.



CCN Vision, Aim & Objectives

Vision

To ensure CCN is an influential and respected network, advocating innovative policy solutions on the challenges facing local government and the wider public sector.

Aim

Ensure Counties have the powers and resources to meet the needs and aspirations of their residents on issues of particular importance to our councils and their communities.

Corporate Objectives

- **Influence public policy at national level**

Act as the voice for County Councils and Unitary Counties, advocating and representing members' views within the LGA, across Whitehall and to key influencers.

- **Produce original research and innovative policy solutions**

Produce or commission original research to support the development and advocacy of innovative policy solutions, addressing the unique demographic, financial and geographical challenges facing counties and their residents.

- **Enhance the profile of CCN**

Continue to raise the profile of CCN, lead members and officers through development of strong, impactful and consistent external and internal communications alongside a targeted public affairs strategy.

- **Support member councils and share best practice**

Act as a gateway to Whitehall for member councils. Share intelligence and best practice to support member councils and public sector partners to continue to be the most effective and efficient organisations in the public sector.

- **Corporate resilience**

Identify strategic risks and set out organisational and financial strategies to ensure the network is resilient and sustainable over short, medium and long term.

Campaigns & Policy Development

Our Approach

Our primary objective is to act as the voice for County Councils and Unitary Counties, advocating and representing members' views within the LGA, across Whitehall and to key influencers through dedicated campaigns and policy development.

Over the past twelve months CCN has delivered against corporate objectives and continued our journey during a period that has witnessed an onset of a new challenges, but also renewed opportunities.

Our campaign and policy achievements over the past year demonstrate that **we have influenced public policy at a national level.**

Despite the constraints of a hung parliament and dominance of Brexit negotiations, we have delivered better policy outcomes for our members across a wide range of areas. CCN is punching above its weight to ensure that counties have the powers and resources to meet the needs and aspirations of their residents.

Our campaigns and policy development have centred on **producing original research and innovative policy solutions**, with CCN significantly increasing the portfolio of policy development and research undertaken by the organisation.

We have expanded the internal research and policy capacity of CCN but at a reduced overall staffing cost. We have recruited specific policy expertise, for instance in housing and planning, while increasing our expertise on local government finance through retainer arrangements with Pixel Financial Management.

Moreover, we have continued to work with leading external agencies and national bodies to commission original research, leading to the development and advocacy of innovative policy positions.

We have built relationships with key think-tanks and influencers, established long-term collaborative relationships with organisations capable of adding weight to our voice, such as Oxford Economics, Localis, Respublica, LaingBuisson and Pixel Financial Management. Our research and policy development has been complemented by a communications and public affairs strategy that has **enhanced the profile of CCN** nationally and locally.

Our membership offer has been improved to **ensure we support member councils and share best practice.** CCN has developed new officer working groups and implemented a formal package of support for the Association of County Chief Executives (ACCE).

This has provided a better platform for member councils to share best practice, shape the policy development of CCN and gain direct access to Government departments and national stakeholders.

And our achievements have been underpinned by **corporate resilience** and a long-term, sustainable financial strategy.

Sound financial management has been aided by streamlining our financial processes, leading to a more efficient and effective approach to the business administration of CCN.

We have safeguarded member councils' investment in 18 Smith Square, while negotiating long-term rent free accommodation in a new dedicated CCN office.

And our events, sponsorship and partnership arrangements have been enhanced to aid CCN's advocacy and support members, while doubling our income generation for the fourth successive year.

Campaigns & Policy Development

Better Outcomes for CCN Member Councils

- **Local Government Settlement:** This year, CCN's targeted advocacy was directly responsible for delivering £166m additional funding, £78.4m of which went to our member councils. This was delivered through a measured campaign, working closely with County MPs and County Leaders, focusing on the unique financial pressures facing county authorities and rural areas.
- **Adult Social Care:** With sector stakeholders, CCN's lobbying for specific resources for adult social care helped deliver £2bn additional funding over three years. We have maintained our pressure since the announcement to ensure that councils have maximum flexibility in investing resources. We have continually raised concerns over centrally imposed, disproportionate delayed discharge targets, and our opposition to any reduction in funding as a consequence.
- **Fairer Funding:** CCN has mainstreamed the debate on fair funding through our concerted national advocacy and support for member councils' local campaigns. Our advocacy has ensured that the Government adopted a 'cost drivers' approach to measuring relative need in the recently published consultation, and secured a much stronger focus on rurality and elderly populations, with both now proposed as cost drivers. Our advocacy also resulted in a small, but still significant, uplift in schools funding following revisions to the schools funding formula.
- **Business Rates Retention:** We are shaping the way councils will be funded in the future as part of the Joint LGA/MHCLG Steering Group and have published new research to make the case for a system that works for counties. CCN are leading calls for the Government to devolve 100% of business rates resources to local areas to meet the £2.54bn funding gap facing our member councils. As part of our work on business rates retention, CCN actively supported member councils in making the case for an extension of business rates pilots to rural areas, helping to secure eight pilots for 2018/19. Our lobbying also ensured that all pilots contained a 'no detriment clause'.
- **Devolution:** In 2017, our calls to drop the devolution requirement of Directly Elected Mayors for county areas were heeded. Alongside this change, CCN's call for a more open, transparent and structured approach to devolution through the publication of a 'common framework' was officially adopted as Government policy. CCN's recent report with Respublica has been cited by the Secretary of State as part of the evidence informing the development of the framework.
- **Reform:** CCN continued to shape the national narrative on local government reorganisation. We have published ground-breaking independent research and provided direct policy development to support those member councils who wish to pursue reform. This helped secure a unitary decision in Dorset and supported Buckinghamshire County Council to receive a 'minded to' decision. More widely, our research and policy development provides analysis to inform and defend member councils where proposals by district councils to split up county areas are not supported by County Councils.
- **County Elections:** In partnership with the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU), CCN ran the 'Out for Count' campaign during local elections in May 2017. Our two month project profiled the county elections on a national stage to encourage democratic participation, utilising the platform as part of Your County Matters campaign to showcase the vital services our member councils provide in a difficult financial climate. The campaign received input from across all our member councils on social media in the lead up to, and during, the elections and received national media coverage.

Campaigns & Policy Development

Our Future Objectives

In July 2017 CCN published our post-election advocacy document *A New Deal for Counties*. Following extensive engagement with member councils this document and associated campaign set out the policy areas in which CCN would engage the new Government.

A New Deal for Counties has been extremely successful in positioning CCN on a range of issues. It has focused on the unique challenges we face in funding and delivering quality public services, the opportunities presented by local growth, devolution and public service reform, and the historical and cultural significance of counties.

Looking ahead, *A New Deal for Counties* campaign and branding will be updated and retained with aim of continuing to raise the critical issues facing county and rural areas.

Supported by the continuation of the **Your County Matters** slogan, *A New Deal for Counties* will be at the heart of all CCN policy development and advocacy, seeking to demonstrate to the Government, MPs, national stakeholders and wider public the unique financial challenges counties face and the essential need for a new, fairer deal for county and rural areas.

We will put forward an evidence and solution-based case for sustainable and fairer funding but also demonstrate that county authorities should be at the forefront of delivering Government priorities such as housing through reformed two-tier planning and infrastructure provision.

Our campaigns and policy development will emphasise how important county authorities, and the services they provide, are economically and socially to our local communities and to delivering national government objectives.

Building on the theme of *Counties as Strategic Authorities*, we will position our members and demonstrate their ability to drive public sector reform at size and scale; seeking equal status for Counties with City Regions on county devolution and the post-Brexit landscape.

Our policy development will be focused on six priorities and 15 associated work streams.

Our priorities and work streams will be underpinned by cross-cutting policy development, public affairs, and communications activity. The following sections provide an overview, including priorities and key areas of the work programme. A full detailed work programme, agreed by Management Committee, Spokesman and ACCE lead Advisors, is available to members on request.

Our primary objective will be to enhance CCN's policy outputs to improve our support to all our member councils and the traction of our policy proposals amongst Ministers and Officials.

In delivering this, we will continue to increase the portfolio of policy development and research undertaken by the organisation.

CCN will work with leading think-tanks and consultancies to gain new insights and robust evidence, ensuring new projects are of sufficient size and scope to provide robust evidence and original insight to generate sector interest to influence the emerging agenda.

And this year we will renew our focus on facilitating the sharing of best practice between member councils.

We will better promote innovation and transformation across our member councils, including peer support through our dedicated Officer Groups and support for ACCE.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH

Funding Models
Integration
Public Health



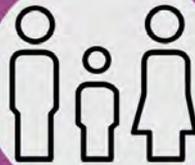
FAIR & SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

County Funding
Fair Funding Review
Business Rate Retention



HOUSING, INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT

Strategic & Local Planning
Infrastructure
Sustainable Transport



CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Financial & Demand-Led Pressures
Delivery Models & Inspection
Social Mobility (Education)



TRANSFORMATION

Efficiency & Reform
Devolution & Governance
Communities & Localism



ECONOMIC GROWTH & BREXIT

Industrial Strategy & Growth
Employment & Skills
Brexit



Public Affairs

Our Approach

Our public affairs strategy over the past year has been to proactively establish alliances and networks with key influencers across Parliament, Whitehall and national stakeholders, promoting the work of CCN and our member councils in a positive, solution-based manner.

We aim to utilise our secretariat support for the County All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) and strong links between County Leaders and MPs to build the profile of CCN's work and campaigns.

CCN works to influence Ministers through our weekly meetings between the Chairman and MHCLG Ministers, and meetings with other departmental Ministers. CCN provide oral and written evidence to Select Committees, and ensure that our research helps guide civil service thinking through key departmental contacts.

Alongside work with Ministers, MPs and Peers to progress the policy aims of the Network, CCN enhance our messaging by forming links with stakeholders, private sector partners, think-tanks and policy networks.

Despite the limited domestic agenda, CCN is gaining more exposure than ever across Whitehall and Parliament, securing high-profile meetings with Ministers, Officials, key national stakeholders, and being represented at set-piece Government events.

Our support for the County APPG and dedicated Parliamentary Briefings led to successive meetings with the Secretary of State and Chancellor, ultimately culminating in an additional £166m in the settlement.

Alongside this, profile raising of our fair funding campaign through the APPG and County MPs was demonstrated through the strong positioning of rurality in the Needs Based Review consultation. Throughout the year, CCN have submitted prominent contributions

to Select Committee Inquiries, and CCN Spokesmen have been called to give evidence on behalf of the network, including on Health & Social Care and Business Rates Retention.



CCN delivered a programme of key ministerial meetings for the Chairman and Spokesmen following the County and General Elections, highlighting key policy priorities from the *New Deal for Counties* report.

As a key Special Interest Group of the LGA, we increased our support to representatives across LGA boards and have strengthened our policy, communications and public affairs links with the organisation to ensure the county voice is heard.



Our Annual Conference was the most successful to date, drawing high-profile speakers from across Whitehall and public policy landscape across a wide range of issues.

And, the success of Conference has been supported by our partner and sponsorship arrangements. Our commercial income doubled during the last financial year, with long-term relationships established with Newton Europe, PA Consulting, Grant Thornton, Serco and Salary Finance.

Public Affairs

Our Objectives

Looking ahead, our strategy will build on our increased national and Parliamentary profile to achieve better policy outcomes for members, while improving our membership offer to councils.

We will continue to strengthen our links across the LGA to ensure the county specific angles of local government policy are better recognised, providing tailored briefings to Board members and regular internal meetings with LGA Officers. More widely, we will look to build links across the sector with similar organisations, with the aim of achieving consensus wherever possible.

Alongside CCN Annual Conference, we will increase our number of policy specific member events, includes a housing conference later this year. Building on member feedback, we will continue to secure high-profile speakers and undertake detailed policy discussions in our Council and Executive member meetings.



Our dual-pronged approach to civil service and parliamentary influencing will be further strengthened.

CCN will look to consolidate and build upon our engagement with Parliamentarians. We will continue to engage with County MPs and Lords to create a strong advocacy base for CCN policy, arranging individual meetings and briefing events through the County APPG.

In the coming months, as part of our plans to increase resources to the County APPG, we will jointly launch a Parliamentary APPG Inquiry exploring Social Mobility in County Areas. With the support of leading think-tank Localis, CCN will issue a call for written and oral evidence, with a report published later this year.



Of particular focus for our Parliamentary activity will be the fair funding review and the Social Care Green Paper.

For the fair funding review, CCN will brief MPs on the current and future implications for member councils. Through briefings on the implications for the County APPG, and technical briefings for researchers, CCN will ensure that the County APPG is fully prepared to respond to forthcoming proposals.

For the forthcoming social care green paper, CCN will put forward proposals to achieve long-term sustainable funding, limit care costs, and highlight best practice in member councils. We will articulate our positions and proposals in a positive solution-based manner throughout the Department of Health and NHS. It is imperative that the wider sector understands the contributions counties make to health and social care.

CCN will look to engage member councils with parliamentary activity wherever possible, in particular working with member councils and their MPs to highlight local fair funding campaigns. CCN will provide support to member councils looking to enhance their influence through data, policy advice and the media.

Media & Communications

Our Approach

CCN aims to robustly defend our councils in the media and articulate the unique challenges and opportunities they face across the national, local and trade media.

We present our positions in a solution-based manner, ensuring that our media and communications is complementary to our policy development and public affairs, aiming to build constructive relationships with Government and stakeholders whilst enhancing the profile and reach of CCN.

CCN has had a strong year in the media in 2017 and beginning of 2018; with 582 media references, including a record 52 national media hits, over 100 references in local newspapers and media, over 350 stories in the local government trade press. CCN also has had placed 62 trade media features.

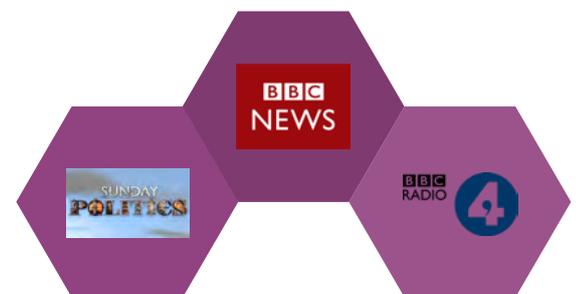
Particular successes include prominent fairer funding stories in The Times and a separate story showcasing our arguments from *A New Deal for Counties*.

We secured coverage in The Financial Times for our Oxford Economics report. The Guardian and Independent featured several stories resulting from CCN's advocacy on rising demands for rural children's social care, concerns over delayed discharge targets, and our refreshed LaingBuisson analysis on county care markets.

582
media hits

Most recently, The Telegraph and The Times covered our calls for the Government to strengthen planning reforms in two-tier areas. As part of our advocacy on the local government finance settlement that secured an additional £166m, we gained coverage in the

Financial Times, Sky News and the Guardian. And in response to the recent National Audit Office report on the sustainability of funding, ITV News and the Guardian covered our response. On Broadcast media, CCN Chairman Paul Carter appeared on prime-time 6pm BBC News to discuss the schools funding formula, and on Radio 4's Today and World at One shows to discuss local government finance. We have also secured coverage in several regional radio and TV shows, including BBC Three Counties, BBC Look East and Sunday Politics.



CCN is doing more than ever to support our members with tailored communications support. We have worked closely with councils in recent months on media matters; offering dedicated support on individual councils' fair funding campaigns, and on localised stories on the local government finance settlement and reorganisation.

52
National media stories

We also continue to be the central voice for counties in the trade media. CCN has regular columns in the MJ, LGC and Public Sector Executive magazines and our reach has now extended to sector specific trades to enhance our advocacy across a wider range of stakeholders. CCN have secured news stories and articles in publications such as Inside Housing, Health Services Journal, and Community Care.

Media and Communications

Our Objectives

Looking ahead, our communications strategy will build on our increased national and Parliamentary profile, while doing even more to support our member councils locally.

Despite our small communications team, and prominent voice of the LGA in the media, we are now one of the established go-to organisations for local government news in Westminster. But this year, we want to do even more to grow our profile and reach amongst national journalists on the issues that matter most to our member councils.

To that end, we will continue to shape the national and sector debate on sustainability of county funding and the fair funding review.

Following developments in Northamptonshire and the NAO report, challenges facing county authorities are particularly in the spot-light.

Through effective media management, it is imperative that CCN ensure that the narrative remains on how our members continue to display efficient and effective financial management in the face of unrelenting demand-led pressures and articulate the need for additional resources for councils.

Crucial to this will be our messaging on fairer funding, achieving cut through on how the review must address the pressures on rural services, the historic underfunding of county authorities and disproportionate council tax burdens facing local residents.

Articulating our positions and proposals in a positive solution-based manner on the fair funding review, and across our work programme priorities, will be at the heart of our approach; whether making the case for local government to be at the heart of Government proposals in the Adult Social Care Green Paper or joining with other national stakeholders to argue for a stronger role for county authorities in housing and planning.



This will be underpinned by CCN's marketing and core messages, including the refresh of the 'New Deal for Counties' branding outlined in this Business Plan and wider sharpening of our core messages.

We will undertake continuous evaluation of our online and internal communications, including the new CCN Website, Chairman's and Director's Updates and Newsletter. On digital media, we will explore other social media channels, having launched a LinkedIn page for CCN last year, and having witnessed strong growth on our Twitter page.

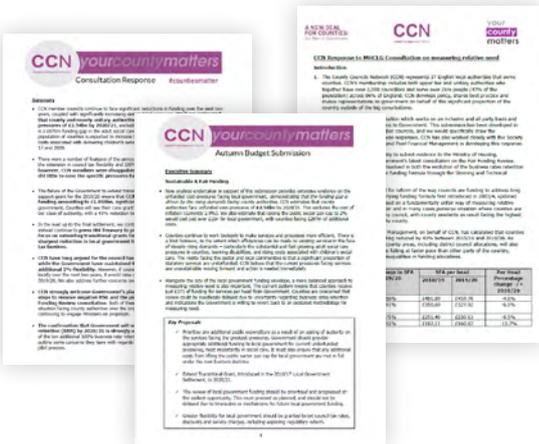
This year CCN also want to make a breakthrough across a broader range of current affairs programmes and other broadcast media outlets including ITV, Sky News and Channel 4.

We will work closely with our member councils to develop tailored media packages for print and broadcast outlets to bring local, county specific examples to our national communications. This will increase the 'human angle' to our stories and exposure to member councils' challenges and innovative best-practice, whilst improving our offer to support members locally on regional media.

And, to further professionalise our approach to media and communications, we will be developing a communications protocol for spokespeople for the network; this is to ensure our communications processes are proactive and efficient, to take advantage of increased opportunities for comment, and respond quickly to national developments.

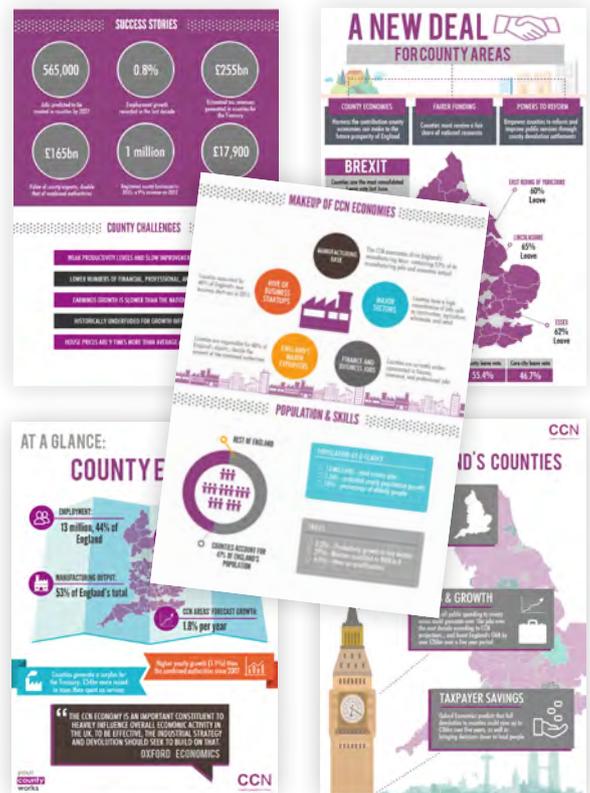
Consultation Responses & Submissions

Officer Working Groups & Events



Research & Publications

Campaigns & Infographics



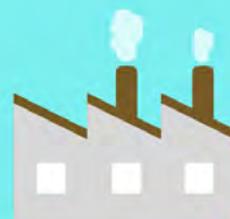
WHY... **your county matters**



Maintain highways & rural roads



Build vital infrastructure for communities



Support local economies and job creation



Care for the elderly and disabled



Protect vulnerable young people



Oversee high quality schools and deliver school places



Provide bus services for residents of all ages



Deliver public health services and advice



Ensure decisions and accountability are both local

Counties do all this, and more, despite heavy funding cuts.

This is why **your county matters**

Priority: Fair & Sustainable Funding

The financial pressures facing local government, and the growing demand-led pressures in counties, have been raised by CCN for a number of years. However, the financial challenges facing county authorities are particularly in the spot-light. Alongside this, the timetable for the fair funding review, moves towards 75% business rates retention and next year's spending review have been confirmed. CCN continues to be key members of the LGA/MHCLG Steering Group overseeing reforms.

Our engagement with member councils demonstrates that the needs-based review remains member councils' top priority. It is crucial that CCN deploy significant internal resources to influencing the outcome while preparing for the spending review.

Workstreams & Key Actions

County Funding

- Support the local government sector in continuing to make the case for sustainable resources and an increased quantum of funding. Within this, articulate the unique pressures facing counties and structural challenges county councils face in delivering further efficiency savings.
- Begin detailed preparations for the 2019 Spending Review. Working closely with MHCLG officials to build evidence on the specific financial challenges facing county authorities to support the department in negotiations with the Treasury.
- Renew CCN advocacy on reforms to the New Homes Bonus as part of preparations for the 2019 Spending Review. Work with member councils to develop quantitative and qualitative evidence base on the impact of the policy on county authorities and establish a CCN policy position on whether the policy should be ended or reformed.

Fair Funding Review

- Continue to shape and challenge the national narrative regarding inequity in national funding distribution and council tax burdens in different parts of the country. Use coordinated public affairs and communications to maintain momentum and prioritisation of the fair funding review. This includes direct support for local fair funding campaigns being led by member councils.
- Explore further opportunities to commission analysis and gather evidence to support our work on the needs based review - focusing on how pressures relate to county costs, particularly social care, and data-driven research to measure the additional costs of delivering services in rural areas.
- Undertake detailed analysis to inform CCN's response to the forthcoming discussion document on council tax and 'local resources' as part of the Government's fair funding review. Advocacy to focus on encouraging Government to adopt an approach that considers 'notional' rather than 'actual' council tax.

Business Rates Retention

- Building on CCN's report with Pixel Financial Management published in 2017, update modelling through retainer arrangements to understand implications for CCN member councils of moving to 75% BRR.
- Agree CCN position in relation to preferred option for the tier split under 75% BRR, with a view to presenting to Government.
- Work with SCT and 100% BRR pilot areas to gather learning and experience from the 2018/19 pilots. Engage MHCLG over the next phase of pilots for 2019/20, seeking to shape the prospectus, ensure the continuation of existing pilots and explore further opportunities for CCN member councils to become pilot areas.

COUNTY FUNDING

— Exploring the issues —



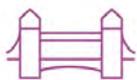
The need for additional funding



The need for fairer funding

FUNDING PER HEAD

By end of decade



London: £459



Met Councils: £327



Non-CCN Unitary: £230



Counties: £161

43%

COUNTIES' REDUCTION IN
CORE GRANTS BY 2020

The highest out of any upper-tier local authority

Priority: Adult Social Care & Health

The timelines and process for the development of the paper have now been confirmed, with the Green Paper expected by summer 2018. CCN need to build on our recent paper discussed at CCN Conference and present evidence on funding and reform options.

With the transfer for the responsibility for the Green Paper to the Department of Health we need to present a compelling case for a fully funded sustainable solution to social care funding, alongside a compelling case on why local government should be at the heart of integration. Therefore, it is important that specific work takes place on both health integration and public health.

Workstreams & Key Actions

Funding Models

- Proactively engage with the Adult Social Care Green Paper. Undertake further work to engage across the sector, including with the Independent Expert Panel and other supporting public affairs work. Alongside this, CCN will engage with the working age adults work stream running in parallel to the Green Paper being led by the DHSC.
- Continue to make a strong evidence-based case for new funding to be invested into the social care system to address the immediate pressures. We will seek to ensure that funding and integration proposals are not delivered in isolation and take into account wider policy drivers such as reforms to business rates retention.
- Highlight the challenges facing CCN member councils in delivering a sustainable reduction in Delayed Transfers of Care. CCN will work to influence the reporting mechanisms and targets for the forthcoming year through the Better Care Fund to ensure that they are fair and transparent.

Integration

- Commission an external body to develop and update a detailed evidence base to support the case for county-delivered social care. This includes examining the specific transformation in member councils during a time of demand-led pressures facing adult social care.
- CCN will continue to advocate for county authorities in two-tier areas to play a lead role in planning for future housing need over a more strategic countywide geography, including planning for specific group's housing needs. A strengthened role would allow for county authorities in two-tier areas to better undertake their market shaping duties that were set out in the Care Act 2014.
- Engage with the Government's Independent Review on reforming Disabled Facilities Grant. Make the case for grants to be held by upper-tier councils alongside reforms to wider delivery in order to reduce bureaucracy, increase efficiency, better align DfGs with adult social care priorities and to reduce the number of delayed transfers of care as a result of equipment and adaptations.

Public Health

- Develop a publication that sets out the importance of county authorities in the delivery of public health, including, how this has been transformed since it transferred, how this has delivered significant efficiencies and evidence of how outcomes have been improved for residents.
- Continue to highlight concerns regarding the funding of public health services and the impact on preventative services for the wider health and social care system.
- As part of our fair funding campaign, dedicate a specific element to advocating for a fairer funding formula to distribute public health funding.

Priority: Children's Social Care and Education

Over recent months local government have been seeking to raise the profile of the pressures facing children's social care and education. While intelligence suggests that Government are beginning to acknowledge growing demand pressures, they are seeking to test the evidence on the variations in demand and what drives the cost pressures.

It is crucial that CCN engage in this work and raise the specific pressures of rural counties, while also undertaking specific work on delivery models and inspection regimes. More widely, CCN will continue to explore the role of counties in education and improving social mobility in county and rural areas.

Workstreams & Key Actions

Financial & Demand-Led Pressures

- Build on the growing recognition in central government about the challenges facing financial and demand led pressures in children's services. Engage with DfE and MHCLG, working with LG Futures to construct a relative needs formula for children's services for the Fair Funding Review.
- Develop an evidence base on the cost-pressures in the provision of children's services in rural areas, including the cost of home to school transport. Use this to undertake advocacy to illustrate the unique challenges faced in rural areas and CCN members more widely.
- As part of CCN's Spending Review preparations, dedicate significant attention to the financial and demand-led pressures on children's services and advocate for an increase in the quantum for children's services.

Social Mobility and Education

- Build on the report by the Social Mobility Commission to develop an evidence base into the specific challenges to social mobility in rural areas by undertaking a joint parliamentary inquiry with Localis and the County APPG into social mobility in county

areas. Produce evidence-based report following call for evidence (written and oral) and detailed research by Localis and CCN.

- Continue dialogue with DfE on the implementation of the National Schools Funding Formula, with a particular focus on high-needs spend. As part of this CCN will continue to make the case for full funding and a fairer formula that delivers funding based upon need and not one that builds upon a regression based formula.
- Continue to collate evidence about the impact of academisation in counties, and use this to make a case to central government to maintain the strategic and respected role of county authorities in supporting schools, including updating data on the provision of school improvement services to academies by county authorities.'

Delivery Models and Inspection

- Collate information on the delivery models put in place in response to the Wood Review on Local Children's Safeguarding Boards. Share best practice amongst CCN members and demonstrate to central government how counties are responding to the Wood Review and highlight emerging issues in terms of resourcing or engagement.
- Monitor how the changes to OFSTEDs inspection regime and the creation of the new Partners in Practice improvement networks are impacting on children's services. Provide CCN members with opportunities to share experiences and where appropriate share concerns with OFSTED or DfE about the new system.
- Ensure that members can continue to engage with civil servants and ministers on future changes to delivery models, the inspection regime, or implementation of new policies or initiatives such as the Transforming Child Mental Health Green Paper. Ensure that county concerns are heard by civil servants and that they are able to continue to promote best practice.

Priority: Housing, Infrastructure & Transport

Housing remains one of the Government's top priorities and recent reforms in housing have shown that Government are alive to the concerns of county authorities over the fragmentation of powers in two-tier areas and the need to reform planning over a larger-scale. Consultations are now taking place on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and reforms to developer contributions.

While Government have acknowledged the concerns of counties, CCN believe that they must go further with proposed reforms. There is a clear desire amongst our member councils to do more in strategic planning and housing investment. With the NPPF and developer contributions consultation on-going, there is significant opportunity to influence, while also showcasing our members role in housing delivery and transport.

Workstreams & Key Actions

Strategic & Local Planning

- Engage extensively with Government's reforms to the planning system through the consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework to help shape the planning system, align planning and infrastructure, and reform infrastructure funding mechanisms. Key to this will be a stronger Statement of Common Ground, in order to properly plan for sustainable communities by joining housing with jobs and infrastructure.
- Research existing good practice in strategic planning across the country and highlight positive outcomes. Set out a series of recommendations of legislative and/or policy changes required to secure a leadership role for counties in strategic planning arrangements.
- Commission work with other influential organisations to demonstrate the innovative work that county authorities are doing to increase housebuilding in their areas. The

work will show examples of leadership by pioneering councils who are unlocking housing through partnerships and direct delivery, and give an indication to government of the skills and capacity of county authorities.

Infrastructure

- Advocate the inadequacies of the existing developer contributions system and the severe funding gaps that counties face. We will work with partners to build an evidence base around housing and infrastructure gaps member authorities face across the country and put forward recommendations that allow members to deliver high quality social and physical infrastructure.
- Continue to make the case that counties should be given the same opportunities as metro-mayor areas, including the ability to set Strategic Infrastructure Tariffs to fund specific infrastructure projects that would help unlock land for development.

Sustainable Transport

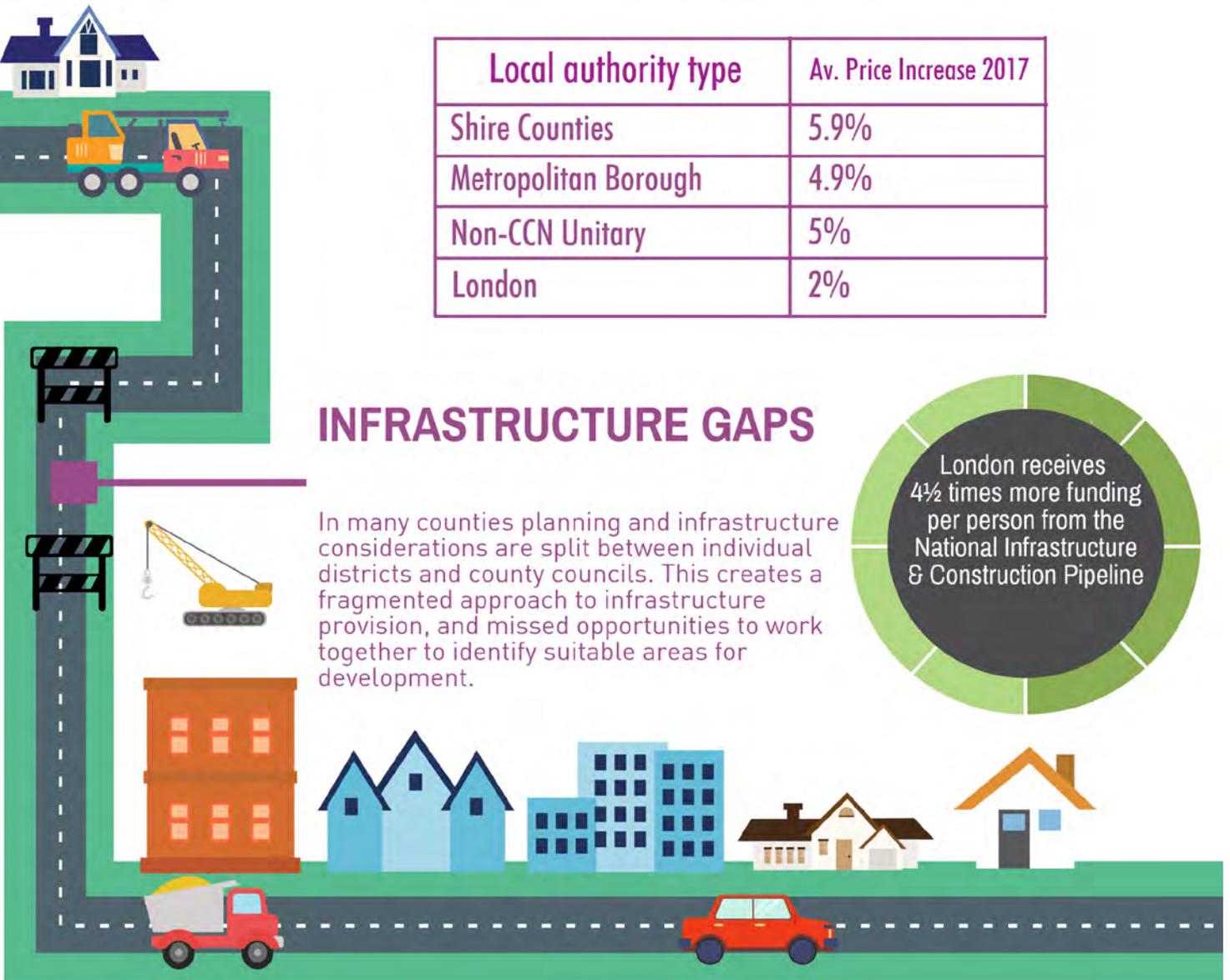
- Advocate for fairer National Infrastructure investment for county members, building upon the DfT's commitment to examine investment decisions by region.
- Support and position the role of counties in driving regional and sub-regional transport, infrastructure and growth initiatives. We will share good practice, showcase the leadership of our members, and engage with key stakeholders.
- Highlight the funding issues around rural bus services linking this to the wider work around social mobility and rurality.

Local authority type	Av. Price Increase 2017
Shire Counties	5.9%
Metropolitan Borough	4.9%
Non-CCN Unitary	5%
London	2%

INFRASTRUCTURE GAPS

In many counties planning and infrastructure considerations are split between individual districts and county councils. This creates a fragmented approach to infrastructure provision, and missed opportunities to work together to identify suitable areas for development.

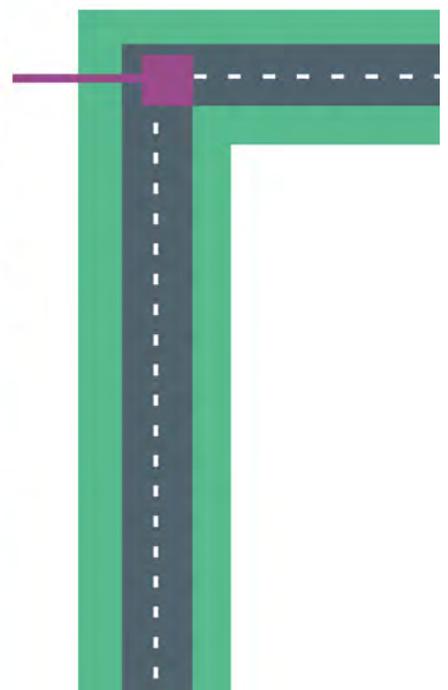
London receives
4½ times more funding
per person from the
National Infrastructure
& Construction Pipeline



JOINING UP & SCALING UP

An increased focus on strategic planning and a strengthened Statement of Common Ground which supports counties and districts to work together at scale could help overcome some of these challenges.

This could join up planning and infrastructure, allowing homes to be targeted to the most appropriate areas. Ensuring that public services, roads, and amenities are in place to mitigate pressures on towns and communities.



Priority: Economic Growth & Brexit

During the past year, counties have continued to be the backbone of the UK economy. Last year, our counties invested more than any other authority type in infrastructure, and are the enablers of growth in county areas. As a result of our work with local businesses and partners, our areas remain the best places to both live and work.

With the Government recently publishing its Industrial Strategy Whitepaper, CCN must continue to engage in the development of Local Industrial Strategies and LEP Review, alongside regional transport initiatives.

More widely, supporting our narrative on devolution, our work on economic growth will focus on a wider lens of re-balancing the economy and strengthening the union. It will show the importance of county economies as the 'backbone' of the British economy and a stronger drive on linking devolution to the post-Brexit world.

Workstreams & Key Actions

Industrial Strategy & Growth

- Campaign to highlight the importance of non-city economies to national prosperity. Building on the 2017 Oxford Economics report for CCN, undertake further media and communications work to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of county economies. This work will aim to show the benefit of devolved powers and investment to counties, the impact of Brexit, and how this will help deliver Government's priorities such as the industrial strategy.
- Continue to engage in the LEP review by engaging with officials at the Cities and Local Growth unit and supporting lead CCN members on the Advisory Panel, highlighting the results of our recent LEP survey. Make the case for strong county involvement in the preparation of Local Industrial Strategies in order to ensure they are as effective as they can be.

- Share good practice and promote the role of counties in regional growth, particularly in relation to sub-national transport boards and initiatives such as Oxford, Cambridge, Milton Keynes Corridor, Midlands Engine and Economic Heartland initiatives. CCN to specifically highlight work of county and unitary member councils on economic development and business support.

Employment & Skills

- CCN will continue to engage with the Industrial Strategy and work of the LGA to define a role for counties in delivering Government's new Technical Education System, and continue to put forward the case for the devolution and consolidation of skills funding and functions.
- Through media and communications work continue to highlight the strengths and weaknesses in labour markets and particular skills gaps, building on the recommendations of the recent Localis report for CCN *In Place of Work* and the LGA's *Work Local* campaign.

Sustainable Transport

- Advocate for fairer National Infrastructure investment for county members, building upon the DfT's commitment to examine investment decisions by region.
- Support and position the role of counties in driving regional and sub-regional transport, infrastructure and growth initiatives. We will share good practice, showcase the leadership of our members, and engage with key stakeholders.
- Highlight the funding issues around rural bus services linking this to the wider work around social mobility and rurality.

AT A GLANCE:

COUNTY ECONOMIES



EMPLOYMENT:

13m people, 44% of England's Total



GVA CONTRIBUTION:

£600bn, 41% of the economy



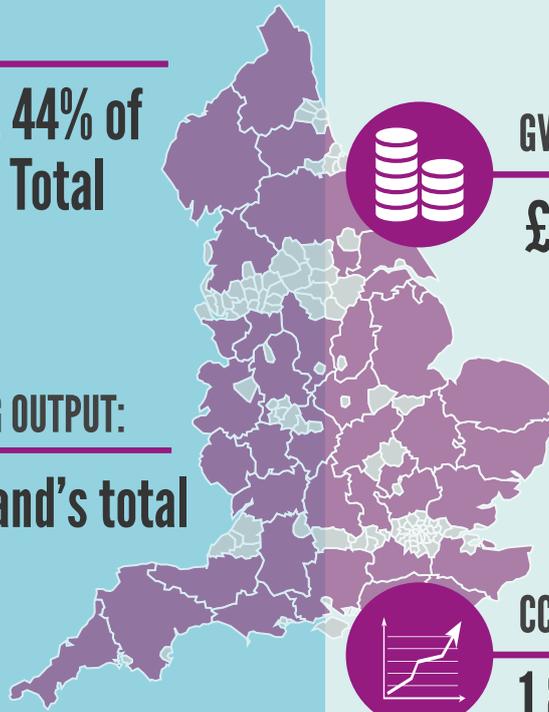
MANUFACTURING OUTPUT:

53% of England's total



CCN AREAS' FORECAST GROWTH:

1.8% per year



Counties generate a surplus for the Treasury: £54bn more raised in taxes than spent on services

Higher yearly growth (1.1%) than the combined authorities since 2007



“ THE CCN ECONOMY IS AN IMPORTANT CONSTITUENT TO HEAVILY INFLUENCE OVERALL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN THE UK. TO BE EFFECTIVE, THE INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY AND DEVOLUTION SHOULD SEEK TO BUILD ON THAT.

OXFORD ECONOMICS

Priority: Transformation

Our preparations for the Spending Review will not only demonstrate the specific financial pressures facing our member councils, but provide evidence on transformation and efficiency savings delivered by member councils since 2010 and their case for driving wider public sector reform.

With Government committed to the publication of a 'common devolution framework' we will engage with county areas to ensure that a national framework balances a better understanding of process and what is 'available/expectations' alongside rural proofing.

CCN has collated extensive evidence supporting structural reform and we will focus on using existing material, making the case for Counties as 'Strategic Authorities', whether supporting support member councils wishing to put forward proposals for unitary status or 'functional reform' through reformed two-tier.

Workstreams & Key Actions

Efficiency & Reform

- As part of our advocacy on county funding and preparations for the Spending Review, commission detailed research exploring the experience and outcomes of genuine transformation in counties.
- Position counties as the lead body for driving whole-place public service reform. Undertake research, analysis and engagement with member councils to support arguments in favour of public sector reform and collaboration at county scale, and reforms that simplify and integrate wider public service providers.
- Work with member councils to explore how county councils are providing 'place-based leadership' in two-tier areas, focusing on how Counties are already acting as 'Strategic Authorities'. Promote and share best practice on service transformation and integration in CCN member councils and partners.

Devolution and Governance

- CCN will engage with Government as it continues to develop the 'Common Devolution Framework'. Use this to renew the campaign for devolution outside of cities. This will include dedicated support to advocate for non-mayoral models and best practice sharing, including those areas operating in Combined Authorities, and those wishing to pursue this model.
- Engage CCN unitary authorities, and those authorities interested in structural reform, to create a sub-group of the CCN Policy & Strategy Group to understand the key issues of concern for those member councils. Support member councils wishing to pursue structural reform. Continue to proactively represent member councils in relation to local government reorganisation.
- Explore alternative approaches to Governance reform through 'functional reform'. This includes undertaking evidence gathering and analysis to explore which services could be transferred between tiers as part of a reformed two-tier including 'district mergers' and further exploring the Respublica/Localis model of 'Strategic Authorities'.

Communities and Localism

- Undertake internal research with member councils on county identity, governance and localism, with particular focus the historical importance and effectiveness of community governance. Engage with CCN authorities and external partners to gather evidence on community level locality governance, service delivery arrangements, and collaborative working.
- Provide direct input and facilitate member councils to take part in forthcoming publication by LGA and NALC exploring how principle councils are supporting parish and town councils to build their capacity and deliver more services.

DEVOLUTION

TO ENGLAND'S COUNTIES

BREXIT BOOST

County devolution could boost England's economic growth to 2.7% per year - significantly more than post-Brexit predicted growth of 1.9% per year



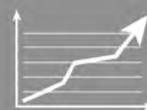
JOBS & SAVINGS

Devolving all public spending to county areas could generate over 1m jobs over the next decade according to CCN projections; whilst full devolution could save up to £36bn over five years

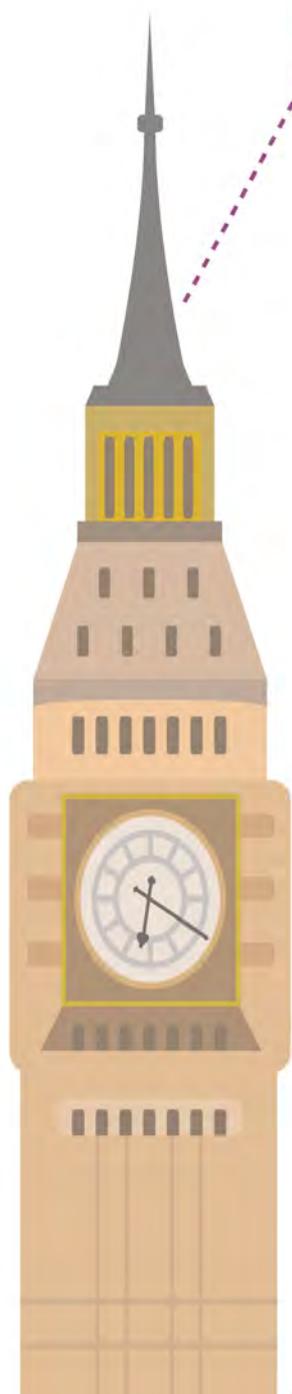


REORGANISATION

ResPublica's recent report argues that new forms of local government are needed to push the door open for devolution; with single-county unitaries the best model to achieve county devolution deals.



£2.9bn





Your Team

The CCN has seven full time members of staff located at Local Government House in Westminster.

Simon Edwards

Director

simon.edwards@local.gov.uk

Simon is the Director of CCN, responsible for leadership of the organisation, business management and all aspects of CCN's membership. Working with the Chairman and leading members Simon has led the transformation of CCN into an influential and respected network which advocates innovative policy solution on the challenges facing local government and the wider public sector.

James Maker

Head of Policy & Communications

james-maker2@local.gov.uk

As Head of Policy & Communications, James is responsible for the development of CCN's full portfolio of policy and research and oversees our communications, parliamentary, Whitehall and public affairs engagement work. He supports the CCN Chairman, Management Committee and Director to deliver the strategic objectives of the organisation and continue to grow our influence across Whitehall.

Michael Chard

Senior Policy Officer

michael.chard@local.gov.uk

Mike is a Senior Policy Officer leading our work on people based areas of our policy and research. He leads work across adults and children's social care and also CCN's advocacy on education, including our engagement on schools funding, and reforms to health and social care.

Peter French

Senior Policy Officer

peter.french@local.gov.uk

Peter leads on the CCN's place-based policy areas and research. His remit includes leading work on economic growth, housing, spatial planning, and infrastructure. Peter will be leading CCN's advocacy on the forthcoming CiL review and housing matters.

James Holden

Senior Policy Officer

james.holden@local.gov.uk

James leads on CCN's policy development and research on business rates and fair funding, skills and devolution, as well as providing wider support for the network's public affairs engagement work.

Victoria Moloney

Public Affairs Officer

victoria.moloney@local.gov.uk

Victoria is the Public Affairs Officer at the CCN. She is responsible for CCN's parliamentary, stakeholder and membership engagement, providing effective avenues for CCN to influence policy makers and wider stakeholders. Victoria also provides policy support to the CCN team.

Ian Burbidge

Media & Communications

ian.burbidge@local.gov.uk

Ian is the Media & Communications Officer with responsibility communications, marketing and public affairs support. In his role Ian leads both internal and external communications, including press releases, newsletters, and articles. He acts as the first port of call for journalists as we expand our media profile.

Phoebe Ward

Business Support Officer

phoebe.ward@local.gov.uk

The Business Support Officer supports the Director on the effective and efficient management of CCN business processes, including finance, programme management, Annual Conference, meetings and events, member and stakeholder information.

CCN

COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK

Founded in 1997, the County Councils Network (CCN) is a network of 37 County Councils and Unitary authorities that serve county areas. We are a cross party organisation, expressing the views of member councils to the wider Local Government Association and to central Government departments.

To discuss any of CCN's proposals in more detail, please contact:

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 County Councils Network