

County APPG

COUNTY ALL-PARTY
PARLIAMENTARY GROUP



your
county
matters

CCN
COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK

Foreword



Peter Aldous MP, Chair of the County APPG

I am delighted to present you with this County All-Party Parliamentary prospectus and invite you to become a member of the County APPG.

The APPG focuses on alerting Government to the unique challenges and opportunities facing our counties, and on promoting the best solutions for our residents.

The challenges facing our areas have been well publicised: the growing need for social care services, a rapidly ageing population, significantly lower funding compared to other local authorities, and rural delivery pressures.

But the potential of our areas should not be underestimated. County economies deliver 41% of England's GVA, with a vibrant business and enterprise environment that make our counties excellent places to live and work.

With a new Prime Minister and Government, this parliament will see an ambitious programme of legislation with significant implications for our county areas.

There is a growing focus on how devolution deals can drive growth and reform services, however we need more appropriate devolution deals for our areas.

Proposed social reforms to education and children's services present opportunities to improve outcomes for young people, but reforms must ensure they support high performing county authorities.

And with radical reforms to local government funding and business rates, we have the opportunity to deliver a fairer funding settlement for our areas, who have been underfunded for too long.

The work of this APPG, and our new parliamentary campaign *Your County Matters* has never been so important. The APPG, supported by the County Councils Network, can help Members of Parliament ensure county areas are given the same consideration as the big cities when it comes to local funding, public service reform and devolution deals.

I would encourage you to add your voice to the County APPG and look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming events.

Peter Aldous MP
Chair of the County APPG

What is the County APPG?



This prospectus for the County APPG demonstrates why Parliamentarians should join this important group.

It provides key details on what the purpose of the APPG is, the priorities for the group, and the activities it performs on behalf of our members.

Crucially it shows *Why Counties Matter*, and as representatives of county areas, why adding your voice to the APPG can help us tackle the big challenges and opportunities facing our areas.

The County APPG is a forum to consider the critical issues and challenges faced by county areas and their communities. It promotes the current and future contributions of county areas, to the national economy, to public services and to social wellbeing.

Through the APPG, we investigate the barriers and constraints that prevent county areas from reaching their full potential, and assist Members of both Houses to raise awareness of these matters in Parliament.

Dates for your diary

Tuesday 6th September

Annual General Meeting

Our AGM will be held on 6th September 2016, 2:30-3:30pm in Committee Room 14. Alongside the business of the AGM, this session will focus on devolution to county areas. We hope to have the new Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government, the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP in attendance. For further information or to RSVP please contact: sara.brouillette@local.gov.uk

Monday 31st October

County APPG Reception

Please join us at our APPG Parliamentary Reception on 31st October 4-6pm on the Terrace Pavilion. To RSVP please contact sara.brouillette@local.gov.uk

Join the County APPG

To join the APPG please email

County.CouncilsNetwork@local.gov.uk

Alternately, come and join us at any of the events mentioned above.

County APPG Priorities

The County APPG aims to provide a forum for Parliamentarians to engage in debate and dialogue about issues related to county economies, services and communities.

County areas cover 86% of England's landmass and 47% of its population. Our areas are largely rural, and contain 55% of all those aged 65 and over. They are the most significant contributors of income tax, stamp duty and business rates in England.

County economies generate 43% of the country's jobs and 41% of England's GVA. County Councils are responsible for 93% of growth related expenditure in their areas, including transport, highways, and infrastructure, while our County Unitary Authorities also provide housing and planning services.

Counties also provide essential services to the most vulnerable, delivering social care to adults and children. They are some of the most high-performing education authorities in the country.

However, counties are also some of the most underfunded areas in the country, and face a growing demand for services. Next year, county authorities will receive significantly less funding than metropolitan authorities, and receive £1.2bn less for health services, having already seen the largest reductions in their funding for social care.

Secretariat

The County APPG Secretariat is provided by the County Councils Network (CCN). The CCN represents 37 English county and county unitary councils who together have over 2500 councillors and serve over 25 million people (47% of the population) across 86% of England

CCN develops policy, shares best practice and advocates policy solutions to Government on behalf of this significant proportion of the country outside the big conurbations.

The priorities of the County APPG are reflective of the vital services counties provide for local communities, and the challenges and opportunities we face. Over the course of this Parliament, the County APPG will focus on:

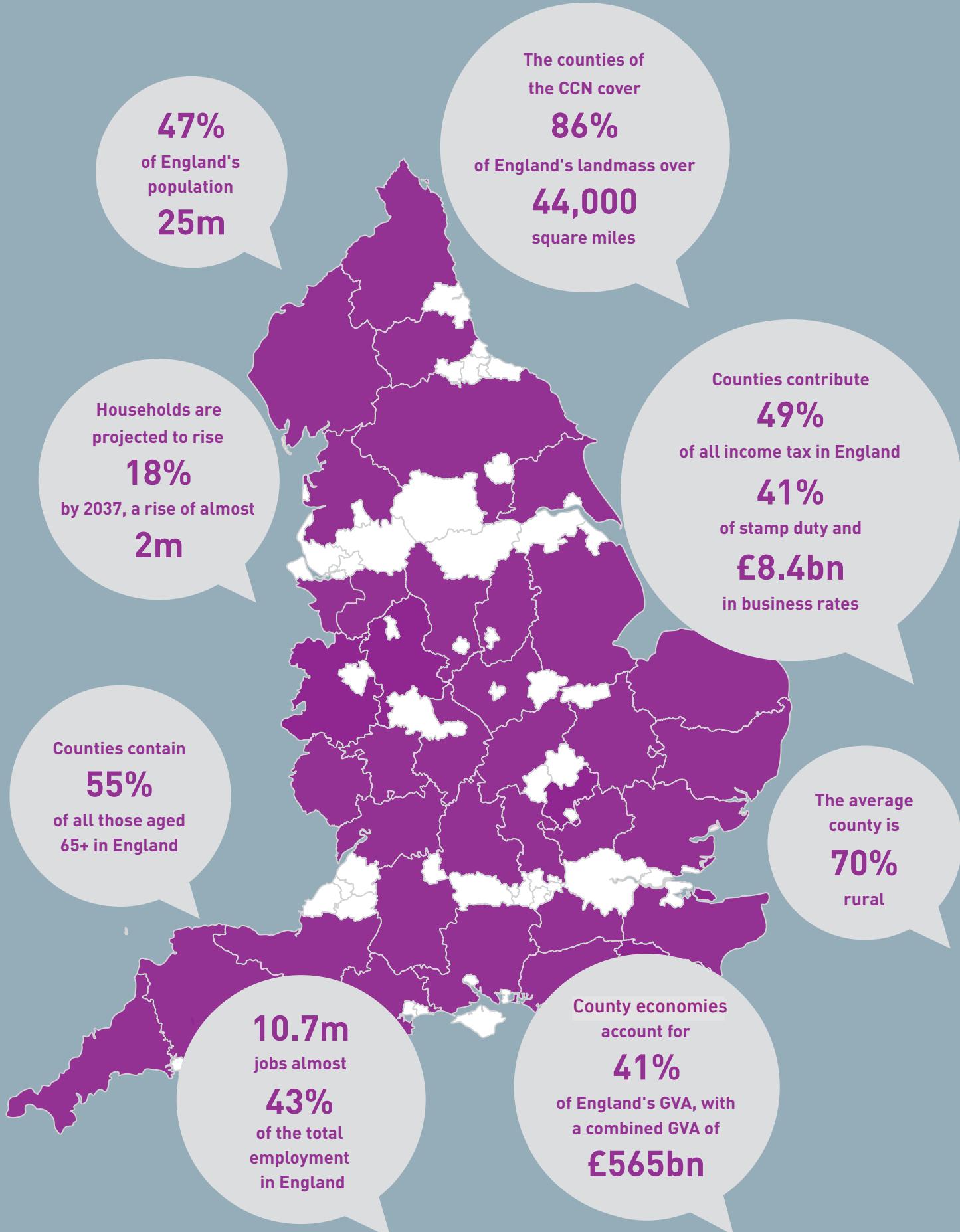
- Fairer Funding
- Devolution & Governance
- Economic Growth & Broadband
- Health & Social Care
- Children & Young People

Focusing on these priorities, the APPG will work with Parliamentarians to advocate for the needs of our communities and respond to the requirements of our members. In particular, the County APPG and CCN will be considering key pieces of legislation and the challenges affecting county areas, including:

- Children & Social Work Bill
- Bus Services Bill
- Jobs and Growth Bill
- Devolution
- Business Rates Retention

CCN is a member-led organisation which works on an inclusive and all-party basis and seeks to make representations to government. CCN is a special interest group of the Local Government Association (LGA). You can find out more about the CCN by visiting our website: www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/about

The councils represented by the CCN constitute the largest and most significant single grouping of local authorities in terms of population, geography, economic growth, taxation, and public services.



APPG Activities

The County APPG has been active since 2013. During the last Parliament it produced two influential reports on growth deals in county areas and health and social care integration. It provided support to members through regular briefings, events and also the opportunity for informal networking at Parliamentary Receptions.

This Parliament the County APPG will give even more support to Parliamentarians. During this Parliament the County APPG will provide increased support to Members of both Houses. Our County APPG Newsletter keeps members up to date with all the latest from CCN and the county world.

Over the coming period the APPG will support you with events on fair funding for counties, business rates reform, county devolution and public service reform. As key Bills come before MPs and Lords, we will provide our insight and detailed analysis on the key issues facing county authorities. And there will be opportunities to network and engage with fellow County MPs, local and national stakeholders in local government, business and public service at Parliamentary Receptions.

EVENTS



BRIEFINGS

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The Children and Social Work Bill - 2014

Background: The Children and Social Work Bill is currently in the Committee stage of the House of Commons. The main stage of the Bill will be in the Committee Stage on Wednesday 29 June.

Key Issues: The Children and Social Work Bill is designed to improve the delivery of children's services. The Children and Social Work Bill is to increase the standard of social work and improve welfare for children and young people. It will also introduce new measures which will better meet the needs of the local area and the duties of Councillors.

Key Changes:

1. The Children and Social Work Bill creates providers for the consolidate alteration of local delivered children's services, whether through delivery by a Combined Authority, or by a single authority or a group of authorities.
2. Councillors will have the opportunity to increase licensing and inspection outcomes for young people through vehicle case reviews. It is essential that any potential changes to licensing and inspection are fully understood and explained.
3. The requirement of local area A for local authority concerns on Councillor authorisation. The majority of high turnover areas and subsequent agency sector usage have been well supported by the introduction of the Local Area Agreement. The Local Area Agreement has been well supported by the introduction of the Local Area Agreement.
4. Any changes to the Local Area Agreement will be made on the basis of increased time requirements or increased costs, and must not deter existing social workers from applying for the position, or discourage those who would consider social work as a career.

Closure:
CCN welcome the increased guidance on Corporate Parenting Principle, and the extension of parental responsibility to the Local Area Agreement. The Local Area Agreement is a positive step forward, but the understanding of these further areas does not include the delivery of services to the most vulnerable children. The Local Area Agreement is a positive step forward, but the understanding of these further areas does not include the delivery of services to the most vulnerable children. The Local Area Agreement is a positive step forward, but the understanding of these further areas does not include the delivery of services to the most vulnerable children.

Closure: 4-7

We welcome the commitment to ensure academies and maintained schools are held to the same standards as other schools. We also welcome the commitment to ensure the Local Area Agreement is in the number of children in need between 2000-10-2014/15, while local authority budget have been maintained.

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The Bus Services Bill - Describing Rural and County Communities as Benefits

Background: The Bus Services Bill has been tabled by Government in the House of Lords. The next stage of the Bill will be in the Committee Stage on Wednesday 29 June. This will be a vital opportunity to review the content of the Bill.

Key Issues: County local authorities have the influence over the provision and quality of bus services in their area. Local authorities are best placed to understand the needs of their local communities and make decisions about public funding services that are important to local residents.

Key Changes: The Bus Services Bill aims to improve the delivery of bus services. New ways of financing, public transport and sustainable local travel are needed.

Key Changes: Bus franchising powers in the Bus Services Bill provide such an opportunity. These powers will allow local authorities to take control of bus services in their area, providing a better customer service and vehicle quality and put us travelling across the area - in line with the needs and demands of the local community.

Key Changes: Equality franchising would present opportunities to better align transport providers across bus, coach and rail services. This would mean that providers can offer a better service, reduce bus and coach usage in staging and decking - franchising also aims to support providers in building a strong and competitive local bus service.

Key Changes: Despite these benefits, the legislation currently states that a route must be opened to franchising if the Government decide to do so on powers, and it is unclear on what basis routes would be opened.

Key Changes: Rural and county communities need sustainable bus services as part of the wider transport system. Local bus services are a lifeline for many residents and we must find ways of making them more accessible and reliable.

Key Changes: Buses are a lifeline to rural communities - efficient public transport is of particular importance to rural areas. Local bus services are a lifeline for many residents and we must find ways of making them more accessible and reliable.

Key Changes: A well designed system can support health and social care - keeping people connected to their local communities and reducing the need for car journeys. Local bus services are a lifeline for many residents and we must find ways of making them more accessible and reliable.

Key Changes: The bus system is crucial to county economies - half of all commutes outside of London are by bus, and businesses say that well designed services in rural areas are crucial in supporting local economies. It is vital to get the right balance between giving the potential power of franchising to local authorities.

Key Changes: CCN welcomes the Bus Services Bill as a positive step forward for rural and county communities.

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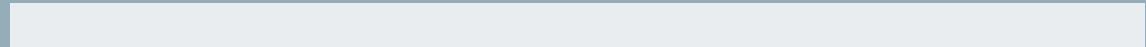
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What we do

- Facilitate dialogue between parliamentarians, Government Ministers and local stakeholders; raising issues that APPG members believe are important to such groups.
- Investigate, monitor, and report on issues relating to the implementation of relevant Government reforms which impact on county areas.
- Develop productive working relationships with other relevant All-Party Parliamentary Groups where there is a common interest in issue impacting on county areas

INQUIRY REPORTS

RECEPTIONS



NEWSLETTER



You can view the inquiry reports and campaign videos by visiting www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/appg-inquiries

- Provide a point of reference for any parliamentarian looking to understand aspects of county areas, providing a resource for research and information.
- Provide regular briefings on current challenges facing county areas and the contribution that they make to the overall national economy and well-being.
- Undertake inquiries into specific policy issues facing county areas, producing in-depth inquiry reports with practical, evidence-based recommendations.
- Host parliamentary events to discuss upcoming legislation and provide a forum for all county representatives to identify common issues.

For all resources and the activity of the APPG, visit www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/countyappg

Your County Matters Campaign

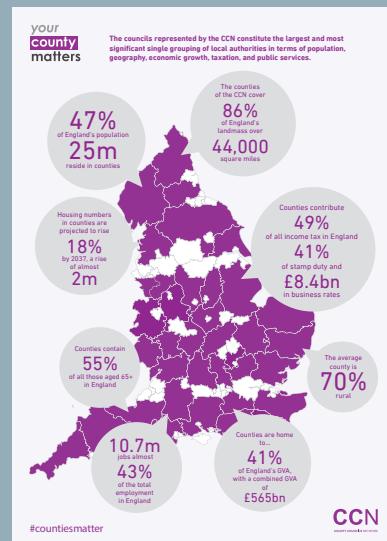
The new *Your County Matters* campaign will deliver a positive, solution-based case for county and county unitary authorities and their ability to drive real public service reform. It will emphasise how important the delivery of county services are economically and socially to our local communities.

The new Government is about to enter a period of enormous change, which will have a significant impact on counties.

The *Your County Matters* campaign will provide County MPs with a strong evidence-base to inform their work to get the best possible services for their residents, grow our economies and deliver real devolution to our areas.

Below, there are a number of resources, already available at: www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/yourcountymatters

**your
county
matters**



While CCN members do all they can to make your county work, thrive and care, they face unique challenges in delivering quality services to local residents and businesses...

**your
county
matters**

**Counties are underfunded and have witnessed
some of the biggest funding reductions...**

Grants per head are
20% lower
& over 46% less than London

Social care cash funding has
reduced 21%
between 2013-15

Counties have growing demand for life critical services...

Children's care referrals
rose 11%
against a national reduction

Demand for elderly care services
grew 8.5%
higher than all other areas

**Counties have high performing economies,
but face long-term challenges...**

Business rates income is
**£851 per head
in rural areas**
compared to £3700 in London

Counties have
**lower
productivity**
which impacts on living standards

We need to work with Government to reform the way councils are funded, ensuring fair and sustainable funding for your local area and new powers to grow our economies. This will allow us to support local economies, deliver sustainable housing growth and protect quality frontline services. This is why *Your County Matters*.

CCN
County Councils Network

To find out more visit www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/yourcountymatters

#countiesmatter

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 CCN proposals in more detail, please contact:

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Media and Communications Officer
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www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk

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