

POLICY INFORM: TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Policy Inform- January 2016

The Directorate Policy briefings will provide an overview of ongoing and recent national legislation, bills presented to Parliament, emerging policies and upcoming consultations. The Directorate Policy briefing will be produced specifically to inform Portfolio Holders and Elected Members and will be taken to Policy & Performance Committees for discussion.

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Introduction

The policy briefing paper is intended to provide Members of the Policy and Performance Committee with the latest position on emerging policy and legislative developments to support the Committee's work programme and future scrutiny work.

The following table outlines the timetable for the preparation and reporting of policy briefing papers:

Policy & Performance Committee Briefings	
July 2015	The first policy briefing will focus predominately on the Queen's Speech, which will establish the Government's legislative programme for the parliamentary year ahead.
September 2015	The second policy briefing will be produced in September and will focus on the Chancellor's July 2015 Budget Statement. The policy briefing will provide an update on policy and legislation and will consider relevant implications for Wirral.
January 2016	The third policy briefing will focus on the Autumn Statement and the Spending Review which sets out how Government money will be allocated. The policy briefing will provide an update on policy and legislation and will consider relevant implications for Wirral.
March 2016	The fourth policy briefing will focus upon the 2016 Chancellor of Exchequers Budget. The policy briefing will provide an update on policy and legislation and will consider relevant implications for Wirral.

The January policy briefing outlines the key features of the Autumn Statement and the Spending Review, which was announced on the 25th November 2015. The policy briefing also alludes to any potential implications that have been highlighted by relevant Officers for Wirral Council, and elaborates on any legislation or policy updates that have been implemented or developed since the last policy briefing in September.

The Committee may wish to identify specific policy areas to focus upon which are in line with the Committee's work programme. Detailed briefing papers can be prepared for these subject matters at the request of the Committee which would be in addition to the regular policy briefing papers outlined above.

Autumn Statement and Spending Review

25th November 2015

The Spending Review sets out how £4 trillion of government money will be allocated over the next five years. The key announcements outlined in the statement have been divided into themes:

Local Councils

- The main grant to local government will be phased out. Other sources of income such as council tax and business rates are forecast to grow in cash terms by £6.3 billion by 2019-20.
- From 2016/17 local councils will be able to add 2% to council tax bills that can be spent exclusively on adult social care in their areas. This is intended to raise £2 billion a year by 2019-20.
- From April 2016, police forces will be able to increase the amount they require from council tax collections by 2%.
- Extension of the doubling of small business rate relief (SBRR) in England for 12 months to April 2017.
- The government will allow local authorities to spend up to 100% of their fixed asset receipts (excluding Right to Buy receipts) on the revenue costs of reform projects.
- The government will deliver its commitment to a £12 billion Local Growth Fund between 2015-16 and 2020-21.

Housing

- The housing budget will be doubled to £2m a year. Stamp duty will be 3pc higher, raising almost £1b by 2020.
- 400,000 new homes by 2020.
- The right-to-buy scheme will be extended to housing association tenants, with a new pilot in five housing associations.
- A series of other schemes, including Help to Buy: Shared Ownership to help people get on the housing ladder.
- From April 2016 people purchasing additional properties will pay an extra 3% in stamp duty. Money raised will be used to help those struggling to buy their first home.
- 300,000 homes will be better protected from flooding by 2021, with £2.3 billion for over 1,500 flood defence schemes.
- A cap on the amount of rent that Housing Benefit will cover in the social sector. The reform will apply to tenancies signed after 1 April 2016, with Housing Benefit entitlement changing from 1 April 2018 onwards.

Planning, Transport and Regeneration

- Further reforms to the planning system, including establishing a new delivery test on local authorities, to ensure delivery against Local Plans.
- Support for the availability of appropriate land for housing, including by releasing public sector land with capacity for 160,000 homes.
- Support for the regeneration of previously developed brownfield sites in the green belt by allowing them to be developed in the same way as other brownfield land, providing it contributes to Starter Homes, and subject to local consultation.
- Consultation on updating the Transparency Code to require all local authorities to record details of their land and property assets in a consistent way on the government's e-PIMS.
- The Roads Investment Strategy will see £15 billion of investment.
- HS2 will go ahead.
- Commuters will soon be able to claim compensation if their train is more than 15 minutes late.

David Armstrong- Project Sponsor
for Good quality housing that meets the needs of residents

David Armstrong- Project Sponsor
for Transport and Technology Infrastructure fit for the future

Digital Government

- £1.8 billion invested in digital technology and transformation projects across the public sector.
- £450 million to support the Government Digital Service's role as the digital, data and technology centre for government.
- DCLG will work closely with the Valuation Office Agency to digitise the collection of local taxes.

Community Cohesion

- Current levels of funding for community integration programmes will be maintained. This funding will be targeted to support the recommendations of Louise Casey's review of opportunity and integration in isolated and deprived communities.

DCLG

- 20% reduction in the department's paybill, with total savings of £94 million by 2019-20.
- At least £74 million of funding for the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme.
- DCLG will operate the £12 billion Local Growth Fund.
- Continue to oversee delivery of devolution deals.

David Armstrong- Project Sponsor for Transport and Technology Infrastructure fit for the future



Arts and Sport

- Funding for museums and galleries will be maintained so they remain free to the public.
- The government will fund capital investments in culture across the country through a total of £1.6 billion by 2020-21.
- £5 million of the Northern Powerhouse investment fund will go to Manchester museum to create a new South Asia gallery in partnership with the British Museum, and £150 million to help make oyster style ticketing a reality across the whole of the North.
- The government will support the Rugby League World Cup bid for the UK in 2021 so matches can be held across the North.

Clare Fish- Project Sponsor for Leisure and Cultural Opportunities for all



Businesses

- The business budget has been slashed by 17 per cent. This is partly achieved by offering £165million of loans to companies, rather than the current grants.
- Universal rates scrapped in favour of devolving powers to local councils who will now collect 100pc of the tax, which brought in £23bn this year.
- The government is creating 26 new Enterprise Zones, including expanding 8 Zones on the current programme. These include 15 Zones in smaller towns and rural areas.
- A £400 million Northern Powerhouse investment fund will be created to help small businesses to grow.

Paula Basnett- Partner pledge led for Thriving Small Businesses

Devolution

- Councils will be allowed to cut business rates to boost growth and elected city-wide mayors allowed to raise them for specific projects.
- There will be further commitment to the Northern Powerhouse, including: investment of £13 billion on transport in the North by 2020, a range of investments in scientific research, and supporting further Northern Powerhouse trade missions to key emerging economies.
- In 2017-18 the government will devolve and reform increased funding for managing temporary accommodation, giving local authorities 'more control and flexibility'.
- In 2016 DCLG will shortly consult on changes to the local government finance system to pave the way for the implementation of 100% business rate retention. As part of these reforms, additional responsibilities will be devolved to local authorities.

Tax Credit

- The government will borrow £8 billion less than forecast – making faster progress towards eliminating the deficit.
- Because of the improvement in public finances, the £4.4 billion of proposed cuts will no longer happen.
- Tax credits are being phased out as we introduce universal credit.
- The government will propose no further changes to the universal credit taper, or to the work allowances beyond those that passed through Parliament.



Families & Childcare

- Spending levels on homelessness services will be maintained.
- £40 million will be allocated for services for victims of domestic abuse.
- Continued investment into the Troubled Families programme with the aim of better outcomes for 400,000 families by 2020.
- Doubling the free childcare entitlement- 15 hours to 30 hours a week for working families with 3 and 4 year olds from Sept 2017.
- Tax-Free Childcare from early 2017, providing up to £2,000 a year per child.
- From 2017-18 an investment of £300 million to increase the average hourly rate childcare providers receive, and at least £50 million of capital funding to create additional places in nurseries.

John Martin- Partner pledge lead for Zero Tolerance to Domestic Violence & Julia Hassall- Project Sponsor for Vulnerable children reach their full potential



Environment

- The current Energy Companies Obligation runs until March 2017. This will be replaced from April 2017 with a new cheaper energy supplier obligation to reduce carbon emissions which will run for five years. The changes will mean that on average 24 million households will save £30 a year on their energy bills from 2017.
- The Warm Home Discount scheme will also be extended to 2020-2021. This currently gives certain low-income households a one-off reduction of £140 on their electricity bill.

Our Partners:



NHS

- The NHS will become a 7-day service in primary care and in hospitals. £750 million of investment and a new national voluntary contract for GPs .
- £300 million per year will be invested in diagnostics by 2020 to fund new equipment and additional staff capacity, including 200 additional staff trained to perform endoscopies by 2018.
- £150 million will be invested in a new Dementia Research Institute .
- £4.8 billion allocated for health every year for the next 5 years. This includes funding for a shift in the way urgent and emergency care services are provided and improving out of hospital services to deliver more care closer to home. New investment of £1 billion in technology will support this transformation and integrate patient records across health and social care by 2020. Over the next 5 years, at least £500 million will be invested in building new hospitals.
- £10 billion extra a year in real terms. £6 billion of which will be delivered in 2016, particularly to mental health services.
- This will fund:
 - 800,000 more operations and treatments
 - 5.5 million more outpatient appointments
 - 2 million more diagnostic tests
 - access to GP services in the evenings and at the weekend
 - 7-day access to hospital services by 2020
 - Whilst the NHS is receiving increased funding, there is also a commitment to find a further £22 billion in efficiency savings.

John Develing- Pledge lead for Wirral Residents Live Healthier Lives



Police

- No cuts to the police budget. The government will protect overall police spending in line with inflation – an increase of £900 million by 2019-20. "The police protect us and we are going to protect the police."
- Additional funding will be provided for forces that have strong proposals to support efficiency and reform.
- The National Crime Agency's budget will also be protected in cash terms to help cut organised crime.

John Martin- Pledge lead for Zero Tolerance to Domestic Violence



Schools and Apprenticeships

- Schools funding will be protected in line with inflation. £23 billion will be invested in school buildings, creating 600,000 extra school places and 500 free schools.
- Sixth form colleges will now be able to become academies.
- Savings of £600million will be made from the education services grant that goes to local authorities as more schools become academies. - "We will make local authorities running schools a thing of the past".
- The current 'unfair' school funding system will be phased out and replaced with a new national Funding Formula from 2017.
- Funding for adult education will not be cut.
- The government will spend twice as much on apprentices- 3 million apprentices by 2020.
- A new apprentice levy of 0.5 per cent will be introduced for employers. The levy will raise £3 billion a year to fund three million apprenticeships. Less than 2% of UK employers will pay the levy.
- Maintenance loans will be available to higher education students who study part time from 2018.

John Martin- Pledge lead for Zero Tolerance to Domestic Violence

Further Analysis & Impact on Local Government and Partners

Local Government:

Funding

- There has been a £4.1 billion funding cut over this Spending Review period and this comes on top of almost £10 billion in further demand-led cost pressures facing councils by the end of the decade. Local communities will suffer as a result.
- The general government grant to local councils will be removed completely by 2020.
- Even if councils stopped filling in potholes, maintaining parks, closed all children's centres, libraries, museums, leisure centres and turned off every street light they will not have saved enough money to plug the financial black hole they face by 2020.
- The Local Government Association (LGA) warn that the spending review represents a 24% reduction in real terms to the local government grant, including the £1.5bn increase to the Better Care Fund.

Business Rates

- Retaining 100% of business rates will, nationally, add up to an estimated £26 billion. As part of the 'devolution revolution' local authorities will also be able to lower business rates to attract business investment in their area. It is hoped that this will correct the 'geographical imbalance' and encourage local authorities to become more competitive and focus their attentions on attracting private investment into their own areas.
- Changes will hit the poorest parts of the country hardest, where there are fewer businesses and taxpayers to make up for lost Whitehall grants. Rich councils will get richer at the expense of already struggling councils.

Social Care

- From 2016/17, local councils will be able to add 2% to council tax bills that can be spent exclusively on adult social care in their areas. This will go some way to allowing a number of councils to raise the money needed to offset some of the cost of social care.
- The new care precept will generate very different levels of revenue across the country, with no equalisation system planned.
- The additional Better Care Funding will not be available until 2017 leaving a shortfall to be addressed between now and 2017.

Local Growth Fund

- DCLG will operate the £12 billion Local Growth Fund, which is more than double the size of equivalent funds in the last Parliament. This will empower local communities to deliver growth by giving them greater control of public spending, allowing them to target their own priorities.
- Secretary of State for DCLG, Greg Clark: "On top of building the homes our country needs across the nation we are devolving powers to local people who know their communities best to drive jobs, nurture businesses and improve local services."

Housing

- Increased investment in schemes to help people to rent or buy has weighted in favour of private developers, at the expense of opportunities to deliver affordable social housing for communities. Tackling local housing need would also help to regenerate local economies and provide jobs and skills. ASPE argue councils are best placed to address specific local housing need.
- Under the new reform, Housing Benefit will no longer fully subsidise families to live in social houses that many working families cannot afford, and will better align the rules in the private and social rented sectors. It will also ensure that Housing Benefit costs are better controlled and will help prevent social landlords from charging inflated rent for their properties
- In areas of Wirral where the Local Housing Allowance rate for the Borough is below the rent charged by housing associations, prospective tenants, particularly those on out-of-work benefits, may be unable to fund the difference between rent and Housing Benefit. The profile of tenants may shift further away from single, younger households on lower incomes or welfare benefits. It may also have implications on the property type and financial appraisals for new-build social housing in the pipeline.

Our Partners:

NHS

- The NHS will become a 7-day service in primary care and in hospitals, this means that by 2021 everyone will be able to access GP services in the evenings and at weekends with an extra 5,000 doctors in general practice.
- An additional £600 million invested in mental health services will mean that significantly more people will have access to talking therapies every year by 2020.
- Investment into the new Dementia Research Institute will accelerate the pace of research and tackle the progression of the disease. This is the government's latest step in a long term strategy to combat dementia.
- Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt: "For doctors and nurses working harder than ever on the frontline this upfront investment means we can implement the NHS's own ambitious plan to transform services for the future." "This new money will help us finish the job."

Police

- Protecting police funding will allow forces to adapt to changing crime threats and train more firearms officers to make sure the country can be protected from terrorist threats.
- £1 billion will be spent on 4G communications for police forces and other emergency services, allowing officers to take mobile fingerprints and electronic witness statements. This will free up officers' time, saving around £1 million a day when fully operational.

Schools and Apprenticeships

- The Education Services Grant helps ensure that children are getting the education they deserve including help to provide speech, physiotherapy and occupational therapies. Last year, £815 million was spent on the ESG. The LGA say urgent clarification is needed on how the £600 million cuts will be achieved, and how quickly, without impacting on welfare and standards.
- Currently a child from a disadvantaged background in one school can receive half as much funding as a child in identical circumstances in another school. The changes to the allocation of school funding will set a national rate for each pupil, with extra funding for those with additional needs.
- Introducing a new system will mean some schools will face relative budget reductions. LGA recommend changes should be introduced in a phased way to protect these schools. Government should also allow for local discretion to be applied to take into account individual local needs.
- 250,000 students will benefit from extra loans. This will include tuition fees for students studying for higher level skills in further education, part-time students and postgraduates.

Queen's Speech 2015- Designation to Policy and Performance Committees

On Wednesday 27th May 2015, the Queen unveiled the Government's legislative plans for the year ahead. Below is a list of each individual Bill which will have implications for local government that were announced during the speech. The list identifies the Policy and Performance committee with whose remit the legislation most closely aligns:

Legislative Plans	Policy and Performance Committee
National Insurance Contributions Bill/ Finance Bill	Transformation and Resources
Full Employment and Welfare Benefits Bill	All Policy and Performance Committees
Trade Unions Bill	Transformation and Resources
Housing Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Buses Bill	Regeneration and Environment
High Speed Rail Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Childcare Bill	Families and Wellbeing
Energy Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Education and Adoption Bill	Families and Wellbeing
Enterprise Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Policing and Criminal Justice Bill	Families and Wellbeing Transformation and Resources
Draft Public Service Ombudsman Bill	Transformation and Resources
Psychoactive Substances Bill	Families and Wellbeing

Additional bills that have been announced are outlined below. These will be monitored in relation to any emerging implications for Local Government and reported to the relevant Policy and Performance Committee as appropriate.

Additional Legislative Plans
EU Referendum Bill
Scotland Bill
Immigration Bill
Extremism Bill
Investigatory Powers Bill
Charities Bill
Armed Forces Bill
Bank of England Bill
Northern Ireland (Stormont House Agreement) Bill

Wales Bill
Votes for Life Bill

The bills relevant to the Families and Wellbeing Committee are discussed in further detail below. The information provided has been sourced predominately from the LGiU, as well as SOLACE and the LGC and therefore solely represents a fact-based introduction to the bills.

Queen's Speech 2015- Developments and Implications

Draft Public Service Ombudsman Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The aim of this Bill is to reform and modernise the Public Service Ombudsman sector to provide "a more effective and accessible final tier of complaints redress within the public sector". It would absorb the functions of the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Health Ombudsman, and the Local Government Ombudsman and potentially the Housing Ombudsman.

Key Points:

- Allow the Public Service Ombudsman to absorb the functions of the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Health Ombudsman, the Local Government Ombudsman and potentially The Housing Ombudsman.
- Ensure a robust process for accountability and reporting. The new Ombudsman will be independent of Government and directly accountable to Parliament.
- Establish the relevant powers for a modern ombudsman organisation.

Further Developments:

- There are no further developments at this time. The Draft Public Service Ombudsman Bill will be kept under review and developments will be outlined in future Policy Inform briefings.

Wirral Implications:

- There are no immediate issues arising. The impact of the Bill will be procedural rather than financial or increasing duties and responsibilities on the Council.

National Insurance Contributions (Rate Ceilings) Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The Bill is designed to set a ceiling on the main and additional percentages, the secondary percentage and the upper earnings limit in relation to Class 1 national insurance contributions.

Further Developments:

- The Bill's Second Reading at the House of Lords took place on 10 November 2015. The Committee Stage of the Bill is scheduled to take place on 30 November 2015.

Wirral Implications:

- There are no direct implications for Wirral arising from this bill. This bill is mainly concerned with Income and Corporate taxation which does not apply to local authorities. There are changes to Employer's National Insurance contributions, coming into effect in April 2016, which will have a significant effect upon Wirral as an employer. These changes have already been legislated for and built into budget forecasts.

Finance Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The Bill is design to grant certain duties, to alert other duties, and to amend the law relating to the National Debt and the Public Revenue, and to make further provisions in connection with finance.

Further Developments:

- Following agreement by both Houses on the text of the Bill it received Royal Assent on 18 November 2015. The Bill is now an Act of Parliament.

Wirral Implications:

- There are no direct implications for Wirral arising from this bill.

Policing and Criminal Justice Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- This legislation is intended to continue the reform of policing with the aim of enhancing protections for vulnerable people

Key Points:

- The Bill would ensure 17 years olds who are detained in police custody are treated as children for all purposes under PACE.
- In particular, the amendments to the provisions of PACE concerning 17 year olds include:
 - Ensuring an appropriate adult is present for drug sample taking;
 - Ensuring appropriate consent is granted by both the 17 year old and parent/ legal guardian for a range of interventions, including intimate searches; and
 - The ability to impose conditional bail to ensure the welfare and interests of the 17 year old.
- Reforming legislation in relation to the detention of people under sections 135 and 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 to ensure better outcomes for those experiencing a mental health crisis.
 - Prohibiting the use of police cells as places of safety for those under 18 years of age and further reducing their use in the case of adults;
 - Reducing the current 72 hour maximum period of detention; and
 - Extending the power to detain under section 136 to any place other than a private residence.

Further Developments:

- There are no further developments at this time. The Policing and Criminal Bill will be kept under review and developments will be outlined in future Policy Inform briefings.

Wirral Implications:

- **Appropriate Adult Provision-** The Youth Offending service is in support of this change and we have been anticipating it for over a year. For many years 17 year olds have not been treated as Youths in the Police custody suite / Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) arena, which is inconsistent with other youth justice parameters. Therefore this change supports and recognises 17 years olds as still being youths and not adults during PACE interviews, processing and charging stages of detention.

Our **Appropriate Adult** (AA) services are already in place and will accommodate this wider age group. YOS provides this service by day and EDT by night. This may involve an increase in workload, however some 17 year olds who are detained in custody can be deemed to be Vulnerable Adults and the existing AA service covers youths and vulnerable adults anyway, so the increased workload may not be large.

We will monitor any increase in use of AA in respect of 17 years olds but this extension of age group now represents the same 10-18 year age group YOS and the youth courts accommodate, so this is more in line and consistent with other such youth justice services.

Wirral Implications Continued:

•**Identification of Accommodation for those Young People detained-** The Merseyside Criminal Justice Board **Youth Detention Protocol** may also need to include 17 year olds and this may have an impact on the requirements for Local Authorities to find accommodation for 17 year olds who have been refused Police Bail and the LA has a duty to accommodate them. The compliance of this protocol is monitored by the Police Crime Commissioner and the existing Policy may change to include 17 years olds, and this would then have an impact on CYPS Specialist Services and demands to accommodate 17 year olds at short notice who have been refused Bail. I have attached the existing protocol as this currently only covers 10-16 year olds but maybe amended.

High Speed Rail Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The aim of this Bill is to provide the Government with the legal powers to construct and operate phase 1 of the High Speed 2 (HS2) railway.

Key Points:

- Give the Government deemed planning permission for the railway between London and the West Midlands.
- Give the Government compulsory purchase powers and the power to temporarily take possession of land required to construct and operate the railway.
- Help rebalance the UK economy and free up space on the UK rail network, improving connections between London, the Midlands, the North and Scotland.

Further Developments:

- Further updates on plans to bring forward the timescales for High Speed (HS) 2 were recently announced by the Chancellor, George Osborne, in his Spending Review and Autumn Statement on the 25th November. Construction of HS2 will now begin in the current parliament, with the route expected to open from London to Birmingham in 2026 and to Leeds and Manchester by 2033.
- Shortly before the summer recess, the Committee rejected calls for the line to be placed in a tunnel across the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. HS2 Ltd wrote to the Committee in October, setting out a package of measures which they believe provides substantial noise mitigation for Wendover. If supported by the Committee, these changes are likely to be brought forward as part of amendments to the Bill in December.
- The Committee has also rejected calls from the London Borough of Hillingdon for a tunnel in the Colne Valley in place of the viaduct which is currently proposed.
- In September, the Government published amendments to the Hybrid Bill, Additional Provision no.3 (AP3), which remove the HS2-HS1 link from the Bill and set out revised proposals for Euston. These include the construction of 11 new high-speed platforms on the western side of the station.
- These plans were heavily criticised by Camden Council, they argue that the plan gives no guarantees on timescales or funding for a full development of the station in the future.
- It has subsequently been reported that the work at Euston would require a six year closure of one lane in either direction on the A400 Euston Road. In its most recent petition, Camden calls for HS2 to temporarily terminate at Old Oak Common to allow more time to get the design of Euston Station right. HS2 Ltd has responded by stating that it is their intention to maximise the full benefits of the new railway from the outset and that the AP3 proposals for Euston should be supported as they are the result of over several years of detailed work.

Further Developments Continued:

- Euston Action Group have proposed locating the main HS2 terminus at Old Oak Common with a link to Euston for a few HS2 trains using a link to the West Coast mainline in the vicinity of Queens Park. The petition argues that this route would be cheaper and less disruptive than the Hybrid Bill scheme. HS2 Ltd argue that this would not be viable. The Committee will start hearing evidence relating to Euston at the end of November.

Wirral Implications:

- The passing of this Bill confirms the start of the construction of Phase 1 of HS2. The significant investment in infrastructure should unlock growth but ensuring that these benefits are fully realised within the city region will require the progression of HS3 linking the key cities across the north including Liverpool.

Trade Union Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The aim of this bill is to bring forward legislation to reform trade unions to ensure hardworking people are not disrupted by little-supported strike action and to pursue the Governments ambition to become the most prosperous major economy in the world by 2030.

Key Points:

- Introduction of a 50% voting threshold for union ballots turnouts (and retain the requirement for there to be a simple majority of votes in favour).
- In addition to the 50% minimum voting turnout threshold, introduction of a requirement that 40% of those entitled to vote must vote in favour of industrial action in certain essential public services (health, education, fire, transport).
- Tackling intimidation of non-striking workers during a strike.
- Introduction of a transparent opt-in process for the political fund element of trade unions subscriptions. This will reflect the existing practice in Northern Ireland.
- Introduction of time limits on a mandate following a ballot for industrial action.
- Making changes to the role of the Certification Officer

Further Developments:

- The Trade Union Bill had its first reading in the House of Lords on 11 November 2015. The second reading is yet to be scheduled.

Wirral Implications:

- The main implication for the Council is the ceasing of employer 'check off' facilities. We expect this means that we will no longer be able to offer the facility to deduct trade union subscriptions from Payroll. However, it is not yet clear what the specific requirement of the bill will be in relation to this. The legislation also places requirements on trade unions to meet certain conditions before industrial action is taken. There are no implications for the Council as an employer directly from those aspects'

Welfare Reform and Work Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The overriding aim of the Bill is to reduce expenditure and “help to achieve a more sustainable welfare system.” A related aim is to support efforts to increase employment and “support the policy of rewarding hard work while increasing fairness with working households.”

Key Points:

- It is essentially a Bill of three parts. First, it will introduce a duty to report to Parliament on:
 - Progress towards achieving full employment.
 - Progress towards achieving 3 million apprenticeships in England.
 - Progress with the Troubled Families programme (England).
- Second, it will repeal almost all of the Child Poverty Act 2010 and introduce a new duty for the Secretary of State to report annually on “life chances”: children living in workless households and educational attainment at age 16, in England.
- Finally, the Bill allows for the introduction of extensive changes to welfare benefits, tax credits and social housing rent levels. These will account for around 70% of the £12-13 billion in welfare savings identified in the Summer Budget 2015. The welfare/housing measures include:
 - Lowering the benefit cap threshold and varying it between London and the rest of the UK.
 - A four year benefits freeze.
 - Limiting support through Child Tax Credits/Universal Credit.
 - The abolition of Employment and Support Allowance Work-Related Activity Component.
 - Changes to conditionality for responsible carers under Universal Credit.
 - Replacing Support for Mortgage Interest with Loans for Mortgage Interest.
 - Reducing social housing rent levels by 1% in each year for four years from 2016-17.

Further Developments:

- A number of changes were made to the Welfare Reform and Work Bill at report stage. The Bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons on Tuesday, 27 October 2015. The Bill had its second reading in the House of Lords on 17 November. The committee stage is scheduled to begin on 2 December.

Wirral Implications:

- **Freeze Working Age Benefits** - This will impact on household disposable income, not previously frozen albeit uprating has been nominal 2013/14. This will potentially increase the strain on Wirral’s Council Tax Support, Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP), Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) schemes, as more people apply; more people become entitled to support. With consequential harder to collect charges, key revenue streams such as Council Tax, charges in respect of adult social care, Benefits overpayments will be detrimentally affected. Rent arrears locally are expected to increase as with all cuts and will continue at least whilst (social) landlords maintain rent levels and annual increases in lieu on the 12% target reduction by 2020-21.

Wirral Implications Continued:

- This will increase pressure on LA Housing Benefit services from Social Landlords which is evident already via the rent shortfall in Bedroom Tax and insufficient DHP. The recent judgement at the Upper Tier Tribunal, supporting the DWP position in Social Sector Size Criteria cases confirms that the activity to reduce the impacts of this reform have ultimately had little effect on a case by case basis at local level. In the private sector is may see a freezing of Local Housing Allowance rates which will give Private sector landlords further issue with taking on tenants who rely on HB. This is likely to have a consequential impact on the levels of people being threatened with homelessness in the Borough.
- **Cutting Household Benefit Cap-** This will certainly impact locally, regrettably we cannot identify how many within present caseload will be affected, nor by how much in monetary terms on a weekly basis, as DWP consider circumstances of household benefits in payment that LA are unable to identify from records held. The Percentage reduction to the total maximum in Benefits that can be paid are relatively high, with the maximum for couples reducing from 26k per annum and for a single claimants reducing from 20k to £13,400. The LA's HB service administers the Cap not the DWP who advise us of each situation. There are currently 60 cases live (but cases go on and off and DWP projected our numbers would be 130). The change would bring some case with a consequential impact on resources, both front and back of house. Those affected would have an increased reliance on other means of support, financial, Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP – annual cash limited budget) or the Local Welfare Assistance potentially (LW – finite residual budget as scheme no longer nationally funded). Likely impact will see increased problems for those in temporary accommodation with large families and again, for LA, placing the homeless or those at risk etc., then reliance on the limited discretionary schemes (DHP).
- **General Issues for Wirral/Benefits Service-** As a consequence of these changes, as impacts emerge, which will be ongoing, there will be a need to make provision for continued review of local schemes and policies with an increased reliance on any discretion the authority can, within its local policies and resources, exercise (again for example its LWA/DHP fund). The definition of 'vulnerable' will need review given the ratio of those reasonable deemed to be vulnerable which are those financially at risk, including dispossession. This will impact on key grant limited local schemes such as Council Tax Support Scheme which currently awards £27m pa in respect of 35, 230 recipients. This will provide a significant challenge for officers reviewing the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2016/17 onwards and will see collection issues increase as more people face difficulty paying, coupled with more strain on the scheme impacting on its capacity and ultimately having their national benefits reduced at source to pay Council Tax. Many people will be affected by more than one of the reforms outlined, which will present complexities, uncertainly and increased need for advocacy and advice, particularly if we are to ensure that their income, often translating to the Wirral Pound, is to be maximised. Broadly we can expect from these changes increased contact to service, both front facing public contact and back of house processing (including the Welfare Right Unit) and decision making services with an increased need and reliance on knowledgeable, experience, skilled resources, ensuring accessibility, thereby support where at all possible anti-poverty measures.

Wirral Implications Continued:

- **Remove Housing Benefit from Young People-** 18-21 year olds, this will see more remain at home where it may not be appropriate to do so which will see issues for householder with Housing Benefits non dependant charges being applied and more rent to pay (as adult is meant to contribute as resident). These cases which will increase provide issues for the LA with collection of information and provision of evidence of household occupants. There is also a risk of young people going missing from benefit record, with difficulties operationally in determining their primary place of residence which will be key given the increasing drive of the DWP to reduce level of error and fraud within Welfare Benefits.

The Draft Investigatory Powers Bill, 2015

Synopsis and Key Points

- The Bill seeks to collate all new rules concerning government surveillance powers under a single law. This includes:
 - The ability to retrain and acquire communications data to be used as evidence in court and to advance investigations;
 - The ability to intercept the contents of communications in order to acquire sensitive intelligence to tackle terrorist's plots and serious and organised crimes;
 - The use of equipment interference powers to obtain data covertly from computers;
 - And the use of these powers by the security and intelligence agencies in bulk to identify the most serious threats to the UK from overseas and to rapidly establish links between suspects in the UK

Further Developments

- The Draft Bill was introduced to Parliament by Home Secretary Theresa May on 4 November. The bill will be subject to scrutiny by a Joint Committee of Parliament before proceeding further. The Committee will seek views and submission from the public. Current proposals include:
 - Oversight**
 - The work of the Interception of Communications Commissioner, the Chief Surveillance Commissioner and the Intelligence Service Commissioner will be brought together under a single investigatory Powers Commissioner (IPC).
 - The IPC will be a senior Judge. S/he will be supported by a team of Judicial Commissioners, who will also be former or serving High Court Judges. They will authorise the use of investigatory powers, audit compliance, undertake investigations and inform Parliament and the public about the need for, and use of investigatory powers.
 - Interception**
 - The right to intercept information will be limited to the nine agencies currently authorised to carry it out – these include the Armed Forces, intelligence agencies and a small number of law enforcement bodies, but no local authorities. Warrants will only be issued in the interests of national security; for the prevention and detection of serious crime; or in the interests of the economic well-being (EWB) of the United Kingdom where it is connected to national security.
 - Currently warrants have to be authorised by the Secretary of State or Scottish Minister. In future they will also have to be authorised by a Judicial Commissioner.
 - The Investigatory Powers Commissioner will oversee and audit the work of the nine agencies in this regard and publish his/her findings.

•Communication data

- At present Communication Service Providers can be required to retain communication data for up to a year. This includes information on when, how and with whom a person communicated, rather than what was said.
- In future rules governing retention of communication data will be brought together under one act
- The definition of communication data will be widened
- There will be a new offer of 'wilfully and recklessly acquiring communications data
- A Single Point of Contact (SPoC) for each of the designated security and intelligence agencies will channel requests to Communication Service Providers, to ensure requests are proportionate and consistent. A Designated Person, independent of the investigation, will sign off requests.
- Communication Service Providers will be required to retain Communication Data Records – not the data itself, or a person's browsing but details of services a device has accessed, for a maximum of 12 months.
- The process will be overseen by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner

•Equipment Interference

- The Draft Bill introduces a specific legal regime for agencies who wish to interfere with electronic equipment in order to obtain communication data. Interference with electronic equipment can reveal what was said, as well as who, when and where the person communicated with
- The nine designated agencies will have to make a specific request to intercept equipment and will not be able to use other powers
- Equipment interference will only be permissible to prevent serious crime
- A Judicial Commissioner will be required to authorise warrants, in addition to the Secretary of State and a Chief Constable, as at present.

•Bulk Personal Datasets

- These are datasets containing information about large groups of people. Examples include the electoral roll or telephone directory.
- At present these may be obtained from public or private bodies by the Intelligence and Security Services.
- The Secretary of State and Judicial Commissioner will have to approve warrants for a class of information. These will last up to six months. If the Security and Intelligence service require information that falls outside these classes, a separate warrant will have to be obtained and approved.

•Obligations on Communications Service Providers

- The draft bill brings together all existing obligations on Communication Service Providers.
- The Government will issue notices to Communication Service Providers detailing the information they should retain. However this will only be accessed with a warrant.
- Appeal routes will be strengthened.
- For overseas companies, enforcement will be limited to communication data acquisition and (targeted and bulk) interception powers only. The courts will have to take into account any potential conflict of laws.
- A separate code of practice will outline how security services obtain, store, and dispose communication data.
- The Investigatory Powers Commissioner will oversee this process.

How will this effect the Wirral?

- The Investigatory Powers Act will allow local authorities to retain some investigative powers, such as surveillance of those suspected of benefit fraud, but they will not be able to access internet connection data

Policy Developments

Briefing: Re-use of public sector information

This briefing looks at new regulations that came into force in July 2015 that will make obtaining public bodies information for re-use easier. Since 2005 public bodies have been encouraged to make information available for re-use; most public bodies are now required to make information available for re-use.

Under new regulations public bodies are required to:

- Make information available at marginal cost.
- Establish an internal complaint procedure and deal with complaints within a “reasonable time”.
- Escalate any unresolved complaints to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) and in specific circumstances to the First-tier Tribunal.

Regulations have now been extended to include public sector museums, libraries and archives. These bodies are not required to permit re-use, but may choose to do so.

Source: [Mark Upton, Briefing: Re-use of public sector information, LGiU, 17th September 2015](#)

Briefing: Managing provider failure – National Audit Office

The National Audit Office (NAO) explores the principles Whitehall departments should use to manage service provider failure and how this is relevant to commissioning across the public sector, including local government.

Service provider failure can have serious consequences which must be managed effectively; though provider failure should not be avoided, it can be the necessary price of innovation and effective competition.

Managing failure requires prior planning to minimise negative impact and swift action to respond to changing external pressures. Planning starts with deciding how a service will be provided and is informed by how much risk of failure is to be tolerated. It is recognised that the political implications of failure will be of particular importance in the context of local government.

Commissioner’s appetite for failure may change over time as priorities and delivery environments change. What is considered to be failure is also likely to change over time. Plans for managing failure may therefore have to be continuously reviewed and updated.

The NAO observe that in central government, while failure regimes have often been established there have been very few occasions when government has allowed providers to actually fail.

Source: [Mark Upton, Briefing: Managing provider failure – National Audit Office, LGiU, 5th October 2015](#)

Briefing: Income generation – general: a policy in practice briefing

This briefing is the first of a pair of briefings on how local authorities are generating income to fund services, the first focusing on bringing money in for revenue services.

Due to cuts in government grants, local government is set to face a funding gap of £9.5 to 10 billion by 2020. Alongside this are constraints on council tax rates and rising demand. Local government's current financial position is 'unsustainable without radical change'.

The briefing draws on the most recent Revenue Outturn (RO) data from 2013-14 to illustrate areas where Councils could generate additional income.

Following the introduction of Business Rate Retention and the New Homes Bonus, Councils can generate income by facilitating housebuilding and helping to increase their business rates base. Specific examples of how Councils have done this are provided.

A number of ways in which service income can be generated, other than through charging and trading are identified. These include:

- Providing staff to other councils and partner organisations.
- Capital investment in cultural and recreational assets.
- Working with partners to build for private rental.
- Turning waste into revenue.

Source: [Alan Weaver and Tom Lawrence, Briefing: Income generation – general: a policy in practice briefing, LGiU, 13th October 2015](#)

Briefing: Income generation – Charging & Trading: policy in practice briefing

This is the second of a pair of briefings on how local authorities are generating income to fund services. This briefing focuses on commercial approaches to generating income, in particular the use of charging and trading.

The current financial position of local government is 'unsustainable'. Commercial approaches are becoming increasingly important in helping councils to generate income.

It is said that income generation from commercial activity now plays a role in the vast majority of councils' 2015/16 budgets. Examples of authorities who have taken such 'corporate' commercial approaches are highlighted.

The briefing explores good practice surrounding charging, local authority charging arrangements and lessons to be learnt from these.

Examples of innovative and experienced local authority trading organisations are also highlighted. The challenges presented by trading are outlined and key lessons and guidance for local authorities are provided.

Source: [Tom Lawrence and Alan Weaver, Briefing: Income generation – Charging & Trading: policy in practice briefing, LGiU, 14th October 2015](#)

Briefing: The National Living Wage and Tax and Benefits Changes: Economic and Distributional Impacts

This briefing deals with the likely economic impacts of the National Living Wage (NLW) and the combined distributional impacts of the NLW, benefits cuts, and tax changes announced in the July 2015 Budget.

Despite the defeat of the relevant regulations for tax credits in the House of Lords, this briefing remains relevant first because it was the distributional implications of the July Budget that prompted the Lords' opposition and second because the analyses presented will help in the assessment of further changes to be announced in the Autumn Statement.

There is considerable uncertainty about the economic impacts of the NLW; however, the central forecasts produced by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) suggest that the macroeconomic effects will be small.

The Resolution Foundation calculates that the largest rises in the wage bill as a result of the NLW will be in the catering, cleaning, hotels, residential care, and retail sectors.

Estimating the distributional impacts of the combined tax and benefit changes and the NLW is complex because of the wide variation in work and family circumstances across households. However, it is clear that the cumulative effect of this re-distribution is regressive; some types of working families will lose substantially.

Source: [Andrew Jones, Briefing: The National Living Wage and Tax and Benefits Changes: Economic and Distributional Impacts, LGiU, 27th October 2015](#)

Briefing: The National Living Wage and Tax Benefits Change: Economic and Distributional Impacts

This briefing deals with the likely economic impacts of the National Living Wage (NLW) and with the combined distributional impacts of the NLW, benefit cuts, and tax changes announced in the July 2015 Budget.

The briefing draws in particular on commentary and analyses produced by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), the Resolution Foundation, and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF).

There is considerable uncertainty about the economic impacts of the NLW; however, the central forecasts produced by the OBR suggests that the macroeconomic economic effects will be small; they include an increase in unemployment of 60,000 by 2020 beyond that in the absence of the NLW, and a small reduction of 0.1 per cent in GDP by 2020.

The Resolution Foundation calculated that the largest rises in the wage bill as a result of the NLW will be in catering, cleaning, hotels, residential care, and retail sectors.

Estimating the distributional impacts of the combined tax and benefit changes and the NLW announced in the July Budget is complex because of the wide variation in work and family circumstances across households.

Source: [Andrew Jones. Briefing: The National Living Wage and Tax Benefit Change: Economic and Distributional Impacts. LGiU. 27th October 2015](#)

Briefing: Scotland and England: local government devolution – lessons and issues

The briefing seeks to describe the 2010-15 ‘devolution story’ in England, its prospective developments over 2015-20, and potential implications and insight the might provide for Scottish LAs. It also considers the case for further collaboration between England and Scottish LAs to progress shared ambitions and address shared concerns.

Overall, the paper argues that English LAs now have a very full ‘menu’ of devolution options that they may choose to pursue. However, the outcomes of these pursuits, and indeed the preconditions for enhanced devolution success, remain fragile and problematic.

The Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal, and three further recent Scottish city-anchored ‘devo-deal’ proposals mean that Scottish LAs are now major players in the process. The case for understanding and learning from English experience, and for inter-LA collaboration is strong – both for the four ‘deal’ areas and for those outside the deals. The challenge may be mediating and resourcing purposeful and sustained exercise.

Source: [David Marlow. Briefing: Scotland and England: local government devolution – lessons and issues. LGiU. 29th October 2015.](#)

Briefing: Business Rates Devolution

On 5th October 2015, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a forthcoming package of reforms to business rates and local authority funding. There will be a move to local government retaining

100% business rate collected by 2020, with an end to Revenue Support Grant. Also, there will be changes to the rate at which tax is levied. LAs will be able to cut rates as much as they like. Directly elected mayors will be able to add a premium to businesses to pay for infrastructure - subject to a vote on the Local Enterprise Partnership.

A related announcement was made by the Deputy First Minister of the Scottish Government on the 16th October. This stated that Scottish LAs will be able to lower rates bill for business in their area from October 31, based on a criteria they choose, such as the type of property, its location, occupation or activity.

This briefing sets this announcement in context of legislation on Business Rate Supplements and Business Rate Reliefs and recent and current reviews of the business rates system. It reproduces the relevant excerpts on the announcement from the Chancellor's speech and comments on them.

Source: [Tom Lawrence, Briefing: Business Rates Devolution, November 4th 2015](#)

Briefing: The English Indices of Deprivation 2015

The latest Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for England was released on 30 September 2015.

The IMD is a huge dataset, ranging across the domains of employment, income, health, crime, environment, education, and skills, and housing and access to services; these various domains are combined to create various composite indicators. The IMD can be used at neighbourhood level or for a local authority area as a whole.

This briefing sets out the background and methodology of the IMD and presents a selection of results.

A preliminary analysis indicates a persistence of deprivation in parts of the north and midlands and parts of London, although London appears to be improving in relative terms; there appears to have been some deterioration in the position of some coastal areas.

Data produced from the IMD is of crucial importance for planning, targeting resources, and preparing funding bids.

Source: [Andrew Jones, Briefing: The English Indices of Deprivation 2015, LGiU, 12th November 2015](#)

Briefing: Work and Pensions Committee Report: A Reconsideration of Tax Credit Cuts

This report, by the Work and Pensions Committee (WPC), is the result of an inquiry into the changes to Tax Credits proposed in the July 2015 budget.

In particular, the WPC investigated the likely impacts on household incomes of proposals to reduce the earnings threshold for Tax Credits and raise the rate at which Tax Credits are withdrawn as income rises; these proposals are examined alongside any compensatory effects of a higher National Living Wage, a higher personal income tax threshold, and an extension of free child care.

The WPC argue that the proposed changes to Tax Credits will result in very substantial cuts to the incomes of working families which will not be fully compensated for by the other measures announced in the July Budget.

The report also considers possible ways of mitigating the impacts of the cuts to Tax Credits; it concludes that altering the income threshold or the rate at which income is withdrawn cannot simultaneously meet the objectives of protecting the incomes of low income households, maintaining work incentives, or reducing expenditure.

The report concludes by suggesting that a limit has been reached to cuts in working age benefits and states an intention to investigate the generational balance of welfare expenditure over the course of this Parliament.

Source: [Andrew Jones, Briefing: Work and Pensions Committee Report: A Reconsideration of Tax Credit Cuts, LGiU, 19th November 2015](#)

Briefing: High Speed Rail Update: Autumn 2015

This briefing reports on recent key developments on the HS2 project and other related activities. It includes details of the interim evaluation report for HS1, published in October 2015, focusing particularly on the section of the report which deals with the local economic impacts.

The briefing also reports on progress on the HS2 Hybrid Bill. This includes recent developments relating to the route in Chilterns and proposals for Euston Station. A brief overview of other recent developments relating to HS2 and HS3, the proposed east-west high-speed rail link, is provided.

Opponents of the scheme continue to highlight concerns about the project, focusing particularly on reports of the spiralling costs. However, it is pointed out that with the Government having recently begun the process of appointing companies to construct HS2, they are clearly determined to press ahead with the project.

Source: [Ruth Bradshaw, Briefing: High Speed Rail Update: Autumn 2015, LGiU, 24th November 2015](#)

Briefing: Preventing Violent Extremism

The briefing summarises the Counter Extremism Strategy, launched by the Government on the 19th October 2015. The strategy assess threat from extremists, outlining the Government's strategic response and sets out proposals for challenging extremist ideology and disrupting terrorist activity through strengthened partnership working and community cohesion.

The strategy argues that British values such as respect for democracy and the rule of law have evolved over centuries in response to the damage and bloodshed caused by religious intolerance and discrimination. The strategy also outlines concerns regarding the separation of some communities; the adoption of harmful and illegal practices like Female Genital Mutilation; and alternative judicial processes such as Sharia councils which have been known to restrict women's right to divorce and protected violent male partners.

In response the Government will:

- Counter extremist ideology
- Work in partnership with organisations that are against extremism
- Disrupting extremists
- Building Cohesive Communities

[Source: Rachel Salmon, Briefing: Preventing Violent Extremism, LGiU, 25th November 2015.](#)

Briefing: Impact of funding reductions on fire and rescue services – NAO report

The briefing summarises the 'Impact of the funding reductions on fire and services' report published by the National Audit Office. The report examines the comparative patterns of change in income, spending and financial and service sustainability across fire and rescue authorities since 2010-11.

Fire and Rescue authorities have absorbed reductions to their funding ranging from 26% to 39% since 2010-11, while maintaining the long-term downward trend in fire casualties. However, some are beginning to experience greater challenges. But while improvements to reducing casualties are slowing down in some areas, the NAO did not find a correlation between casualties' figures and funding reductions.

The report complements, and coincides with the publication of a separate the NAO's value-for-money report on the approach taken by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to fire and rescue authority funding. A separate LGiU member briefing on that particular report will be published shortly.

[Source: Mark Upton, Briefing: Impact of funding reductions on fire and rescue services – NAO report](#)

Useful Sources

Autumn Statement and Spending Review

Key Announcements:

[Chancellor George Osborne's Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015, Government website, speech, 25th November 2015](#) – *Full speech*

[Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015: key announcements, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Key announcements emerging from the statement*

[Department of Health's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the spending review for the Department of Health*

Briefing: Autumn Statement and spending review 2015, APSE, November 2015 – *Analysis of the Autumn Statement and Spending Review and the impact local council frontline services*

[Department for Education's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the spending review for the Department for Education*

[Department for Communities and Local Government's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the Spending Review for DCLG*

[Lauren Lucas, Briefing: The Spending Review and Autumn Statement, LGiU, 25th November 2015](#) – *Key points emerging from the statement*

Further Analysis and Impact on Local Government and Partners:

[LGA Responds to 2015 Spending Review, Lord Porter, Chairman of the Local Government Association, 25th November 2015](#) – *LGA response to the spending review*

[Home Office's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the spending review for the Home Office*

[Department of Health's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the spending review for the Department of Health*

[LGA responds to Education Services Grant announcement, Cllr Roy Perry, Chairman of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, 26th November 2015](#) – *Outlines the Education Services Grant announcement and highlights concerns*

Briefing: Autumn Statement and spending review 2015, APSE, November 2015 – *Analysis of the Autumn Statement and Spending Review and the impact local council frontline services*

[LGA responds to national schools funding announcement in Spending Review, LGA, 26th November 2015](#) – *Brief outline of the impact of the new national funding formula*

[Laura Sharman, Spending Review: Warning that councils at financial tipping point, LocalGov, 26th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the Spending Review for council budgets and services*

[William Eichler, Spending Review: Local authorities to retain 100% of business rates, LocalGov, 25th November 2015](#) – *Outlines Business Rates Retention for councils*

[Department for Communities and Local Government's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the Spending Review for DCLG*

Draft Public Service Ombudsman Bill

There are no further developments at this time. The Draft Public Service Ombudsman Bill will be kept under review and developments will be outlined in future Policy Inform briefings.

National Insurance Contributions (Rate Ceilings) Bill

[National Insurance Contributions \(Rate Ceilings\) Bill, Parliamentary website](#) - *Previous debates on all stages of the National Insurance Contributions (Rate Ceilings) Bill and any latest updates*

Finance Bill

[Finance Bill, Parliamentary website](#) - *Previous debates on all stages of the Finance Bill and any latest updates*

Policing and Criminal Justice Bill

There are no further developments at this time. The Policing and Criminal Justice Bill will be kept under review and developments will be outlined in future Policy Inform briefings.

High Speed Rail Bill

[High Speed Rail Bill, Parliamentary Website](#) - *Brief analysis of the High Speed Rail Bill*

[Ruth Bradshaw, High Speed Rail Update: Summer 2015, LGiU, 23rd July 2015](#) – *Update on key developments and other related proposals since April 2015.*

[Ruth Bradshaw, High Speed Rail Update: Autumn 2015, LGiU, 24th November 2015](#) – *Update on key developments and other related activities since July 2015*

Welfare Reform and Work Bill

[House of Commons, Briefing Paper- Welfare Reform and Work Bill, 16th July 2015](#) – *Brief analysis of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill*

[Welfare Reform and Work Bill, Parliamentary website](#) - *Previous debates on all stages of the Childcare Bill and any latest updates*

[Andrew Jones, The Welfare Reform and Work Bill: Welfare Reform Update, 20th August 2015](#) – *Brief overview of the Bill and any latest updates*