

# **State of Local Government Finance Survey 2019**

**Published 14th February 2019**

**LGiU THE MJ**

## About the State of Local Government Finance Survey

LGiU and The MJ have run the State of Local Government Finance Survey every January since 2012 to coincide with councils setting their annual budgets. The results give a snapshot of the key pressures facing councils and the impact of ongoing financial uncertainty on their communities.

The survey was sent to senior decision-makers at each of England's 353 councils (Council Leaders, Chief Executives, Cabinet Members for Finance/Resources and Directors of Finance/Resources) between 9th January and 5th February 2019.

This year we received 158 responses from 123 individual councils, meaning that over a third of English councils are represented in the results. We received responses from a broad cross-section of councils, encompassing county, district and unitary authorities, a mixture of political control, and all regions.

The survey questions covered topics including income sources, confidence, service level spending and public trust.

## Executive Summary

Eight in ten (**80%**) councils say they are not confident in the sustainability of local government finance; none said they were 'very confident'.

**97%** of councils plan to increase council tax in 2019-20, three quarters by more than 2.5% (the maximum increase without a referendum is 3% in most places).

Over half of councils (**53%**) plan to dip into their reserves this year. Worryingly, **40%** of councils plan to use their reserves two years running.

**97%** of councils are planning to increase fees and charges in the coming year, with some planning rate rises of more than 5% (**13%** of councils).

Almost one in ten (**9%**) councils are anticipating legal challenges this year due to reductions in service provision and over half (**53%**) of councils said that the current financial situation in local government is negatively affecting their relationship with citizens.

**84%** of councils say it is a high priority or essential to explore other sources of income. Eight in ten (**82%**) councils are considering commercialising council services to raise extra money and over half (**57%**) want to sell off council assets.

Children's Services and Education is the top immediate financial pressure for the second year running (**36%** of councils), ahead of Adult Social Care (**23%**) which has historically ranked highest. However Adult Social Care is still under severe strain, being named as the top longterm financial pressure (**37%** of councils).

Councils will be forced to cut many community services this year, with reduced activity expected across libraries (**32%** of councils), arts and culture (**46%**), parks and leisure (**45%**), waste collection (**22%**), recycling (**11%**) and roads (**38%**).

Services for vulnerable people are not immune, with councils also planning to reduce activity in Adult Social Care (**29%**), Children's Care Services (**24%**), special education and disability support (**16%**), homelessness support (**11%**) and funding for local Citizens Advice Bureaux (**18%**).

## Forewords

### **Jonathan Carr-West, Chief Executive of LGiU**



Uncertainty piled upon uncertainty: we have been running this annual survey with the MJ since 2012. We know that council funding is broken. Eight out of 10 of those people leading English local government tell us it is unsustainable.

This year we see that we are no closer to finding a solution. Councils are making do by increasing council tax as much as they can, increasing charging and dipping in to their reserves. And even with these desperate measures they are having to reduce spending; not just on vital place-shaping services like leisure, libraries and parks but in core life-saving areas like social care and children's services.

Now more than ever we need a thriving, resilient local government sector to weather the storm of national uncertainty, but years of chronic underfunding has left local government on life support.

So we urgently need a bigger debate about how and at what level we fund vital local services.

We hope this survey provides a starting point for that conversation.

### **Heather Jameson, Editor of The MJ**



After nearly a decade of austerity, councils have been cut to their very core. With one in three councils delivering just the bare minimum services, local people – and our places – will start to suffer.

Council tax is rising and people are seeing very little return on their money – it is no surprise they expect better services but the finances just don't stack up.

Local government will be central to rebuilding the economy after Brexit. Councils are key in the Government's plans to tackle the housing crisis. They are responsible for caring for our elderly and for vulnerable children – yet the Government is hollowing out their capacity with a lack of funding.

If our communities are to survive, central government needs to rethink its funding, fast. The people in our communities deserve more.

## Introduction

The annual State of Local Government Finance Survey gives a snapshot of the pressures facing councils. We ask the most senior figures in each council to tell us their plans for the coming year in the run-up to setting their annual budget. This year 158 council leaders, chief executives, cabinet members for finance and finance directors took part, representing over a third of all English councils.

The results help us to assess the impact of policies and highlight areas that are of current or future concern. As an independent, cross-party membership body we hope to bring together the voice of the sector and contribute to the strength of our local democracy.

## What's happening in local government?

Local government is responsible for a dizzying array of essential community services, visible and invisible, universal and targeted – from care homes to business support, potholes to social services, education to leisure centres. But if you ask the average person on the street what their council does, they'll likely reply, 'Collecting my bin.'

If you were feeling particularly cruel, you could ask the poor soul how their council is funded, to which they would probably hesitantly reply, 'Council tax?' And who could blame them for this assumption? Most of those working in the sector struggle to wrap their own heads around the complexities and vagaries of the various grants, tariffs, top-ups, funding formulas and local business rate shares.

But this (somewhat glib) example strikes right to the core of the challenge that councils face in articulating their current financial situation with the urgency it requires.

When people see their council tax go up and the quality of their services deteriorate, they rightly ask questions. But in reality council tax only accounts for 16% of local authority income: over half comes in the form of grants from central government\*.

However, local authority grant income has plummeted by £16bn since 2011\*\*, first because of wider public sector budget cuts after the financial crisis, and then as part of government's plan for councils to transition from grant funding to relying on local business rate income by 2020 – the implementation of which has been severely delayed.

As it stands, councils are facing the 2020 cliff-edge without a clear idea of how they will be funded afterwards or how much money they will have.

## Why this work matters

The real world impact of delaying these seemingly technical decisions is that, across the country, libraries and parks are closing down, the elderly and disabled can't access basic care, vulnerable children aren't be supported and the streets are dirtier and more dangerous.

Council tax and charging are two of the only mechanisms left over which councils have some control, which is why we are seeing 97% of councils increase both this year. This is not a sustainable solution.

Each council has approached these challenges in different ways according to the needs and wishes of their residents, so it can be difficult to see the overall impact of central cuts to council income. This survey helps us to shine a light on the cross-sectoral challenges in order to move the conversation back to the national scale.

It would be easy for this to remain a technocratic debate among those in the sector, but the consequences of slow or ineffective decisions is potentially disastrous and deserves greater urgency and a wider audience.

\* [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/723999/Local\\_Government\\_Finance\\_Statistics\\_2018\\_publication\\_Web\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/723999/Local_Government_Finance_Statistics_2018_publication_Web_Accessible.pdf)

\*\* <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/LGA%20briefing%20-%20Debate%20on%20the%20review%20of%20the%20business%20rates%20system%20-%20130618.pdf>



nurseries



health and safety checks



new housing

What does my council do?



bus shelters



gritting the roads



elderly care



allotments



social housing



equipment for disabilities



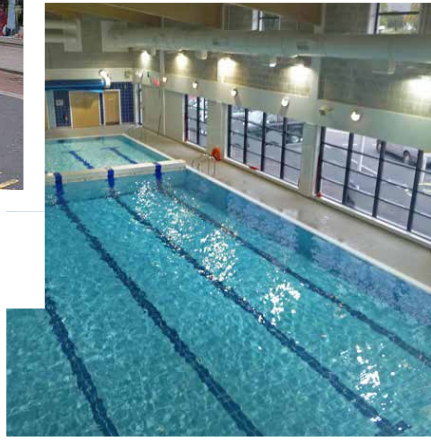
youth centres



museums



taxi licenses



leisure centres



trading standards



adoption & fostering



parks



public health



bins & recycling



public space



street cleaning



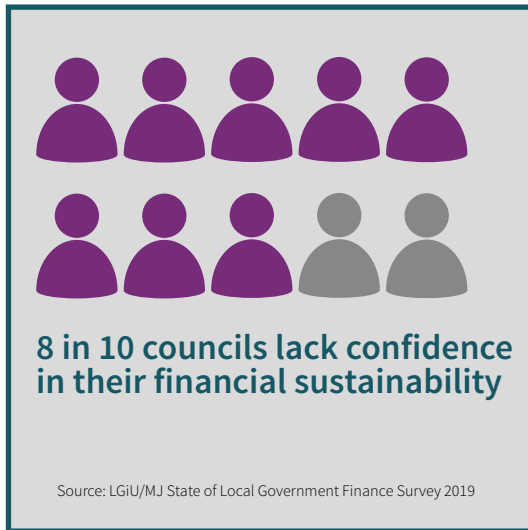
public toilets



schools



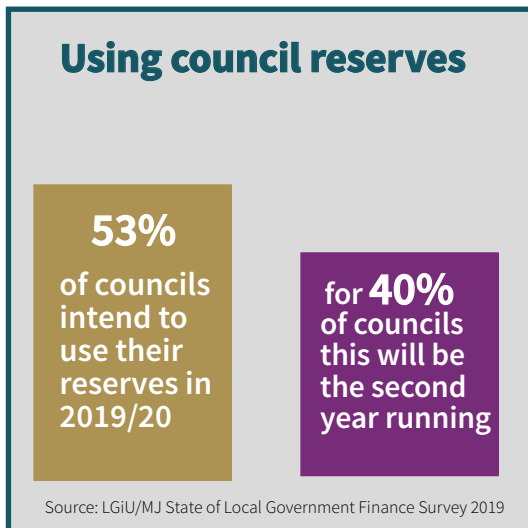
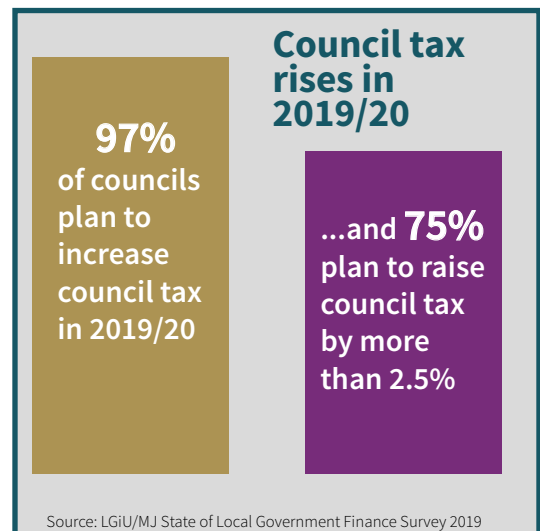
## Current situation



Eight in ten (80%) councils say they are not confident in the sustainability of local government finance; none said they were ‘very confident’. There has been no improvement in confidence since 2017.

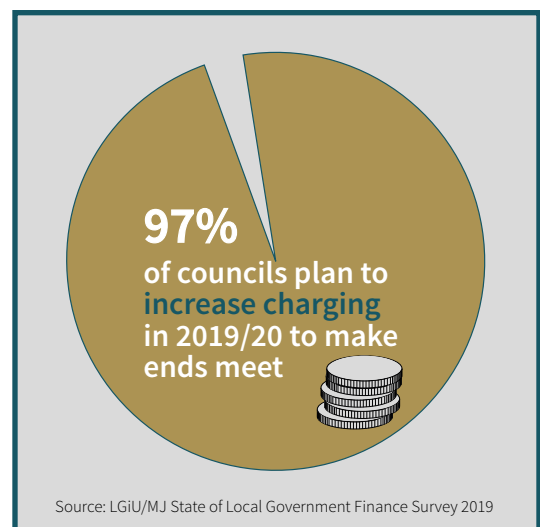
Nearly all (97%) councils plan to increase council tax in 2019-20\*, 75% by more than 2.5% (the maximum increase allowed without a referendum is 3% in most places).

*\*Excluding any additional precepts such as the social care precept*



Over half of councils (53%) plan to dip into their reserves this year, even more than the 49% who used their reserves last year. Worryingly, 40% of councils plan to use their reserves two years running.

Nearly all (97%) councils are planning to increase fees and charges in the coming year, with some planning rate rises of more than five per cent (13% of councils).



Councils say they are planning to introduce or increase charging across a wide range of areas including: garden and bulky waste collection, parking, fine enforcement, leisure facilities, planning services, adult social care, electric vehicle charging points, registrar services, cremation and burials, licensing (taxis, venues, landlords), pest control, public toilets, replacement bins, community meals, business support and council venue hire.

Four fifths (84%) of councils say it is a high priority or essential to explore other sources of income.

In the future, two thirds (61%) of councils expect core council services to become reliant on income from commercial investments (19% said they weren't sure; 21% said they didn't).

## **1 in 20 councils say they are in danger of being unable to fulfil statutory duties this year**

more than the statutory minimum and three (2%) councils said they are unable to provide anything more than the legal minimum.

Almost one in ten (9%) councils are anticipating legal challenges this year due to reductions in service provision.

A third of councils (30%) said the level of frontline services available to residents has declined over the past year, and a quarter (26%) said planned cuts to services in the coming year would be evident to the public. One in twenty (6%) councils say there is a danger they will be unable to fulfil statutory duties this year due to financial constraints.

Only a third (37%) of councils said they are able to comfortably provide a range of non-statutory services to their residents, while two thirds (61%) said they were able to provide a little bit

## **1 in 10 councils expect to face legal challenges this year due to service cuts**

## Income generation activities

Eight in 10 (82%) councils are considering commercialising council services to raise extra money and over half (57%) want to sell off council assets. Other income sources being considered include offering advertising space (41%), sponsorship opportunities (28%) and energy projects (28%).



Investing in property has become a widespread practice across local government, with the dual aims of place-shaping and developing new income streams. Around three quarters are investing in local commercial developments (81%) or residential developments (73%), while a few are looking outside their council area for development opportunities (13% for commercial, 5% for residential). Over half (56%) are thinking of purchasing investment properties.

Over half (53%) of councils have increased their level of borrowing over the past five years in order to fund investments.

The Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) is still the most popular source of finance. Almost nine in ten (88%) councils seeking external funding this year plan to approach the PWLB. Other external funding sources councils plan to pursue include grant funding (58%), private investment (17%), other local authorities (15%), the Municipal Bond Agency (14%), the capital markets (12%) and crowdfunding (9%).

# What projects or service improvements have you cancelled or postponed due to financial uncertainty?

Asset repairs

New city centre scheme for retail and leisure

Commercial acquisitions

We haven't been planning new projects for years as a result of continued austerity

**BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

New housing development

Regeneration projects

Town Hall major refurbishment to reduce costs

Backlogs in road, housing and building maintenance

Major capital projects

City centre redevelopment has been cancelled

Delays caused by lack of government clarity on new policies eg social care

Some projects are taking longer due to resource constraints

**GENERAL DELAYS**

Postponed projects across all areas

Uncertainty from Brexit has arguably slowed down private investment plans in the city

Ageing leisure facilities

Advisory support project for benefit seekers following Universal Credit roll out

Community engagement

**PLACE-SHAPING AND COMMUNITY**

Waste collection improvements

Parking improvement schemes

A new swimming pool

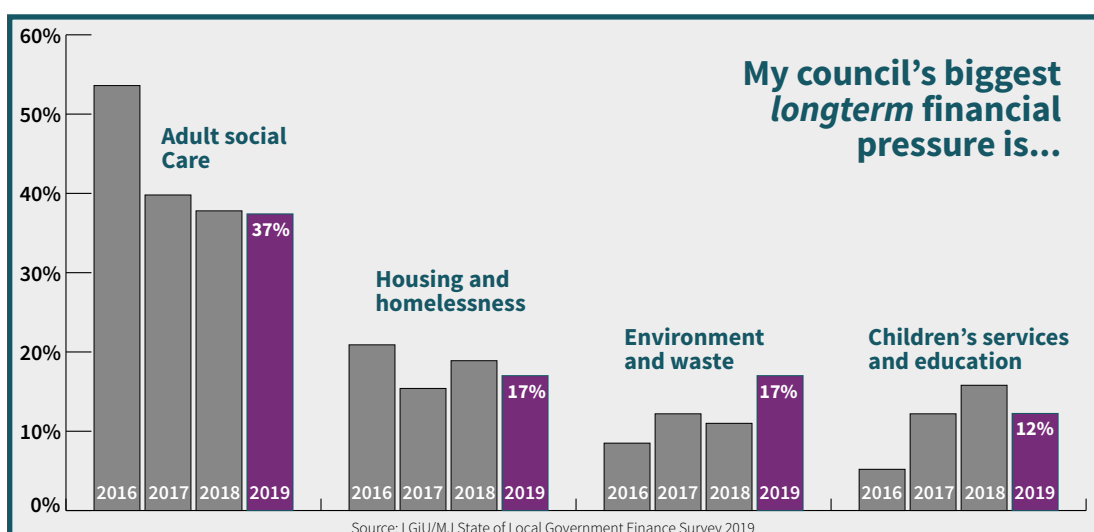
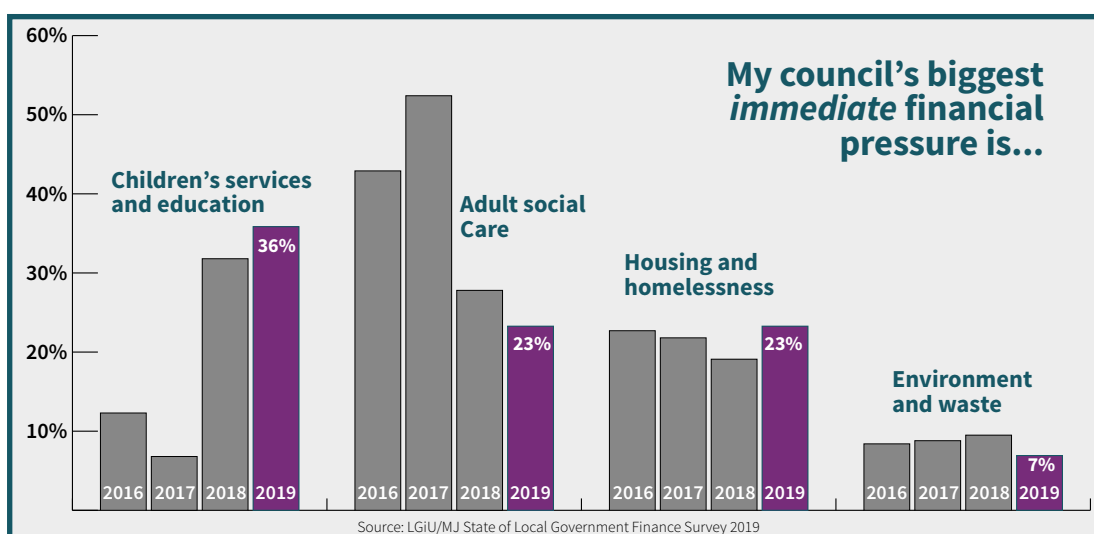
New school for children with special educational needs and disabilities

Adaptation to climate change

## Pressure on local services

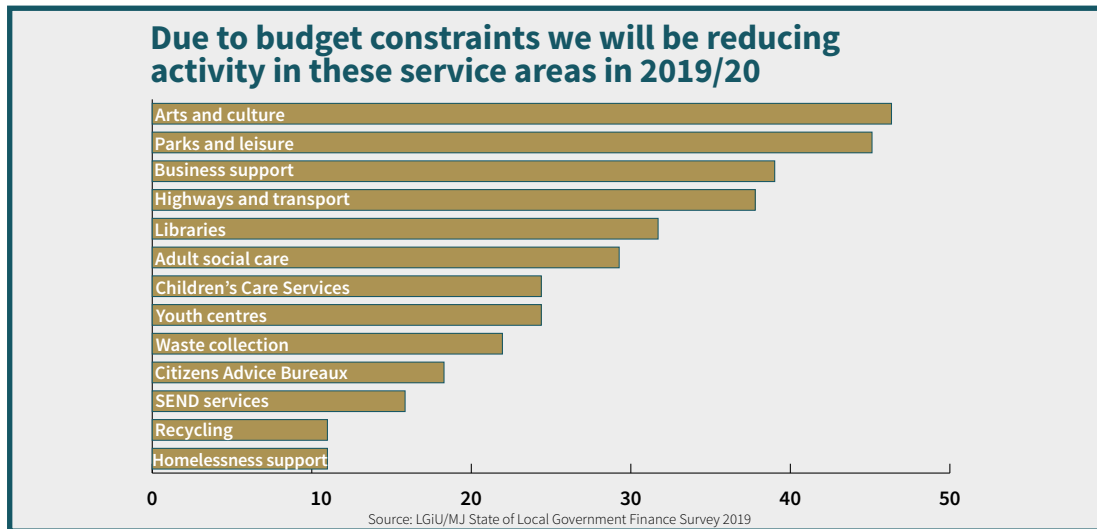
Children’s Services and Education is the top immediate financial pressure for the second year running (36% of councils), ahead of Adult Social Care (23%) which has historically ranked highest. However Adult Social Care is still under severe strain, being named as the top longterm financial pressure (37% of councils).

Housing and Homelessness was also flagged as both an immediate and a longterm pressure, tied with Adult Social Care as second most urgent immediate financial pressure (23% of councils) and with Environment and Waste as the second most urgent longterm pressure (17%).



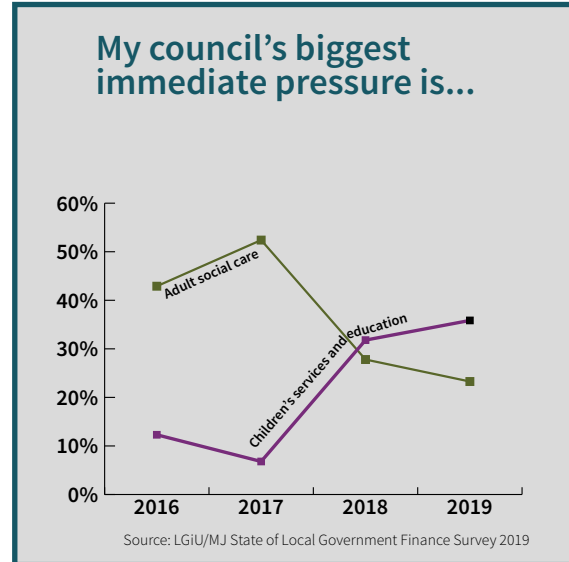
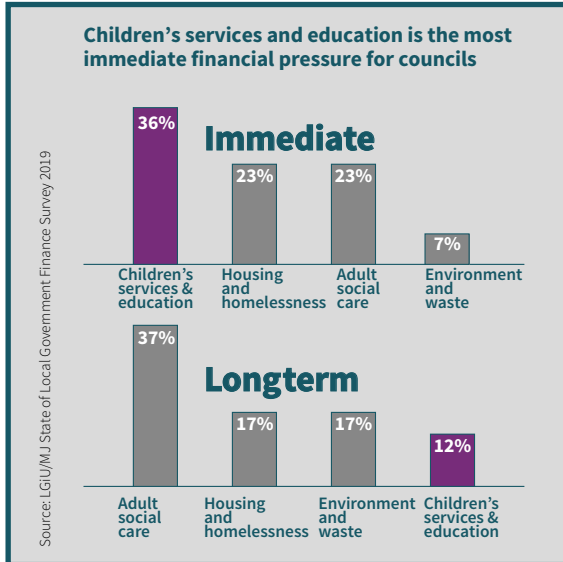
Ongoing budget cuts and financial uncertainty will continue to hit community services, with councils forced to reduce activity across everything from libraries (32%), arts and culture (46%) and parks and leisure (45%) to waste collection (22%), recycling (11%) and roads (38%).

Concerningly, services for vulnerable people are not immune, with councils planning to reduce activity in Adult Social Care (29%), Children’s Care Services (24%), special education and disability support (16%), homelessness support (11%) and funding for local Citizens Advice Bureaux (18%).



## Children’s Services and Education

Last year, Children’s Services and Education overtook Adult Social Care as the biggest immediate financial pressure facing councils.



Children’s Services and Education was named as the top immediate pressure for upper tier councils (i.e. those authorities with responsibility for delivering care and education), with 72% placing it first.

### Council services that affect children are seeing cuts this year

- Children’s care services (24%)
- Youth centres (24%)
- Arts and culture (46%)
- Parks and leisure (45%)
- Libraries (32%)
- Special educational needs and disability services (16%)

% of councils saying they will be reducing activity in this area

Source: LGIU/MJ State of Local Government Finance Survey 2019

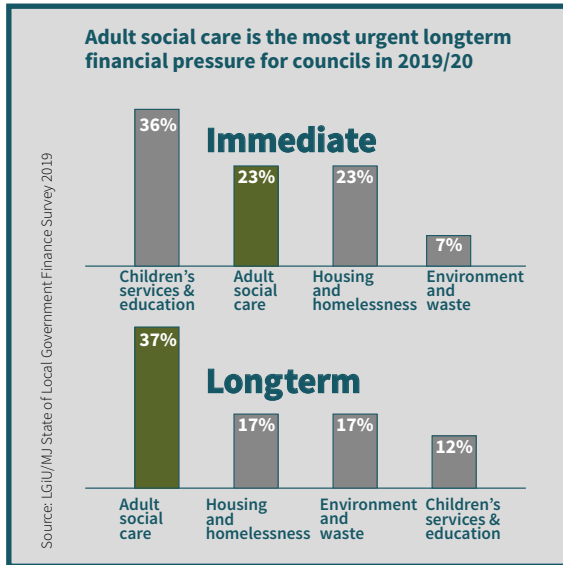
As Children’s Services is a growing pressure for councils, we asked respondents from social care (upper tier) authorities to identify the top three sources of pressure on their local service. They identified having more families with complex support needs as the top driver (59%) along with more children being taken into care (57%) and services for children with special educational needs and disabilities (52%).

Other significant factors include the increasing cost of providing residential care (49%), social worker recruitment and retention (43%), more referrals about child safety concerns (38%) and a lack of foster carers and adoptive parents (35%).

Gang activity, including county lines operations, was identified as a top three pressure on Children’s Services by one in twenty upper tier councils (6%), all of which were located in the South East, London and the Midlands. Unaccompanied child asylum seekers was identified as a top pressure by one in seven (14%) upper tier councils, across these same regions and also Yorkshire.

## Adult Social Care

In terms of immediate pressures, Adult Social Care (23%) was overtaken as the top choice by Children’s Services (36%) for the second year in a row. However Adult Social Care was named the most urgent longterm financial pressure for councils (37%), followed by Housing and Homelessness (17%) and Environment and Waste (17%).



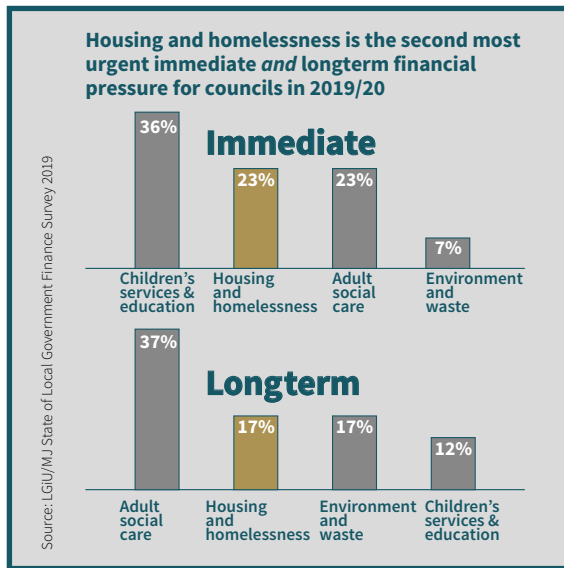
Among upper tier councils only (i.e. those authorities with responsibility for delivering social care), Adult Social Care was named as the top longterm financial pressure, with 61% placing it first. These councils also said Adult Social Care is the second most urgent immediate pressure (28%) after Children’s Services (72%).

The acute pressure on Adult Social Care services is also being felt by councils without direct responsibility for social care (lower tier councils), with 20% saying it was their top immediate pressure, second only to Housing and Homelessness (37%) among this group.

Almost a third of councils (29%) said they were planning reductions in service level within Adult Social Care due to budget constraints.



## Housing and Homelessness

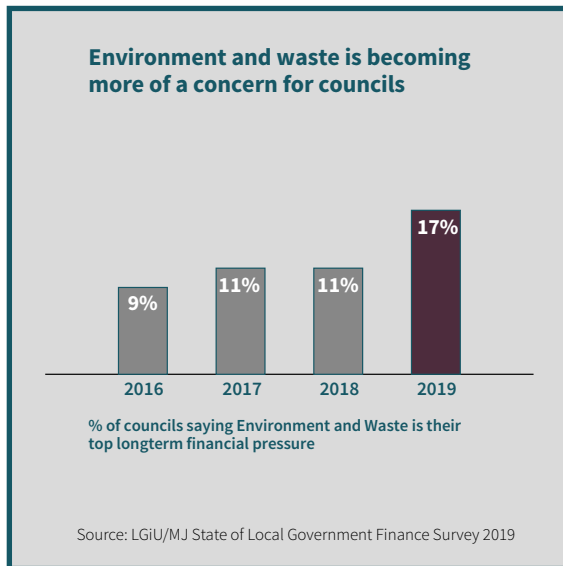


After Children's Services, Housing and Homelessness is tied with Adult Social Care as the second most urgent immediate financial pressure, with 23% of councils naming it their top concern. It was also second among the longterm financial pressures, tied with Environment and Waste (17%). Among those authorities without responsibility for social care, it was named as the top immediate (37%) and longterm (24%) financial pressure.

One in ten councils (11%) said they were planning reductions in service level within Homelessness Support due to budget constraints.

Almost two thirds (61%) of councils said that the lack of variation in the Local Housing Allowance is causing problems in their local housing market. The type of issues vary across different authorities, from making it harder to tackle homelessness (45%) and artificially inflating local rental prices (25%), to encouraging rogue landlords (10%) and causing a decline in the quality of local housing stock (10%).

## Environment and Waste



Environment and Waste was named second in the list of top long-term concerns (17% of councils placed it top), tying with Housing and Homelessness and following Adult Social Care (37%). Environment and Waste is becoming more of a concern for councils, with the percentage of councils naming it their top long-term concern doubling in three years (from 9% in 2016).

Almost a quarter of councils (22%) said they were planning reductions in service level within waste collection due to budget constraints, and one in ten plan to reduce recycling activity (11%).

## Community Services

Councils are responsible for providing a wide range of community services, many of which are coming under intense pressure because of the rising costs associated with

Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Housing and Homelessness.

### Community services seeing cuts in 2019/20 due to council funding reductions

- Libraries (32%)
- Arts and culture (46%)
- Parks and leisure (45%)
- Road maintenance and transport (38%)
- Special educational needs and disability services (16%)
- Homelessness support (11%)
- Funding for local Citizens Advice Bureaux (18%)

% of councils saying they will be reducing activity in this area

Source: LGIU/MJ State of Local Government Finance Survey 2019

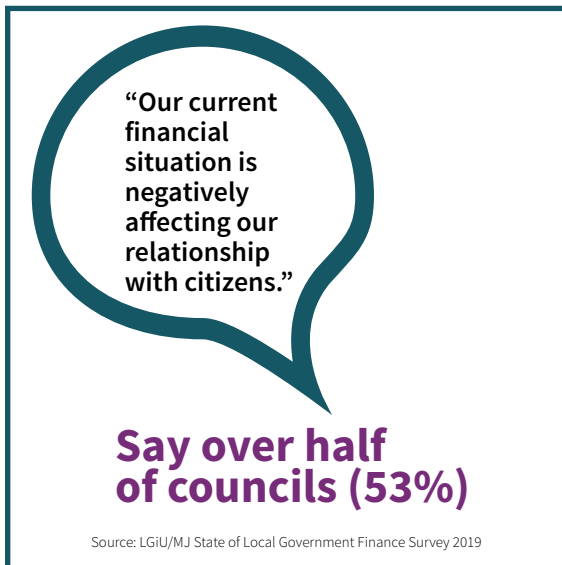
Councils say they will be forced to reduce activity across Libraries (32% of councils), Arts and Culture (46%), Parks and Leisure (45%), Road Maintenance and Transport (38%), Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Services (16%), Homelessness Support (11%) and funding for local Citizens Advice Bureaux (18%).

## Public Trust

Over half (53%) of councils said that the current financial situation in local government is negatively affecting their relationship with residents. From staff cuts leading to slower response times to anger over bins and potholes, councils tell us they are struggling to match rising public expectations with less money.

While some respondents said their residents are sympathetic to their financial situation, others said that a lack of understanding about how local government is funded and structured, along with rising council tax bills, has led to negative perceptions about council services. Respondents told us how voter turnout has declined, civic groups

are more reluctant to engage with the council, and that residents were complaining about cuts to specific services including pothole repair, waste collection, school crossing patrols, Citizen's Advice Bureau funding, libraries and parking charges.



# APPENDIX

## Survey respondents

RESPONSES BY REGION	
East Midlands	22
Eastern	23
London	7
North East	8
North West	12
South East	33
South West	23
West Midlands	16
Yorkshire and Humber	14
RESPONSES BY COUNCIL TYPE	
<i>Upper tier</i>	
County	13
Unitary	24
London Borough	7
Metropolitan	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>
<i>Lower tier</i>	
Non-Metropolitan District	94
RESPONSES BY POLITICAL CONTROL OF COUNCIL	
Conservative Council	101
Labour Council	42
Liberal Democrat Council	6
No Overall Control Council	8
UKIP	1
RESPONSES BY ROLE	
Cabinet Member (Finances/Resources)	17
Chief Executive	52
Director of Finance/Resources	46
Leader	42
Elected mayor	1

## Data tables

EXPECTED COUNCIL TAX CHANGE 2019/20	
Reduce	0.00%
Freeze	2.53%
Increase - up to 0.49%	0.00%
Increase - 0.5% to 0.99%	0.00%
Increase - 1% to 1.49%	3.80%
Increase - 1.5% to 1.99%	13.29%
Increase - 2% to 2.49%	5.06%
Increase - 2.5% to 2.99%	60.76%
Increase - more than 3% (without referendum)	14.56%
Increase - more than 3% (with referendum)	0.00%

Is there a danger that financial constraints will put your authority in a position where you no longer have enough funding to fulfil your statutory duties in 2019/20?	
Yes	6.37%
No	93.63%

GREATEST IMMEDIATE PRESSURES 2016-19	2019	2018	2017	2016
Children's services and education	35.85%	31.8%	6.8%	12.3%
Adult social care	23.27%	27.8%	52.4%	42.9%
Housing and homelessness	23.27%	19.1%	21.8%	22.7%
Environment and waste	6.92%	9.5%	8.8%	8.4%
GREATEST LONGTERM PRESSURES 2016-19	2019	2018	2017	2016
Adult social care	37.41%	37.8%	39.8%	53.6%
Housing and homelessness	17.01%	18.9%	15.4%	20.9%
Environment and waste	17.01%	11.02%	10.75%	8.5%
Children's services and education	12.24%	15.8%	12.2%	5.2%

LGIU/MJ Local Government Finance Survey 2019

In which of these areas will activity be reduced in 2019/20 due to budgetary constraints? Tick all that apply	
Arts and culture	46.34%
Parks and leisure facilities	45.12%
Business support	39.02%
Highways and transport	37.80%
Libraries	31.71%
Adult social care	29.27%
Youth centres	24.39%
Children's Care Services	24.39%
Waste collection	21.95%
Citizens Advice Bureaux	18.29%
SEND services	15.85%
Homelessness support	10.98%
Recycling	10.98%
Planning	7.32%
Further education	4.88%

How confident do you feel about the sustainability of local government finance?			
Not at all confident	Not very confident	Quite confident	Very confident
25.32%	55.06%	19.62%	0.00%

Are residents still able to access the same level of frontline service as this time last year?	
Yes	70.25%
No	29.75%

Will your 2019/20 budget lead to cuts in frontline services which will be evident to the public?	
Yes	25.95%
No	74.05%

Did your authority use, increase or not touch your reserves last year? And do you intend to use, increase or not touch your reserves this year?			
	Use reserves	Not touch reserves	Increase reserves
2018/19	49.36%	25.64%	25.00%
2019/20	53.21%	30.77%	16.03%

How much of a priority is it for you to actively explore other sources of income?				
Not a priority	Low priority	Medium priority	High priority	Essential
0.00%	0.00%	15.71%	42.86%	41.43%

LGIU/MJ Local Government Finance Survey 2019

<b>Which sources of income are you considering? Tick all that apply</b>	
Fees and charges, eg. Garden waste, Planning fees	86.54%
Commercialising council services	82.05%
Commercial developments (locally)	81.41%
Housing developments (locally)	73.08%
Asset sales	57.05%
Purchasing investment properties	55.77%
Advertising space	41.03%
Sponsorship	28.21%
Energy Projects	28.21%
Commercial developments (further afield)	13.46%
Housing developments (further afield)	5.13%
Other (please specify)	3.85%
Congestion charge	0.64%

<b>Has your council increased the level of borrowing in order to invest over the past 5 years?</b>	
Yes	52.94%
No	47.06%

<b>In the future do you see core services becoming reliant on income from commercial investments?</b>	
Yes	60.65%
No	20.65%
Not sure	18.71%

<b>If you are planning to seek external funding for any of the above projects, where from? Tick all that apply</b>	
Public Works Loans Board	88.44%
Grant funding	57.82%
Private investment	17.01%
Other local authorities	14.97%
Municipal Bonds Agency	13.61%
Capital markets	11.56%
Crowdfunding	8.84%
Bank loan	5.44%
Other (please specify)	4.76%

By how much do you intend to increase fees and charges income in 2019/20 compared with last year? Give a best estimate across all service areas	
None	3.33%
Below 5%	83.33%
5% to 9%	12.00%
10% to 14%	1.33%
15% to 19%	0.00%
20% to 24%	0.00%
25% to 29%	0.00%
30% or more	0.00%

Are you anticipating an increase in judicial challenges to the level of service provision this year?	
Yes	8.55%
No	91.45%

How would you characterise your current level of service provision?	
We are fulfilling our statutory obligations but nothing else	1.96%
We are providing a little bit more than our statutory obligations	60.78%
We are comfortably providing a range of non-statutory services	37.25%

Is the financial situation in local government negatively affecting your relationship with the public?	
Yes	52.63%
No	47.37%

FOR SOCIAL CARE AUTHORITIES ONLY Where is the pressure on Children's Services coming from? Choose the top 3	
More families with complex support needs	58.73%
More children being taken into care	57.14%
Special educational needs and disabilities	52.38%
Increasing cost of providing residential care	49.21%
Social worker recruitment and retention	42.86%
More referrals about child safety concerns	38.10%
Lack of foster carers and adoptive parents	34.92%
Providing support for care leavers	20.63%
Other (please specify)	15.87%
Unaccompanied child asylum seekers	14.29%
Youth remand services	7.94%
County lines/gang activity	6.35%



Are you finding that a lack of variation in Local Housing Allowance payments is causing problems in your local housing market? Tick all that apply	
No - it is not a problem for us	39.23%
Yes - it is making it harder to tackle homelessness	45.38%
Yes - it is artificially inflating local rental prices	24.62%
Yes - it is encouraging rogue landlords	10.00%
Yes - it is causing a decline in the quality of our housing stock	10.00%
Yes - other issue (please describe)	4.62%

## Copyright notices for images used on pages 6-7

Children's play area, Springfield Park - cc-by-sa/2.0 - © P L Chadwick - [geograph.org.uk/p/798887](http://geograph.org.uk/p/798887)

Gritter lorry at Baltasound - cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Mike Pennington - [geograph.org.uk/p/1691778](http://geograph.org.uk/p/1691778)

Pothole patching. Locality: Táboritů street, Olomouc - © Michal Mañas - CC BY 3.0 - [wikimedia.org.uk](http://wikimedia.org.uk)

Checking in with a Patient - CC BY-ND 2.0 - © Jose Luis Pelaez, Inc./Blend Images/Corbis - [flickr.com](http://flickr.com)

Solihull Library - cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Nigel Mykura - [geograph.org.uk/p/5253558](http://geograph.org.uk/p/5253558)

Kingston Youth Centre, Hull - cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Stephen Meara-Blount - [geograph.org.uk/p/3222476](http://geograph.org.uk/p/3222476)

Taxi rank in Channel Street, Galashiels - © Walter Baxter - CC BY-SA 2.0

Hampshire County Council counterfeit goods warning notice, Blackbushe - cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Jaggery - [geograph.org.uk/p/3672644](http://geograph.org.uk/p/3672644)

Food hygiene rating - © Quinn Comendant - CC BY-SA 2.0 - via Flickr

Colour-coded recycling bins outside Somerfield, Lower Northam Road - cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Peter Facey - [geograph.org.uk/p/1041984](http://geograph.org.uk/p/1041984)

Uxbridge Foster Posters - © Alan Stanton - CC BY-SA 2.0 - via Flickr

Portree Community Swimming Pool - © John Allan - CC BY-SA 2.0 - via Wikimedia

Outdoor gym in Fairy Hill Park - cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Stephen Craven - [geograph.org.uk/p/2362164](http://geograph.org.uk/p/2362164)

City centre regeneration in Birmingham - cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Roger Kidd - [geograph.org.uk/p/5343739](http://geograph.org.uk/p/5343739)

Roadside parking restriction notice in Fulham - © DeFacto - CC BY-SA 2.5 via Wikimedia

Fallow Hill, Sydenham, Leamington - © Lydia - CC BY 2.0 via Flickr

Runnymede council dialaride bus - © David Howard - CC BY-SA 2.0 via Wikimedia

Base seeks crosswalk patrols for school year - Senior Airman Stacy Sanchez via <https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/News/Photos/igphoto/2000684068/>

Planning Notice on Halfacres Lane - cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Ian S - [geograph.org.uk/p/4074914](http://geograph.org.uk/p/4074914)

Bournemouth : Housing Construction - © Lewis Clarke CC BY-SA 2.0 via Wikimedia

A quadrant bench on Saint Werburgh Street - cc-by-sa/2.0 - © John S Turner - [geograph.org.uk/p/781494](http://geograph.org.uk/p/781494)

Bus shelter, Albany Road, Preston - © Derek Harper CC BY-SA 2.0 [geograph.org.uk](http://geograph.org.uk) - 764960.jpg

The Great Bath at the Roman Baths - © Diliff - CC BY 2.5 via Wikimedia

Street cleaning vehicle on a Neath corner - cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Jaggery - [geograph.org.uk/p/4944441](http://geograph.org.uk/p/4944441)

Afternoon playtime at Forest Fields Primary and Nursery School - © John Sutton - CC BY-SA 2.0 via [geograph.org.uk](http://geograph.org.uk) - 1408918.jpg

Wheatley Village allotments - © allispossible.org.uk - CC BY 2.0 - via Flickr

Public toilets, Driffield, East Riding of Yorkshire - © michael ely - CC BY-SA 2.0 [geograph.org.uk](http://geograph.org.uk) - 970563.jpg

Children's Nursery - cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Alan Hughes - [geograph.org.uk/p/4985875](http://geograph.org.uk/p/4985875)

London Road cycle path - cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Richard Croft - [geograph.org.uk/p/535347](http://geograph.org.uk/p/535347)

Colourful outdoor play area, Little Acorns Nursery, Littledean - cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Jaggery - [geograph.org.uk/p/4367979](http://geograph.org.uk/p/4367979)

Thamesdown Transport school bus fleet - cc-by-sa/2.0 - © P L Chadwick - [geograph.org.uk/p/885423](http://geograph.org.uk/p/885423)

A straight rail stairlift - © Bcm924 - CC BY-SA 4.0 - via Wikimedia

Basketball practice court Banks Road - © David Lally - CC BY-SA 2.0 - [geograph.org.uk](http://geograph.org.uk) - 752055.jpg

## About LGiU

The Local Government Information Unit (LGiU) is a think tank and membership body with over 200 councils and other organisations subscribing to our networks. We work to strengthen local democracy and put citizens in control of their own lives, communities and local services. For more information, [visit www.lgiu.org.uk](http://www.lgiu.org.uk)

## About The MJ

The Municipal Journal (MJ) is the UK's leading weekly magazine for council chief executives and senior managers in local authorities and allied sectors. It offers an insiders' view of what's going on and what people are thinking in today's ever changing and challenging world of local politics – the latest news, incisive comment, in-depth features and interviews, business analysis and the top recruitment vacancies. Visit [www.themj.co.uk](http://www.themj.co.uk)

Published 14th February 2019  
Copyright LGiU 2019

**LGiU**  
**Third Floor,**  
**251 Pentonville Road,**  
**London N1 9NG**  
**020 7554 2800**  
**[info@lgiu.org.uk](mailto:info@lgiu.org.uk)**  
**[www.lgiu.org.uk](http://www.lgiu.org.uk)**