

# POLICY BRIEF

Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview Scrutiny Committee

22 September 2021



## GOVERNMENT POLICY, LEGISLATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS

### Government

#### [Chancellor has launched public spending review and budget date](#)

The Chancellor has launched Spending Review 2021 (SR21), which will conclude on 27 October 2021 alongside an Autumn Budget and set out the government's spending priorities for the Parliament.

#### [Government launch National Disability Strategy](#)

The National Disability Strategy, which sets out the actions the government will take to improve the everyday lives of all disabled people, has been published (28.07.21). The strategy sets out 100 immediate commitments and is supported by £1.6bn of funding. The strategy is focused on improving inclusion in the workplace, tackling the disability employment gap and making sure children with special educational needs and disabilities are at the heart of the strategy.

#### [New body to tackle health disparities will launch 1 October, co-headed by new DCMO](#)

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) will officially launch on 1 October with the aim of tackling health inequalities across the country.

### Housing and Homelessness

#### [Extra healthcare and housing support for those arriving from Afghanistan](#)

An additional £5 million for local councils is being made available to provide housing support to Afghans coming to UK. The Afghan LES (Locally Employed Staff) Housing Costs Fund will provide a 'top up' to help councils meet the costs of renting properties.

### Finance and Welfare

#### [Council tax collection: best practice guidance for local authorities](#)

This guidance shares the experience of innovative authorities and the methods they use when collecting council tax. These include investing in clear communication, supportive recovery techniques, and proactive engagement with the debt advice sector.

#### [Business rates revaluation 2023: the central rating list](#)

The central rating list held by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government contains the business rates assessment of large, usually utility network properties of a nature not suitable for assessing on local authority rating lists. This consultation proposes that for the 2023 business rates revaluation certain assessments currently on local rating lists should be moved to the central list.

#### [HMRC can help with childcare costs as children head back to school](#)

HMRC is reminding families eligible for Tax-Free Childcare that they can use the scheme to help with their childcare costs as children head back to school. Eligible families can save money on their childcare and benefit from a government top-up worth up to £2,000 every year, or up to £4,000 a year if a child is disabled.

### Communities

#### [New Government survey results underline community spirit generated during pandemic](#)

Community spirit and support for neighbours, friends and family remained as strong as ever during the height of the coronavirus pandemic, despite its negative impact across the country, new figures from the Community Life Survey have suggested. Despite the inevitable decrease in the proportion of people formally volunteering, dropping down to an all-time low of 17% doing it at least once a month, there was an increase in the proportion of people informally volunteering with acts of kindness to support their community.

#### [£1 million fund to help faith groups support communities](#)

A 'new deal' between faith groups and government to capitalise on efforts to help communities during lockdown is being forged. Faith groups will be able to apply for a share of the £1 million Faith New Deal Pilot

Fund for projects providing innovative solutions to issues such as food poverty and poor mental health. Faith groups have been instrumental in supporting communities throughout the pandemic.

## Transport - Investment

### [National Highways wants views on future road investment](#)

National Highways has launched an online feedback tool for road users and those who live near to England's motorways and major A roads to give their views on where investment is needed the most.

The [online tool](#) has been developed as part of our engagement process for Route Strategies which is one activity used to inform the government's decisions on future road investment. As well as capturing public feedback the database will be used to record engagement with local government and transport authorities, as well as other interested parties.

### [Vision set out for a once-in-a-lifetime digital revolution](#)

A virtual twin of the road network that can predict the time and location of potholes and other maintenance issues is just one of the innovations poised to transform National Highways' future operations.

### [Chewing Gum Task Force to clean up our high streets](#)

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) has announced a chewing gum taskforce to clean up high streets and significantly reduce gum litter.

## OPEN CONSULTATIONS

| Date of publication | Committee/Department  | GOV                                       |
|---------------------|---|---|
| 08.07.21            | <p><a href="#">Fair school funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula</a></p> <p>DfE are seeking views on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the approach to completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula (NFF)</li> <li>• how we most effectively transition away from local formulae to all schools' funding allocations being determined directly by the NFF in the years ahead</li> </ul>   | This consultation closes on 30 Sept 2021. |
| 16.08.21            | <p><a href="#">Business rates revaluation 2023: the central rating list</a></p> <p>The central rating list held by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government contains the business rates assessment of large, usually utility network properties of a nature not suitable for assessing on local authority rating lists. This consultation proposes that for the 2023 business rates revaluation certain assessments currently on local rating lists should be moved to the central list.</p>   | This consultation closes on 08 Nov 2021.  |
| 05.09.21            | <p><a href="#">Government launches public consultation to make outdoor measures for high streets permanent</a></p> <p>Temporary measures that have given a huge boost to high streets and hospitality during the pandemic could be made permanent following a <a href="#">public consultation</a> launched this week (closes 14 November).</p> <p>The permitted development rights introduced over the past year and that the government are now consulting on include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Right for markets to be held by or on behalf of local councils.</li> <li>2. Right for moveable structures in the grounds of pubs, cafes, restaurants and historic visitor attractions.</li> </ol> <p>The consultation will also seek views on new permitted development rights to support the efficient development of Ministry of Defence sites. This includes providing more accommodation, workspace, and training facilities at fewer facilities to reduce the pressure on local authorities.</p> | This consultation closes on 14 Nov 2021.  |