

WEST MIDLANDS IN CONTEXT

ISSUE 11, JULY 2016

West Midlands in Context highlights a broad mix of reports, statistics and other material that has something to say about the West Midlands or that help provide a wider context to the work of councils and other organisations in the region.

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REFERENDUM RESULTS

EU REFERENDUM - HOW THE WEST MIDLANDS VOTED

West Midlands' results

On Thursday 23rd June the nation went to the polls in a historic referendum on whether the UK should remain in or leave the European Union. The result was in the balance until the very last day. On the morning of 24th June it became clear that the vote to leave the EU had edged remain by 51.9% to 48.1%.

As the votes were counted on a local and regional basis as well at a national level it is possible to see how the balance of "leave" and "remain" votes varied from place to place and within each area. Across the country, "leave" polled the most votes in 270 of the UK's counting areas and "remain" in 129. In the West Midlands the percentage voting to leave was just shy of 60%, the highest in the UK. Of the 30 council areas used for counting in the West Midlands only one had a majority in favour of remaining.

After the West Midlands, the nations and regions with the highest percentages voting to leave the EU were the East Midlands followed by the North East. The nations and regions in favour of remaining were Scotland, Northern Ireland and London.

Within the West Midlands, the areas with the highest percentages voting to leave were Stoke-on-Trent, Cannock Chase and Walsall. Of the eight Staffordshire districts only Lichfield and Stafford had fewer than 60% voting to leave. The only counting area polling more “remain” votes than “leave” was Warwick where just short of 59% voted to remain. The next highest percentages for remaining in the EU were in Birmingham (49.6%) and Stratford-on-Avon (48.4%).

Sources:

- BBC - [EU Referendum 2016](#), June 2016
- BBC - [EU referendum results in maps and charts](#), June 2016
- Electoral Commission - [EU Referendum](#), June 2016

Nations and regions	Turn Out	Remain Votes	Leave votes	Remain %	Leave %
UK	72.2%	16,141,241	17,410,742	48.1%	51.9%
England	73%	13,266,996	15,188,406	46.6%	53.4%
Northern Ireland	62.7%	440,707	349,442	55.8%	44.2%
Scotland	67.2%	1,661,191	1,018,322	62%	38%
Wales	71.7%	772,347	854,572	47.5%	52.5%
West Midlands	72%	1,207,175	1,755,687	40.7%	59.3%
East of England	75.7%	1,448,616	1,880,367	43.5%	56.5%
East Midlands	74.2%	1,033,036	1,475,479	41.2%	58.8%
London	69.7%	2,263,519	1,513,232	59.9%	40.1%
North East	69.3%	562,595	778,103	42%	58%
North West	70%	1,699,020	1,966,925	46.3%	53.7%
South East	76.8%	2,391,718	2,567,965	48.2%	51.8%
South West and Gibraltar	76.7%	1,503,019	1,669,711	47.4%	52.6%
Yorkshire and Humber	70.7%	1,158,298	1,580,937	42.3%	57.7%

Council area	Turn out	Remain Vote	Leave Vote	Remain %	Leave %
Birmingham	63.7%	223,451	227,251	49.6%	50.4%
Bromsgrove	79.3%	26,252	32,563	44.6%	55.4%
Cannock Chase	71.4%	16,684	36,894	31.1%	68.9%
Coventry	69.1%	67,967	85,097	44.4%	55.6%
Dudley	71.7%	56,780	118,446	32.4%	67.6%
East Staffordshire	74.3%	22,850	39,266	36.8%	63.2%
Herefordshire	78.3%	44,148	64,122	40.8%	59.2%
Lichfield	78.7%	26,064	37,214	41.2%	58.8%
Malvern Hills	80.5%	23,203	25,294	47.8%	52.2%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	74.3%	25,477	43,457	37%	63%
North Warwickshire	76.2%	12,569	25,385	33.1%	66.9%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	74.3%	23,736	46,095	34%	66%
Redditch	75.2%	17,303	28,579	37.7%	62.3%
Rugby	79%	25,350	33,199	43.3%	56.7%
Sandwell	66.5%	49,004	98,250	33.3%	66.7%
Shropshire	77.3%	78,987	104,166	43.1%	56.9%
Solihull	76%	53,466	68,484	43.8%	56.2%
South Staffordshire	77.8%	23,444	43,248	35.2%	64.8%
Stafford	77.8%	34,098	43,386	44%	56%
Staffordshire Moorlands	75.3%	21,076	38,684	35.3%	64.7%
Stoke-on-Trent	65.7%	36,027	81,563	30.6%	69.4%
Stratford-on-Avon	80.8%	38,341	40,817	48.4%	51.6%
Tamworth	74.1%	13,705	28,424	32.5%	67.5%
Telford and Wrekin	72.1%	32,954	56,649	36.8%	63.2%
Walsall	69.6%	43,572	92,007	32.1%	67.9%
Warwick	79.2%	47,976	33,642	58.8%	41.2%
Wolverhampton	67.5%	44,138	73,798	37.4%	62.6%
Worcester	73.8%	25,125	29,114	46.3%	53.7%
Wychavon	80.8%	32,188	44,201	42.1%	57.9%
Wyre Forest	74%	21,240	36,392	36.9%	63.1%

FALL OUT ZONE

SOME EU REFERENDUM RELATED ISSUES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A seat at the table

It's an understatement to say that there will be a great deal for councils digest as the implications of the referendum become apparent. Indeed, a number of relevant organisations have already flagged up some important issues. In the immediate wake of the referendum and reiterated at its annual conference, the Local Government Association (LGA) called for England's councils to have a seat around the negotiating table when the decisions about how to replace EU laws and regulations take place. With an exit necessitating the unravelling of the complex pattern of domestic and EU laws and regulations, the LGA says it is *"vital"* that local government *"is part of the team"*. This is important, they say, as regulations cover matters such as waste, employment, health and safety, consumer protection and environmental standards. In the light of this, the LGA suggests it should not be assumed that *"power over these services is simply transferred from Brussels to Westminster"*, going on to say that *"if services are delivered locally, then the power over how to run them should rest locally too"*. In support, the LGA has published a new discussion document, *"What next for devolution?"* Adding to the ongoing debate, the Mayor of London has also spoken about more powers, not *"asking for London to get a bigger slice of the British pie"* but for *"the ability to decide how the money already spent in London is distributed"*. The accompanying press release stated *"it is understood that the Mayor is looking for the devolution of fiscal responsibility including tax raising powers ... more control over business and skills, housing and planning, transport, health and policing and criminal justice"*.

Regional centres of power

It remains to be seen whether the Government heeds these calls, but speaking to Parliament for the first time since the referendum, David Cameron announced the creation of an EU unit. Led by Cabinet Office minister Oliver Letwin it will bring together officials and policy expertise from the Cabinet Office, Treasury, Foreign Office and Business Department. In preparation for the negotiations he said the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland governments will be *"fully involved"*. Other areas, such as Gibraltar, Crown Dependencies, the Overseas Territories and *"all regional centres of power"* including the London Assembly will be consulted. Quite what constitutes a regional centre of power and who represents it will no doubt become apparent in time.

New ways to slice the domestic cake?

In its statement the LGA also called on the Government to protect EU regeneration funding, stating that as *"communities in England have been allocated £5.3 billion of EU regeneration funding up to 2020"* the Government should *"guarantee it will protect this vital funding to avoid essential growth-boosting projects stalling"*. This also begs the question as to whether there will be a similar domestic replacement for European Regional Development Funds and how that might function. The Centre for Cities takes up this point, its Chief Executive Alexandra Jones commenting that *"there are big questions about how Brexit will affect cities which have historically relied on EU funding to strengthen their economies"*. It seems then, that there is a significant debate to be had as to whether this type of regional support

continues and, if so, the criteria for its distribution.

In this respect, what happens elsewhere in the UK is likely to impact on the West Midlands as well. The Institute for Government notes that Wales receives *“six times as much money from EU structural funds as England. And all three devolved nations receive several times as much per person from the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy as does England”*. This may give further impetus to calls to review the existing Barnett formula for distributing government funding around the UK, particularly as England receives less per head from this mechanism than the devolved nations. Needless to say, no one will want to be a loser at the end of this process, but will every one be able to be a winner?

Devolution - derailed, or redoubled?

Of course, all of this negotiation and lobbying is going to take a lot of central and local government resources. With both sectors losing experienced staff over the last few years this is likely to be a stretch. Even without the political uncertainty, the demands on the civil service, ministers and Parliamentary time to meet the planned legislative programme may be problematic. As a consequence, some commentators are suggesting existing legislation may slip as Parliament busies itself on referendum related business.

In this context, the Centre for Cities, points to the need to keep the domestic devolution agenda to the fore as government turns its attention to the complex task of negotiating the exit. That said, this may also provide opportunities. Birmingham City Council Chief Executive Mark Rogers wrote in his role as Solace President (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) that *“local government should be redoubling its devolution pressure”* taking the *“opportunity to make our cities and regions catalysts of change”*. He went on to emphasise the importance of making sure that *“EU funded projects both continue and flourish by making decisions at a local level more closely with the people it impacts”*.

Council funding and staff pipeline uncertainties

In this statement Mark Rogers also noted the potential impact of economic uncertainty on council funding in an already tough and uncertain financial environment. Significant changes are already underway, such as the devolution of business rates to fund councils, which could be affected by a more volatile economic climate. It is likely that a great number of extremely important decisions with long-lasting consequences will need to be made in a relatively short length of time. Clearly the scope for unintended consequences is high and the capacity and experience to scrutinise such developments before hand will be fully tested. Considerations such as this may have prompted CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance) to say that the *“Government must carry out a detailed analysis of public finance before making decisions”* as *“many councils, hospitals and schools are already on the brink”* and would *“not easily withstand shocks to their funding”*. As employers too, Mark Rogers points to a need to ensure the pipeline of staff amid the uncertainty, *“particularly in shortage areas like social care, nursing and transport”*.

End game

With the percentage of people in the West Midlands who voted to leave the EU the highest in the UK, it is reasonable to think that people will expect to see positive changes as a result. One of the key challenges ahead will be to make sure that places in the West Midlands get an equitable deal from the inevitable constitutional, administrative, economic and legal wrangling that lies ahead and that that results in noticeable improvements on-the-ground.

Sources:

- Centre for Cities - [Responding to Britain's decision to leave the EU](#), June 2016
- LGA - [Statement on "leave" vote in EU referendum](#), June 2016
- LGA - [Councils must have leading role in EU exit negotiations](#), July 2016
- LGA - [What next for devolution, a discussion paper](#), July 2016
- HM Government - [The process for withdrawing from the European Union](#), February 2016
- SOLACE - [Statement on the outcome of the EU Referendum](#), June 2016
- CIPFA - [Statement on the EU Referendum result](#), June 2016
- Institute for Government - [Brexit consequentials](#), June 2016
- Mayor of London - [Press release, Now London must "take back control"](#), June 2016
- BBC news - [Mayor Sadiq Khan calls for London spending powers](#), June 2016
- No.10 - [PM Commons statement on the result of the EU referendum](#), June 2016
- Public Finance - [Letwin to helm Whitehall Brexit team](#), June 2016
- Institute for Government - [Brexit - but what about the Queen's speech?](#), July 2016
- Schools Week - [White paper is a "goner", says policy expert](#), June 2016

LOOK NORTH - NORTHERN POWERHOUSE UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

Lessons for sub-national growth strategies

Long term city-region spatial plans

There have been a number of recent reports looking at potential ways of distributing growth and development across the Northern Powerhouse. Among these, the Centre for Cities has looked for potential lessons from the apparently similar multi or polycentric regions of the Rhine-Ruhr in Germany and the Randstad in the Netherlands. Challenging the view that there is a need to improve transport links between the northern cities to create a single economy, the Centre found that these economically successful areas did not function as a coherent entity, but as a collection of cities that *"just happen to be close together"*.

Perhaps with lessons for the West-East Midlands initiative, Midlands Connects, transport between cities was not seen as the key factor in economic success as commuting levels and the speed of train links between city regions in the Rhine-Ruhr and the Randstad were found to be similar to those in the North. Instead, they suggested that the reason for their success was getting *"more out of the economic activity they have by concentrating it in cities"*. The report suggested that while there is a case for improving intercity transport links *"the allure of a "grand projet" should not divert attention from improving the places it is designed to link, particularly when it comes to transport within city-regions and skills across the north"*. As a result, the Centre for Cities' recommended increasing the density of cities with long-term spatial plans for development across city regions. With this focus on cities, the Centre pointed to the need to manage the costs of density such as congestion and housing and property costs as well as the need to increase the pool of skilled workers and improve city-region transport. Turning to decision-making, they recommended that economic policy decisions should be made at the lowest appropriate level, with pan-northern institutions only created where there are significant benefits.

Does a big city narrative have to put smaller cities in the shade?

The Centre for Cities' report strongly argued the case for the benefits of agglomeration, the concentration of activity and infrastructure. Putting a different perspective, a new report by the IPPR has called for a *"more sophisticated understanding"* of the north which, while acknowledging the role of big cities, says that there should be a *"more coherent and comprehensive approach to regional economic strategy that gives greater attention to the complementary strengths of small and medium sized towns and cities"* or SMCs. In doing so, the IPPR questioned the the *"dominance"* of the *"agglomeration narrative"*. The think-tank pointed out that since 2010 SMCs have grown just as fast as the north's core cities, stating *"the majority of the North's primary and enabling economic capabilities lie outside of its big cities"* while, conversely, some of the problems that SMCs have are *"made worse by the prevailing "big city" narrative"*. Without understanding the dynamics between places, the Institute suggested that regional policy risks becoming self fulfilling. As a result, the IPPR considered that there needs to be a better understanding of the different types of agglomeration, a recognition of the complementary roles of different places, the importance of connectivity over concentration and a more comprehensive approach to regional economic strategy that plays to places strengths without spreading public money too thinly.

Towards a Great North Plan

Working jointly with the Royal Town Planning Institute, the northern arm of the IPPR has also taken a look at strategic planning in the north of England. They found that there was *"broad agreement among stakeholders"* that there is a need for a Great North Plan. Working with the stakeholders, they have developed a set of principles as to how this plan should be developed, the different layers of planning required, and made proposals for the next steps. Among other things, their *"Blueprint"* suggests a suite of four interlocking documents: a vision for the north, a set of collaborative strategies, a prospectus for investment, and a programme for action. Under a population and place strategy, they suggest that the strategy must *"set out some of the key places in the north"* including current and future population growth hubs, labour market geographies, and the distinctive attributes of particular cities, towns and areas. As might be expected, the other strands for cooperation include the economy, transport and connectivity, and the environment.

It would seem there might be lessons here for those involved in other regional and sub-national projects around the country. Nonetheless, it would be interesting to see similar independent studies focusing on the Midlands.

Sources:

- The Centre for Cities - [Building the Northern Powerhouse](#), June 2016
- IPPR North - [City systems: The role of small and medium-sized towns and cities in growing the northern powerhouse](#), June 2016
- IPPR North - [Blueprint for a Great North Plan](#), June 2016

THE COST OF LIVING

Household income, housing costs and living standards

Incomes rise above 2008/09 levels

Last week the Department of Work and Pensions' (DWP) newly released 2014/15 figures showed that UK median incomes exceeded 2008/09 figure for the first time, standing at a record high of £473 a week or £24,700 a year. This, after taking housing costs into account, amounts to £404 a week or around £21,100 a year. The DWP note that while individuals across the income distribution have seen real terms increases, it is those towards the middle of the distribution that have seen the biggest rises and those at the bottom the smallest. This has resulted in some fluctuations in the percentage of people and households in poverty, depending on the measure used, relative or absolute, before or after housing costs. The West Midlands nonetheless remains one of the worst places in the UK for levels of poverty.

Housing costs and living standards

However, housing costs don't just affect poverty levels they affect living standards across the income spectrum. Perhaps not coincidentally, at the same time as DWP released their figures, the Resolution Foundation reported on the effects of housing costs on living standards when they rise faster than wages. Among their findings, they suggest that changing tenure patterns and cuts in housing subsidy over the past 20 years have *"conspired to increase housing costs for large numbers of working age households"* and that the *"gains associated with the sharp cut in interest rates ... are dissipating"*. As such, housing costs have had the effective of dragging incomes down so that that living standards for over half of working age households have been falling or flat since 2002. An example the report uses to illustrate this is of a two income couple with one child who, if they were *"paying the same proportion of their income in housing costs today as an equivalent family did in the early 1990s, they would be £1,400 a year better off"*, a loss *"equivalent to a 9p rise in the basic rate of income tax over the period"*.

Increasing housing costs eat up income growth and more

It seems that while those in the bottom half of the income distribution have historically spent a higher proportion of income on housing than the top half, the gap between the two has widened. However, it is the low, rather than lowest, and middle incomes that have *"felt the squeeze the most"*, experiencing the *"largest jump in their housing costs to income ratio"* and the *"biggest rise in over-crowding"*. As a result, despite income growth, the Resolution Foundation found that housing costs had effectively wiped-out *"most if not all of the median income gains made by the bottom 56 % of working age households over a 13 year period"*. In cash terms they contrast a real terms increase in household income of £32 a week (7% 2002/03 to 2015), against real terms housing cost growth of £21 (32%) which takes about two thirds of that income growth. Within those figures, things are worse for certain groups. For example, for households headed by someone aged 25-44, or for those renting in the private sector increases in housing costs have absorbed more than twice over any income growth. Things are a little better for those in the low to middle incomes as a whole, but housing costs have still exceeded income gains.

Buying a house in the West Midlands

Bearing in mind the importance of housing costs on income, it's perhaps worth looking at the most recent Office of National Statistics (ONS) average house price figures. This data is available on a range of geographies including regions, Local Enterprise Partnership areas and councils. Comparing average house prices for the last quarter of 2002 and 2015, a similar period to that used by the Resolution Foundation, gives an indication of the how the cost of buying a house has increased. For the West Midlands' Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas, for example, the average price of a house in the Black Country has risen from £85,379 to £151,193; in Coventry and Warwickshire from £124,572 to £224,455; in Greater Birmingham and Solihull from £115,989 to £202,405; in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire from £85,463 to £163,879; in The Marches from £120,899 to £208,106: and Worcestershire from £145,519 to £243,783.

Disposable income in the West Midlands

It remains to be seen if the national up-swing in median incomes shown by the DWP's figures will be reflected in the West Midlands. If the latest data on West Midlands gross household disposable income levels are anything to go by, the augers are not so good. Published last month, the the Office of National Statistics (ONS) calculates gross disposable household income (GDHI) by taking income and subtracting things like the interest on loans, taxes on income and pension contributions and national insurance.

Their figures for 2014 show that the West Midlands suffered the UK's largest decrease in GDHI when it fell by 0.5% per head on the year before. The only other areas experiencing declines were Northern Ireland (-0.3%) and the North West and Wales (both -0.1%). At the other end of the spectrum, London (1.9%) and East Midlands (0.8%) had the highest rates of growth per head. However, these figures can be quite variable. The year before, for example, the West Midlands had one of the higher growth rates at 1%, being out performed by only London, the South East and Northern Ireland.

Long term decline

Regardless of fluctuations in growth, this left the region's 2014 GDHI per head at £15,611. This placed it eighth out of the UK's 12 nations and regions, ahead of Yorkshire and Humber, the North East, Northern Ireland and Wales. The highest disposable incomes were unsurprisingly in London and the South East, followed by East of England and the South West. Indexed against other regions, the ONS highlight that the West Midlands has had the largest long term decline in GDHI per head, falling from 91% of the UK average in 1997 to 86.9% in 2014. That said, over the same time frame only London and Scotland improved their positions against the UK average.

Looking below regional level is not too encouraging either. At the statistical NUTS 2 sub-regional geographies, the West Midlands conurbation occupies last place in the GDHI per head tables with £14,139, or 78.7% of the UK average while Shropshire & Staffordshire come second last in terms of per head growth rates (-1.7%). More positively, despite a small fall in per head growth, the GDHI per head in the other West Midlands' NUTS 2 area of Herefordshire, Worcestershire & Warwickshire remained above the UK average.

In terms of local authority (NUTS 3) areas within the West Midlands, Coventry experienced the largest per head decrease in the UK at 4.3%. In cash terms, Coventry was alongside Wolverhampton and Sandwell in occupying three of the bottom ten places in the UK disposable income stakes. Across the region, the variation in the West Midlands' GDHI ran from £12,505 in Sandwell to £19,476 in Solihull.

Sources

- ONS - [Regional gross disposable household income](#), May 2016
- DWP - [Households below average income, an analysis of UK income distribution: 1994/95-2014/15](#), June 2016
- Resolution Foundation - [The housing headwind: the impact of rising housing costs on UK living standards](#), June 2016
- ONS - [House prices statistics for small areas: year ending Dec 1995 to year ending Dec 2015](#), June 2016

CONSULTATIONS AND CALLS FOR EVIDENCE

PLEASE CHECK CONSULTATION DEADLINES AND DETAILS ON THE APPROPRIATE WEBSITE

BUSINESS RATES: DELIVERING MORE FREQUENT REVALUATIONS

HM TREASURY, DCLG, VALUATION OFFICE, DAVID GAULKE MP AND MARCUS JONES MP

CLOSES 8TH JULY 2016

The Budget announced the aim to introduce more frequent, at least 3 yearly, revaluations of properties in England for business rates purposes. This discussion paper sets out the challenges of doing this under the current valuation system and alternate approaches including self-assessment and a formula approach.

The paper does not indicate a government preference and does not discount other options. The paper aims to enable stakeholders to consider the trade-offs of delivering more frequent revaluations against the merits and limitations of the current bespoke valuation system.

Full details here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/business-rates-delivering-more-frequent-revaluations>

SHARIA COUNCILS - INQUIRY

PARLIAMENTARY HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE - CLOSES 20TH JULY 2016

The Home Affairs Committee has launched an inquiry into Sharia councils operating in the UK. The Committee will examine how Sharia councils operate in practice, their work in resolving family and divorce disputes and their relationship with the British legal system.

Full details here: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/news-parliament-2015/160623-new-inquiry-sharia-councils/>

NATIONAL LIVING WAGE AND NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE: 2016 EVIDENCE

LOW PAY COMMISSION - CLOSES 29TH JULY 2016

This consultation is relevant to organisations and individuals that are affected by the National Living Wage and the National Minimum Wage rates, for example:

- employees on low wages
- employers of low-paid workers, particularly those in low-paying sectors such as retail, hospitality, social care, cleaning and hairdressing
- young people and apprentices
- representative bodies of the above groups
- other organisations such as charities and voluntary organisations with an interest in the National Minimum Wage.

Full details here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-living-wage-and-national-minimum-wage-2016-evidence>

FUTURE OF INTERCITY WEST COAST RAIL FRANCHISE

DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT – CLOSES 2ND AUGUST 2016

The Department for Transport is seeking views on the future of rail services, stations and other supporting services provided in the new InterCity West Coast (ICWC) franchise. They are welcoming views from: passengers, rail industry employees, communities, business, rail groups, local authorities, LEPs, devolved administrations, unions and other organisations.

Full details here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-intercity-west-coast-rail-franchise>

HEAT NETWORKS INVESTMENT PROJECT (HNIP) - CONSULTATION

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE – CLOSES 3RD AUGUST 2016

HNIP aims to provide £320m of capital support to increase the volume of heat networks being built, deliver carbon savings and help create the conditions necessary for a self-sustaining heat network investment market to develop. The Government is seeking views to inform the design and management of a scheme to support investment in heat networks including what form the funding should take and the other criteria that should be used to assess applications.

Full details here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-heat-networks-investment-project-hnip>

ADULT SOCIAL CARE INQUIRY

PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE –

SUBMISSIONS BY 19TH AUGUST 2016

The Communities and Local Government Committee has launched an inquiry into the financial sustainability of local authority social care and the quality of care provided. It will examine whether the funding available to local authorities is sufficient to fulfil their statutory obligations to assess and meet the needs of people requiring care and support. This includes looking at the impact of policies such as the National Living Wage and the two per cent council tax precept. It will also look at the role of carers in providing adult social care, the relationship between carers and local authorities; the effect of local authority social care commissioning practices and market oversight functions on their local social care markets; and innovative approaches to the design and delivery of adult social care, for example use of digital technology and the progress made by local authorities and health services to deliver integrated health and social care by 2020, and the expected outcomes.

Full details here: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/communities-and-local-government-committee/news-parliament-2015/adult-social-care-launch-16-17/>

HATE CRIME AND ITS VIOLENT CONSEQUENCES - INQUIRY

PARLIAMENTARY HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE – SUBMISSIONS BY 1ST SEPTEMBER 2016

The Committee is carrying out an inquiry into hate crime and its consequences, including hate crime motivated by extremism and actions carried out by fixated individuals. Evidence is invited on issues including - the effectiveness of current legislation and law enforcement; barriers preventing reporting of hate crime; the role of social media; the role of the voluntary sector, community representatives and frontline organisations; statistical trends and recording; and the type, extent and effectiveness of support available to victims.

Full details here: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/news-parliament-2015/160704-new-inquiry-hate-crime/>

RURAL TOURISM IN ENGLAND - INQUIRY

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (EFRA) – CLOSES 6TH SEPTEMBER 2016

The Committee has launched an inquiry into the role of tourism in supporting rural growth in England. Issues covered include how government policies can: encourage more people to visit more of England's rural places; support farmers and rural residents to diversify into tourism; and ensure visitors' experiences are balanced with the need to preserve the environment and the character of local communities. The Committee is seeking evidence on the following key issues: marketing, access, funding and financial policies, planning and regulations, infrastructure and skills, local environment and character, and the role of Defra.

Full details here: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environment-food-and-rural-affairs-committee/news-parliament-2015/rural-tourism-inquiry-launch-16-17/>

FUTURE OF SOCIAL CARE INSPECTION

OFSTED – CLOSES 9TH SEPTEMBER 2016

This consultation seeks views on proposed changes across Ofsted's inspections of children's social care. It has 4 parts:

- principles for children's social care inspections;
- a new approach to inspections of local authority children's services from 2018;
- a new common inspection framework for social care establishments, agencies, boarding schools and residential special schools from April 2017;
- changes to inspections of independent fostering agencies.

Full details here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-social-care-inspection>

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS STATEMENT FOR ACHIEVING PERMANENCE -

CONSULTATION

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION – CLOSES 9TH SEPTEMBER 2016

The Department is seeking views of the content of its knowledge and skills statement for children and family social workers involved in permanence planning. The statement sets out what social workers need to know in order to make long-term plans for children who are looked after or may become looked after. It also informs the content of the continuous professional development programme. Permanence means making a plan for a child which lasts throughout their childhood.

Full details here: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/adoption-and-family-law/knowledge-and-skills-statement-for-achieving-perma>

CAPACITY OF THE HOMEBUILDING INDUSTRY - INQUIRY

PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE –

SUBMISSIONS BY 12TH SEPTEMBER 2016

The Committee has launched an inquiry into the capacity of the housebuilding industry to meet the demand for new homes. As well as calling for written submissions, the Committee says it is likely to invite ministers and representatives of industry bodies, Homes and Communities Agency, local authorities and housing associations to give evidence in public.

Issues to be covered include - whether the numbers of builders and types of firms are sufficient to meet demand, the structure of the industry, house builders business models, workforce, role of planning, innovative approaches, and the role of development finance.

Full details here: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/communities-and-local-government-committee/news-parliament-2015/homebuilding-launch-16-17/>

EVENTS

If you have a suitable event you would like to suggest for inclusion in this section please email: swong@westmidlandsiep.gov.uk

Public Health England Annual Conference 2016

Public Health England

University of Warwick, 13th - 14th September 2016

The Public Health England annual conference will bring together 1,400 participants from a wide range of organisations to learn, network and share knowledge and experience. The theme of this year's conference is "Evidence into action". The conference will promote and showcase the application and translation of science and research, to support effective local and national action to improve public health. Keynote speakers will include the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, Secretary of State for Health, and Jane Ellison MP, Minister for Public Health.

There will be six parallel tracks of sessions enabling participants to create their own schedule and make the most of their time at the conference.

For more information, visit the Public Health England website [here](#).

SHOES - Sandwell Health Other Economic Summit

Sandwell MBC
Venue tbc, 26th Sept

This year's conference will explore austerity, poverty and health. It will look at a global picture and will include speakers on the Icelandic and Greek alternatives and from key national commentators on the picture in England.

More details to follow, visit the Learning for Public Health West Midlands website [here](#)

WEST MIDLANDS IN CONTEXT

West Midlands in Context is written and produced by Sherman Wong for the West Midlands Chief Executives Group with design and distribution supported by [IEWM](#), Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy but please refer to the source material via the links and references provided.

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