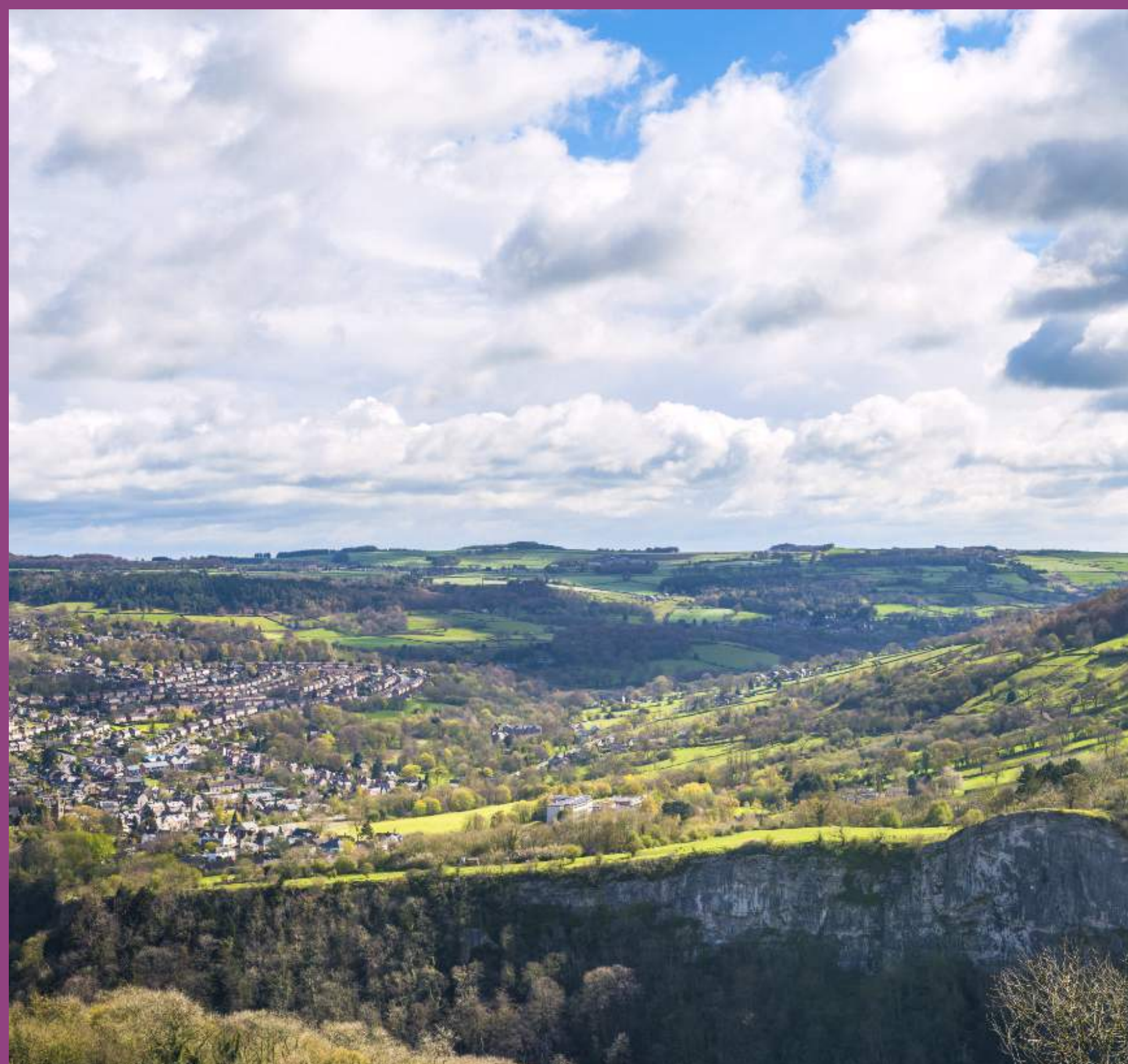


CCN

COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK



Councillors Guide

2021

Introduction

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CCN

COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK

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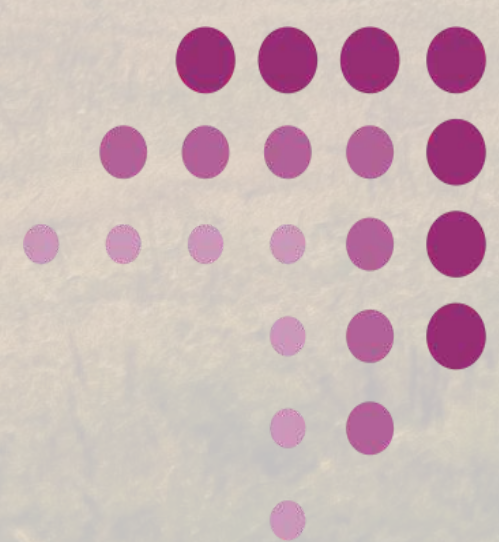


Email the team

countycouncilsnetwork@local.gov.uk

Visit our website

www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk



COUNTIES

LEADING **RECOVERY**
DELIVERING **RENEWAL**

Your Network

The County Councils Network (CCN) is your dedicated local government special interest group representing 36 county councils and unitary authorities, both nationally and within the Local Government Association (LGA). We are a member-led, cross-party organisation.

CCN provide a platform for our councils to share common challenges and best practice, while representing your unique interests nationally. At its core, the CCN aims to articulate the priorities and policy issues that matter most to member councils through impactful research, publications, media, and Parliamentary activity.

CCN is the only national voice for the county councils and some significant unitary authorities in England, who cover cities, towns, rural, and coastal communities that make up our areas. We provide a significant counterbalance to the organisations representing London and metropolitan areas.

In light of the pandemic the need for a powerful voice for county and unitary authorities has never been more important. CCN has spoken with one voice with the sector on the critical role councils have and will continue to play.

As a continuing, or newly elected councillor, this guide to the CCN provides you with the key information on the network.

CCN look forward to supporting you over the coming period and being your council's national voice.

CCN is the largest grouping of upper-tier authorities in England by population and landmass. What makes CCN the natural home for county and unitary authorities of significant size and scale, and what binds our network together, is not only the services our councils provide, but the uniqueness of the places our councillors represent.

86%

of England's
landmass

46%

of England's
population

2,600

Councillors

21.9%

aged 65
& above

33%

of residents living
in rural areas

44%

of all
employment

39%

of all councils
revenue expenditure

70%

of all local roads
in England

Your Network

Influencing on the national stage

Campaigning for you

CCN works on a cross-party basis, articulating the priorities and issues facing our member councils as agreed in a yearly work programme, alongside day-to-day advocacy in responding to announcements, policies, and consultations.

In recent years, the network has produced high profile pieces of research that have led the debate and outlined the case for counties across a whole host of policy areas, such as the future of adult social care, housing and planning, devolution, councils' financial pressures, and economic recovery and renewal.

At the heart of our advocacy has been a number of successful campaigns to outline the importance of county and unitary councils. For instance, our *Fairer Future for Counties* campaign acted as a counterbalance to advocacy from metropolitan areas, and was crucial in making the case for a fairer distribution of government funding. Other campaigns have sought to make the case for county devolution deals that work for rural areas, and to argue why care services should remain locally-delivered.

This year, the network will launch a new campaign, *Counties: Leading Recovery, Delivering Renewal*. This campaign aims to position county councils and unitary authorities as those able to lead successful local economic recovery and social renewal following the pandemic – and to argue for powers and funding to do so.

Our Vision

To ensure CCN is an influential and respected network, advocating innovative policy solutions on the challenges facing local government and the wider public sector.

Our Aim

To ensure counties have the powers and resources to meet the needs and aspirations of their residents on issues of particular importance to our councils and their communities.

Campaigning for you

Delivering for county authorities

The County Councils Network works hard to represent the interests of your council on the national stage. Since the 2017 elections, here are some of the network's biggest achievements:

2017

Fair Funding Review

Secured a commitment to undertake a review of local government needs and resources.

Academisation of schools

Our advocacy made government rethink forced academisation of schools.

Devolution

Helped to make possible the first county devolution deals in Cornwall, Cambridgeshire, and Northumberland. Government subsequently announced at CCN's conference it would consider non-mayoral devolution deals.

Social care grant

CCN's targeted advocacy helped secure £410m of funding for social care, and was directly responsible for ensuring that this funding was distributed via the adult social care relative needs formula, benefiting member councils.

High-needs education

CCN's research highlighted escalating overspends in high-needs education funding and helped secure an additional £250m.

Social care reform

Released an influential report on the kind of social care reform county authorities want to see in the long-trailed white paper.

Local government reorganisation

CCN published the first ever national study on local government reorganisation - helping to secure unitary status for Dorset and Buckinghamshire.

Adult social care funding

Helped to secure an extra £2bn for social care in the March Budget, alongside a further £78m of additional funding for counties in a new adult social care grant.

2018

Negative Revenue Support Grant

Secured confirmation that negative Revenue Support Grant would be cancelled. This followed a two-year campaign on behalf of those member councils affected by the policy.

Roads investment

Secured in-year investment of £420m for local highways. Our member councils received 71% of this funding, with the government distributing the funding according to road length following direct CCN advocacy.

Housing

CCN became a key national stakeholder on housing policy, building on its advocacy on strategic planning. We launched two research reports and hosted our first dedicated national conference.

Campaigning for you

Delivering for county authorities

2019

Local government finance

CCN published a substantive analysis by PwC of local government finance, setting a new benchmark in understanding the funding gap facing councils.

SEND funding

Following intense advocacy CCN and the wider sector helped secure an additional £700m for special educational needs and disabilities at the Spending Round.

Care winter pressures

Helped secure in-year investment of £240m for social care during the winter, funding that will be repeated in 2019/20. CCN councils received 44%

Coronavirus support

When the pandemic struck in March 2020, CCN provided a variety of immediate support and advocacy, for instance on service closures, shielding, PPE, care home support, and encouraging residents to stay local.

Covid-19 Funding

Three substantive CCN reports on counties' financial pressures due to the pandemic helped secure five tranches of funding for councils from the government in 2020/21.

2021

National Bus Strategy

A CCN report examining the decline of bus usage in rural areas helped influence the government's National Bus Strategy to ensure all areas could access powers and resources.

£1bn social care funding

Coordinated advocacy with the LGA at the Spending Round led to a further £1bn of funding for social care services, with CCN ensuring a fair distribution of resources for member councils.

Temporary grants

CCN's dedicated advocacy on council reliance on temporary social care grants helped ensure the continuation of the Improved Better Care Fund, social care grant and winter pressures funding.

Roads Investment

Secured in-year investment of £420m for local highways. Our member councils received 71% of this funding, with the government distributing the funding according to road length following direct CCN advocacy.

2020

Fair Funding Review

CCN secured a re-commitment to the Fair Funding Review following the general election.

Pothole funds

CCN's campaigning helped secure a further £2bn for road maintenance, with counties receiving 71% of the first tranche.

Local government reorganisation

An influential study on reorganisation post-pandemic paved the way for discussions in Cumbria, Somerset, and North Yorkshire.

Keep Care Local

A substantive report *The Future of Adult Social Care* with Newton argued that councils should be in the driving seat of social care system reform, with care locally-delivered.

Your Network

Our support for member councils

Supporting you

Alongside CCN's research, advocacy and policy development we offer a wide range of services to our member councils.

Alongside big-ticket advocacy and campaigns, our policy team provides proactive on-the-day briefings and information on new policies and set piece events such as the budget as soon as they are unveiled.

A core part of CCN business is to ensure that our councils hear from policy makers in Westminster to help shape national policy. We facilitate a variety of meetings, events and host an Annual Conference for councillors to debate and discuss particular issues and hear from expert speakers and Ministers.

The CCN team is always on hand to answer policy queries and provide our member councils with expert advice on developments nationally, while supporting dedicated officer networks.

A key element of support is also disseminating and highlighting the work of our member councils through the sharing of best practice. During the pandemic, the network has produced two 'best practice' reports, whilst case studies regularly feature in major CCN reports and research.

More widely, our communications and public affairs activity ensure that the county voice is heard on the national stage.

Below, we summarise the key aspects of our support to member councils.

CCN

COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK

Corporate objectives

Influence public policy at national level

Act as the voice for county and unitary councils, advocating and representing members' views within the LGA, across Whitehall and to key influencers.

Produce original research & innovative policy solutions

Continue to raise the profile of CCN, lead members and officers through development of strong, impactful and consistent external and internal communications alongside a targeted public affairs strategy.

Enhance the profile of CCN

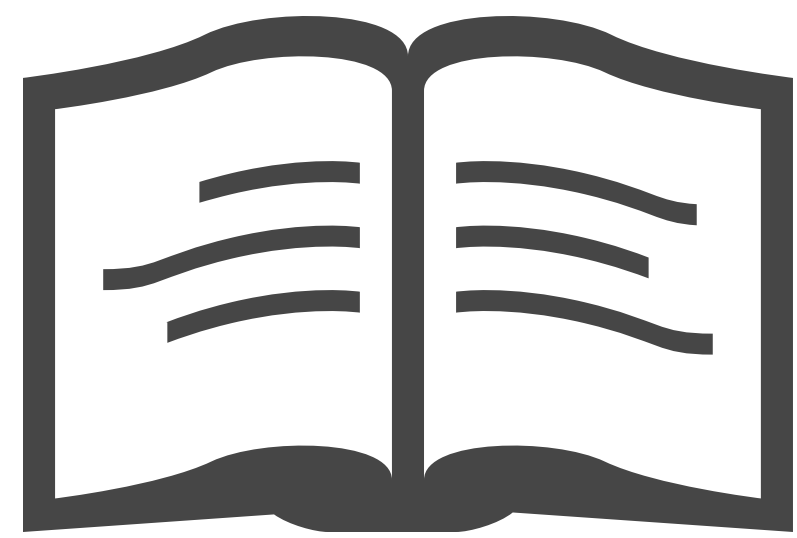
Produce or commission original research to support the development and advocacy of innovative policy solutions, addressing the unique demographic, financial and geographical challenges facing counties and their residents.

Support member councils & share best practice

Act as a gateway to Whitehall for member councils. Share intelligence and best practice to support member councils and public sector partners to continue to be the most effective and efficient organisations in the public sector.

CCN's Support For Councils

At a glance



30

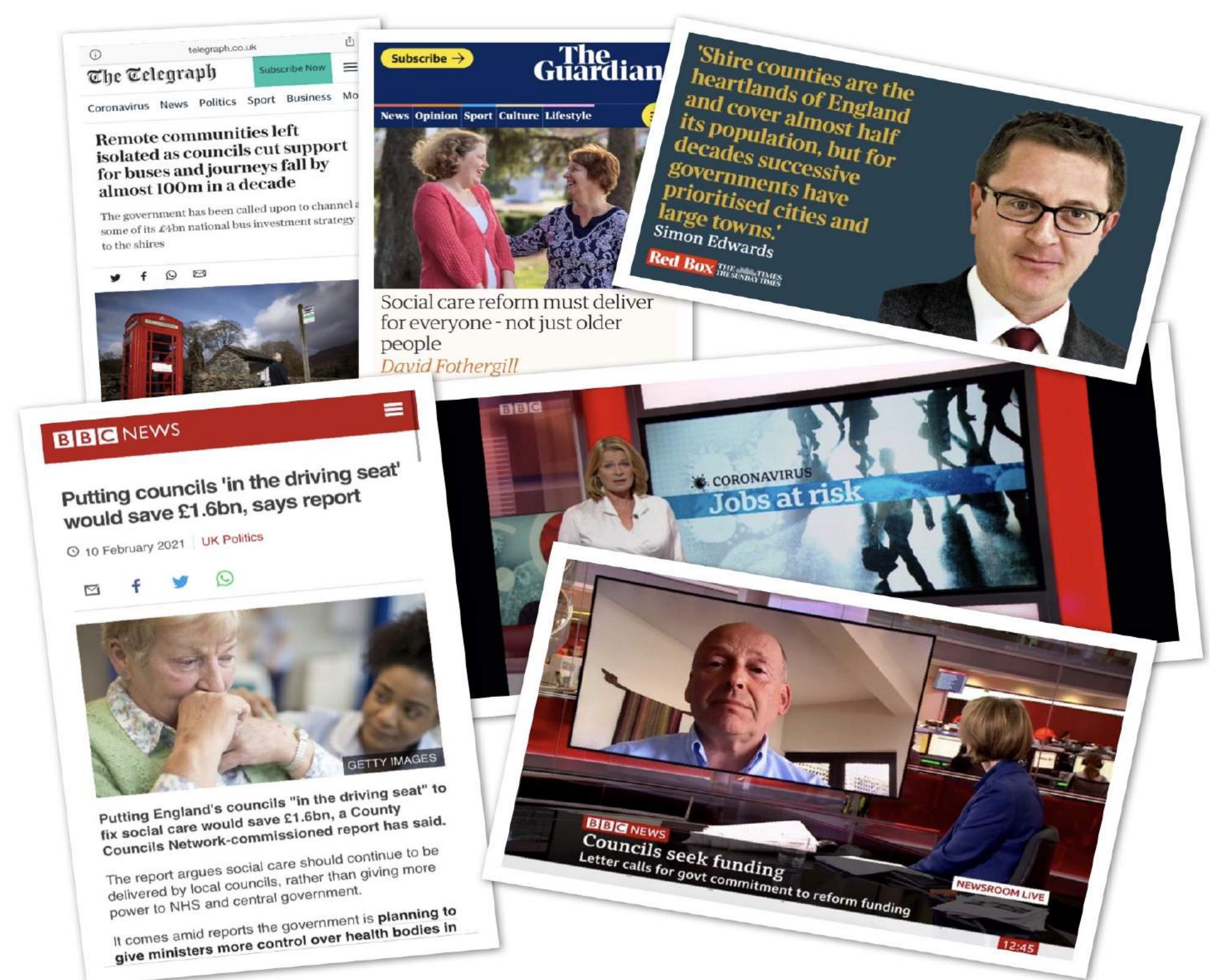
**publications, consultation
responses and
submissions to
government in 2020/21**

Policy Development and Research

CCN produces research and responds to Government consultations, putting forward a strong evidence base and policy solutions to address the challenges and opportunities for counties. Since 2016, CCN has produced 42 substantive reports or analysis pieces on the big issues of the day for local government. The network has worked with some of the biggest global brands and industry thinkers to produce new evidence on behalf of county authorities.

Media and Communications

CCN is a prominent voice in the media, speaking up on behalf of member councils. Alongside being the go-to organisation on issues affecting county and rural areas, it is increasingly seen as a key voice for local government across all major national media outlets. Last year was the network's most successful year in the media, with 1,297 stories featuring CCN in the media, including 142 in the national press. In that time, CCN distributed 42 press releases arguing the case for counties.



Public Affairs

CCN is the gateway to Whitehall and Parliament for member councils, while building strong relationships with stakeholders across the local government, public and private sectors. CCN maintains a strong presence in Parliament, including (pre pandemic) weekly meetings with the Secretary of State, and regular meetings with MPs. Additionally, CCN is the secretariat for the County All-Party Parliamentary Group. The group released an influential report on the decline of rural buses last year, and its chair Peter Aldous MP regularly raises issues on behalf of county and unitary councils in the Commons.



CCN's Support For Councils

At a glance



6

**online set-piece events on
a range of policy subjects
in 2020/21**

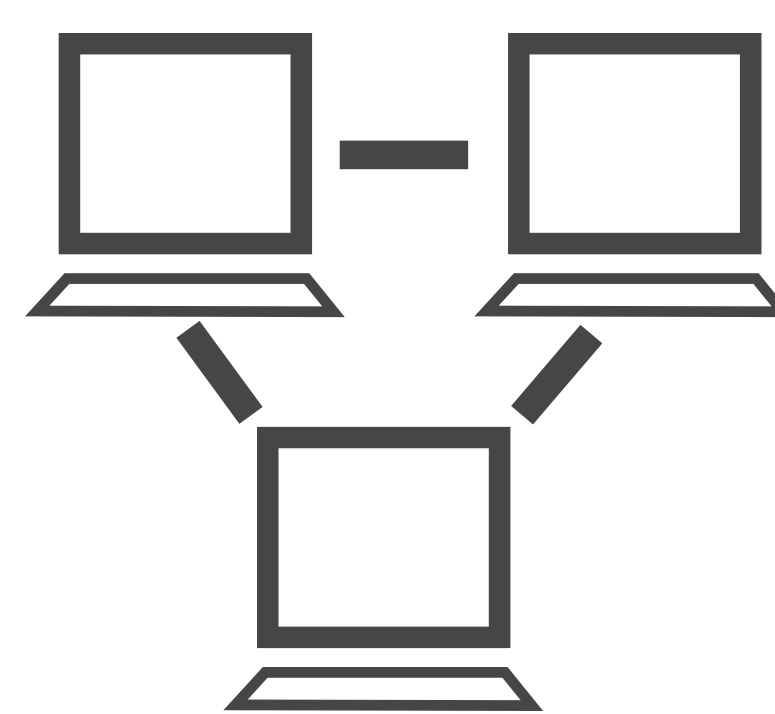
Events and Conference

As a leading national voice on local government, CCN hosts a number of events throughout the year, as well as one of the most prominent public sector conferences.

Our events range from report launches and panel discussions, to briefing events for officers and members on the key policy issues of the day. As a result of the pandemic we have delivered more online events, providing the opportunity to profile our major projects and also gain insights from our Strategic Partners. Looking ahead, our Annual Conference 2021 will be one of the first post-pandemic local government events.

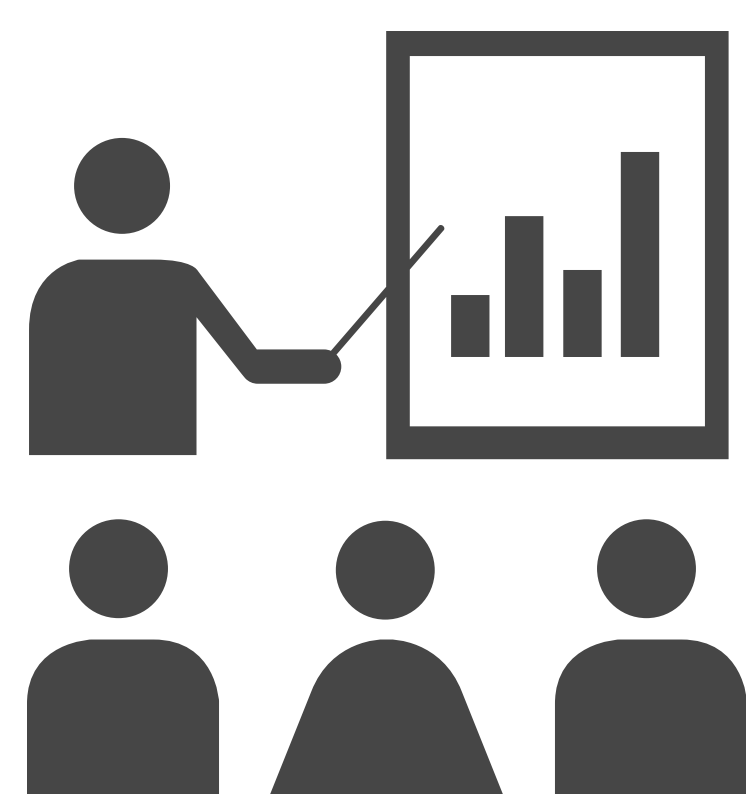
Meetings and Advisory

CCN provide a range of member meetings, including our four Council meetings per year for members to influence and shape the work of the network and engage Ministers and other high-profile speakers on key policy issues. The use of improved video-conferencing technology has dramatically increased our weekly contact with member councils through additional Leaders & Chief Executives virtual meetings. CCN is also providing more bespoke expert advice and intelligence gathering for individual councils across a range of policy areas.



56

**virtual meetings in 2020/21 for
Councillors and Chief
Executives**



17

**dedicated officer group
meetings across
corporate policy, adults and
children's services**

Officer Groups & Support

Alongside our dedicated support to the Association of County Chief Executives, CCN has four policy specific officer groups, providing senior officers in our member councils access to policy makers and national influencers, while feeding into the policy development of the network. Moving meetings of our officer groups online has dramatically increased the level of attendance and engagement.

Governance

How CCN works

Member-led Network

CCN is a cross-party member-led organisation, with elected councillors at the heart of driving the organisations advocacy. The network has three layers of governance.

Management Committee is the elected body comprising the CCN chairman and Vice-Chairs from each of the political groups. The group with the largest political representation proposes a candidate for Chairman.

Executive Committee consists of Management Committee members and 10 Spokespersons. The overall balance of membership of the CCN Executive will be politically proportionate in line with the total political balance of CCN authorities, with Group Leaders nominating Spokespersons to lead on policy portfolios.

CCN Council is the third part of our governance structure. A much larger body of up to 150 councillors, each member council nominates up to four elected members to serve on the CCN Council. Top up places are used to ensure political proportionality.

Following May's local elections CCN's political balance will be updated using the Rallings and Thrasher model, with new members of CCN council appointed ahead of the CCN Annual General Meeting in September 2021.

Management Committee

Management Committee proposes the annual budget, business plan and audited accounts for approval by CCN Council and oversee all aspects of CCN day-to-day business.

Executive Committee

Advise Management Committee on the annual budget, work programme and overall direction of CCN. Spokespersons are allocated to specific policy areas to lead the delivery of the CCN work programme and act as the networks' voice in the media.

CCN Council

Meets four times a year to approve the annual budget, business plan and audited accounts. Members of CCN Council have the opportunity to attendee meetings and engage with high-profile speakers, including Government Ministers.

Governance Officer Support

Meet the Team

The CCN officer team of seven is based on the fifth floor of the Local Government Association's building, 18 Smith Square, in Westminster.

Click 'contact for' to email a specific member of the team.



The CCN office's close proximity to the decision-makers and influential organisations within Westminster has enabled the network to secure regular meetings and briefings with high-profile individuals, while ensuring your voice is heard in Whitehall, Parliament and the LGA.



Simon Edwards

Director

Contact for: strategic direction, partnerships & member relations



James Maker

Head of Policy and Communications

Contact for: corporate policy, finance, devolution and reform



Peter French

Senior Policy Officer

Contact for: Planning, Transport & Economy



Jon Rallings

Senior Policy Officer

Contact for: Adult & Children's Social Care



Ellie Skinner

Policy Officer

Contact for: Climate Change & Environment



James Holden

Senior Public Affairs & Policy Officer

Contact for: Parliamentary engagement, County APPG and external affairs



Ian Burbidge

Senior Communications Officer

Contact for: Press and communications

Campaigning for you

The year ahead for CCN

Over the next twelve months, CCN has agreed six key priorities to influence key debates and policy areas on behalf of its member councils, alongside showcasing the power and influence of local authorities in people's everyday lives.

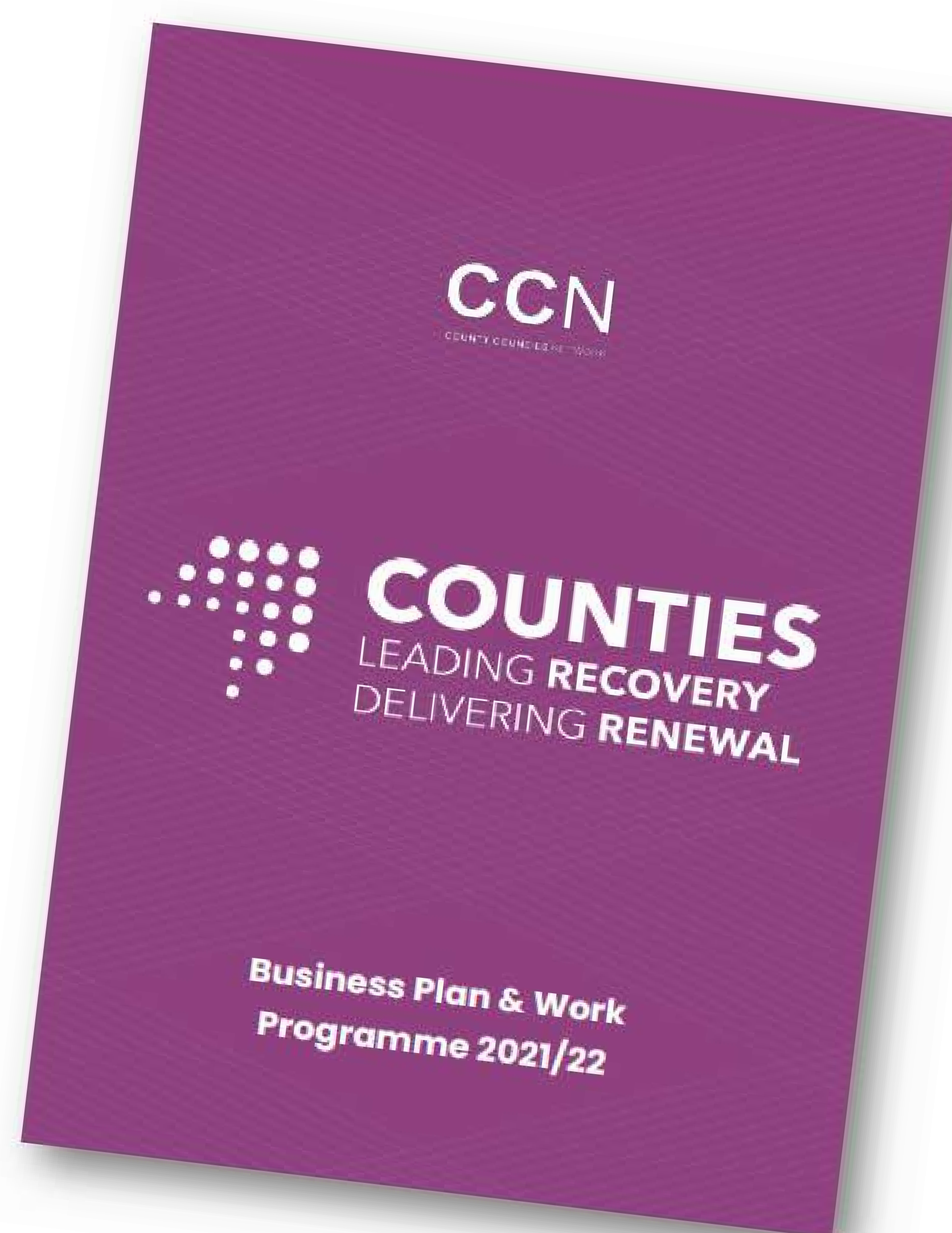
This forms the basis of the network's Business Plan & Work Programme 2021/22, which was agreed in March this year. Following detailed engagement with member councils, our six priorities reflect the most important issues facing our county and unitary authorities and the residents and businesses they serve.

At the core of CCN's work this year will be a new campaign narrative *Counties: Leading Recovery, Delivering Renewal* which aims to showcase your local authorities role in delivering recovery and renewal across social care, the economy, climate change, and more.

CCN will also be exploring fresh challenges facing county authorities, from continuing financial pressures, home to school transport, the children's services review, and planning reforms. We will set solutions and responses on behalf of county areas.

Below we summarise our six priorities and associated work streams for the year ahead.

Click the image below to download CCN's business plan for the next year. The priorities begin on page 17.



Upcoming CCN work

CCN is already busy putting into action our Business Plan & Work Programme for 2021/22 to shape Government policy, support our member councils and secure better outcomes for county areas. Alongside developing detailed plans to deliver our core activity across our six priorities, a number of major projects have begun and will be published in the coming months, including;

- ***The Future of Local Government***: a major new report with PriceWaterhouseCoopers, setting out the opportunities and challenges facing local government up to 2030, and how the sector can transform to deliver recovery and renewal following the pandemic.
- ***Optimising Children's Social Care***: building on our ground-breaking report *The Future of Adult Social Care*, CCN is working with Newton to develop a detailed evidence base to influence the on-going independent review of children's services and future policy direction.
- ***Rising to the Climate Challenge***: a new report that will examine in detail the climate emergency in county areas and how CCN member councils can be leaders of place in supporting residents and businesses to reduce carbon emissions and drive green growth.

Campaigning for you

The year ahead for CCN

1. Sustainable and Fair Funding

Helping to recover council finances post-pandemic, delivering the Fair Funding Review and reforming local government finance so it is more efficient.



**Sustainable
funding**



**Fairer funding
for counties**



**Council tax and
fiscal devolution**



**Rates and
reform**

2. Reforming Health and Care

Influencing social care reform and health integration, alongside arguing to keep care local. Making the county case in reforms to children's services and in special educational needs.



**Social care
reform**



**Integration and
public health**



**Children's social
care**



**Education and
special
educational needs**

3. Devolution For All

Campaigning for a framework of devolved powers and structural reform to drive powers down to local communities, from Whitehall to county halls.



**Devolution
white paper**



Accountability



**Local
government
reform**



**Public service
reform**

Campaigning for you

The year ahead for CCN

4. Strengthening Communities

A more strategic approach to planning, matched by new infrastructure financing, adequate funding for culture, plus improving community safety and wellbeing.



**Housing and
planning**



**Infrastructure:
financing and
delivery**



**Cultural and
voluntary
services**



**Fire and
community safety**

5. Growing Our Economies

Making the case for government and business to back the role of counties in economic recovery, devolving skills budgets and investing in transport and connectivity.



**Place-based
economic
recovery**



**Strategic
investment**



**Transport and
connectivity**



**Skills and
employment**

6. Tackling Climate Change

Supporting councils to reduce their carbon emissions, improving parks, public spaces and waste management, and investing in green infrastructure.



**Council
leadership**



**Parks and
public places**



**Green
infrastructure
and climate
resilience**



**Waste and
recycling**

Strategic Partners

Providing insights & innovation

As part of our collaboration with the business and third-sector community, CCN has this year established a new 'strategic partnership' offer for organisations who will add value to the work of member councils and CCN.

Our member councils understand the benefits our partners can bring, from insight, experience, and sharing knowledge, to ideas and innovation. These partnerships are an essential part of CCN's sponsorship and corporate strategy.

CCN has established strategic partnerships with six organisations: **CCLA, FutureGov, Grant Thornton, IMPOWER, Newton and PwC.**

As part of the strategic partnership offer, we commit to collaborate with organisations on areas of mutual interest, which provide our member councils with new insights and support the advocacy objectives of the organisation.

You can read more about our work with our strategic partners on our new dedicated website section by clicking the link below.

[**Click here for more information on our strategic partners**](#)





COUNTIES
LEADING **RECOVERY**
DELIVERING **RENEWAL**

Founded in 1997, the County Councils Network is the voice of England's counties. A cross-party organisation, CCN develops policy, commissions research, and presents evidence-based solutions nationally on behalf of the largest grouping of local authorities in England.

In total, the 23 county councils and 13 unitary councils that make up the CCN represent 26 million residents, account for 39% of England's GVA, and deliver high-quality services that matter the most to local communities

The network is a cross-party organisation, expressing the views of member councils to the government and within the Local Government Association.

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@CCNOffice



County Councils Network



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