Where the full text article is freely available, please click on the headline for further information. Alternatively, please contact the Business and Legal Intelligence Team for further details.
If you would like advice or assistance with any of the issues covered in this bulletin, please contact Celia Cullen, Head of Local Government Services at Pinsent Masons.

LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. High Court throws out JR on ‘easyCouncil’
   Law Society Gazette
   29 April 2013
   A London council is to proceed with the outsourcing of regulatory services such as building control and land charges after fighting off a High Court challenge.

2. Barnet Council wins legal victory over outsourcing plans
   localgov.co.uk
   29 April 2013
   Barnet Council has won its High Court battle to proceed with its One Barnet change programme.

3. London boroughs call for action over £22m NHS scandal
   localgov.co.uk
   29 April 2013
   A group of South West London boroughs has called for NHS officers responsible for a £22m financial scandal to be held to account.

4. Richmond demands residents are protected from falling bodies
   localgov.co.uk
   26 April 2013
   Richmond LBC has demanded action is taken to protect residents from stowaways falling from flights to Heathrow.

5. Wards Corner legal challenge dismissed
   Out Law
   25 April 2013
   A High Court judge has refused to grant permission for judicial review of Haringey Council's decision to grant planning permission for a mixed use redevelopment of Wards Corner in north London's Seven Sisters.

POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

6. Improving councils' powers to tackle unauthorised development
   Department for Communities and Local Government
   29 April 2013
Communities Secretary Eric Pickles today pledged to “stop caravans in their tracks” with changes to ‘stop notices’, backed up by potentially unlimited fines for those who ignore planning rules.

7. **CLG pushing to use NHS land for building**
   *Inside Housing*
   *29 April 2013*
   'Intensive efforts' are being made by the department of Communities and Local Government to try and get National Health Service land made available for housing, a senior civil servant has said.

8. **LGA plans new model for local government**
   *Public Finance*
   *26 April 2013*
   The Local Government Association is set to launch a radical reform plan for councils that will outline new ways of allocating public funding and providing services, chair Sir Merrick Cockell has revealed.

9. **Councils urged to end high-rise housing ‘scandal’**
   *Inside Housing*
   *26 April 2013*
   The leader of the Greater London Authority Conservative group has called for a ban on children being housed in social tower blocks at a London Assembly meeting.

10. **Northern Ireland Executive agree transfer of planning powers**
    *Out Law*
    *25 April 2013*
    The majority of planning functions in Northern Ireland will be transferred from central Government to 11 new district councils in April 2015, NI Environment Minister Alex Attwood has announced.

11. **Councils urged not to procure on cost alone**
    *localgov.co.uk*
    *25 April 2013*
    A 10-point checklist to ensure sustainable procurement has been drawn up for local authorities by the Building & Engineering Services Association.

**MARKET NEWS**

12. **Croydon set to share services with other London boroughs**
    *localgov.co.uk*
    *29 April 2013*
    Croydon LBC is set to share trading standards, environmental health and licensing services with fellow local authorities, Merton and Richmond LBCs.

13. **Government urged to drop ‘wasteful’ competition plan for LEPs**
    *localgov.co.uk*
    *29 April 2013*
    The government has been urged to back down on plans to make Local Enterprise Partnerships compete for a share of the proposed single local growth fund after a warning that such an exercise could be a waste of money.
14. **Real-terms cut in Council Tax for third year running**  
Department for Communities and Local Government  
27 April 2013  
The government’s Council Tax freeze deal helps to cut residents’ cost of living.

15. **Council pension funds could be merged, says DCLG official**  
localgov.co.uk  
26 April 2013  
Government ministers want council pension funds to work closer together and ‘do not rule out’ implementing mergers of existing funds, the man leading pension reforms at the Department for Communities and Local Government has said.

16. **Pension investment could deliver 20,000 new homes**  
localgov.co.uk  
25 April 2013  
Investing the capital held in Local Government Pensions Schemes could unlock 20,000 new homes, according to Hearthstone Investments.

17. **Union attacks ‘low wage epidemic’ in local government**  
localgov.co.uk  
25 April 2013  
Research commissioned by a trade union has indicated 28,000 local government workers are paid below the revised hourly rate for the National Minimum Wage.

18. **Second council invites applicants to buy £1 homes**  
Inside Housing  
24 April 2013  
A second council offering homes for £1 says it has had thousands of expressions of interest as it begins the formal application process.

19. **Self-reported data breaches increase, research finds**  
localgov.co.uk  
24 April 2013  
Councils received the most monetary penalties for data security failings of any organisation last year, as self-reported breaches rose, research finds.

20. **Wigan picks developer for 474-home scheme**  
Out Law  
23 April 2013  
Developer Taylor Wimpey has been selected as preferred bidder by Wigan Council and the Homes and Communities Agency for a mixed-use regeneration scheme at a former colliery site near Wigan.

21. **Green light for two London office-to-residential conversions**  
Out Law  
23 April 2013  
Westminster City Council has resolved to grant planning permission for a £35 million redevelopment of 55 Victoria Street and a £9m redevelopment of Westbourne House at Westbourne Grove.

**PEOPLE NEWS**
22. Temporary labour usage rises in public sector
localgov.co.uk
24 April 2013
Temporary labour usage by public bodies increased by 1.6% in the first quarter of 2013 on the previous year, figures suggest.

23. Councils offer 1% pay rise to staff
Public Finance
24 April 2013
Council workers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland have been offered a ‘best possible’ 1% pay increase for the current year, local authority employers announced today.

24. London tri-borough chiefs step down
Public Finance
23 April 2013
Derek Myers, the first joint chief executive of two unitary councils, is to step down from his post, it was announced today.

OTHER

25. Fears over increase in council tax arrears
localgov.co.uk
26 April 2013
The number of people seeking advice over council tax arrears is likely to rise by 25% following the Government’s reforms of benefits, according to the Council Tax Advisors.

26. English councils owed £2.4bn in council tax
Public Finance
26 April 2013
Local authorities in England have failed to collect almost £2.4bn in council tax since the system began, according to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

27. Council staff could face daily test for alcohol abuse
localgov.co.uk
23 April 2013
Local government staff could face daily alcohol testing at work, following the launch of a new finger touch system.