

# SECTOR-LED IMPROVEMENT



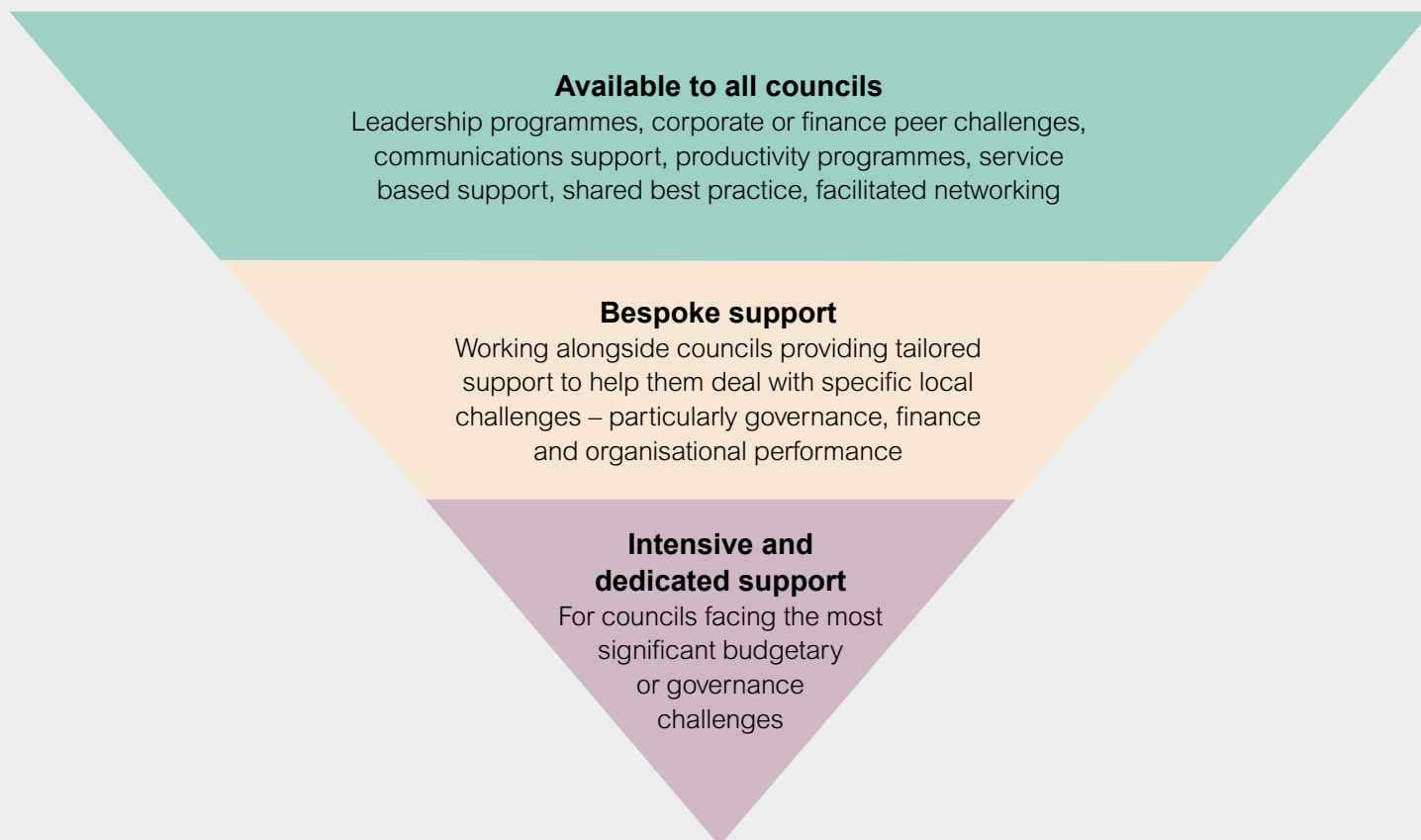
## OUR OFFER OF SUPPORT

The challenges currently facing councils are unprecedented, but sector-led improvement has proven to be a success even in tough times. Our refreshed offer provides different tiers of support depending on the intensity of the challenges being faced locally.

The range of tools and support available have been shaped by what councils have told us they need and would be most helpful to them.

In addition we continue to maintain an overview of performance in the sector so that we are able to offer support on a proactive basis, helping councils facing severe challenges and minimising the need for government intervention.

[www.local.gov.uk/sector-led-improvement](http://www.local.gov.uk/sector-led-improvement)



**95%** of chief executives and council leaders said support from the Local Government Association (LGA) had a positive impact on their authority

**78%** of senior councillors and officers said that the sector-led improvement approach is right in the current context

## Children's services

We provide advice and a range of support including:

- Leadership Essentials, providing an intensive introduction to the role of lead member for children's services
- an informal system of support for lead members going through an Ofsted inspection or single inspection framework (SIF) re-inspection
- developing and/or brokering bespoke diagnostic or peer review tools either to individual councils, as part of a regional offer, or commissioned by the Department for Education for authorities in intervention
- courses for practitioners engaging in peer challenge or diagnostic activity
- research looking at the key enablers, and barriers, to improvement and how the whole system can support improvement in local children's services.

Children's improvement advisers work with LGA principal advisers.

[www.local.gov.uk/childrens-services-improvement](http://www.local.gov.uk/childrens-services-improvement)

## Communications

A wide range of specialist support is available to communication teams. This includes one-day communications health checks, three-day strategic communications reviews, place branding support, crisis communications assistance and advice on managing issues of high reputational risk.

The LGA can also assist with accessing best practice case studies and resources and can provide advice on issues such as research, evaluation and training.

[www.local.gov.uk/our-site-communications-support-offer](http://www.local.gov.uk/our-site-communications-support-offer)

## Devolution

There is no standard template for our offer as we want to ensure that just as devolution is different in different areas then so too is the support that we put in place. Our bespoke package could include anything from policy and leadership development to strategic advice for ongoing discussions with government and help to gain additional capacity and capability.

The LGA also provides support to combined authority mayors and senior officers through our combined authority networks. These include the Chief Executives Network and officer networks focused on finance, housing and planning, employment and skills, HR and governance.

Our devolution hub has everything you need to know and includes our popular 60-second explainer videos.

[www.local.gov.uk/devolution](http://www.local.gov.uk/devolution)

## Finance

In the current financial climate councils are increasingly looking for good practice and support to help them manage their overall finances. This can range from achieving productivity or efficiency savings through to engaging local communities in how to prioritise spending with reduced resources.

We offer a range of support:

- Financial Review, a specialist financial peer challenge that focuses on a council's strategy for achieving financial sustainability
- Leadership Essentials, a two day residential programme to help leaders and finance portfolio holders get to grips with financial challenges
- Budget Challenge, a facilitated discussion, led by a member peer, working with the cabinet or equivalent, offering political advice and guidance on budget options and issues
- bespoke finance improvement advice.

[www.local.gov.uk/finance](http://www.local.gov.uk/finance)

## Innovation

Each year at the LGA Conference our Innovation Zone showcases bold and innovative ideas to tackle local issues from councils and beyond. Ongoing innovation work includes:

- over 1,100 examples of council innovation on our website
- our work with the Design Council, equipping councils with design skills and techniques to apply to service challenges
- our behavioural insights programme
- #InnovateTuesday, highlighting our latest case studies.

[www.local.gov.uk/case-studies](http://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies)

## Local Partnerships

Local Partnerships, a joint venture between HM Treasury, the LGA and Welsh Government, helps local authorities save money, make money and respond to public sector reform opportunities. Working in partnership with the LGA, Local Partnerships assists the development and implementation of strategic transformation programmes across services including: housing, waste collection and disposal, energy efficiency, mergers and shared services, business case development and more.

[www.localpartnerships.org.uk](http://www.localpartnerships.org.uk)

## Managerial leadership

Local government managers are leading through unprecedented times. To support these professionals our development offer focuses on ensuring the best graduates are encouraged into the sector and those leading councils are offered opportunities for joint political and managerial development. Plus, through our partnership with Solace, the prestigious IGNITE programme for chief executives and programmes aimed at aspiring chief executives and middle managers.

[www.local.gov.uk/officer-development](http://www.local.gov.uk/officer-development)

## One Public Estate

The One Public Estate (OPE) and Land Release Fund (LRF) programmes are delivered in partnership with the Cabinet Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. OPE provides practical support and revenue funding to councils to deliver ambitious property-focused programmes, in collaboration with central government and other public sector partners. Our offer includes a combination of dedicated regional support, grant funding, a specialist pool of experts and access to central government departments.

A new cross-government initiative, LRF, will bring forward the release of local authority owned land for over 7,200 new homes. In 2018, £45 million capital funding was awarded to over 70 council-led projects for remediation and infrastructure works to combat barriers which would otherwise make land unusable for development.

[www.local.gov.uk/onepublicestate](http://www.local.gov.uk/onepublicestate)

## Peer support

Peers are at the heart of the sector-led improvement process. They are officers and elected members who provide a 'practitioner perspective' and 'critical friend' challenge. Over 2,200 LGA peers help build capacity, confidence and sustainability by challenging practice and sharing knowledge and experience.

[www.local.gov.uk/become-a-peer](http://www.local.gov.uk/become-a-peer)

## Planning

The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) provides high-quality help, advice and training to councils to help planners and councillors stay effective and up-to-date. This includes help with progressing a local plan, improving performance with planning applications, delivery and infrastructure funding, peer challenge and support, Leadership Essentials, best practice updates and events.

[www.local.gov.uk/pas](http://www.local.gov.uk/pas)

## Political leadership

The LGA has developed a range of political leadership development programmes and resources to help support and develop councillors – ensuring local politicians are confident, capable, and well equipped to make a difference locally. These include:

- our flagship Leadership Academy for councillors in leadership positions
- the Next Generation programme
- Leadership Essentials, focusing on specific portfolio areas
- Focus on Leadership seminars and workshops.

In addition, the LGA offers all councils that change political control, whether to a single party administration or no overall control, up to five days free support from our experienced member peers and free support for councillors in opposition who are likely to form administrations.

[www.local.gov.uk/councillor-development](http://www.local.gov.uk/councillor-development)

## Productivity and efficiency

The LGA supports your council to innovate, save money and generate income. Support includes:

- cyber security – funding from the Cabinet Office to ensure that councils are as resilient to cyber-attacks as possible
- commercialisation – commercial skills training supporting councils to undertake successful commercial activities
- National Procurement Strategy 2018 and toolkit – focusing on three themes: showing leadership, behaving commercially and achieving community benefits.
- Transformation and Innovation Exchange – case studies, guidance, tools, performance
- data, training and other resources to help councils continue to deliver value for money and better outcomes for communities.

[www.local.gov.uk/efficiency-and-income-generation](http://www.local.gov.uk/efficiency-and-income-generation)

## Research and data

We provide data services and research to support councils and provide the evidence needed to make the best decisions for communities, including:

- regular, national resident satisfaction polls
- free data benchmarking club
- online eLearning modules and support to help authorities make better use of data.

LG Inform is a free online data benchmarking service containing over 5,500 data items covering demographics, health, finance and performance data. The newly established, LG Inform 'Value for Money' service holds over 950 financial data items for local authorities. Finally, LG Inform Plus gives subscribers a suite of online services to help add, view and report key data for small areas.

[www.lginform.local.gov.uk](http://www.lginform.local.gov.uk)

[www.local.gov.uk/research](http://www.local.gov.uk/research)

## Scrutiny

The Centre for Public Scrutiny's (CfPS) purpose is to improve lives and places through effective governance and public scrutiny. We work with a wide range of organisations, people and places to support them in developing a culture and ways of working which incorporate challenge, scrutiny and involvement.

[www.cfps.org.uk](http://www.cfps.org.uk)

## Workforce

All of the challenges facing local government have implications for its workforce – organisational design, recruitment, skills, rewards and leadership. Our report Workforce Focus takes stock and offers ideas for improvement.

We offer a range of innovative and practical support. Our bespoke offer tailors our resources to individual council needs around job evaluation, pay structures, senior staff appraisals, political relationship management and much more.

[www.local.gov.uk/workforce](http://www.local.gov.uk/workforce)

# Support and challenge from peers

Support and challenge from our network of experienced member and officer peers is what makes a sector-led approach to improvement unique and successful.

Our peer challenge approach involves a team of officers and members spending time onsite at another council as 'peers' to provide challenge and share learning. It is an established and proven tool that supports improvement. In our most recent perceptions survey 92 per cent of respondents said peer challenges are useful to councils.

A recent independent evaluation, 'Rising to the challenge', concludes

that our corporate peer challenge continues to have positive impact for participating councils and local government as a whole.

We want all councils to benefit from peer challenge and there is an expectation that all councils will have a corporate peer challenge (at no charge) every four to five years. Councils can choose the timing of their peer challenge and there is scope to tailor its focus.

The LGA also provides direct bespoke support through its pool of member and officer peers and in-house experts, helping councils and their councillors with improvement and learning by providing a 'practitioner perspective' and 'critical friend', for example mentoring for new leaders and portfolio holders.

[www.local.gov.uk/peer-challenges](http://www.local.gov.uk/peer-challenges)

**92%** of leaders and chief executives said that peer challenge is a useful way to get an external view on performance

LGA Perceptions Survey 2017/18

## How we can help with immediate challenges

To support councils to be the very best we have shaped our offer to reflect the key challenges councils are facing.

### Adult social care and health

The Care and Health Improvement Programme offers a range of options to help councils and their health partners overcome the demands on adult social care provision, including:

- a self-assessment tool to manage and mitigate financial and sustainability risks
- the Commissioning for Better Outcomes framework to implement best practice in commissioning
- the high impact change model to minimise unnecessary hospital stays and consider new interventions
- a self-assessment tool and facilitated workshops to assess ambitions, capability and capacity to integrate services

- a new approach to identifying efficient and sustainable use of resources
- workshops to aid public health and prevention decision making
- transformation support through information sharing and technology
- training and networking opportunities.

Our care and health improvement advisers work alongside principal advisers in each region to provide tailored help and advice, coordinate expert mentoring and peer support.

[www.local.gov.uk/chip](http://www.local.gov.uk/chip)

### Brexit

We are supporting councils to prepare for EU Exit by facilitating a programme of regional sounding boards, where regional sector

representatives have the opportunity to highlight risks and opportunities, and share best practice from within the sector on EU Exit planning.

[www.local.gov.uk/brexit](http://www.local.gov.uk/brexit)

### Housing

Council house building must be at the centre of a renewed effort to deliver homes that generate growth and that communities need. The 2019/20 Housing Advisers programme will support councils to deliver a project to meet their local housing needs: delivering homes, reducing homelessness, or generating revenue or savings.

Councils can apply for bespoke expert support from an independent adviser.

[www.local.gov.uk/housing](http://www.local.gov.uk/housing)

# How do I find out more?

To find out more about our services or to discuss any support you may need, please contact your principal adviser.

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We consider requests on an individual basis.

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