



East of England
Local Government Association

East of England LGA Business Plan

2019-24



The Business Plan sets out the over-arching themes for the next 5 years that set into context the activities of the Association.

It describes the ways in which the East of England LGA will work with and support our member councils and partners.

It is intended that this plan will be reviewed and refreshed on an annual basis as part of the Association's standard governance and budget-setting process.

Document Reference Information

Author/Lead	Eddie Gibson, Senior Manager, East of England LGA
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Version Control Record

Version	Description of Change(s)	Reason for Change	Author	Date
1.0	Draft Business Plan		EG	21/5/19

Foreword

The East of England is one of the most vibrant and economically active regions in the UK – we have 2 of the UK's 5 busiest passenger airports at Stansted and Luton, 2 of the 3 busiest shipping container ports at Felixstowe and Tilbury and the 5th biggest passenger port at Harwich. These connections have created a region which is well-placed to attract investment, foster innovation and support local businesses to grow and become successful.

However, sustaining our status as a region making a net contribution to the national UK economy will be a challenge. Our infrastructure requires further investment in order to be truly fit for purpose with some parts of our road and rail network in urgent need of improvement or upgrade. Delivering enough housing to meet the current and future needs of our communities is essential, as are strategies to attract and retain the workforce required to support our local economies.

There are wider social changes at work which demand our attention – an ageing population, an increase in looked-after children and the uncertainty surrounding Brexit are all placing pressure on local government services and require us to make the best of the limited resources and finances at our disposal to support our communities effectively.

In the East of England, the good news is that we have the Association in place to bring us together to face these challenges collectively. Through its' work, we can ensure that the shared ambitions of local government in the East – fairer funding for the sector, greater local autonomy and continuing investment in the drivers of economic growth – are amplified and heard all the way to the top tiers of Government. It is important that this work is delivered in a financially sustainable way and I will be working on behalf of all members to ensure that the Association implements the recommendations from our organisational Review in 2018 to achieve this.

We have a long and successful history of collaborative working across the councils in the East; and we are proud that all 50 of these authorities continue to be members of the Association.

As Chairman, my ambition is to build on this collaboration and make the most of the opportunities that the Association offers in enabling all of our member councils to be “the best that they can be for their communities”.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Finch'.

Cllr David Finch

Chairman of the East of England LGA
& Leader of Essex County Council

Purpose and Objectives

The East of England LGA is a politically-led, cross-party organisation which works on behalf of the 50 local councils in the East of England to harness their collective strength. It is a voluntary body and registered Employers' Association, funded by a mixture of annual subscriptions and income derived from delivering commercial services.

The Core Purpose of the Association is:

“To support our member councils to be the best that they can be for their communities”

To achieve this purpose, we aim to be:

- ▶ an honest broker bringing together partners to harness their collective strength and knowledge.
- ▶ an enabler of innovative solutions and a catalyst for collaborative working.
- ▶ a highly respected and influential advocate for our members; promoting their leadership of their locality, as well as fighting for them to get the resources, powers and freedoms necessary to perform that role successfully.
- ▶ an invaluable resource of specialist expertise and capacity; providing advice and support to councils on key issues.
- ▶ a key partner in the ongoing development of the future local government workforce



Themes for 2019-24

In addressing the contextual challenges and opportunities outlined above, our Core Services will focus on five priority themes:

▶ Economic Growth and Infrastructure

We will:

Harness the collective strength of the Wider South East Partners to make the case for strategic infrastructure investment and progress identified schemes of mutual benefit.

Ensure that our members and their partners have a strong voice in the development of the London Plan.

Support our members with meeting new and existing housing pressures and tackling barriers to housing growth.

Support our members and their partner organisations, particularly those involved in Sub-National Transport Bodies (STBs), secure essential investment in strategic transport corridors

Support our members to deliver the aims and objectives outlined in the East of England Growth and Prosperity Motion

▶ Resource Management

We will:

Support partnerships to make the most of any opportunities and to tackle any challenges arising from local government's changing financial and structural models.

Help partners to maximise the use of their assets to improve service delivery, achieve efficiencies and provide additional revenue streams where appropriate.

Support our members to achieve ongoing added financial and social value from their commissioning, procurement and contract management activities.

Equip our members with the skills and capabilities needed to pursue commercial services to improve financial resilience and to support the delivery of core council services.

Support our housing authorities to recognise and deal with the cost pressures and challenges arising from the increase in homelessness.

► Health and Social Care

We will:

Provide councils, through their political leadership, the opportunity to debate and address the common challenges in delivering effective adults and children's social care services in the East.

Enable councils to share learning and best practice in health and social care integration and innovation within the region and more widely.

Work alongside our partners the national LGA, ADASS and the Children's Services Improvement Programme to tackle the funding pressures facing adults and children's social care as one of the biggest challenges facing local government.

Support collaboration at a local, regional and national level to give councils in the East a collective voice on important policy areas.

► Workforce Development

We will:

Deliver guidance and advice on strategic HR and employment issues.

Help our members recruit, equip and retain a workforce with the skills and behaviours which are integral to the future of the public sector.

Develop a coordinated approach to tackling skills shortages in priority areas.

Encourage and support the best use of the Apprenticeship Levy to help authorities to attract and build their future workforce.

Support constructive relationships with regional trade union bodies and influence national terms and conditions.

► The Impact of Exiting the EU

We will:

Support partners in understanding and navigating the local impact of the Brexit process, including gaining clarity on the future of EU funding and implications for the workforce.

Engage with the Government to highlight East of England priority issues arising from Brexit such as the impact on our many "ports of entry" from a changed trading and customs regime.

Continue our role as the host of the regional Strategic Migration Partnership and to use their knowledge and strength in this area to support our members.

The way we work

The way we work is supported by the following set of principles:

- We are a cross-party, politically led organisation with our members at the heart of decision making and development.
- We harness the expertise, experience and resources of our member councils.
- We seek new opportunities for extending and strengthening the influence of councils to shape national policy.
- We are proud of the civic role played by local authorities and act as an advocate for our member councils to ensure that they are recognised for their work.
- We work in partnership with the national Local Government Association and seek mutually to reinforce our respective work on behalf of local government
- As one of the nine regional employers' organisations, we provide a strong regional voice to influence negotiations on pay, workforce issues and terms and conditions.
- We recognise that councils operate across a range of geographical areas – local, LEP, county, regional and national - for different objectives and purposes.
- We work across the public sector to support integrated working and the development of new and better ways to meet current and future challenges to service delivery.
- We deliver effective activities that provide good value for money and excellent customer service.

Our Offer

Our offer to our members is delivered on the following basis:

▶ Core Services

Our core services are funded by member subscriptions and are available to all 50 members of the East of England LGA.

Our Core Services are a universal offer available to all subscribing members and provided free at the point of access. They include programmes of activity in priority areas, support for regional member and officer networks, a range of free events, specific helpdesk and advice services, as well as activity undertaken jointly with Trade Unions in our role as the Regional Employers Organisation.

▶ Commercial Services

Our range of Commercial Services provide additional high-quality support, which are accessible on a "paid for" basis at the point of delivery.

Our Commercial Services have been developed to support and enhance our core services by providing additional value to our members which is paid for at the point of delivery. These services add value to our overall offer, generate additional income for the Association, help us to keep down our annual subscription cost and contribute to the ongoing financial sustainability of the East of England LGA.

The Talent Bank is our most prominent commercial service, whereby associates are provided to our customers on either a day rate or project package basis across a number of specialist areas of activity. Our Marketplace service, which enables our members to sell their traded services more easily to one another, is also expected to grow over the period of the Business Plan.

Other commercial services will be developed and made available which complement ongoing activity associated with the priority themes.

Governance and Staffing

This Business Plan is supported by a detailed Action Plan outlining intended outcomes, activities, responsibilities and timescales and an Annual Budget which outlines the management of the Association's resources. This provides a framework for monitoring and evaluating progress against key priorities and objectives. The Business Plan is accompanied by a 5 year Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which shows the expected impact on "Members Funds" over that period.

Following the organisational review of EELGA undertaken in 2018, the Medium Term Financial Plan is expected to show the organisation moving from operating an annual budget deficit to a break-even and ultimately financially sustainable position. This will be achieved through a mixture of cost saving and income generation activity. The MTFP should be reviewed before the beginning of each new financial year in order to ensure that the organisation remains on course to deliver this overarching objective by 2023-24 at the latest.

The 50 local councils in the East of England are all members of East of England LGA.

The organisation is governed by the Leader or elected Mayor of each of the 50 councils in the region and the full Assembly of Council Leaders meets twice a year. This is a forum for discussion on common issues but importantly provides a platform for all leaders to meet and debate key issues affecting our members.

Day to day management, including oversight of the Action Plan and Annual Budget, is provided by a Management Committee of five Leaders which meets on at least a quarterly basis.

Chief Executives from across the region also come together quarterly to bring together the county and unitary councils plus one district representative from each county area to tackle the strategic issues facing councils across the East of England.

A series of panels and networks also bring together the Lead Members around the key priority areas who come together to share experience and work collaboratively by thematic area. These networks are also supported by officer groups with expertise in these same priority areas.

A structure chart is included as Appendix A.

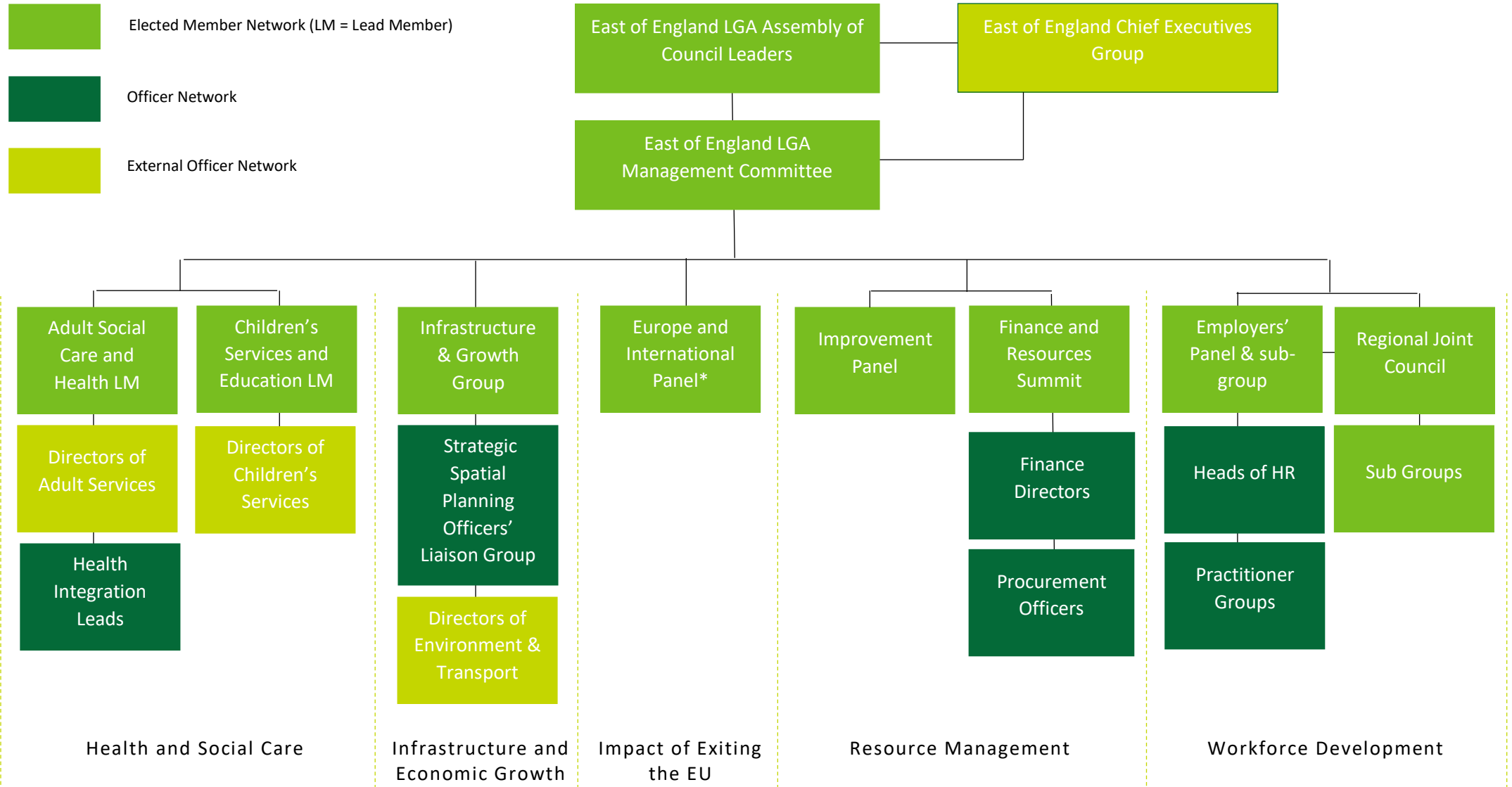
The organisation is staffed by a small core of highly experienced and committed officers.

Communications and Advocacy

The Business Plan is underpinned by a strong communications, marketing and advocacy strategy which assist us to:

- ▶ Provide two way communication between the East of England LGA and our member councils to ensure that the support we provide is relevant and appropriate.
- ▶ Ensure awareness and understanding amongst our member councils of the role, services and added value of the East of England LGA.
- ▶ Be an influential advocate for local government in the East of England and to enhance its' reputation for innovation, achievement, resilience and excellent service delivery.
- ▶ Enable the sharing of knowledge, ideas and good practice.
- ▶ Continue to work with partners, including the Local Government Association, to collaborate on issue led campaigns and to strengthen the voice of local government.

Appendix A - Organisation Structure



*subject to further consideration of any ongoing role for this panel following the UK's departure from the European Union



Get in touch

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Find out more about the East of England LGA

www.eelga.gov.uk