

ANNUAL REPORT

EAST OF ENGLAND
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
ASSOCIATION

2019
2020



WELCOME

TO THE EAST OF ENGLAND LGA ANNUAL REPORT
2019/20, WHICH SHOWCASES OUR HIGHLIGHTS
FROM THE YEAR

**OVER THE PAST
YEAR, OUR WORK
HAS BEEN
STRUCTURED
AROUND A NUMBER
OF KEY PRIORITIES:**

- Economic Growth and Infrastructure
- Public Sector Resource and Reform
- Workforce
- Future of Health and Social Care



**OUR OFFER TO
MEMBERS IS
DELIVERED ON THE
FOLLOWING BASIS:**

- Core Services - funded by member subscriptions and available to all 50 members of the East of England LGA
- Commercial Services - providing high quality support, accessible on a 'paid for' basis at the point of delivery

**SUPPORTING COUNCILS TO BE
THE BEST THEY CAN BE FOR
THEIR COMMUNITIES**

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

WELCOME FROM CLLR DAVID FINCH

Firstly, I would like to thank you all for your continued support for the East of England Local Government Association. This annual report shows the breadth and depth of the work of EELGA, and the evident strength we have as a sector when we collaborate for the benefit of our region and our communities. EELGA can, and does, play a pivotal role in engaging with many of local government's partners and stakeholders; industry partners, transport bodies, the NHS, ADASS, and the national LGA, to name but a few - ensuring that together we present a coordinated and strong voice as a sector, on behalf of the people of the East of England.

The association's work programme in 2019/20 has supported all 50 of our councils, as demonstrated throughout the various sections of the annual report, which includes a snapshot of highlights in "our year in figures" on page 14. The work of EELGA is diverse, from operating as the region's employers organisation, joining up the region's response to the London Plan, preparing for Brexit, and strengthening our communities, including dealing with the emerging challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic in the latter part of this financial year.

One of the core goals of my Chairmanship of the association was ensuring that EELGA was financially sustainable, well managed and in good shape for the future. In 2019/20, we saw the continuation of EELGA's progress towards that sustainability, with the further development of commercial activity in the Talent Bank, and continued efficiencies in the delivery of core services. It remains a high priority to ensure the organisation's medium term financial plan delivers year on year, and I'm pleased to report the positive progress towards this in 2019/20.

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

2019/20 also marked a period of considerable change for EELGA. It was a year in which we celebrated the work of our departing Managing Director Cecilia Tredget, as she moved into retirement and a new chapter in her life. We reflected on her achievements at the helm of the association over number of years, and looked back on her remarkable career in public service across the East of England. I'd like to thank her again personally for her support to me as Chairman, and to my predecessors, and we all wish her well for the future.

In February we announced the appointment of our new Managing Director, who has since joined us in early May. With Professor Cheryl Davenport in place, a new and exciting chapter has begun for the East of England LGA.

I look forward to the next phase of the work of the association, in particular EELGA's work in supporting the crucial and complex recovery period that councils now face. We need the East of England positioned at the forefront of every opportunity for economic development, and we must continue to collaborate, seeking out and sharing all the good practice and innovation local government generates, of which we have witnessed some quite outstanding examples over the last few months. I shall therefore close with my gratitude to all my colleagues across the entire EELGA membership on their impressive work and commitment in response to the Covid-19 crisis, and to wish you all a successful year ahead.



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

Cllr David Finch
Chairman of the East of England LGA

THE EAST OF ENGLAND LGA IN 2019/20

CORE SERVICES

PROCUREMENT AND PUBLIC CONTRACTING

The regional Procurement Network was supported by EELGA directly in the 2019/20 year, and we worked hard to strengthen it in partnership with Crown Commercial Services (CCS).

Our work with CCS will ensure a continued benefit to our authorities around the sharing of best practice, and will allow us, as a region, to achieve the best value possible with limited resources as we move in to challenging financial times.

TRANSPORT EAST

Transport East made great progress in 2019/20, from the submission of the Regional Evidence Base in July 2019 ([available here](#)) to the implementation of an inquiry on reducing carbon emissions, commencing in the spring of 2020.

The year also saw the recruitment of a new Strategic Director, committed to driving forward the work of the programme, and he commenced in post from 2nd April 2020.

WIDER SOUTH EAST ENGAGEMENT

Our Infrastructure and Growth Panel continued to influence the development, outcome and review of the London Plan, working with colleagues across London and the Wider South East to deliver a solution that fits the needs of all engaged authorities and their citizens.

THE EAST OF ENGLAND LGA IN 2019/20

CORE SERVICES

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE AND LEAD MEMBERS NETWORKS

In addition to supporting our Lead Members networks, EELGA have taken on a more active role in driving improvement across the health and social care sector.

We have undertaken a commercial arrangement with ADASS in the region, working to develop regional best practice and intelligence delivery. In support of this arrangement, we are programme managing the work of the regional Sector Led Improvement Forum across Adults and Children's Social Care, Public Health and the interface with the NHS in the East of England.

EAST OF ENGLAND ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

The East of England LGA continues to support the East of England All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), jointly chaired by Peter Aldous MP and Daniel Zeichner MP, and Secretariat provided by Devo Connect.

Throughout 2019/20, we have taken a more active role in setting the agenda of this forum, with key members from across the region taking part, and leading discussions that directly impact the region and the work of EELGA.

THE EAST OF ENGLAND LGA IN 2019/20

COMMERCIAL SERVICES

TALENT BANK

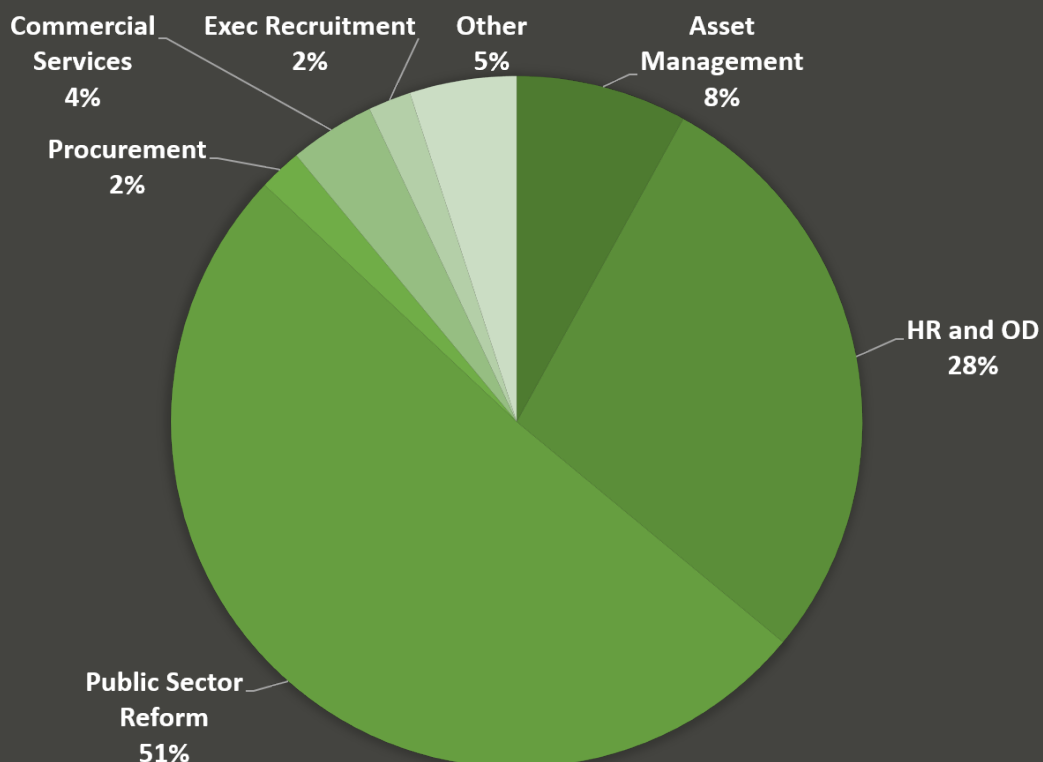
The Talent Bank allows us to support local authorities beyond what can be done by core staff. It enables us to help our member authorities move forward with improvements without the need to enter a lengthy procurement process by virtue of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Talent Bank accounted for 53% of income in 2019/20 (Revenue £2.9m, TB £1.5m, 223k Profit). The majority of work came through in the Public Sector Reform service area this year.

We continue to have positive reviews of associates, like this one in relation to one of our procurement projects:

"The talent bank offers exceptional value for money. The people on it really know their subject and easily beat those from any big named consultancy".

Share of Profit Generation by Service Area



THE EAST OF ENGLAND LGA IN 2019/20

COMMERCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT

We continue to offer Executive Recruitment to our councils, having supported a number of assignments including Chief Executive and Director roles.

The service is now offered via the Marketplace and can be provided in any combination from initial job design and market appraisal to executive search, support with assessment centre design and delivery and final interview.

We have undertaken headhunting for hard to fill roles in a number of councils. These tend to be at Assistant Director or Senior Manager level and often relate to specific professional disciplines e.g. Commercial, Finance (S151) and planning roles. However, we are starting to see demand increasing for Environmental Health and Monitoring Officer roles.

During the Covid-19 pandemic we have moved the offer into virtual delivery including the recruitment of an Executive Director for a district council.

Virtual delivery is now available as an option alongside traditional recruitment methods, and we have seen considerable success in this area.

MARKETPLACE

The Marketplace is a mechanism for Local Authorities and Local Authority companies to trade in the East of England without the need of a lengthy procurement process and is open to any wholly owned trading company of a member Authority.

During 2019-20 we expanded the Marketplace and now have 11 partners advertising services from temporary staff (including interim Town Planners) to specialist training and Environmental consultancy.

THE EAST OF ENGLAND LGA IN 2019/20

EMPLOYER'S SERVICES

APPRENTICESHIPS

Over the year we have continued to support county level apprenticeship groups, run the Regional Apprentice Working Group and held two Apprentice Challenge Events. The winners of the two Apprentice Challenge events then went head to head to compete for the coveted title of East of England Local Government Apprentice of the Year. They each had to produce a short video clip and a marketing leaflet to promote apprenticeships in local government. These were judged by representatives of the Regional Joint Council who were all extremely impressed with the quality of the entries.

The winner was Ellena Steward of West Suffolk Council and coming in a close second was Katy Whiting of South Norfolk and Broadland Councils. While the prize was due to be an overnight stay and entrance to the Local Government Conference, this has had to be postponed owing to the need to change that event to a virtual one.

E-PAYCHECK

The pay benchmarking system known as e-paycheck was open to authorities to join in order to compare salaries with others in the region and across regions. The system allowed users to update salaries for specific jobs in their own authorities and to download comparison reports for jobs or job families. Unfortunately, the uptake across the different regions was decreasing and it was becoming more difficult for authorities to prioritise the time to update data.

We considered an option for authorities in this region to join in with the London Councils benchmarking, but it was not suitable for all of them.

We also considered the possibility of an annual regional survey but again, this did not suit the purpose of most authorities. E-paycheck therefore ceased at the end of the financial year with no replacement.

THE EAST OF ENGLAND LGA IN 2019/20

EMPLOYERS' SERVICES

ADDRESSING CAPACITY GAP IN PLANNING

The skills shortage in planning continued and on 4th March we held a regional event looking at options to tackle the capacity gap. At the event it was suggested that it would be helpful to form another Regional Working Group to take forward some of the points about collaborative working in the region. It was agreed that the group should be made up of two Heads of Planning from each County area and a Head of HR. From the event, it was suggested that the group should look to address the following issues:

- Improving the provision of the degree apprenticeship within the East of England so that technical apprentices could progress without having to travel out of the region
- Consider how we as a sector can cover skills fairs/careers events for universities
- Address the issues raised by Public Practice regarding the difficulty potential recruits have understanding our job descriptions and application processes
- Consider other opportunities for Joint Working generally on the skills gap

Unfortunately this work was put on hold owing to the pandemic and will need to be resurrected in the autumn, with the additional consideration of how the gap may have changed.

END POINT ASSESSMENTS

All apprenticeships have some form of End Point Assessment and this has to be conducted by an organisation separate to the training provider. Most training providers will recommend an End Point Assessor Organisation but the decision on who to appoint rests with the employer.

Our sister organisation South West Councils is an approved End Point Assessor Organisation for a number of standards relevant to Local Government and we have been working with them to extend their model to this region. Essentially, this means training and using officers from Local Authorities and or the regional office to assess apprentices in other authorities.

This is a great opportunity for staff to learn new skills and to keep the fees for End Point Assessments within the Local Government Community.

While the work on this is currently on hold, we do have a pilot authority ready to begin as soon as the reactive work around the pandemic dissipates.

THE EAST OF ENGLAND LGA IN 2019/20

EMPLOYERS' SERVICES

WORKFORCE PLANNING

During the year we joined forces with the national LGA to bring people together in the region to discuss workforce planning.

There are some really good examples within the region of authorities looking ahead at future skills needs and working on a pipeline of training and development opportunities to ensure there are sufficient people with the right key skills to deliver future services.

The National LGA took away information from various regional groups to develop a new toolkit to help authorities to plan in the future. We have been keen to try and support authorities to develop local plans and then share them so we get a better county level and regional picture of skills needs. We hope this may help with collaborative work such as influencing training providers.

While this work is also on hold, we anticipate that workforce plans will need to be reconsidered alongside the changes likely to arise from different skills sets required to accommodate new ways of working as we move forward.

COACHING

We undertook a review of our coaching offer and gathered feedback on what authorities required going forward. It was evident that the idea of coaches in one authority supporting coaches in another on a mutual aid basis was easier to manage on an informal basis than by using a kind of bank system.

We also found that coaches in authorities were struggling to attend the CPD sessions that were put on regionally, even when we offered them as virtual training to cut out travel time.

We therefore developed a package to help individual authorities to introduce a coaching culture to their own organisation with the potential for them to set up their own supervision and CPD sessions internally. This is available through the Marketplace.

THE EAST OF ENGLAND LGA IN 2019/20

EMPLOYERS' SERVICES

CORE BUSINESS

Over the year we continued to offer the Employers Helpdesk service which is well used by Heads of HR for queries ranging from Terms and Conditions queries to in depth case management advice.

We also undertook a wide range of ad hoc benchmarking surveys on topics ranging from whether or not authorities give time off for job interviews at other authorities (mostly not unless at risk of redundancy) to which external companies are used for Employee Assistance Programmes. We undertook 5 new Head of HR Inductions and it was great to welcome them to the region.

We worked with the Regional Trade Unions and the Local Government Employers Panel to deliver the pilot Apprentice Challenge in 2019 and the winner for that award, Kirsty Moore, was presented with her award at the Regional joint Council.

EXIT CAP

The government legislated for a cap of £95,000 on public sector exit payments in the Small Business Enterprise and Employment Act 2015, as amended by the Enterprise Act in 2016. The 2015 act sets out a duty to implement the cap through secondary legislation. The consultation closed in July 2019 but we have not yet seen an official response. Our understanding is that this is still being considered.

THE EAST OF ENGLAND LGA IN 2019/20

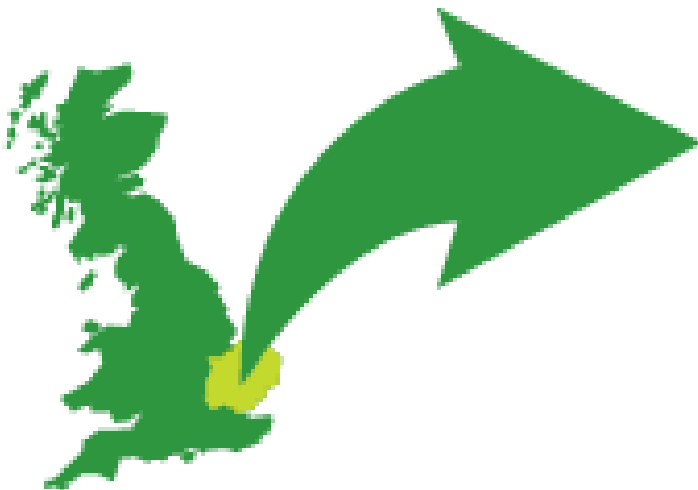
EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP

EUROPE AND INTERNATIONAL PANEL

Britain's changing relationship with the EU has led to a change in focus for the European and International Panel. The role of the Panel in 2019/20 has been under review, with a view to shifting the focus of the forum to one of international trade and engagement with partners beyond Europe. With this in mind, EELGA have been working directly with the Essex / China Forum to develop international trade via Stansted Airport.

REGIONAL BREXIT HUB

EELGA have supported the region's co-ordination activity on issues related to Brexit. This includes the delivery of regular and routine intelligence across authorities in the region, sharing and developing engagement with the region's LEPs, and working with colleagues across government to deliver guidance to authorities and businesses as trade negotiation scenarios have progressed.



OUR YEAR IN FIGURES

Overall Satisfaction Rate **83%**

Councils in Membership **50**

Turnover Generated **£1,533,000**

All authorities are members

Generated £53,000 more than 2018/19



97% Satisfaction in Our Events

63% Sponsored Events

1,394 Event Attendance

Twitter Followers **1897**

LinkedIn Followers **788**

LinkedIn Impressions **1400**

Growth in social media reach across all channels

VIRTUAL WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

At the time of production of the 2019/20 annual report the EELGA team are working remotely, and we have adapted well to this situation. We are currently setting out arrangements for key meetings and events for the 2020/21 year and beyond.

Virtual meetings are working well so far internally and externally and our members have already commented on the flexibility this offers, and the positive impact this can have on changes to the way we work, live and travel, both now, and in the future, as restrictions ease.

We will make decisions about the return of EELGA staff into West Suffolk House (WSH) in due course, in line with government guidance on social distancing and the completion of Covid-19 secure risk assessments for workplaces. We are working closely with WSH on these arrangements and will keep you advised as these develop.

THE VIEW AHEAD

2020/21 presents the region, and EELGA, with significant and unexpected challenges. Our world is changing rapidly, and the need to respond with agility has become ever more important.

In the coming year, we will look to face these challenges head on, and are implementing a series of innovative programmes of work with our members and wider partners, to continue to innovate for the region.

KEY PROGRAMMES INCLUDE:

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

- Covid-19 Prevention and Recovery for people
- People and Communities Forum (linking Adult Social Care with District and Borough services such as Housing)
- Improvement work with the region's Directors of Adult Social Services
- The Region's Sector Led Improvement Leads Forum
- District and Borough engagement in prevention
- Work with NHS Digital, NHS Improvement, NHS X (Technology)

FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY

- Service transformation
- Digital tools and technologies
- Public sector estate

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND RECOVERY

- Covid Economic recovery programme
- Transport East
- England's Economic Heartland
- London Plan / WSE
- APPG Recovery Work
- Regional Economic Forum

THE FUTURE WORKFORCE AND EMPLOYERS

- Ways of Working Forum
- Workforce challenges for the region



East of England
Local Government Association