

Local Government East

BUSINESS PLAN

2025-28



**Fit for the future,
delivering for the East.**



FOREWORD BY

CLLR GRAHAM BUTLAND

**Chair of Local Government East Management Committee,
Leader of Braintree District Council and Portfolio Holder
for Devolution at Essex County Council**

I am delighted to introduce the Local Government East Business Plan for 2025 - 2028. This is an important document at a critical time for local government and for our organisation. Our Business Plan sets out what we want to achieve for our members over the next three years and is set against the backdrop of the priorities of the new Government elected in 2024, especially the aspirations set out in the English Devolution White Paper, and its missions. It also highlights how we will deliver added value for all of our members and achieve greater recognition for the region as a whole.

This plan tells the story of who we are at Local Government East, and sets out our ambitions over the next 3 years across 3 priorities:

1. Adapt and respond in an agile way to meet the needs of our members, providing consistent support, capacity and resource in the context of a rapidly changing local and national government landscape.
2. Be a strong and unified voice for the East.
3. Build and nurture partnerships and networks to work collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes for our region.

Our Business Plan sets out the vision, mission and values of Local Government East, as well as our key aims, alongside some measure of success.

This is an exciting time for our organisation and for local government. We will continue to work tirelessly to advocate with a strong and united voice to get the best outcomes for the East of England.

We can only achieve this by working closely with others. I'd like to thank all our partners who have worked with us up until now and with whom we will continue to work to deliver this ambitious Business Plan as we navigate the challenges ahead together.



FOREWORD BY

CAIRISTINE FOSTER-CANNAN

Chief Executive of Local Government East


As we look ahead to the 2025-2028 period, Local Government East stands at a pivotal moment, ready to embrace a dynamic and evolving future. The East of England is an extremely special place which continues to grow and change, with the communities we serve facing a diverse range of challenges and opportunities. From addressing climate change to fostering inclusive economic development, and from enhancing local services to strengthening regional collaboration, the path ahead is filled with both promise and responsibility. As we continue on the road towards devolution and local government reorganisation, we know that our members, and their needs, will change and evolve between now and 2028, and that the local government landscape will look very different.

'Fit for the Future, Delivering for the East' outlines a clear vision for how we, as the membership body and voice for local government in the East of England, will support our members to tackle these challenges, and harness opportunities. Whilst we know that the future is changing for our member authorities, we stand ready to support them, able to provide expertise and create capacity where it is most needed. Our vision to support our member authorities to create a thriving, resilient, and inclusive East of England, recognised for its value nationally, remains steadfast.

In this plan, we focus on the priorities that matter most to our members. Our work will be underpinned by collaboration and partnerships, ensuring that we achieve greater impact by working together, with shared goals and mutual respect.

As I reflect on my first 14 months in post, and look forward to the next three years, I am excited about the future of Local Government East, our members, and our region, and remain committed to fostering an environment where innovation, collaboration, and inclusivity thrive. Together, we will continue to make the East of England a region where everyone can prosper and be proud of the place they call home.

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IN THIS BUSINESS PLAN WE SET OUT TO:

1. Provide a clear plan for the work Local Government East aims to achieve over the next 3 years including our vision, mission and values which guide our priorities.
2. Give an overview of who we are and how we work.
3. Demonstrate how our work is aligned to the priorities of our member organisations and partners across the East of England.
4. Provide clarity, assurance and accountability to our members and partner organisations about our key priorities and aims for the next 3 years.
5. Set out opportunities for collaborative working with our members and partner organisations across the region and nationally to achieve the best possible outcomes for our region.
6. Showcase the unique nature of our offer and the added value we bring.
7. Demonstrate how we deliver value for money for our members.

1. LOCAL GOVERNMENT EAST – WHO ARE WE?

We are the cross-party, politically led membership body representing local government in the East of England. We currently have all 50 councils in our region and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mayoral Combined Authority in membership. As the Government's ambitions around devolution of powers out of Whitehall, and for local government reorganisation, are realised and worked out in practice, the shape of local government in our region will change considerably. Our ambition is to retain all local government authorities and organisations in our region in membership, and to adapt and develop our offer, so that we continue to support them to deliver the very best outcomes for their places.

As a small and agile organisation, with a values-led culture, we bring together a broad range of skills, expertise and experience, and use them to support our members to the very best of our ability. Everyone is passionate about making a difference to our members and the communities they serve. We work collaboratively with a wide range of partners, and we are a trusted convenor, regionally and nationally, generating and facilitating opportunities for innovation and partnership working.

At the heart of our organisation lies a commitment to supporting our member authorities to foster sustainable, resilient communities and places across the East of England. Our strength lies in our deep understanding of our members and the communities they serve and our ability to support them collectively to amplify the importance of the East of England to the UK.

THE FUTURE IS CHANGING

for our member authorities. We stand ready to support them, able to provide expertise and create capacity where it is most needed. We will remain agile and flexible, fit for change and for the future.

WE ARE INCLUSIVE

and accessible, offering reliable, knowledgeable support that our member authorities can depend upon.

WE ARE TRUSTED

by our member authorities and the partners, stakeholders and associates with whom we work. This trust stems from our shared understanding of our region, championing our members and driving positive change across the East of England.

2. OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

OUR VISION:

Our vision is to support our member authorities to create a thriving, resilient, and inclusive East of England, recognised for its value nationally. At the heart of everything we do are our members, whose needs and priorities drive our efforts.

OUR MISSION:

Through collaboration and partnership, we support our member authorities in the East of England to be the best they can be by providing expertise, advocacy, and resources to tackle today's and tomorrow's challenges. We will remain agile and flexible, ready for change and fit for the future.

OUR VALUES:

AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT EAST WE ARE:

R

Resilient - we can adapt to change. We support each other and our member authorities to respond to change. We share knowledge, equip and develop our people. We understand the need to adapt our actions and behaviours in response to a changing climate.

I

Inclusive - we are an inclusive workplace where employees are respected, involved, have a sense of belonging and are valued for the experiences they bring.

S

Supportive - of each other, our members and of all with whom we work.

E

Empowering - we trust our people to do their jobs and provide the support and environment they need to thrive. We work in an agile and flexible way, recognising that people have different needs. We take an outcomes-based approach.

#TOGETHERWERISE

AREAS OF WORK

OUR WORK WILL BE DELIVERED ACROSS THE FOLLOWING KEY AREAS:



People and Employer Services

We will support the region's human resources teams with key guidance and updates on national terms and conditions and pay awards. We will also lead on the employer/trade union relationship for the East of England and encourage collaborative working to face the challenges presented to local government.



Policy and Advocacy

We will support our members to analyse and interpret government policy, convene collaboration opportunities on shared priorities and provide the single, unified voice of local government in the East of England, advocating for greater investment and support for our residents.



Communications and Commercial Services

We will provide professional, knowledgeable and adaptable services to support our members through our consultancy support services Talent Bank Services and Talent Bank Training. These services will provide our members with reassurance and the security of knowing that additional resource can be provided when it is needed. We will provide a comprehensive, cost effective, bespoke and professional events management service. We will use derived income to enhance the support we provide to our members. We will use every opportunity to promote the East of England and our members across social, digital and print media.



Strategic Migration Partnership (SMP)

The SMP is the central point in the region for collaboration between central and local government and other key agencies across all sectors on migration issues. The SMP role includes strategic leadership, consultation, coordination and project management of key migration programmes alongside communications, information and data sharing, practical assistance and advice.



UK Innovation Corridor (UKIC)

We also host the UK Innovation Corridor. The UK Innovation Corridor is a 'coalition of the willing' bringing together local government, private business, universities and colleges from Cambridgeshire to London in a 'bottom up' strategic partnership.

3. OUR PRIORITIES:

WHAT WE WILL DO AND HOW WE WILL MEASURE OUR SUCCESS.

These are our priorities, informed by our vision and mission.

1. Adapt and respond in an agile way to meet the needs of our members, providing consistent support, capacity and resource in the context of a rapidly changing landscape.

In the next three years we will:



Support our members through devolution and local government reorganisation, advocating for the best deal for the places in our region, and speaking for all members of the local government community.



Provide expert advice and support to our members as the regional employers' organisation and be an exemplar of best practice in terms of people leadership.



Deliver a comprehensive programme of commercial events, in addition to events included within our core membership offer.



Maintain and expand our Talent Bank for consultancy and training, providing additional capacity to our members at pace and without the need to go through lengthy procurement processes.



WE WILL KNOW THAT WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE:

- We will successfully support HR teams in councils and other organisations in the region to address workforce priorities and challenges, both regional and national.
- InfiniStats membership will grow to provide regional and national data for ease of benchmarking.
- HR helpdesk provision will support our member organisations.
- Based upon our members' feedback, we will review and develop our professional consultancy services to reflect their needs.
- We will increase the revenue from our consultancy services Talent Bank Services and Talent Bank Training and will demonstrate how this has enabled us to provide support to our member councils.
- We will increase revenue from our commercial events service and develop our bespoke offering to members demonstrating flexibility and response to changing needs.
- We will formally measure our reputation amongst our members and partners and use those outcomes to develop our services, ensuring that they are fit for purpose.
- We will develop a People Strategy which will ensure that we have the right people with the right skills to deal with future challenges.
- Our member authorities will feel well represented in our advocacy with the Government and feel better informed as a result of our policy support.



2. Be a strong and unified voice for the East.

In the next three years we will:



Promote and advocate for local government financial resilience.



Provide the single, unified voice for the East of England's growth potential and highlight the infrastructure investment required to unlock this.



Promote our successes and those of our members so that they are front and centre of all that we do.

WE WILL KNOW THAT WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE:

- Local Government East is recognised by all stakeholders as the representative body for the local government community in the East of England, and wider democratic institutions, following devolution and local government reorganisation.
- The opportunities and needs of the East of England and its local government community are better understood by the Government as a result of our advocacy activity.
- Positive policy, legislative and fiscal outcomes for the region are achieved.
- Using social, digital and print media we will build our profile across our members, partners and develop an increased media presence to support this aim.
- We will increase our following across social platforms, remain vigilant to opportunities and flex our communications approach accordingly so that our members are aware of our work on their behalf.
- We will extend the reach of our HR Dispatches publication, pulling in case studies from across and outside the region to showcase best practice and to support collaborative working between members and key stakeholders.

3. Build and nurture partnerships and networks to work collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes for our region.

In the next three years we will:



Strive for improved housing, health and wellbeing outcomes for our residents through collaboration opportunities and unified advocacy.



Provide opportunities for member authorities to collaborate, share best practice and explore joint opportunities in priority areas including their journey to net zero and greater climate resilience.



Support councils and other partners in managing migration flows and delivering effective integration for migrant communities to unlock their potential to contribute to their local areas through the work of the Strategic Migration Partnership.

WE WILL KNOW THAT WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE:

- We will support, develop and promote networks based on regional needs and drive engagement and collaborative working, showcasing future focus and best practice.
- The focus on working with our recognised trade unions will be revitalised, putting partnership working at the core of the relationship to reduce conflict at a local level.
- Local government Members and officers in the East of England will feel better informed and will have the opportunity to engage and collaborate with their regional peers as a result of our policy activity.
- We will continue to experience high levels of attendance at our thematic member and officer roundtables.
- The place-based approach to migration will be embedded, recognising each council's contribution across key migration strands - asylum, resettlement, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
- The regional asylum dispersal plan will be progressed, with accommodation procured in all geographical areas and reliance on contingency sites reduced.
- Migrants are economically active in roles commensurate with their skills and experience. They also contribute to their local communities and will be involved in the social and civic life of their area.

4. HOW WE WORK

GOVERNANCE

The Assembly

The East of England Assembly consists of the Leaders of all councils in membership. The Assembly forms the highest level of governance for Local Government East and usually meets twice a year in addition to the Annual General Meeting, which receives the organisation's annual accounts, and at which any changes to the Management Committee are voted upon.

Special meetings of the Assembly can be called, if required, to deal with important business outside the usual meetings.

Decisions which go to the Assembly are subject to a vote, with a majority being required to make a decision.

Management Committee

The Management Committee forms the next level of governance for Local Government East and consists of a Chair, Vice-Chair, regional political party leads for each of the main political parties, and the lead Chief Executive for the region. The political make-up of the Management Committee is dictated by that of the East of England Assembly.

Management Committee members serve a term of 2 years.

The Chair and Vice-Chair roles currently rotate between different types of councils (County, Unitary and District / Borough), although this is likely to change as more unitary councils are formed and replace the existing two-tier system.



Chair

Cllr Graham Butland, Leader of Braintree District Council and Portfolio Holder for Devolution at Essex County Council



Management Committee Vice Chairs

Cllr Stephen Robinson, Leader of Chelmsford City Council (Liberal Democrats)



Cllr Hazel Simmons, Leader of Luton Borough Council (Labour Party)



LEAD MEMBERS AND REFERENCE GROUPS

Local Government East has adopted a Lead Member approach to oversee our workstreams and the advocacy work that we are increasingly undertaking on behalf of the region. Politically representative reference groups have been established to support Lead Members. Our Lead Members and reference groups oversee the following areas:



Infrastructure, Growth and Planning

Lead Member - Cllr Andrew Mellen, Leader of Mid Suffolk District Council (Green Party)



Local Government Finance

Lead Member - Cllr Graham Butland, Leader of Braintree District Council (Conservative)



Local Government Workforce

Lead Member – Cllr Cliff Waterman, Leader of West Suffolk Council (Labour Party)



Health and Wellbeing

Lead Member - Cllr Richard Siddall, Leader Maldon District Council (Independent)



Housing and Homelessness

Lead Member - Cllr Jacqui Taylor, Chair of Housing and Inclusion Committee, St Albans District Council. (Liberal Democrats)



Lead Chief Executive

The Lead Chief Executive for Local Government East is Dan Gascoyne, Chief Executive of Braintree District Council. The Lead Chief Executive sits on Local Government East's Management Committee.

In addition Chief Executives from across the region lead on various portfolios which are aligned to Lead Member roles.

OUR WIDER PARTNERSHIP



5. AND FINALLY, MEET THE TEAM!



Cairistine Foster-Cannan
Chief Executive



Adam Thorp
Director of Policy and
Corporate Services



Alison Thompson
Head of People and
Employer Services



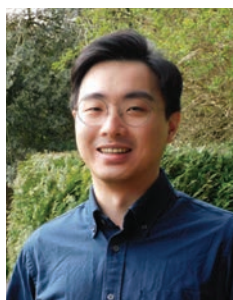
Sharon Bleese
Head of Communications
and Commercial Services



Gosia Strona
Head of Strategic
Migration Partnership



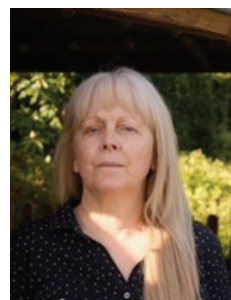
Carly Barker
People Advisor
(Transformation)



Parco Chan
Project Advisor EON &
Regional Hong Kong Hub



Jayne Cole
Events Manager



Julie Cooke
Senior People Consultant



Sarah Golding
Executive Assistant



Louise Gooch
Projects Manager



Emma Grant
Senior People Consultant



Helen Hancock
Senior Policy Officer



Rachel Heathcock
Equity and Equalities
Manager



Ann Hunter
Regional Hong Kong Hub
Co-ordinator



Hilary Jarrett-Firat
Internal People Advisor



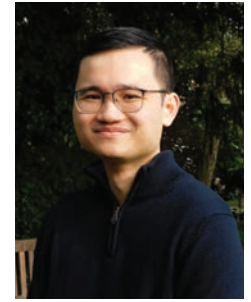
Yuval Kedar
Policy Officer



Anne Kindleysides
People Advisor
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Ferzana Kusair
High Skills Employment
Advisor & Employer Liaison



Justin Leung
Regional Hong Kong Hub
Advisor



Karen Lowes
Project Finance Officer



Kate O Driscoll
Policy and Programme
Manager



Sebastian Reeves
Finance Manager



Marta Ruiz
Finance Administrator



Yasser Rezvani
Regional ESOL Co-ordinator



Gill Searl
Project Manager - EON



Grace Shaughnessy
Commercial Manager



Latif Shariat
Talent Bank Administrator



Jo Slater
Executive Assistant



Matt Stewart
Policy and Programme
Manager



Julie Taylor-Poole
Event Administrator



Humeira Yaqub
Senior Policy Officer
(Resettlement and Ukraine
lead)

