

09.10 – 09.15 Conference Welcome

**09.15 – 10.00 Local Authorities and Consumer Standards
Inspections**

Darren Hooker, Partner & Head of the Social Housing Governance Team,
Capsticks

A year into compliance with the new consumer standards and inspections by the Regulator of Social Housing, we will look at how local authorities have been faring under the new regulation, the lessons that can be learnt from the inspections to date and what local authorities should be doing now to prepare for their inspection. We will also cover what to expect from the inspection process.

Chair: Deborah Evans, CEO, LLG

10.00 – 10.15 Break

10.15 – 11.00 How to hold Strategic Authorities to Account?

Claire Ward, Partner, Anthony Collins

Catherine Stephens, Interim Head of Law & Deputy Monitoring Officer, East
Midlands Combined County Authority

Ed Hammond, Deputy Chief Executive, CfGS

With the increasing powers and mandate described in the Devolution Whitepaper for Strategic Authorities, how can local councillors ensure accountability?

This session will cover the law and guidance on Strategic Authority scrutiny with insight from the East Midlands Combined County Authority on how it is working on the ground.

Chair: Paul Turner, LLG President and Director of Legal and Assurance and Monitoring Officer, Essex County Council

11.00 – 11.15 Break

11.15 – 12.00 New Town Developments/New Homes/Housing

Duncan Tringham, Partner, Freeths

Nathan Holden, Partner, Freeths

Government policy is driving both new towns and new large scale housing projects. Local Government Reorganisation will create new housing authorities – do you know what you need to know?

Developing and bringing forward new housing development is a daunting prospect – what are the legal and practical steps you can take to avoid the potential pitfalls and deliver a successful scheme. This webinar will highlight the key changes and issues that are relevant to local government lawyers working in this area.

Chair: Helen Bennett, Executive Director of Policy and Governance, LLG

12.00 – 12.15 Break

12.15 – 13.00 Contract Management

Catherine Newman, Partner, Sharpe Pritchard

Raechel Slattery, Partner, Sharpe Pritchard

Good contract management has always been vital to the delivery of high quality, value for money public contracts. It has now come to the fore for both contracting authorities and suppliers with the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023. Part 4 (Management of Contracts) brings operation of procured contracts within the statutory regime for the first time, and is the biggest change under the new legislation. There are significant

implications for all parties. In this session we will explore contract management, with reference to what good contract management looks like, why it is important and how best to achieve it. We will consider both governance and performance management regimes and we will look at the links between management of performance and being able to successfully navigate and utilise related termination rights. Takeaways for attendees will include a refresher on statutory context and an examination of the common practical issues to consider, from contract drafting through to operation of contract management; looking at how best to effect good performance and how to use your contract when that doesn't work. Both Catherine and Raechel have extensive experience of both drafting commercial contracts and then advising clients on how best to enforce them.

Chair: Nichola Vine, LLG Midlands Regional Director and Head of Legal and Governance, Warwickshire County Council

13.00 – 13.45 Lunch**13.45 – 14.30 Give your Recruitment Process the Best Chance of Success**

Jade Gorrod, Senior Manager – Public Sector Legal, Venn Group

Connie Ross, Manager – Public Sector Legal, Venn Group

Tom Hoults, Senior Managing Consultant – Public Sector Law & Governance, Venn Group

Hear from our specialist local government recruiters on how to attract the best talent. Venn Group presents their research findings, considering perceptions and vision of employment and recruitment in local authorities. Don't miss out on understanding how to attract key employees to your team, and avoid underselling or mis-selling local government, its values, and its career prospects.

Chair: Sarah Harriot, LLG National Lead Director and Senior Contracts Lawyer, West Northamptonshire Council

14.30 – 14.45 Break

14.45 – 15.30 Children's Welfare & Education Bill – Key Changes for Children's Services

Marion Robins, Partner, Weightmans

A General overview of the Bill and impact on Children's Services; considering Family Group Decision Making, Safeguarding Partners, Kinship Care, Deprivation of Liberty, Agency Workers, Children not in School and the Challenges for Local Authorities.

Chair: Patricia Narebor, LLG London Regional Director and Monitoring Officer and Deputy Director of Legal and Democratic Services, London Borough of Bexley

15.30 – 15.45 Break

15.45 – 16.30 Elections: Process or Problem

Tim Straker KC, Barrister, Head of Chambers, 4-5 Gray's Inn Square
Rupert Beloff, Joint Head of Chambers, 4-5 Gray's Inn Square

The session will examine the legal framework underpinning electoral procedures, explore recent legislative developments, and highlight emerging challenges such as misinformation, voter accessibility, and the role of digital technologies. Participants will gain insights into key statutory obligations, case law developments, and compliance issues that impact local authorities' role in conducting fair and lawful elections. The seminar will also address the implications of the Elections Act 2022, including voter ID requirements and the restructuring of the Electoral Commission's oversight. In light of increasing public scrutiny and a dynamic political



climate, the session will offer practical guidance on risk mitigation, managing contentious electoral issues, and ensuring procedural integrity.

Chair: Deborah Evans, CEO, LLG

16.30 Close