



**LLG GOVERNANCE CONFERENCE 2025:
DAY 1 FRIDAY 28 NOVEMBER**

PROGRAMME A MEETING ROOM: CITY 1 & 2

09.50 - 09.55 Conference welcome

Deborah Evans, LLG CEO
Paul Turner, LLG President

10.00 - 11.00 Its the Cover-Up that Kills You – Good Governance Comes First

We live in an age if internet fuelled suspicion and conspiracy. Never has the Public been able to see the inner workings of Government all levels like they can today. This means that policy, decision-making and service delivery must be based on sound principles and good governance. They must be open and defensible.

The trend for public lobbying to produce Inquiries, Inquests and Investigations means that officials have more than Judicial Review to fear of they get it wrong. Hardest of all is the “Court of Public Opinion”, in which the worst crime is the cover-up.

Our session will examine how recent Inquiries and investigations reveal failures of governance, and the traps that await officials. We will take delegates through the lessons of past mistakes and equip them to avoid the same outcomes.

Speakers: Henry Bermingham, Weightmans
Simon Goacher, Weightmans

11.00 - 11.45 REFRESHMENTS AND NETWORKING

11.45 - 12.45 AI Deep Dive:

1) Demystifying AI: Moving beyond AI as a glorified search engine

This session will consider:

- Three Eras of AI: What's stayed the same, what's changed?
- Demystifying Terminology: Prompting, Context, Agentic, and more
- Identifying Use Cases: Brainstorming and "Promptathons"
- Adoption starts small: embed AI into existing workflows, not as standalone tools
- Governance matters: ethics, confidentiality, and bias management
- Cultural shift: AI augmentation, not substitution

Speaker: David Lane, Freeths



2) The Ethical Use of AI in Public Services

The ethical use of AI in public services is now a central governance priority. As councils adopt AI to improve service delivery, decision-making and productivity, they face a set of risks that demand clear frameworks, proactive oversight and strong organisational leadership.

Five domains are critical. Data protection requires lawful bases, meaningful DPIAs, and assurance that systems use only the minimum personal data necessary. Bias and discrimination risks must be addressed through auditing datasets, stress-testing models, and monitoring outcomes across protected characteristics. Transparency and explainability are essential so that residents can understand, question and challenge decisions that affect their lives. Cybersecurity becomes more complex with AI systems, which can be vulnerable to adversarial attacks, data poisoning and model manipulation. Procurement and contracting must evolve to include requirements around fairness, auditability, transparency, and robust security obligations.

A risk-based, principles-driven governance approach is essential. Public bodies should establish AI inventories, classify systems by risk level, embed human oversight, and ensure that decision pathways remain contestable. Training is vital to reduce “automation bias” and support responsible human-machine collaboration.

Ethical AI is not simply a technical project. It is a whole-organisation capability, rooted in governance, accountability and public trust.

Speaker: Amardeep Gill, Trowers & Hamlins

12.45 - 13.45 LUNCH BREAK AND NETWORKING

13.45 - 14.30 Launch of the LLG Professional Body: The Association of Monitoring Officers

Challenge 1: Working constructively with new leadership

Challenge 2: Dealing with the changing political landscape

Solution: The Professional Body for Monitoring Officers

Speakers: Paul Turner, LLG President
Anita Bradley, LLG Deputy Vice President
Rachel McKoy, Executive Director of AMO



14.30 - 15.30 The practical Impact of LGR: Delivering cultural change

Speakers: Sari Brice, Head of Employee Relations, Inclusion and Policy,
Somerset Council
Scott Wooldridge, Head of Governance and Democratic Services
and Deputy Monitoring Officer, Somerset Council
Claire Ward, Anthony Collins Solicitors
Matthew Gregson, Anthony Collins Solicitors

15.30- 16.00 REFRESHMENTS AND NETWORKING

16.00 - 16.45 Managing Standards in a changing world

This session will include:

- a review of relevant current caselaw
- a practical application of when the code applies and Art 10 to social media posts on Gaza
- how the demise of the traditional political parties is changing local government
- the double whammy of LGR and the Government's new standards framework

Speakers: Perry Holmes, Wiltshire Council
Estelle Culligan, Wilkin Chapman Rollits
Jonathan Goolden, Wilkin Chapman Rollits

16.45 CONFERENCE PROGRAMME CLOSES

17.00 – 18.30 DRINKS RECEPTION



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PROGRAMME B MEETING ROOM: CITY 3

10.00 - 11.00 Governance in Practice: Rethinking the Codes

Join Philip McCourt of Bevan Brittan for a thought-provoking session exploring the evolution and future of two of the key governance codes of practice developed with LLG— Firstly, **Good Governance for Local Authority Statutory Officers**, and secondly, **Council Interest in Companies**. With recent council failures and shifting best practices, this session invites you to reflect on how these codes are being applied, where they fall short, and how they can be improved. Expect a lively discussion on implementation, compliance, and the real-world impact of governance frameworks in local government.

Speakers: Philip McCourt, Bevan Brittan
Anita Bradley, LLG Deputy Vice President

11.00 - 11.45 REFRESHMENTS AND NETWORKING

11.45 - 12.45 Getting the Rule Book right: Drafting a sound, fit for purpose Constitution

Speakers: Daniel Dickinson, Governance Consultant, Harlow Council
Ben Standing, Browne Jacobson

12.45 - 13.45 LUNCH BREAK AND NETWORKING

13.45 - 14.30 Programme A and Programme C only

14.30 - 15.30 Pre-Election Notice Periods: Emerging Trends in Election Law: Insights for Local Government

The session will run through the legal and practical issues that can arise in the pre-election notice period for Councils and Monitoring Officers, how to manage such issues and minimise risks, as well as other issues around the running of elections that have arisen in recent times and how to minimise the risks of those arising /address such matters when they arise , as well as election law matters / issues for the future.

Speaker: Mark Heath MBE, VVV

15.30- 16.00 REFRESHMENTS AND NETWORKING



16.00 - 16.45 Mazur: How to structure and run local government legal services in a compliant way

Speaker: Matthew Reed KC, Landmark Chambers

16.45 CONFERENCE PROGRAMME CLOSES

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PROGRAMME C MEETING ROOM: CONTROL ROOM

10.00 - 11.00 Public Authority (Accountability) Bill

This session explores the Public Authority (Accountability) Bill—often called the “Hillsborough Law”—and its far-reaching implications for local authorities, including both councillors and officers, and their legal teams.

The session will provide a practical analysis of the Bill’s key provisions, including the new statutory duty of candour, enhanced ethical standards, and the introduction of personal criminal liability for failure to comply, together with other criminal offences for serious misconduct in public office. Attendees will gain insight into how the Bill aims to reshape governance, transparency, and accountability in the public sector, with a particular focus on the responsibilities of local authority lawyers. The session will also address the Bill’s impact on inquests and public inquiries, highlighting measures to ensure fairness for bereaved families and proportionality in legal representation.

Speakers: Sian Ballingall, WBD
Francesca Hodgson, WBD

11.00 - 11.45 REFRESHMENTS AND NETWORKING

11.45 - 12.45 Local Government Reorganisation: Managing Organisational Change in Practice

This session we will consider why change is challenging in local government and will look at a people focussed approach to understanding change. A number of topics will be explored such as different ways of looking at organisations, organisational emotion, reactions to change, change leadership, understanding resistance and rules and boundaries. Practical examples and tools and tips for change management will be offered and there will be an opportunity for participants to consider relevant issues and experiences, and to contribute to discussion.

Speakers: Annie Moy, Principal Solicitor & Manager Contracts, property and Regeneration, Basildon Borough Council
Catherine Newman, Sharpe Pritchard



12.45 - 13.45 LUNCH BREAK AND NETWORKING

13.45 - 14.30 Building a career plan

This roundtable session will consider how lawyers at all stages of their careers can plan and prepare for progression within local government. Whether you have recently qualified into a local authority legal team or are aspiring to Head of Service or Monitoring Officer positions, the discussion will explore the opportunities, challenges, and strategies associated with each stage of career development.

In addition to examining routes for advancement within a single council, the session will also address lateral career moves across authorities and provide insight into how best to present your experience and aspirations through your CV and interview performance.

This will be an interactive, breakout-style discussion designed to share practical advice, professional insights, and peer-to-peer learning.

Speakers: Linda Walker, Governance Consultant at Newark & Sherwood District Council
Graham Kitchen, Director of Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer (Acting), Peterborough City Council
Jade Gorrod, Venn Group
John Smith, Venn Group

14.30 - 15.30 Transitions in Governance

Governance and devolution are changing the face of local government, and the scope for employment law issues to arise has never been greater. Legal Directors Raj Basi and Claire Gilbert will talk about how LGR transitions and reorganisations can be best managed, including key risks and legal considerations for legal and HR professionals, with a focus on transferring staff, pay and terms and conditions, recruiting a new leadership team, and recruitment and retention through change. The session will also look at how devolution is affecting employment in local authorities.

Speakers: Claire Gilbert, Capsticks
Raj Basi, Capsticks

15.30- 16.00 REFRESHMENTS AND NETWORKING

16.00 - 16.45 The Impact of Devolution on the Job market: What skills will be in demand and how to position yourself for success



This session explores how devolution is reshaping the legal job market, creating new opportunities as well as pressures around recruitment, retention and competition for talent. We will look at how greater powers being devolved to combined authorities, may influence the job market and the landscape for local government legal teams. Venn Group will share real-time insight from recent campaigns, supported by expert perspective from Matthew Cumberbatch, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer at the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, to help lawyers position themselves for success.

Speakers: Matthew Cumberbatch, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer,
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority
Emma Walker, Venn Group
Nik Stoate, Venn Group
Will Pardoe, Venn Group

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