

08.00 – 09.20 Arrival and Refreshments

Please note, breakfast is available in the restaurant on the 2nd floor.

09.20 – 09.30 Welcome

Helen Bradley

Director of Legal & Democratic Services, Durham County Council

09.30 – 10.15 English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

The prospective "English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill" will include a number of measures that will change how local authorities go about doing their business for many years to come. Here, Philip McCourt will explore some of the implications and issues that monitoring officers will need to grapple with as we look ahead to developing guidance, procedures and local practices.

Philip McCourt, Legal Director, Bevan Brittan

Chaired by Anita Bradley, LLG Regional Director – Southern, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, Oxfordshire County Council

10.15 – 11.00 Shifting Gears: Navigating Challenges in Local Council Leadership Transitions

When political leadership changes within a local council, it often brings a wave of new priorities, policies, and personalities. While such transitions are a natural part of democratic governance, they can also disrupt ongoing projects, strain administrative continuity, and create uncertainty among officers. We will take a look at the key issues that arise during these periods of change.

Claire Ward, Partner, Anthony Collins

Chaired by Helen Bradley, Director of Legal & Democratic Services, Durham County Council

11.00 – 11.30 Break

Please note, refreshments will be served on the 4th floor during this break.

11.30 – 11.45 LLG Update – Professional Body for Monitoring Officers

Deborah Evans and Paul Turner will provide insight into the development of the Professional Body for Monitoring Officers, due for launch later this year, and spark discussion around the support and services you seek – safe space discussions? guidance and policy? support and protection in times of need? networking? This is your chance to shape your future body.

Deborah Evans, Chief Executive, LLG

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

**11.45 – 12.30 Resilience and Ethics – Upholding the Role of the
Monitoring Officer in challenging times**

In this session, Kerren Daly and Victoria Searle, Browne Jacobson, will consider how monitoring officers can fulfil their vital role as one corner of the “golden triangle” of leadership. They will reflect on learning gleaned for their work with the Local Government Information Unit and LLG on the Changing Role of the Monitoring Officer and apply this learning to the unique challenges posed by local government reorganisation, offering guidance on how Monitoring Officers can continue to uphold the highest standards of legal compliance and ethical behaviour, the values of their authorities and public trust and confidence during a period of intense uncertainty and change.

Victoria Searle, Principal Associate, Browne Jacobson

Kerren Daly, Partner, Browne Jacobson

Chaired by Helen Bradley, Director of Legal & Democratic Services, Durham
County Council

12.30 – 13.15 Gang Based Child Sexual Exploitation & Abuse

It is nearly 11 years since Alexis Jay published her report on sexual exploitation in Rotherham. It first brought the issue to public attention and led to sweeping changes to that Council. However, the grooming of teenage girls is not a new phenomenon and not limited to Northern towns, but Jay gave it a name – “Child Sexual Exploitation” or CSE. It is a manifestation of a specific type of paedophile activity.

Since Rotherham, there have been dozens of Local Authority investigations, Case Reviews, and a local Inquiry in Telford. All of them have provided a detailed examination of the local picture on CSE. Never have there been a National Investigation looking at all places, all agencies and joining the dots. That is what a National Inquiry can do – and now we have one. Based on the current crop of statutory Inquiries, the question is whether it will deliver that?

This session will examine the roots of the Inquiry, what we know about it so far, what organisations it will examine, and how best to respond if it decides to look at your Council. Stepping back from the headlines, CSE is an extremely serious crime that blights lives. This Inquiry could make a real difference and engaging well with it is the key.

Henry Bermingham, Partner, Weightmans

Chaired by Dee Sekar, Non Executive Director to the LLG Board for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, LLG

13.15 – 14:15 Lunch

Lunch will be served in the restaurant on the 2nd floor.

14.15 – 15.00 Identity politics is no longer just rhetoric

We will discuss the changing political environment that means the politics of protest, which was once just heard in the media and on the streets, is now in charge of many local authorities. We will discuss the impact of recent election outcomes on the traditional role of the political group in

local authorities, including examples of how single issue and identity politics have impacted local authorities in recent years. We will discuss the opportunities and challenges facing the sector of the move away from the traditional political groups and how, as Monitoring Officer, you can guide your local authorities to provide continued stability and effective governance in a changing political environment.

Estelle Culligan, Partner, Wilkin Chapman Rollits

Jonathan Goolden, Partner, Wilkin Chapman Rollits

Chaired by Helen Bradley

Director of Legal & Democratic Services, Durham County Council

15.00 – 15.45 Dealing with challenges of Local Government Reorganisation

During this session we will look at the legislative framework for Local Government Reorganisation, the latest position with regard the Government's reorganisation agenda and consider what steps can be taken now and in the future in preparing for reorganisation.

Tiffany Cloynes, Partner, Capsticks

Rebecca Gilbert, Principal Associate, Capsticks

Chaired by Paul Turner, LLG President & Director of Legal and Assurance and Monitoring Officer, Essex County Council

15.45 – 16.00 Break

Please note, refreshments will be served on the 4th floor during this break.

16.00 – 16.30 A Year in Practice: The Golden Triangle Code

The Code of Practice on Good Governance has been in our collective consciousness now for just short of a year, so what's the word on the street and how is this tool being put to practical use? Sarah and Siân will provide an overview of the Code and share some insights from the sector to consider the different benefits the Code can bring and how statutory



officers can collaborate to optimise those benefits in the interests of sustained good governance.

Sian Ballingall, Partner, Womble Bond Dickinson

Sarah White, Partner, Womble Bond Dickinson

Michael Graham, Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services,
Reading Borough Council

Chaired by Helen Bradley, Director of Legal & Democratic Services, Durham
County Council

16.30

Conference Close

Helen Bradley

Director of Legal & Democratic Services, Durham County Council