



LLG DIRECTORS REPORT FOR THE AGM 2024

Contents

Presidents Foreword	2-3
Chief Executives Comment	4-5
Board Directors	6
National Leads	7
Campaigns & Activity	7-11
Guidance	11
Consultations	12
Training Delivery & Events	12-16
Press	16
The Local Government Legal Society Trust	18
Our Corporate Partners	19
The LLG Team	19
LLG in Pictures	20-22

Please note the LLG Accounts are available on the LLG Website [here](#).

President's Foreword



Rachel McKoy

LLG President 2023-24

When I was appointed LLG President, I wanted to bring something of myself to the role and make a difference. So, I decided on five themes close to my heart to fulfil during my presidential year, which aligned nicely with the LLG strategic plan:

1. **front and centre** - to ensure LLG was visible and present in the room for all the important conversations - whether it be media, speaking engagements or lobbying.
2. **embracing our family**: nurturing the community through collaboration, networking, social events, with a focus on growth and wellbeing
3. **future first**: succession planning and the attraction of junior talent. For those more established in their roles - to look at career pathways, leadership, and mentoring.
4. **sharing the joy**: champion the sector, celebrate successes, and share stories and best practice.
5. **wide reach**: building member engagement at regional and national level and working collaboratively with stakeholders across the sector.

So, you may be asking did LLG deliver? Well, a look back at 2023 presents a hive of activity within LLG around these topics, much of which I am particularly proud. We were certainly front and centre, speaking in the local government press and the national press on topics of importance such as ...standards (or lack thereof), remote meeting provision, violence against councillors and officers, statutory protections, elections, ethical governance, the Golden Triangle and yes, if there was an innovative conversation around law in local government, we were in it.

We widened our reach by collaborating with stakeholders on groundbreaking research and analysis - working with the LGIU and Browne Jacobson on The Changing Role of the Monitoring Officer; and Grant Thornton, SOLACE and CIPFA



on Learning Lessons from Public Interest Reports. Both of these reports will drive policy and process change.

We have truly embraced our family with a growing program of highly topical events, with excellent feedback and a great buzz at the Spring & Governance conferences. With a relaunch of our regional program, we hope to extend that community feel to more local events. We all need to tell our stories and feel the support of our peers, and I've appreciated you sharing both your joy, your problems, and your successes.

Your support and engagement make LLG special - it is informed, innovative, and ambitious for the sector, and with your help we will continue to go from strength to strength in 2024.

With very best wishes

Rachel McKoy



Chief Executive's Comments



2023 was a year of fast paced change and delivery for LLG and the Local Authority Sector. Change has become a constant, presenting real opportunity for LLG to influence the sector and ensure the member voice is heard.

The board set an ambitious new strategy for the next 3 years, focussing on significant areas such as promoting exemplary governance, building a sustainable profession, embracing a truly inclusive community, using the LLG voice in every debate, the new regional strategy, and enabling and supporting our members.

Members benefit from a vast programme of topical training, free webinars, national lead, and regional events. We strive to build legal and governance competence and those all-important soft skills, promote succession planning and nurture wellbeing. Personal development is a key objective. Consequently, in 2023 we were proud to launch LLG Inspire, a development course for current and aspiring monitoring officers to teach essential skills - including conflict management, leadership of lawyers and democratic services officers, engaging with politicians, overseeing outsourced legal work, and understanding best practice in the golden triangle. We are working with the LGA, SOLACE and CIPFA to produce complementary training for the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Finance Officer, and the Chief Executive.

We were gratified that the 2023 survey of Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity across Local Government legal services departments sparked extensive discussion. Indeed, the picture painted of an ageing workforce has sparked more local authorities to engage in work experience week and trainee & apprenticeship recruitment. Our hybrid work experience week for students went from strength to strength, and the junior lawyer group gained new impetus with several face-to-face training days. The recruitment hub was launched on the website, offering members the opportunity to advertise graduate vacancies and apprenticeships at no cost. Many, many other projects began in 2023 that will deliver for our members in 2024.

Policy wise, work started on the Code of Practice in Good Governance for the Statutory Officers in Local Government. This will be an essential tool for monitoring officers, explaining best practice in the operation of the golden triangle. Guidance



was issued on Call-Ins, and work began on understanding the digital imprint regime. Lobbying continued with respect to remote meeting provision within local

government - progress continues to be slow, but it remains illogical that in an environment where local authorities are encouraged to invest in Artificial Intelligence, council members are forbidden from making decisions in remote or hybrid meetings. We also began work with the LGA on the Improvement & Assurance Framework - firstly mapping the myriad of activities within local authorities, then seeking to simplify. Further work was done with the LGA regarding workforce capacity - a key issue for legal services teams struggling to recruit.

LLG remains firmly not-for-profit yet financially secure, enabling us to keep membership subscriptions affordable. Recognising the funding pressures in local authorities, LLG launched membership plus to allow local authorities an inclusive subscription that entitled their lawyers to free access to the excellent one-day training conferences. This has been a huge success.

Recognising the increasing number of public interest reports, and the growing pressure on monitoring officers, LLG relaunched the Monitoring Officer Defence Scheme, and, importantly, is looking to launch a Professional Body for Monitoring Officers in 2024 to provide guidance, support, mentoring and development for Monitoring Officers, Deputy Monitoring Officers, and those aspiring to the position. Leadership is tough but rewarding, and being part of a strong network can be the key to success.

At LLG we are excited about the opportunities grasped in 2023 that will come to fruition in 2024. We look forward to working closely with you to on whatever challenges come our way!

Deborah Evans

CEO



Board Directors (severed or serving since last AGM)

For biographies [Click here](#)

Helen Edwards	Past President (Advisory)
Rachel Mckoy	President
Aneeka Sarwar	Vice President
Paul Turner	Deputy Vice President
Fiona Anthony	Training Director
Helen Lynch	National Lead Representative Director
John Purvis	Junior Director
Deborah Evans	Chief Executive Officer
Rochelle Tapping	Membership Director
Manisha Patel	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Director
Paul Turner	Regional Director - Eastern
Kieran McGaughey	Regional Director - North
Jennifer Phillips	Regional Director - South
Patricia Narebor	Regional Director – London
Nichola Vine	Regional Director - Midlands
Kelly Byrne	Interim Regional Director - Wales
Sarah Harriott	(Interim) National Lead Representative Director
Emma Harrison	National Lead Representative Director

Please note the Law Society Local Government Council Seat Member during this period was Suki Binjal who acted in an advisory capacity to the Board. The Local Government Council Seat Member is elected via the Law Society rules and procedures and is not appointed by way of nomination made directly from LLG (which had historically been the case).

LLG say goodbye to the following Directors at the AGM 2024 with grateful thanks for their immense contribution over the years and good wishes for their future endeavours: -

Helen Edwards (Past President- Advisory)

Kieran McGaughey

Rochelle Tapping

Jennifer Phillips



Rachel McKoy (as President)

John Purvis (as Junior Director)

Paul Turner (as Eastern Director)

Helen Lynch (as National Lead Board Representative)

National Leads (served or severing since last AGM)

Ravinder Johal, Housing and Regeneration
Helen Lynch, MO & Governance
Robin Donaldson, Adult Social Care & Health
Penny Latham, Adult Social Care & Health
Vacant Litigation & Licensing (retired)
Stephen Turner, Licensing Deputy
Aneeka Sarwar, Litigation Deputy
Kieran McGaughey, Partnerships & Procurement
Kevin Carter, Procurement Deputy
Andrew Brett, Employment
Rachel McKoy, Planning and Highways
Sarah Harriott, Information Governance
Jeanette Bloor Children Services and Education

Regional Lead Officers

LLG are aware that there are numerous Regional Leads operating within the Regions. With the appointment of an executive assistant to the regions in January 2024, LLG is building a comprehensive list of those actively meeting in their groups together with encouraging new members to step forward within their area. LLG would like to thank every member who gives their time to disseminate knowledge and provide a conduit for networking and support within their practice area in their locality.

Campaigns & Lobbying

The Golden Triangle:

LLG, Browne Jacobson & LGiU

LLG worked with SOLACE, Grant Thornton and ALATS to better understand the work required within leadership and culture in local government.



LLG and Browne Jacobson commissioned a research piece by the LGiU to examine the role of the monitoring officer. This produced a piece of work which was published in 2023 entitled [“The Changing Role of the Monitoring Officer”](#). This research paper made the following observations: -

1. MOs should be included with the head of paid service and the section 151 officer as part of the golden triangle of senior council officers, and in communication with the council leaders and the heads of party groups. This is essential for their role to function as it should.
2. However, some have reported a steady undermining of their status and position within their local authority. MOs we spoke to for this research had different experiences of their place in council structures. What is clear from our work is that they need to have access to the highest levels of council decisions in order to ensure and enhance the governance of councils and the delivery of services. Indeed, many see it as a significant barrier to fulfilling their role if they are looked upon as lower status within the council.
3. MOs’ capacity has been further diminished by a combination of reduced resources and limited powers to enforce compliance with codes of conduct. The latter follows weakening of the standards regime since the Local Government Act (2011) and a sense that there is a growing degradation in behaviour and respect for institutional governance in politics more generally.
4. Without the support of a robust standards and sanctions regime, MOs often find themselves in difficult situations whereby they are exposed to personal intimidation or other forms of unprofessional behaviour if they take a stand on enforcing legal norms within the council. Many report stress and absence from work while some have even left the sector altogether as a consequence of poor behaviour that has gone unchecked.
5. Councils are taking on increasing risks in order to make up for the reduction in their budgets in recent years, which places additional pressure on the MO role. The MO role is expansive, and includes a range of responsibilities and skills, linked to good governance more broadly.
6. In our discussions we heard from several people that they would benefit from a professional body for monitoring officers, akin to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) for section 151 officers and the Society for Local Authority Chief Executives. This could provide support, training and advice for monitoring officers working in the current local government climate, with all the challenges and pressures noted in this report. It could also provide a forum and network for professionals to share experiences, which might prove particularly beneficial given the loneliness that many of our interviewees told us their role entails. Finally, a professional body could advocate on behalf of its members and for better, stronger governance in general.

LLG and Browne Jacobson held a follow-up roundtable to this paper in 2024 and are in the process of developing a next stage report for comment at the June 2024 Spring Conference.



LLG & Grant Thornton

LLG inputted substantially into Grant Thornton's report on '[Preventing Failure in Local Government](#)', further assisting by holding roundtables and events to explore the following: -

- Sharing key themes and learning from our recent VFM and wider audit reporting during 20/21 and 21/22.
- What are the key codes and guidance on behaviours and standards for the sector. What are the key themes where these have not been met and the weaknesses that have led to failings, and what do councils need to do to ensure standards are maintained.
- Examples of good / notable practice.
- Impact on the sector where arrangements fail.

LLG & The LGA

LLG worked with the LGA together with CIPFA and SOLACE on their improvement and Assurance Framework and Workforce Capacity streams.

LLG & The Legal Services Board

LLG discussed ethical governance and its impact on the rule of law. Collaboration work has been identified around conduct, culture and ethics.

LLG & The SRA

LLG fed into the SRA's priorities and business case and fed into their inhouse code of ethics guidance.

LLG & The Bar Council

LLG established talks with the Bar Council around ethical behaviour.

Code of Conduct for Statutory Officers

LLG went out for consultation on the draft Code of Conduct for Statutory Officers produced in conjunction with SOLACE & CIPFA and with thanks to Philip McCourt and Bevan Brittan. The final version will be timed to launch at the LLG Spring Conference in June.

Remote Meeting Provision

Following the determination by the High Court having heard the matter on 28th April 2021 to dismiss the proceedings brought by [LLG, ADSO and Hertfordshire](#), LLG and



ASDO have been attempting to get the Government to release the information it holds in respect of the Call for Evidence it opened during the aforementioned case; together with calling for a change in the law.

ASDO and LLG made a FOI request which was refused by the Government on the basis of it being a vexatious burden and not in the public interest. LLG and ASDO asked the ICO for a review of that decision and the ICO upheld the Governments decision and stated that whilst in the public interest, it would amount to a vexatious burden and that – the Government has committed to publishing it. 3 years have nearly past and the Call for Evidence has not been made public. LLG will continue to call for its release.

In terms of seeking a legal change, LLG and ASDO worked with NALC (who were doing a lot of lobbying) to seek an amendment to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. Despite twice being supported by the Lords, it was eventually defeated to ensure the Bill made the Kings Speech at the start of November 2023. Whilst LLG did manage a mention in the House of Lords, remote meeting provision is still not available in England. LLG will continue to call for remote meeting provision following the next general election.

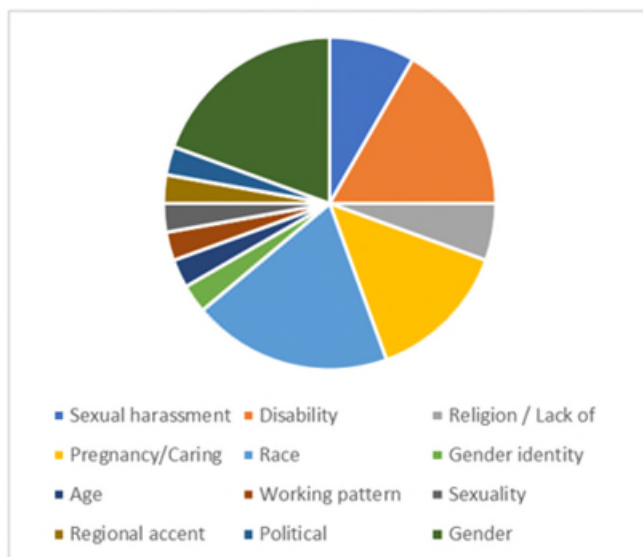
EDI: Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity:

LLG is committed to ensuring that lawyers working within local government are treated fairly and with respect regardless of their background or identity. We wholeheartedly believe that learning from and incorporating a broad range of perspectives will help us to achieve resilience and growth as a community. We want every lawyer to be able to prosper in an environment which is free from discrimination and abuse, and for local government legal departments to be a beacon of inclusivity. This aim extends to LLG as an organisation in terms of our board membership, speaker profile and staff.

LLG have established an EDI committee to enable the company to meet its goals in this area. LLG were able to conduct a sector wide EDI survey and published press releases on the subject.

LLG Policies have also been reviewed by our Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Director, Manisha Patel.

LLG EDI Survey – Reported experiences of Discrimination



Graduate Recruitment:

The National Graduate Recruitment campaign opened up a dedicated webpage for free advertisement of graduate placements to enable those seeking entry into the profession a streamlined approach to vacancies. Alongside this, LLG delivered another successful Work Experience Week in 2023.

Other Achievements:

- Establishment of the MO Defence Panel with Anthony Collins, Weightmans and VVW.
- The LLG Awards 2023
- Work Experience Week 2023
- Spring Conference 2023
- Monitoring Officers Conference 2023
- Governance Conference 2023
- Launch of LLG Inspire

Disrepair Case -

- Churchill v Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council was heard on 8th November. The case is a claim in nuisance alleging the spread of Japanese Knotweed from Council land to the Claimants land. However, the case tested whether the courts should overturn the decision in Halsey v Milton Keynes General NHS Trust from 2004, which established that parties could not be compelled to mediate. To assist, LLG launched a survey to establish legal spend as against housing stock numbers compared to actual compensation paid. You can find the judgement [here](#).



Guidance published:

[LLG Brief on the Economic Crime & Corporate Transparency Bill](#)

A detailed brief examining applicable to Local Government and obligations flowing from it.

[Practical Guide: AI in Local Government](#)

The guide discusses training needs, the use of electronic signature and GDPR compliance together with ethical and legal considerations when implementing an AI system.

[LLG Position Statement on the Provision of Practising Certificates.](#)

LLG published a position statement promoting the provision of practicing certificates by local authorities.

[LLG Members Planning Code of Good Practice](#)

LLG published the Members Planning Code of Good Practice on the 25th January 2024 in collaboration with Bevan Brittan and Sharon Bridglalsingh.

[Code of Practice on Good Governance for Statutory Officers](#)

LLG went out for consultation on the Code of Practice in conjunction with SOLACE & CIPFA with thanks to Philip McCourt and Bevan Brittan.

[The use of Call-In- a guidance for English authorities](#)

LLG contributed to the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny Guidance

Consultations responded to:

OFLOG consultation on their Corporate Plan

SRA in-house ethics

Part 1 Procurement Regulations

LLG Strategy 2024-2027:

The [LLG Strategy](#) document sets out LLG's values and strategic objectives, with corresponding actions on how LLG will continue to work to deliver them.

Training & Events:

Training Delivered:-

Learning from Recent Reports: What is Good Governance?



Commercial Law Conference
Essential Guide to Overview and Scrutiny Committees
CPOs
Local Authority Prosecutions
Right to Buy Workshop
Highways and Development
Planning Committees
Licensing Reviews
Planning Committees
Local Authority Companies: The Law, Key Roles and Risk
Fundamentals of Local Government
Defending Housing Disrepair Claims
Public Rights of Way
Planning Basic Survival Guide
Setting Up and Running Local Authority Companies: Practical Challenges
Possession Proceedings and Anti-Social Behaviour
Adult Social Care Conference
Roles and Responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer
Dealing with Standards of Conduct of Elected Members
Monitoring Officers Conference
Defending Housing Disrepair Claims
Navigating Data Protection Law
Licensing Committees
Planning Enforcement Prosecutions
Local Authority Finance Scrutiny: The Essentials
Licensing Basic Survival Guide
Compulsory Purchase Orders: The Basics and Beyond
Committees Basic Survival Guide
Political Awareness
Junior Lawyers Day (In-Person)
Equal Pay
Chambers Case Law Update
The Role of the Monitoring Officer: The Fundamentals
Masterclass: Licensing Law in Action
Essential Guide to Overview & Scrutiny Committees
Section 106 Agreements
Local Authority Finance Scrutiny: The Essentials
Access in Housing Cases
Licensing Basic Survival Guide
Navigating Freedom of Information Law
Independent Persons: The Role of the IP in Ensuring High Standards of Conduct
Premises Closure Orders



Planning Conference
Traffic Regulation Orders
Setting Up and Running Local Authority Companies
Local Authority Companies and Insolvency
Roles and Responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer
Off-Licences and Illegal Tobacco: Prosecutions and Reviews
Learning from Recent Reports: What is Good Governance?
Housing Conference
Highways and Development
Dealing with Standards of Conduct of Elected Members
Local Authority Prosecutions: The Basics in Practice
Planning Committees
The Role of the Independent Person in Ensuring High Standards of Conduct
Anti-Social Behaviour Injunctions
Planning Basic Survival Guide
The Fundamentals of Local Government
The Court of Protection: A Practical Guide to Running Cases
School Admissions and Appeal Compliance
Committees Stage 2
Right to Buy Workshop
Navigating Data Protection Law
Key Challenges and Updates for Monitoring Officers
Elections Conference
Licensing Committees: Law and Procedure
Dealing with Standards of Conduct of Elected Members

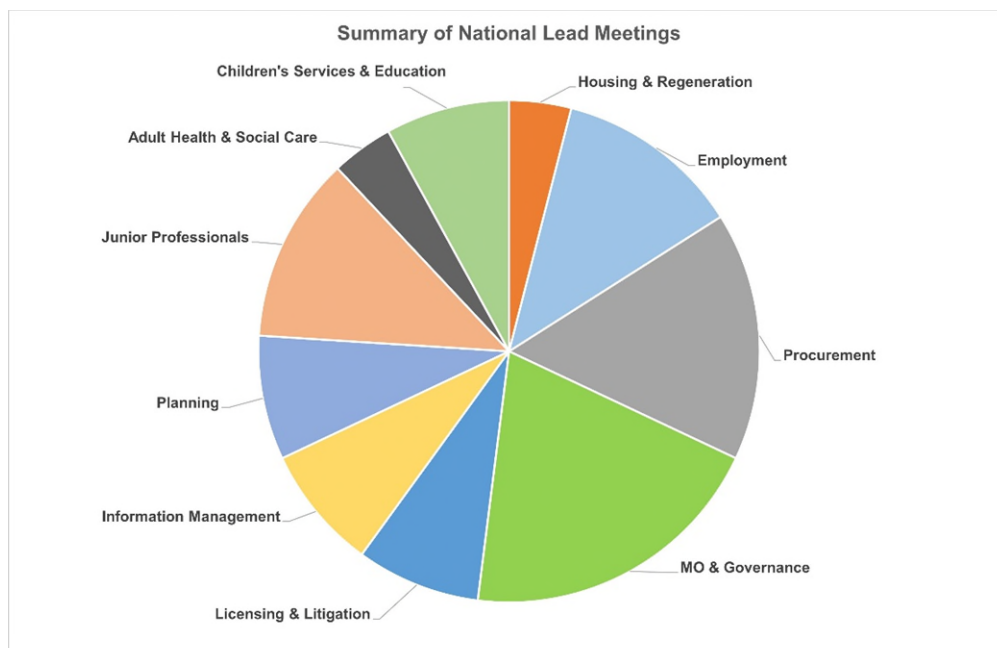
Events Delivered:

National Lead & Regional Meetings

- Employment on 2nd March
- Procurement on 9th March
- Monitoring Officer & Governance on 30th March 2023
- Housing & Regeneration on 6th April 2023



Employment on 13th April 2023
Litigation & Licensing on 4th May 2023
Information Management on 11th May 2023
Monitoring Officer & Governance on 18th May 2023
Planning on 25th May 2023
Procurement on 8th June 2023
Junior Professionals on 1st June 2023
Litigation & Licensing on 22nd June 2023
Information Management on 20th July 2023
Junior Professionals on 1st August 2023
Planning on 10th August 2023
MO & Governance on 7th September 2023
Partnership & Procurement on 14th September 2023
Southern Region Meeting on 5th December 2023
Children Services and Education 7th December 2023
MO & Governance National Lead Meeting on 25th January 2024
Procurement National Lead Meeting on 8th February 2024
Southern Regional Meeting on 1st March 2024
Northern Regional Meeting on 19th March 2024
Midlands Regional Meeting on 2nd April 2024
Eastern Regional Meetings every quarter with PLP



Webinars

19th April – Avoiding Disputes in Construction



26th April – Getting Ready for the Procurement Act
11th May – The Future of Planning Law
25th May - Getting ready for the Golden Thread: What we know so far
25th July – How to Break the Cycle of Burnout in your Legal Career
13th December – Elections and Top Tips for Advising Committees 1
14th December – The Procurement Act 2023, what does it mean for local authorities
17th January – LA's & Limited Companies
25th January - Wellbeing Webinar- Financial Resilience, Confidence & Clarity for Career Driven Professionals
14th February – Employment Law Update – Key Areas of Development for 2024
21st February – Renters Reform Bill
28th February – Pension Disputes in the LGPS

Social Media

LLG has; -

- 5,547 LinkedIn connections
- 1,368 X followers

LLG launched Instagram at the start of 2024

Press

Notable press

UK Parliament

[LLG mentioned in the House of Lords by Baroness Scott of Needham Market \(15/03/2023\) "Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill" – RE: Freedom of Information Request with ADSO.](#)

The Guardian

- [Lawyers raise alarm at struggle to tackle UK local government corruption](#)

MJ

- [Curating a good council and government system](#)
- [Councillor or Candidate \(in-print\)](#)
- [Local government lawyers: filling the age gaps](#)
- [Councils at 'significant risk' over issues facing Monitoring Officers](#)



LGC

- [Government accused of 'stalling' remote meetings decision](#)

Law Gazette

- [Councils withdraw money for Practising Certificates](#)
- [Something quite magical](#)
- [Councils cash crisis: Local government lawyers told to 'get in the room'](#)
- [News focus: How local government lawyers can help prevent organisational failure](#)
- [Monitoring officers unable to tackle bad behaviour in councils due to 'toothless' sanctions regime - report](#)

Local Government Lawyer

- [Lawyers and democratic services officers criticise Government refusal of freedom of information request on remote meetings 'call for evidence'](#)
- [LLG sets out six categories open for nominations in 2023 Awards](#)
- <https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/marketplace/528-market-news/56111-llg-calls-for-applicants-for-deputy-vice-president-position>
- <https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/planning/401-planning-news/56254-llg-publishes-revised-members-planning-code-of-good-practice>
- <https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/careers/626-careers-news/56250-call-for-more-training-contracts-as-sra-data-shows-public-sector-solicitors-more-diverse-but-with-higher-age-profile>
- <https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/governance/396-governance-news/56122-llg-president-warns-of-worrying-trend-in-councils-not-funding-practising-certificates>
- <https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/governance/396-governance-news/55845-failures-in-local-government-are-not-inevitable-and-proper->



exercise-of-functions-by-golden-triangle-officers-should-keep-all-councils-safe-says-top-audit-firm

- <https://www.bevanbrittan.com/insights/articles/2024/llg-members-planning-code-of-good-practice/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/feb/02/lawyers-raise-alarm-at-struggle-to-tackle-uk-local-government-corruption>
- [LLG and ADSO dismay after Information Commissioner upholds decision that their FOI request for information on remote meetings call for evidence was “vexatious”](#)
- [Facing financial failure](#)
- [Government shuts door on virtual attendance at council meetings as amendments fail to make final version of Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill](#)
- [So who is looking at governance?](#)

The Local Government Legal Society Trust

LLG would like to thank the Trust for helping it to support its members and celebrate their successes.

You can read more about the Trust [here](#).





Our Corporate Partners

LLG's Corporate Partners are an essential support to LLG's provision of training, support and networking. LLG could not provide the level of membership benefit we do without their continued support. Our grateful thanks to our corporate partners and their excellent work.





The LLG Team

Deborah Evans, CEO

Helen McGrath – Executive Director of Policy & Governance

Ann Harlow – Head of Business Services & Training

Lucy Duncan – Training Manager

Jack McCann – Legal Events, Project & Technical Executive

Daria Porwisz – Legal Training, Policies & Project Co-ordinator

Rachel Carruthers – Business, Finance and IT Co-ordinator

Dennis Hall – Bulletin Editor

Janet Hooper – Welsh Policy Officer

Simran Panesar – Legal Training, Membership Support and Projects Co-ordinator

Ore Shoyinka – Executive Assistant (Corporate)

Nylah Clarke-Mills – Executive Assistant (Regions)

LLG In Pictures





