

A blue-tinted background image of a city skyline with various skyscrapers and buildings.

# Redesigning Local Government: Lawyers at the Centre of Change

## LLG CONFERENCE 2026

DAY 2 FRIDAY 12 JUNE 2026  
ONLINE CONFERENCE

### A Profession at the Heart of Change

Local government lawyers and governance officers in England and Wales are operating in an **unusually complex and fluid environment**.

The pressures — and opportunities — extend far beyond the delivery of legal services. They arise from **structural reform, financial stress, political volatility and rapidly evolving case law**.

To be the best lawyer you can be, you must understand law in the context of an **ever-changing local government sector**.

**The 2026 Spring Conference is your window to the wider world**

**LLG SPRING CONFERENCE**

**DAY 2 ONLINE CONFERENCE  
FRIDAY 12 JUNE 2026**

**09.00 - 09.15 Conference Opening and Welcome**

Speaker: Helen Bradley, LLG President

**09.15 - 10.00 Elections Round up**

During the session, we will delve into some of the challenges encountered during the May 2026 polls, exploring the key lessons that election organisers and those providing legal guidance to Returning Officers should consider for future events. Additionally, we will highlight several aspects that Government officials may wish to review and reflect upon to enhance electoral processes going forward. This comprehensive discussion aims to foster more effective practices and thoughtful decision-making in upcoming elections.

Speaker: Mark Heath, VWV

Chair: Helen Bradley, LLG

**10.00 – 10.15 BREAK**

**10.15 – 11.00 Decarbonisation**

This session discusses approaches to decarbonisation for public authorities in 2026. The progression towards the UK's net zero ambition of 2030, and beyond, is a key driver for public authorities to decarbonise. The session will explore how to approach developing decarbonisation projects, obtaining robust and compliant decisions by stakeholders, key areas of development in decarbonisation technologies, and the impact of the Procurement Act 2023 on potential routes to procurement. It will include case studies and consider how legal teams can be at the heart of stakeholder decisions, in project development and delivering on relevant ambitions.

Speakers: Emma Whitfield, Freeths  
Richard Lockhart, Freeths

Chair: Deborah Evans, LLG

**11.00 – 11.15 BREAK**

**11.15 – 12.00 Data Subject Access Requests**

Data controllers are facing an increasing volume and complexity of Data Subject Access Requests (DSARs), driven by heightened public awareness and evolving regulatory expectations. This session is designed specifically for lawyers working in local government, providing practical insight into the operational and legal challenges associated with managing DSARs effectively.

This session will explore:

- Defensibly reducing the scope of DSARs which cover large and unstructured datasets.
- Approaches to workflow design.
- The use of technology to increase efficiency and reduce risk.
- The rise of DSAR complaints in light of the Data Use and Access Act 2025.

Speaker: Amy Prime, WBD

Chair: Helen Bennett, LLG

## **12.00 – 12.15 BREAK**

### **12.15 – 13.15 The Evolving Standards Regime: The Role of the Independent Person and the Independent Chair in Standards Committees and the Right to Review**

With standards reform in local government absent from the King's Speech, legislative change does not appear to be on the immediate horizon. So, in the meantime, how can councils strengthen the effectiveness of their standards committees? This session will explore practical best practice in the roles of the Independent Person and Independent Chair, before turning to the operation of the Right to Review and Right of Appeal in Wales, and the value these mechanisms can bring to the complaints process.

Speakers: Jonathan Goolden, Wilkin Chapman Rollits  
 Grahame Wright, Independent Chair of South Tyneside Council's Standards Committee  
 David Pearl, Independent Person for Uttlesford District Council, Deputy Independent Person for Cambridge City Council and Independent Person for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority  
 Gareth Owens, Chief Officer Governance, Flintshire County Council

Chair: Rachel McKoy, AMO

## **13.15 – 14.00 LUNCH**

### **14.00 – 14.45 Life after Mazur**

Local authorities have long championed the legal executive route to qualification, recognising the valuable opportunities it creates for those pursuing a career in law outside more traditional pathways. However, the decision in *Mazur* had significant implications for

the many legal executives working across local government, raising important questions about legal supervision and decision-making, the answers to which remain untested. In this timely session, regulators and practitioners will examine the practical impact of Mazur in a local government context, offer insight into the issues still causing uncertainty, and explore future qualification routes that could enable legal executives to play an even greater role in litigation.

Speakers: Helen Bennett, LLG  
Jonathan Peddie, Executive Director – Investigations, Enforcement and Litigation, SRA  
Katie Bray, Essex County Council  
Simon Garrod Director of Policy & Governance, CILEX

Chair: Helen Bennett, LLG

Closing: Deborah Evans, LLG