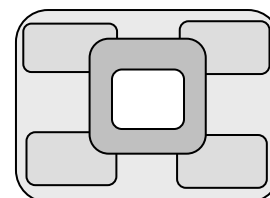


“Helping People, Improving Places”

Joint work programme to support councils

2007–08 to 2009–10

**Local Government Association
Local Government Employers
Local Government International Bureau
Public Private Partnerships Programme
Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services
Improvement and Development Agency**



Introduction

This document describes the work undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA) and the related 5 associated national organisations to support local government. It is intended to describe how the work will develop over the next 2–3 years in the light of external factors and changing local government priorities. However the plan needs to be flexible over that period to respond to new council priorities.

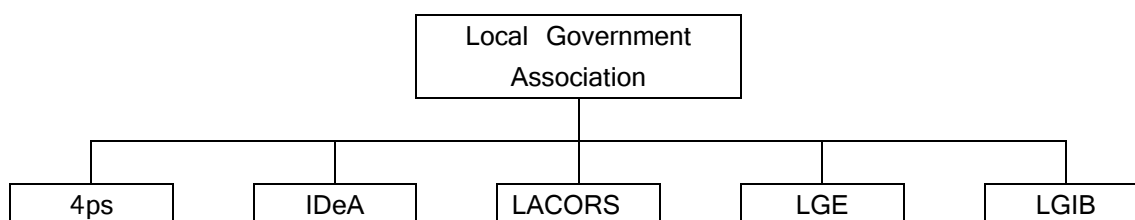
It is the first time that the consolidated work programme covering all of the central local government organisations has been published in this way. The aim is to ensure our work programme is responsive to the needs of councils and other stakeholders. For this reason feedback on its content would be particularly welcome.

Endorsement by LGA political leaders and Executive Directors

[To follow consultation with councils]

The “Local Government family”

There are 6 principal organisations working together to support and promote better local government. The individual partners have a distinct role and specific expertise. With the exception of the LGA which is a membership organisation based on subscription income, these organisations are partly funded from the top slice of the Revenue Support Grant.



Local Government Association (LGA)

The Local Government Association is the national voice for local authorities. It represents just under 500 councils throughout England and Wales. These councils represent over 50 million people and spend around £100 billion a year on local services. The LGA aims to put local people in the driving seat of public service improvement. It promotes local government issues to the public, Parliament, Whitehall and the media.

The LGA's objectives are to:

- give people greater power and influence over their lives, their services and the future of the places where they live.
- secure more fundamental improvements in public services and make better use of public money
- improve the quality of life and economic performance of cities, towns and villages

The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)

The IDeA works for local government improvement so councils can serve people and places better. It:

- uses experienced councillors and senior officers, known as peers, who support and challenge councils to improve themselves.
- enables councils to share good practice through the national Beacons scheme and regional local government networks. The best ideas are put on the IDeA Knowledge website.
- helps councillors via the Leadership Academy programmes to become better leaders so they can balance the diverse demands of people living in the same community.
- promotes the development of local government's management and workforce.
- advises councils on improving customer service and value for money.
- helps councils work through local partnerships to tackle difficult problems such as crime and poor public health.

Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS)

LACORS supports and promotes the work of local authority regulatory services throughout the United Kingdom. Its work covers enforcement relating to: trading standards, food safety, hygiene and standards, public entertainment, alcohol licensing services, gambling reform, civil registration, health and safety at work and animal health and welfare. This remit has recently been extended to cover environmental protection in relation to land, air, water and noise pollution and private sector rented housing.

LACORS provides comprehensive policy advice, guidance and good practice information to local authorities and partners.

Local Government Employers (LGE)

LGE works with local authorities, regional employers and other bodies to lead and create solutions on pay, pensions and the employment contract, to ensure the provision of excellent and affordable local services. LGE represents authorities' interests on pay, pensions and employment issues to central government, government agencies, trades unions, European institutions and others.

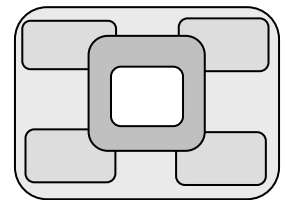
Local Government International Bureau (LGIB)

The LGIB advances local government's interests in European legislation, funding and policy and also in international issues, such as sustainable development. With offices in London and Brussels, the LGIB works with UK organisations and other countries' local government associations to ensure that councils get the best deal from EU and global developments. This involves enabling councillors to play their part in a range of European and international organisations.

The LGIB also helps local authorities form partnerships with their counterparts overseas and promotes local democracy internationally. It keeps UK local authorities up-to-date through a range of information services, so that they can anticipate European or international agreements which will affect them. A review of the LGIB was undertaken in 2006 and this may impact on the work and organisation of LGIB's current activities.

Public private partnerships programme (4ps)

4ps is local government's project delivery specialist. 4ps has a significant and growing impact on the success of the private finance initiative, public private partnerships and large-scale projects in the public sector, and has a direct impact on providing improved public services and infrastructure.



Context for this work programme

Table 1 illustrates the framework for this work programme.

Helping people, improving places

Our aim is to improve the lives of local people and the communities in which they live. We do this in a variety of ways, often indirectly by working with councils, government and other organisations. But we should not lose sight of the central focus.

Our support has to take account of and anticipate the growing pressures facing councils. There is increasing population migration and mobility, an ageing population and growing diversity and inequalities at local, regional and national level. There is greater geographical variation (e.g. in health, employment, households and communities).

There is a growing consensus across central and local government about the importance of delivering local solutions to meet local needs; this provides a real opportunity for local government.

Supporting public service improvement

People expect good quality services. Local government is able to demonstrate steady improvement in recent years. So our work is designed to help councils to continue to improve and to encourage councils to support other councils. This help can take a variety of forms including specific reviews of particular services, working with groups of councillors and officers, and helping to interpret and implement new legislation / guidance. It also involves working with government to influence policies before they become law.

People's expectations are rising. Individuals are expecting a greater choice in the services they use and for services to be tailored to their individual needs. Each person's needs are different and can be complex. Similarly the needs of different communities also vary. So we are promoting ways to help councils to listen to individuals and work with their communities to really understand their needs.

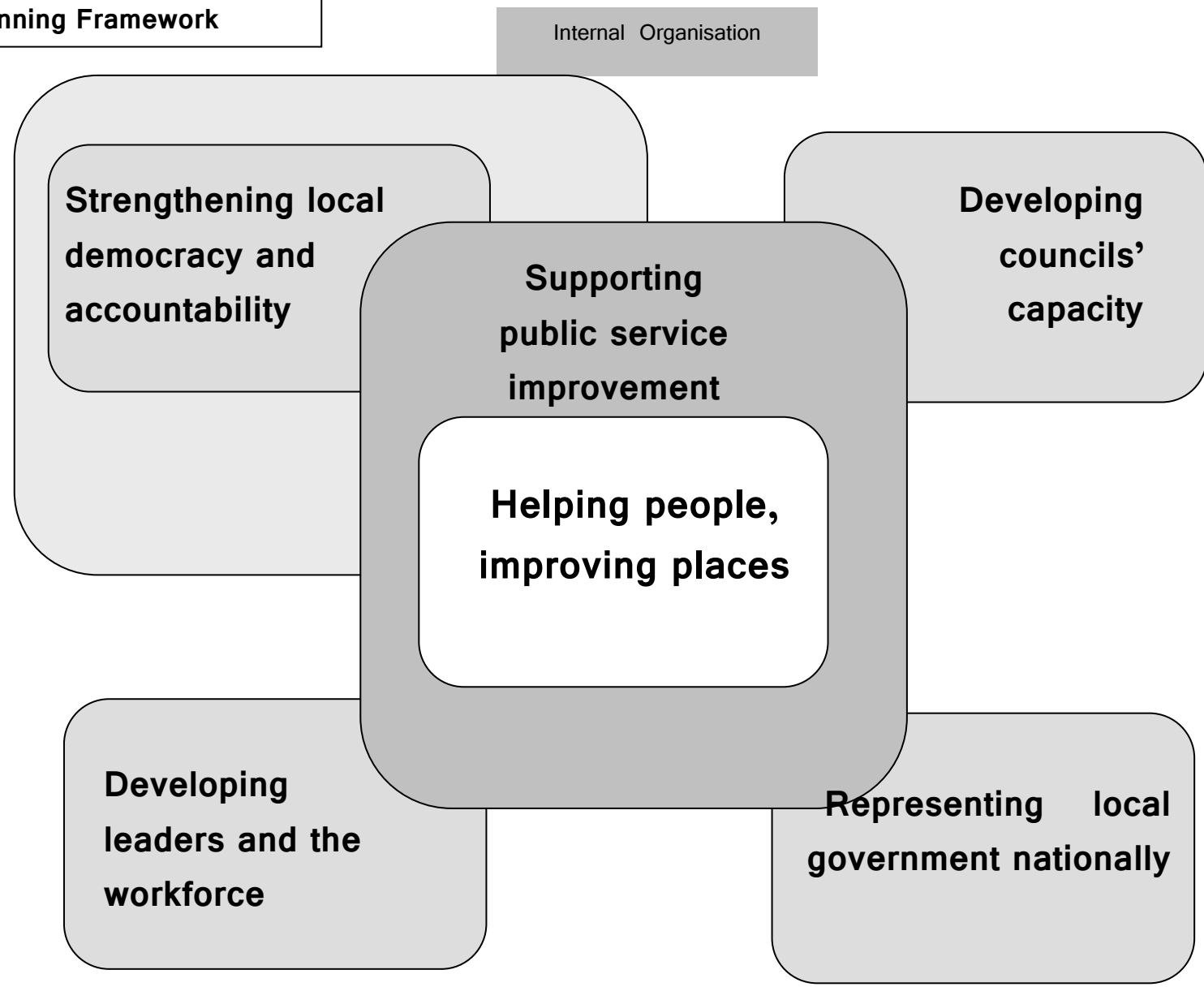
Individuals pay for council services – either directly or indirectly – and therefore expect councils to make efficient and effective use of the money they spend. So part of our programme is aiding councils to improve their use of resources. Particular examples of this are: assisting with major new capital projects, improving the way services are bought and seeking to secure efficiency savings.

Representing local government nationally

The local government family works on behalf of councils to influence future legislation and then assist with its implementation. Each of the organisations works with government departments and other key stakeholders to represent the views and priorities of councils. The performance and inspection framework which will be introduced in 2008 is an example of our work. The local government family is working to put forward an acceptable arrangement that has local government exercising greater responsibility for monitoring and improving its own performance.

The public does not have a high regard for councils (although they place a higher value on the services they receive). Public trust is low. If local government is to thrive these perceptions have to be changed. So we actively use communications and marketing to improve the reputation of local government and encourage people to become involved.

TABLE 1 - Planning Framework



As a result of the government's review of spending next Summer 2007, money allocated to councils over the next 3 years until 2011 is expected to be tightly constrained. There may also be proposals to change the funding arrangements for councils. So, in addition to helping councils secure efficiency gains, we also seek to argue for councils to have access to the resources necessary to meet changing and increasing demands.

Our work depends on understanding and responding to the needs of councils. So we use a network of regional associates to liaise with councils and identify which services and areas of support are required – individually and collectively.

Developing councils' capacity

People look to their council to be equipped to deliver appropriate services. Part of our work is helping councils to build the capacity to do this. Much of our help is directed to those councils judged to be in greatest need. Importantly we draw on the experience of other councillors (as peers) to share their knowledge and good practice.

Communities also expect councils to strengthen the local economy, establish and promote the locality – urban or rural – and take strategic decisions that will affect future generations (e.g. housing, planning, social care or education). Councils increasingly have to do this in partnership with other organisations, including businesses, the health service and the voluntary sector. So we provide support for partnership working, for putting in place local agreements, for collaborative working and for jointly buying services.

Strengthening local democracy and accountability

Individuals and communities look to councillors to help them and to represent their interests. We need to equip councillors to be effective in this role and able to lead for their localities.

People are confused about where and how to get help. They should not have to understand which body does what or how each is governed in order to access services, influence decisions or get help when things go wrong. So we need to support appropriate partnership working between public, private and voluntary organisations, and support a stronger role for councils in steering services and holding them to account. Our work programme is designed to help partnership working, and to develop the skills of councillors to scrutinise the public services provided locally to identify opportunities to improve.

Communities are becoming more diverse. Part of our work is about helping to embrace this diversity, tackle issues of inequality and promote neighbourhoods working together. In this way localities will be better placed to tackle a range of issues such as improving community safety or achieving sustainable communities.

Developing leaders and the workforce

People want councillors who will lead their city, county or district on their behalf, and play a stronger role in promoting the interests of the area, supporting economic growth and being strategic commissioners and leaders of their local areas, using all their levers – such as planning powers as well as housing policies – to create mixed communities. So we offer an extensive range of training and development for political and managerial leaders.

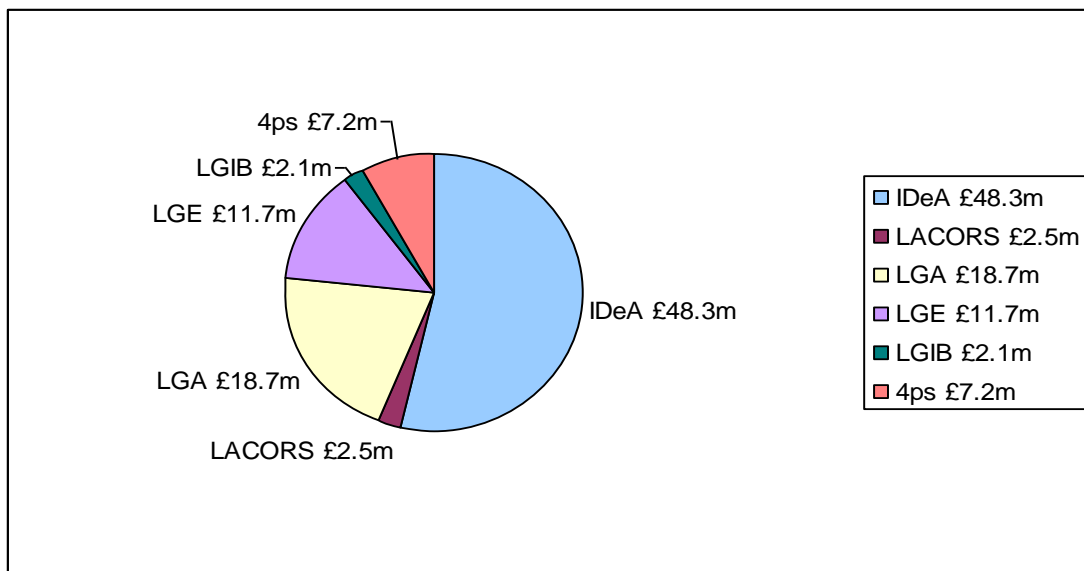
Having the right workforce to deliver services to people and places is vital. Councils need to develop their approaches to recruiting, retaining and rewarding their staff. So we offer support in a range of areas including people managements, pay and rewards, pensions, overcoming skills shortages and changing the workforce to meet changing needs.

Where the money comes from.....

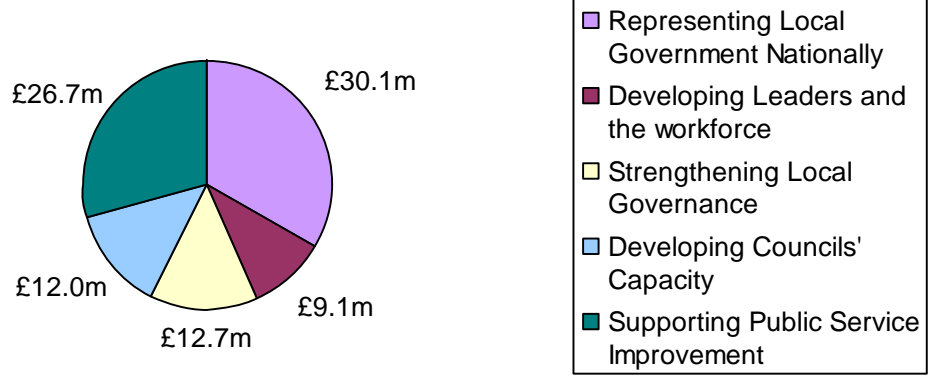
The main source of income for the Local Government Association is subscriptions from member authorities. For the other members of the local government family the major income comes from a share of the annual revenue support grant. The family receives about 1.1% of the total Revenue Support Grant each year. This enables other funding to be secured, for example for specific initiatives, and there is income from fees and charges, conferences and subscriptions.

One of the strengths of this family is its ability to lever in additional funding for local government from other sources such as government departments. Because the core costs are covered it is possible to provide a very cost effective method to deliver specific programmes, such as support to major procurements or support to improve public health.

... how it is distributed between the organisations.....



... and where the money is spent



Supporting information

Contact details:

[Details for each organisation to be inserted in the final version; in the interim contact:

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Improvement and Development Agency
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76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

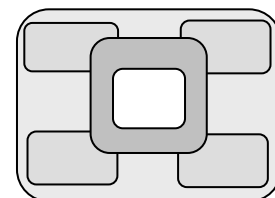
Tel: 0207 296 6700]

Further information:

[To be inserted inc. web link]

Other

Supporting Public Service Improvement



To meet the needs of local authorities for support in specific areas
To promote and share best practice, guidance and advice

Support for Public Health

This programme enables local authorities, in conjunction with their partners, to improve the health of their local communities and tackle health inequalities. It also builds capacity to respond to requests for support from local authorities in discharging their leadership role for public health. The core elements of the programme – leadership academy, knowledge dissemination and peer review / stocktake – are designed to be subsumed into core business once the Department of Health funding has ceased in March 2008.

Development and support for adult social care services and children and young people's services

This builds capacity in the sector and drives improvement from within the sector. The overarching purpose is to support the transformation of:

- adult social care as a whole council, community and partnership exercise, with a particular focus on promoting independence, choice and control for service users and carers.
- children's services required by the Children Act 2004, with a particular focus on improved outcomes for children and young people.

At a strategic level, a methodology has been agreed for working with partners, notably CSIP and CSCI, through the Joint Improvement Partnership. This is based on an integrated Health and Social Care system. A programme linking children, adults, public health and the wider council agenda is being developing possibly including member networks.

The programmes relating to social care encompass:

- improving health and adult social care through closer and more effective partnership working in strategic planning, commissioning and delivery of services.
- Seeking the transfer of money from the NHS to local government to accompany the shifting policy emphasis towards prevention and well-being.

Procurement

– support to major projects

Expert project advice and support to local authorities on the development, structuring, procurement, execution, and delivery of improved public services and projects through the private finance initiative (PFI), public private partnerships, and contractual partnering arrangements. The support offers local authorities a critical friend at each stage of the project lifecycle, from strategic assessment to service delivery.

Strategic and programme support is also provided to central government sponsoring departments and HM Treasury in developing and shaping the policies and practices

underpinning local government PFI and partnerships; and support to service providers and other organisations.

- gateway reviews

The Gateway Review is a process that provides assurance that a project can progress successfully to the next stage. It requires independent assessment of projects and programmes at key points in their life cycle. The process has been designed to support projects that procure services, construction/property and IT-enabled business change projects.

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The Gateway process has two key objectives:

- to enable the successful delivery of projects
- building council capacity to deliver large complex projects

Gateway Reviews are delivering significant value within the local government sector; indications are that projects benefit from efficiency savings of over 5% of whole life costs. To date around 150 reviews have been delivered.

- information

Key areas will be the further development of the 4ps procurement packs for corporate services, culture and sport, housing, joint service centres, street lighting and waste management. New procurement packs will be produced for fire and police, highways management, and social services. The aim will be to secure and incorporate Treasury approval for the sector specific PFI contracts in the relevant packs

- efficiency

National work is designed to promote a step change in the efficiency and effectiveness of public services in localities with an emphasis on the enabling role of commissioning, procurement, collaboration, market mechanisms and contestability. Advice is offered on EU procurement rules including strategies for shared services.

- workforce issues

Support and guidance is provided on handling workforce matters in procurement and outsourcing to authorities including working in partnership with other bodies. This includes:

- influencing national policy in this area
- contributing to the national procurement strategy
- supporting the people management and workforce aspects of procurement and outsourcing through the Centres of Excellence (with the regions).

Rural Excellence Mentoring Scheme

This activity uses trained and accredited specialist peer mentors to help rural councils act as community leaders, facilitate regeneration of their rural economies and communities and assist in delivering innovative improvements to key rural services.

The programme – which in 2006–07 involves working with 13 councils – also assists Defra to disseminate the lessons learned by the Rural Pathfinder programme

Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

This service supports local government to improve its knowledge, skills and practice in working with the VCS. It includes increasing VCS information available to councils, for example in the form of case studies of best practice. This will lead to improvements in local government's planning, community engagement, service delivery and the building of social capital.

Cultural Services

The programme aims to contribute to an overall improvement in the quality of cultural services available to local communities. Over the next three years the project will work with a range of national, regional and local organisations to support improvement in cultural services provided by local authorities. The aim is to support all upper tier councils which are defined as below the minimum standard to undertake some improvement activity over the next two years.

Strategic housing

There are two strands to this work: to support the implementation of the Housing Act in councils and to develop the strategic housing role of councils.

Planning Advisory Service

The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) is a DCLG initiative delivered jointly with English Partnerships. The service supports all local planning authorities in:

- improving service-delivery
- contributing to changing the culture within planning services
- raising the corporate profile of planning
- providing faster, fairer, more efficient services
- with the outcome of facilitating self-sustaining improvement in all local authority planning services.

Regulatory services

This activity covers a range of support to regulatory services including:

- identifying the drivers for high quality service delivery and the barriers to achieving this.
- peer reviews for trading standards. To date up to 80 peer reviews have taken place.
- the provision of advice and guidance to council practitioners to achieve consistency of service delivery and the use of good practice from across the country.
- supporting the development and implementation of the DTI Consumer Strategy
- a lobbying strategy to influence central government in its approach to developing priorities, performance frameworks and management for these services.

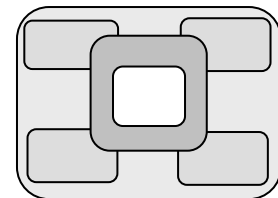
- encouraging strong collaborative working across council regulatory services both at the regional and inter-authority level through the support of regional policy fora and advisory groups
- a single liaison body on regulatory issues to provide a gateway for local food authorities investigating trans-border issues and assisting with colleagues in other member states.
- developing a coherent approach to regulation, that takes account of the government's Better Regulation agenda, the low profile of these services within authorities and the recruitment and retention crisis in environmental health and trading standards.

Regulatory Services includes: public/consumer protection, trading standards, environmental health, food hygiene and standards, licensing, health and safety, private sector housing, gambling, metrology, animal health and welfare and civil registration.

European and international activity to support service improvement

This service:

- keeps councils informed about EU developments that may affect their service provision in the future and alerts them to major changes through the local government press and media
- provides examples of good practice and innovation in service delivery from around the world that UK local authorities can emulate
- encourages UK councils to develop partnerships that will enable them to share experience in service delivery with counterparts around the world.



Representing Local Government Nationally

To represent the interests of local councils to government
To facilitate the sharing of information about best practice
To communicate the role of councils

Anticipating future developments

The organisations seek to anticipate future changes that will affect councils. Current examples include:

- the Local Government White Paper and Bill – a programme of work to influence the development and implementation of the Local Government White Paper and Bill expected in the 2006–07 session of Parliament, initiated with the publication in May 2006 of our vision for local government, *Closer to People and Places*.
- Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 and financial settlements for the next three years will take a zero based approach to assessing the effectiveness of departments' existing spending, examine the key long-term trends and challenges and look at how the public expenditure framework can best embed ongoing efficiency improvements. Our work will seek to ensure that the spending pressures faced by councils are adequately reflected in future financial settlements.
- New central–local performance framework – the Local Government Bill and Comprehensive Spending Review will together determine the shape of the performance framework for councils and local public services from April 2008; the aim of this work is to ensure that the new framework significantly reduces the number of top–down targets and indicators, external inspection and regulation, in favour of a focus on meeting the needs and priorities of local people.
- Next–generation Local Area Agreements – a programme of work closely linked to work on the new performance framework aims to ensure that the next generation of Local Area Agreements, operational from April 2008, become an effective tool for the coordinated deployment of all public service resources in each area.
- Lyons review and local tax reform – work to influence the Lyons review of local government functions and finance will give way in 2007 to influencing the government's response to Lyons' recommendations and legislation to reform local taxation likely to be introduced in the 2007–08 session of Parliament.

Policy and research

Research is undertaken in a number of areas to underpin other work programmes or inform discussions with others (e.g. government departments). Specific examples are gathering intelligence on the pay, demographic profile and working patterns of the local government workforce, and monitoring progress in the implementation of local pay reviews.

New central–local performance framework

Development and promotion of a new performance management framework. The aim of this work is to reduce significantly the amount of external scrutiny and inspection

and enable more reliance to be placed on self, peer and user regulation. A second level impact will be improved understanding of and use of self-assessment as an improvement tool across local areas.

Representation of council interests at a governmental level

The local government family represents councils to government on a wide range of issues on a continuing basis. Current examples include:

- delivery of the Every Child Matters agenda, including improving the achievement of children in care
- promoting the end of custody for children in trouble for all but the most serious of offences
- the future and funding of adult social care
- seeking adequate resources to meet the needs of asylum seekers
- ensuring that the government's police reform programme enables closer and more effective working between police and local authorities
- seeking devolution of transport, regeneration, skills, planning and housing powers to allow councils to ensure that local economies thrive
- regulatory services – meeting regularly with many government departments to represent local views on a wide range of policy initiatives including animal welfare, avian influenza, civil partnership, private sector housing and environmental protection
- ensuring that the government and London 2012 bodies become proactive in ensuring a positive legacy from the Olympics for all regions.
- working with business, trade associations, consumers and professional bodies on the implications of government policies
- lobbying for the retention and extension of local discretion to tailor services to local needs
- capital allocations – arguing for adequate capital allocation for major infrastructure projects in local government.
- pensions – Authorities benefit from a collective voice in discussions with the DCLG and the unions, representing employers' interests to Government on pensions policy in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme. This extends to representing employers' interests on teachers' pensions by influencing government policy on the operation and review of the teachers' pension scheme.
- pay – maintaining a two-way flow of information with civil servants in relevant departments (Treasury, DCLG, DfES and Home Office), ensuring that people are aware of the financial impact of current developments such as equal pay and developing political awareness on key pay issues to influence policy and legislative change.

Representing local government in Parliament

We ensure that members of both Houses are aware of local government's interests in Bills before Parliament and, where necessary, promote amendments to secure them.

Representing local government in Europe and internationally

There is a varied work programme in relation to Europe including:

- seeking to influence EU decision-taking on new law and policies that affect UK local government through direct lobbying of EU institutions; supporting local government representatives on European bodies (e.g. Committee of the Regions); opinion-forming and agenda-setting; participation in EU conferences and events.
- ensuring that UK local government has a voice in wider European and international decision making processes through respective relationships with the Council of Europe and United Nations institutions.
- promoting a positive image of UK local government overseas by enabling international counterpart organisations to visit and meet with UK local government and learn from our experience.
- promoting a positive image of UK local government within central government by working alongside government departments and agencies (FCO, DFID, DFES, British Council etc) on initiatives to promote local democracy overseas
- promoting the reputation of UK local government, and UK local democracy, across the world – e.g. website, media work, work with government departments in promoting partnerships & developing capacity. This includes "exporting" UK local government good practice.
- making local government's voice as a major employer count in Europe, by participating in the available fora, namely the cross-sectoral social dialogue covering all employees in the EU via the European Centre of Enterprises with Public Participation and of Enterprises of General Economic Interest (CEEP) and the sectoral social dialogue covering local government employees via the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). The benefits of this participation are information, early warning about development that will affect UK employers and the opportunity to influence them; also contacts with other public service employers throughout the UK,
- lobbying to reduce the administrative and financial burden of EU legislation and policy on local authorities, e.g. changes that might affect 'services of general interest', public procurement, urban governance, waste management
- working with the Government and EU to reduce EU red tape that affects local government ('better regulation' initiative)
- monitoring the Government's compliance with the European Charter of Local Self-Government.
- promoting effective decentralisation and local democratic government with international agencies, including the United Nations and World Bank.

Regional Associates

In order to provide support – direct or indirect, to one individual council or the sector as a whole – it is important to understand the needs and priorities of councils. This is the role undertaken by the 8 regional associates who liaise with councils and seek to broker support as required from the most appropriate sources available.

Providing information and learning

The purpose of IDeA Knowledge is to be the primary online knowledge transfer service for all local authorities in England and Wales. It also serves as the communication tool for promoting services to the sector.

IDeA Knowledge provides examples of good practice, delivered through case studies, tools and other materials from across the sector, as well as community discussion forums. It connects those working in local authorities so that methods of good practice can be shared, and lead to improvement within the sector.

The programme is developing to take advantage of improving technologies and emerging knowledge management techniques. A specific development will be the facilitating networks of people with a similar specific interest so that they take responsibility for their own information exchange.

The Beacon scheme - supporting service improvement

Support is provided to deliver the Beacon Council scheme which is specifically targeted on promoting improvement by disseminating good practice. In particular it aims to a) develop and improve specific areas of key importance to local authorities of all types, with the emphasis on improved outcomes for service users and b) to support councils of all types with the key challenges they face in promoting well-being and in creating sustainable, cohesion and inclusive communities.

Conferences and events

A wide spectrum of course and conferences are run to share knowledge about current issues and facilitate the exchange of information about new legislation and approaches.

Communications and marketing

There is a significant role in ensuring effective communications with the sector and other stakeholders. This is undertaken in a variety of ways including newsletters and the internet.

Media and campaigns

There is a programme of work to ensure positive coverage of councils and their work in the media.

The Reputation Campaign encourages all councils to undertake 12 core actions that have been proven to have a marked and positive impact on a council's reputation.

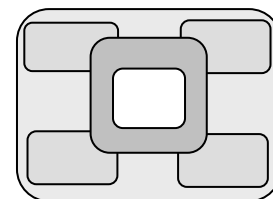
The Local Democracy Campaign aims to promote the value of local councils and the power of the individual vote, particularly to young people. Its highlight is the annual Local Democracy Week which provides an opportunity for all councils to take local initiatives to involve and interest young people.

Support to councils and councillors

The LGA provides support to councils and councillors to facilitate the work of the association.

Develop Councils' Capacity

**To target support to increase councils' capacity to improve
To facilitate the sector to help itself improve through support and tools developed locally
To assist in the identification and allocation of further funding to localities and councils from central government**



PFI/PPP Skills Development

Skills development has two overarching objectives:

- building local authority capacity to deliver large complex procurements and strategic partnership projects (PFI and PPP projects) with the objectives of improving services,
- equipping local authorities with the strategic and governance skills to achieve the key procurement objectives including the Efficiency Review and Value for Money targets.

On behalf of the National Efficiency Skills Programme Board a review of the skills requirements of the sector has recently been undertaken. The focus is on supporting individual PFI/PPP projects directly whilst also building capacity in the local government sector, particularly amongst members and senior managers.

Tailored support to build up the capacity of councils

This service aims to help individual local authorities (including fire authorities and national parks), particularly those with lower CPA scores, to improve. It includes marshalling resources to achieve this.

Work also focuses on supporting groups of authorities at a regional and sub-regional level, bespoke work in areas where there are sector weaknesses such as performance, organisational development and HR workforce development.

Review, challenge & improvement work by peers

Peer work – using both councillors and officer peers – to provide experienced challenge and practical advice from within the sector. Peer reviews are developed and facilitated by the organisations and can broadly be divided into corporate reviews (based on the revised CPA 2005 format) and more specialist/service reviews in areas (such as partnerships, efficiency, libraries, planning, trading standards). Gateway Reviews take serving officers to look at processes in other authorities and enable good practice to be shared widely throughout the community.

Clearing house for peers

The Peer Clearing House (PCH) undertakes the recruitment, accreditation, placement and evaluation of member and officer peers to work with councils to support capacity building. The Peer Clearing House also manages incentive payments from the Capacity Building programme for member peer support and acts as central point of co-ordination of peer work. In 2006–07 there will be 400 peers involved on 800

projects and, because of new work including the self-improvement framework, the demand for peers is expected to increase by at least 10% per annum.

Local leadership academy

The local leadership academy (LoLA) offers bespoke member development modules and a range of other services to local authorities. It aims to improve the political skills of councillors in their ward member, community leadership and political leadership roles to an extent that enhances the perceptions of the public and the reputation of local government. Approximately 100 modules are delivered each year.

Regulatory services

Councils' capacity in regulatory services is increased by:

- providing advice and guidance on technical and operational issues to ensure effective use of their time and resources
- analyzing and interpreting central government regulations and subsequent guidance challenging central government to devolve services locally to enable a more effective and customer focused set of services.
- providing an enquiry helpline for private sector housing officers
- Identification of external funding resources for councils and localities. It is estimated that in excess of £30m has been channelled into councils from central government in areas such as alcohol licensing, safer food campaigns, health a safety research development, enhanced animal health and welfare enforcement and grants to assist the implementation of peer review.
- supporting the collaborative working between councils through regional working groups to encourage sharing resources across geographical locations to deliver effective and efficient services.

Employer policies and human resources practices

This programme strengthens the sector's capacity to help itself by providing high quality consultancy support to councils on all aspects of human resources management, including employee relations, reward management, pay and grading, dispute resolution, and performance management.

A core advisory service on key UK and EU employment law, policy developments and HR matters, strengthens improvement in local government by providing strategic and direct support and expertise in managing 'hard' technical employment relations issues. These include; managing pay and rewards, sickness absence management, health and safety and strategic solutions on age discrimination issues. For example, this work on health and safety has contributed to local authority average sickness absence rates reducing from 11.7 days a year in 2003-04 to 11.5 in 2004-05, while social services departments registered a fall from 16.1 to 14.7 days a year.

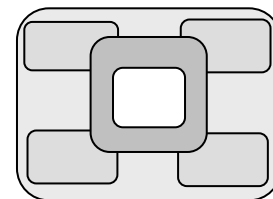
European and international programme

There are a number of areas involving working with the European Union to increase councils' capacity including:

- fostering relationships with counterpart local authority associations overseas to promote the sharing of experience of developing councils' capacity

- developing projects to enable UK local authorities to share their experience with overseas counterparts
- enabling local councils to develop their own capacity by contributing to the development of local government capacity overseas
- alert councils to funding opportunities from the EU to build their resources in new areas and help them become more creative. Partnership work will also contribute to capacity building in the UK, as well as overseas (staff development etc), as will examples of good practice from overseas.

Strengthening local democracy and accountability



To develop the effectiveness and responsiveness of local councils to meet community needs

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)

The purpose of the service area is to strengthen the role of councils as convenors of local public services through the development of local area agreements and local strategic partnerships. Support, including on-site consultancy and knowledge sharing, is provided for all LAA authorities to maximise the potential of their LAAs and to help local strategic partnerships provide better outcomes for local people. Market research in 2006-07 will determine the support to be offered from Spring 2007 onwards when all LAAs will have been negotiated and implementation will have begun.

Neighbourhood and community governance (Closer to people)

A campaign is being undertaken to encourage all councils to share and devolve power to local communities and neighbourhood groups, and enhance support for the work of frontline councillors.

In addition there is work in the following broad areas:

- Neighbourhoods
- Regional issues and structures
- Community cohesion
- Diversity and equalities (see also next page)
- Housing

This work is linked with the work of a national adviser for neighbourhoods and communities and ensures a contribution to wider aims as well as delivering specific project and service outputs.

Sustainable communities

At a national level this work stream focuses on the continuing need to address infrastructure funding issues and key objectives in relation to the strategic housing role of councils. In addition to tools to improve environmental sustainability (e.g. on climate change), the feasibility of a programme of sustainability master classes in partnership with Defra, DCLG and potential other partners (e.g. SOLACE, Environment Agency and Planning Advisory Service) by March 2007 is being considered.

This work is supported by a national adviser on sustainable communities and partnerships. At a European level work is undertaken to promote sustainable communities in European governance, through EU policy-makers and LGA from other countries.

At an International level work is undertaken to promote participatory local democracy and sustainable local development.

Equalities and Diversity

This work involves:

- developing, supporting, monitoring and evaluating the use of the Equality Standard across local government services (including increasing the proportion of councils adopting the Equality Standard).
- implementing a validation scheme for the Equality Standard
- representing local government to external organisations to ensure the national equality agenda takes account of the complexities of the public sector
- providing local authorities with advice and guidance on all aspects of good equality practice in employment and service delivery

The work will engage with European local authority associations to promote greater diversity in local politics, and promote knowledge of the European Equality Charter. Specifically, it will facilitate a good local government participation in the 2007 European Year of Equality of Opportunity for All.

Regulatory services

This work is aimed at ensuring the engagement of local councillors in regulatory services. Work includes:

- a councillor engagement strategy including the development of committee guidance documents, and guidance on councillors' interests
- electronic bulletins sent out monthly to over 1000 councillors on current and high level policy initiatives.
- an e-mail bulletin for councillors in licensing and gambling
- training packs on licensing act 2003 for councillors and officers
- supporting community safety activities through the regulatory medium of licensing, underage sales, doorstep selling

A European and international perspective to developing local governance

Arrangements exist to provide information and opportunities for UK local authorities to learn from different international models of local governance (e.g. city regions, elected mayors), as well as participatory approaches to strengthen community cohesion.

The work will promote community cohesion by encouraging local authorities to participate in initiatives that are responsive to their needs, interests and aspirations of all sections of local communities.

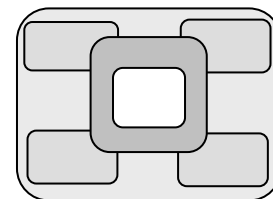
Developing leadership in local authority scrutiny

This service aims to support and improve the overview and scrutiny function in local authorities so that it:

- becomes the locus for community leadership by the democratically legitimate local authority in its prime role of ensuring community well-being
- supports the approach to self-improvement and regulation in local government
- ensures public accountability in local government and other public services.

All local authorities are registered with a scrutiny champions' network underpinning this work.

Developing leaders and the workforce



To develop the leadership skills of councillors and officers
To support the delivery of an effective, high performing and flexible workforce

Leadership programmes

The purpose of this area is to improve the quality of leadership in local government. The national leadership team contributes to this by ensuring that all elected members and senior officers are offered a variety of opportunities to consider and develop their leadership capacity and skills. These opportunities are promoted and delivered through programmes, courses, research and distance learning opportunities delivered nationally, regionally, sub-regionally and within individual or groups of local authorities.

There are:

- National programmes for elected leaders and those aspiring to leadership
- National programmes for strategic managerial leaders
- National leadership programmes for BME aspiring managerial leaders
- The development and delivery of top team programmes in local authorities
- The publication of books, magazines, guides and web-based information for councillors to enhance their political leadership and community leadership roles

Leadership research and development

This activity is designed to ensure a culture of leadership development through the commissioning and delivery of research and new tailored products. In 2006-07 a leadership development best practice network will be established.

Councillor mentoring scheme

The councillor mentoring programme builds and supports political leadership capacity in local government. The programme offers a range of mentoring activities including one-to-one, leadership and executive mentoring, political group support, skills and role mentoring, and training for councillors to become mentors. In 2006-07 the councillor mentoring programme will be delivered to 50 councils and 400 councillors.

Local government pay and workforce strategy (LGPWS)

The LGPWS aims to support authorities in improving their performance, achieving their key corporate objectives and providing value for money services because they have the workforce they need, with the right motivation, skills and flexibility. This service area supports authorities in addressing the key current and future workforce issues they face by coordinating, implementing and developing a national, regional and local workforce strategy for local government. It also supports authorities in making efficiency savings in relation to 'productive time' as well as dealing with the workforce aspects of implementing efficiency generally. In 2006-07 the work includes:

a people management peer review; tailored support days and promoting a community of practice for professionals to share their best practice.

Support for organisational development in workforce issues

This work supports the implementation of the 'Organisational Development' priority of the Local Government Pay and Workforce Strategy with a particular focus on elected members, senior managers and HR professionals.

National leadership programme for leaders of tomorrow

The national graduate development programme (NGPD) recruits 67 graduates a year to an intensive two-year development process as a 'springboard' to leadership in local government. The programme, which has been very successful, is being revised so that it is financially self-sustaining in future years following the ending of support from the Capacity Building Fund.

Addressing skills shortages

The aim is to ensure that the priority skills issues (skills shortages and skills gaps) in the local government sector are being effectively addressed by UK Sector Skills Councils. The service area will provide a range of services targeted at both sector skills councils and local authorities.

Supporting effective recruitment and retention

This work area includes:

- promoting the diverse range of career opportunities available in local government to individuals, schools, universities, and career professionals and supporting local authorities in their career promotional activities.
- promoting and providing efficient and effective recruitment processes and practices for local authorities to attract a wider and more diverse pool of talent into local government
- researching, developing and promoting good human resources practice for local authorities to help them to identify, develop and retain appropriately skilled staff for current and future service needs. This area will include the continued development of skills pathways and competency frameworks.

The work includes the development of an integrated online recruitment service for all local authorities.

Identification of training needs with regulatory services

This programme works closely with local regulatory services to identify and determine their specific training needs. For example the identification of officer and councillor training needs on the Gambling Act. , It encompasses working closely with councils and professional bodies to develop current and future professional and technical qualifications (e.g. public protection, food standards).

The employment relationship

This programme develops national strategies for pay and conditions of service which modernise the employment relationship to meet the requirements of local government employers, both nationally and locally. Support includes;

- supporting the national employers' bodies in national negotiations and policy development, in consultation with stakeholders including Government departments (e.g. Local Government Services, Fire, Craft, Chief Officers and Chief Executives, Teachers, and Youth Workers).
- advising and supporting authorities on the implementation of national agreements and wider employment and industrial relations issues, for example in fire and police this service has contributed to greater flexibility and capacity to identify and implement employment solutions, and through advice and support, helped to avoid or minimise industrial action, at local level. ,.
- preparing for and negotiating the 2007 pay settlements for local government services and fire.
- responding to recommendations made by the Local Government Pay Commission, joint advice on pay reviews, workforce development and equalities. Negotiations have started on conditions of service issues.
- preparing for and negotiating changes to terms and conditions for police officers and police staff to support the wider workforce modernisation agenda.
- negotiating pay settlements for both teaching and support staff in Sixth Form Colleges
- producing joint advice to schools and education authorities on the new national teachers' pay framework and schools workforce issues.
- developing policy in joint discussion with DfES and trade unions to inform evidence submitted to the School Teachers Review Body
- supporting reform and improvement in the adult and children's services workforce.

Pensions management performance

This programme promotes high standards of pensions management performance. It provides advice and information on the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and related matters, including; a one-stop shop for specialist technical advice on the LGPS and related compensation provisions for administering and employing authorities, a website explaining the LGPS to all employees and councillors, and standard national leaflets and guides; this year 32 circulars were issued and 37 roadshows delivered to aid better application of pensions legislations. The programme also provides high quality training to councillors, pensions practitioners, personnel officers and other local authority staff, delivering 76 training days attended by 198 employers during 2005-06.

Educational psychologists clearing house

The central clearing house for the Educational Psychologist grant scheme efficiently administers the scheme to maintain the supply of key professionals required for the delivery of children's services in local authorities. 130 placements were made in

2005-06 and 150 were to start the first year of a new 3 year course in September 2006.

Developing leaders and the workforce

This activity influences EU policy and law on employment and related matters that can impact on local authorities as employers .It raises awareness of how international issues and events affect domestic priorities through the gain of personal and professional development through international experience either learning from others or show-casing their own excellent practice in other countries with benefits for promoting tourism or local businesses. It also increases the profile of UK councils overseas by highlighting innovation and good practice developed by UK local government (e.g. Bosnian Beacon Councils Scheme).

Supporting the management of regulatory services

This activity provides bespoke advice and guidance to senior managers working in council regulatory services within the wider strategic and political agenda. This is done through the medium of regular heads of service e-bulletins providing detailed information on current developments in each of our policy areas.