Local Councils Network

Leading locally. Influencing nationally.

Get in touch

Email for more information about LCN and how to become part of our network.

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localcouncilsnetwork.gov.uk

Working with councils to build better places

The District Councils' Network is becoming the Local Councils Network (LCN). Our organisation's rebirth reflects the changes in local government structures under which new unitary councils will succeed district councils. But, even more significantly, it presents an opportunity to build on our strengths and create a bold new body to stand up for councils at a time of unprecedented and rapid change.

We retain a passion for genuinely local government, a faith in our members and a support for collaboration between our councils, central government and other parts of the public sector.

It's our priority to continue representing your views at the highest levels of government to influence national policy as it's being developed and to secure the best outcomes for our members.

We take with us our track record of winning results through our campaigning. This includes securing £115m extra to cushion many councils from last-minute funding changes in this year's finance settlement, and Housing Revenue Account reform to lift a major barrier to building council homes. But with your support we can do even more.

LCN believes that insight facilitates success. Knowledge permeates through our political and officer networks, and we have a programme of webinars and in-person gatherings to share the latest intelligence on the biggest issues.

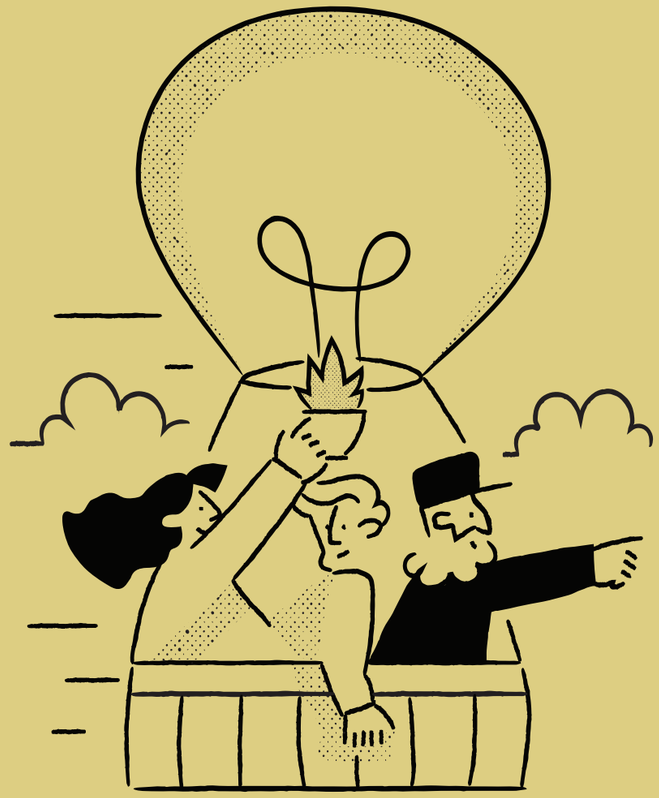
Whether or not you've worked with us in the past, whether you're a new or existing council, we want to be there for you now. Please discover more about us in this prospectus and be part of LCN.

Together we're stronger. Together we can build a bright new future.

Cllr Richard Wright
Chair, Local Councils Network

Local government is changing – and so are we

Devolution and local government reorganisation are reshaping the way places across England are led. At the same time, wider reforms to local public services, including health, social care and policing, combined with the rapid adoption of new technologies, are changing how decisions are made and services are delivered. These changes create new opportunities, but also uncertainty about roles, influence and accountability.



To reflect the changing landscape of local government and help councils to seize opportunities through transformation and beyond, the District Councils' Network is becoming the Local Councils Network (LCN).

Under our new name, LCN will remain a cross-party membership organisation for councils across England, and a special interest group within the Local Government Association. We will continue to serve district councils for as long as they exist, alongside current unitary councils, while embracing new unitary councils into our membership as they are created.

Empowering leaders. Shaping policy. Strengthening communities.

LCN speaks up for councils across England and supports them to build better places. We champion the critical role played by councils within a devolved system, asserting that power, responsibility and accountability should sit as close to communities as possible. Politically neutral and led by our members, we bring together senior councillors and officers to develop collective priorities, influence national policy decisions and strengthen local leadership.

Through direct support, advocacy and peer collaboration, we equip councils to operate confidently within the changing landscape of local government – ensuring they remain prominent, influential and effective democratic leaders of the people and places they serve.

Strong local leadership matters because it directly impacts people's everyday lives. Our ultimate goal as a membership organisation is to help councils lead effectively and deliver the essential services required in their areas – creating better places for people to live and work.

Benefits of membership: insight, influence, impact
LCN is led by our membership, grounded in the places councils serve and the people who live and work there. We are a responsive, resourceful organisation dedicated to helping councils lead places in ways that improve everyday life – and life chances – for residents, while supporting local economies and strengthening communities.



Why join?

National influence: speaking up for councils, shaping government policy

LCN gives councils a powerful voice nationally. We represent member councils collectively in policy discussions, with a focus on the role of councils within devolved governance. By engaging with government early and clearly articulating councils' shared viewpoints and priorities, we influence policy and funding decisions on behalf of our members. Our connection to government also means we're always ready to act decisively to support our members when changes are announced.

Devolution works best when the roles of councils, mayors and central government are clearly defined and balanced. By collaborating with central government and wider local government, we're able to position our members to lead effectively in their areas, while working in constructive and complementary ways with other local public services.

Practical support: equipping councils to operate effectively through change

LCN uses our extensive contacts within central government and expertise within our membership to develop practical frameworks and toolkits to help councils operate effectively within changing local government structures. We provide clear, timely briefings and structured information to help our members understand and prepare for emerging issues, policy developments and system changes.

We provide practical support, playbooks and guidance on working with mayors and combined authorities, navigating shared accountability, and clarifying roles and responsibilities within the new devolved arrangements. We also provide in-depth research reports on critical areas of responsibility for councils, such as adult social services and children's services.

Peer connection: working through transformation together

Councils are most effective when they learn from each other and act together. LCN brings councils together to build common understanding and develop collective viewpoints on key issues. We recognise the emotional and political pressures of leading through change, and the importance of peer support in helping our members maintain confidence and resilience as they work through transformation and uncertainty together.

As well as networks, events and direct engagement, we run a programme of popular webinars, bringing together local leaders from all over the country. We explore the key issues, challenges and opportunities for local government, including reorganisation, helping our members plan and prepare for the future.

Data-led insights: sharing knowledge, experience and best practice

We provide valuable opportunities for senior councillors and officers of all political colours to share innovation and best practice, access information and collaborate with peers. LCN uses place-related data to identify councils in different areas facing similar challenges, pressures and opportunities. Such insights enable us to connect councils so they can work together to share knowledge, learn from comparable experiences and develop practical solutions for their own areas.

We also collaborate with experts within and beyond local government to offer member councils the broadest array of support, guidance and inspiration. No council single-handedly holds the answers to all its dilemmas, but LCN opens doors to insight on anything from social care to street cleaning, leisure centres to licensing.

How we make a difference for our members
LCN will continue the influential and impactful work of DCN in championing council interests nationally, shaping government policies and developing practical support to help councils lead with confidence. We have achieved significant wins for local councils in recent years, cementing our reputation as an effective and powerful organisation, trusted by our members to make a tangible difference to the people and places they serve.

Influenced government to make affordable house building simpler for councils.

Secured £115m extra funding to protect over 100 councils from funding changes.

Our impact



Member wins:

- Continued to grow our influence in Parliament, giving member councils greater prominence with MPs, peers, select committees and ministers.
- Secured extensive media coverage – getting issues such as devolution, local government reorganisation, housing, planning and homelessness into the national spotlight.
- Published influential research, including reports on adult social care, children's services and on how we can respond to the challenges and opportunities of local government reorganisation.
- Ran our biggest ever Staff Development Programme to develop talented officers in councils and help ensure a pipeline of excellent local government leaders in the decades to come.
- Worked to enhance diversity in our political representation, with events to encourage more people from underrepresented groups to stand for elected office.

Policy wins:

- Secured £115m extra funding to protect over 100 councils from substantial last-minute funding changes in the 2026–27 finance settlement.
- Overcame a major barrier to affordable housing by making it far easier for councils to build council homes. The Government agreed to raise the threshold at which councils must set up a Housing Revenue Account from 200 to 1,000 houses in response to calls for the measure in our Affordable Housing Blueprint.
- Obtained greater flexibility on the government proposed 500,000 minimum population threshold for new unitary councils.
- Achieved big increases to planning application fees and influenced legislation that will give planning authorities full flexibility to set fees locally.
- Averted an excessively top-down approach to waste and recycling. Our lobbying for discretion for collection authorities prevented government from stipulating how many bins each household must use.