

Annual Report

2024-2025



Local
Government
East



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About Us

We are the cross-party, politically led membership body representing local government in the East of England. We currently have all 50 councils in our region and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mayoral Combined Authority in membership.



Chair's reflection on 2024-25



I am delighted to introduce the Local Government East Annual Report for 2024 - 2025.

As we bring the 2024-25 financial year to a close, it is timely to reflect on a period of profound challenge, change and remarkable resilience across the local government sector—and in particular here in the East of England. As Chair of Local Government East (formerly the East of England Local Government Association), I continue to be proud of the leadership, innovation and collaborative spirit demonstrated by our councils amidst a fast-changing landscape.

This past year has brought with it the continuing pressures of financial constraint, the complexity of reorganisation and devolution discussions, and a significant shift at the national political level following the formation of a new Government. These changes are reshaping the way we deliver local services, and they demand that we remain agile, strategic, and united in our advocacy for the communities we serve.

This year, LGE has worked tirelessly to highlight these pressures to national policymakers. Through evidence-based submissions, ministerial engagement, and coordinated regional messaging,

we have reinforced the urgent need for greater support for councils and the region and a more robust fiscal framework for local government. Our region, with its mix of rural and urban authorities, faces particular challenges that must be reflected in future funding formulae.

Local Government East has also been instrumental in supporting its member authorities, and the region as a whole, to navigate the broader challenges they face in creating a thriving, resilient, and inclusive East of England.

This report highlights some of the key activity that has been carried out with, and on behalf of, member authorities. It also serves to reinforce the importance of our ongoing regional collaboration as we head towards further significant change in the future.

Despite the challenges, there is much to be optimistic about. Across the East of England, councils are leading ambitious work on climate resilience, inclusive growth, digital transformation and community empowerment to name just a few. LGE remains committed to supporting this work—through collaboration, workforce support, and by being a trusted voice for our sector.

As always, I want to thank all council members and officers for their tireless dedication to public service. I also wish to recognise the LGE officer team, whose professionalism and commitment continues to underpin our work across the region.

Cllr Graham Butland, Chair of Local Government East and Leader, Braintree District Council

Our Vision, Mission and Values:

Our Vision:

Our vision is to support our member authorities to create a thriving, resilient, and inclusive East of England, recognised for its value nationally. At the heart of everything we do are our members, whose needs and priorities drive our efforts.

Our Mission:

Through collaboration and partnership, we support our member authorities in the East of England to be the best they can be by providing expertise, advocacy, and resources to tackle today's and tomorrow's challenges. We will remain agile and flexible, ready for change and fit for the future.

Our Values:

At Local Government East we are:

R

Resilient

We can adapt to change. We support each other and our member authorities to respond to change. We share knowledge, equip and develop our people. We understand the need to adapt our actions and behaviours in response to a changing climate.

I

Inclusive

We are an inclusive workplace where employees are respected, involved, have a sense of belonging and are valued for the experiences they bring.

S

Supportive

Of each other, our members and of all with whom we work.

E

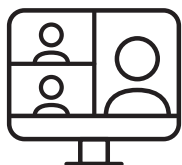
Empowering

We trust our people to do their jobs and provide the support and environment they need to thrive. We work in an agile and flexible way, recognising that people have different needs. We take an outcome-based approach.

#togetherweRISE

Summary of Achievements

9



virtual roundtables, average of 50 councillors and officers at each - **Total of 450 attendees**

50

councils signed up

to the workforce data project on Infinistats



118



Talent Bank assignments completed

3

commercial events

for partners and members



9



Chief Executive appraisals

308

Unaccompanied **Asylum Seeking Children** transferred

into the region (1,518 since the start of the National Transfer Scheme in 2016)



47



training sessions organised, attended by **857 participants**

28

councils



using the full version of Infinistats to benchmark HR and pay data

20

MPs and 3 Ministers directly engaged with



12

Heads of HR meetings

2,422

asylum seekers in dispersal accommodation and 4,300 in contingency sites (including Wethersfield)



15

Cultural Awareness Hub training projects

116

apprentices

(Levels 2 & 3) completed Apprentice of the Year 2024





4 **Regional Joint Council meetings**, bringing together officers and trade unions

741 **people supported** by Employability for Overseas Nationals (EON) project



2,910 **people supported** via the regional Hong Kong Hub

2,561

refugees resettled under UK Resettlement Scheme and Afghan schemes



12

virtual events and a series of roundtable discussions, 7 in-person events - **Total number of attendees 590**



12



National Association of Regional **Employers meetings**

Our work featured 8 times



in media publications including BBC News

We supported

13



of our member authorities with Member Development Training

14,582



arrivals from Ukraine

between February 2022 and March 2025

9



Government consultations responded to

9



days of online training sessions



4

HR Dispatches editions

Key Highlights

Spring Spending Review Submissions

Local Government East's Spending Review 2025 submission called on the Government for greater support, financial stability and urgent action to allow councils to deliver crucial services for their communities. Our submission outlined the huge pressures facing homelessness and social care services, and the spiralling financial and human impact of insufficient funding for local government. It highlighted the region's opportunities for inclusive sustainable growth regionally and nationally, urging the Government to commit to funding significant infrastructure projects.

Drawing on the strength of our partnerships, we produced additional in-depth submissions to the review, addressing the specific challenges for children's and housing services, through the region's Education and Children's Services Lead Members' Network and Association of Directors of Children's Services, and the East of England Housing Delivery Group.

Our submission with the East of England All Party Parliamentary Group set out the potential of the region to support delivery of the Government's missions and 1.5 million new homes, paving the way for a new Opportunity East report to be launched later this year.



Healthy Homes in the East of England Report

A pivotal moment last year was the launch of our Healthy Homes in the East of England report, a vital tool for Integrated Care Systems wanting to better join up housing and health services, at our joint Parliamentary Reception with the East of England All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) in December.

Led by LGE and developed by local councils, housing associations, NHS, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and IMPOWER Consulting, this report highlights the link between a lack of warm, safe, affordable homes and health inequalities. By sharing examples of partnerships addressing this challenge in the region, it makes practical recommendations to system leaders on how to scale up these approaches for healthier homes. It calls for housing to be front and centre of health strategies and plans, and a systemic shift to preventative programmes that improve housing conditions and supply.

Commending the report, Baroness Taylor of Stevenage, Lords Minister for Housing and Local Government, stated it would not only support Integrated Care Systems in the East of England but across the country. The report received significant media attention with six articles in local government and health sector publications, reaching and sparking interest from policymakers. Following the report we have presented the recommendations to the DHSC and are working with Integrated Care Boards through our East of England Housing Delivery Group.



Net Zero and Climate Resilience Summit 2024

Building on the outcomes of our first conference held in 2023, this Summit was an important – and successful – milestone on our collective journey to Net Zero across the region. Notably, we changed the event description from a conference to a Summit, marking our desire to drive action, as well as bringing people together.

For the first time, climate resilience was added to the title of the event and featured across the agenda, demonstrating the significance of adaptation to our work for the East of England region.

The event also marked the launch of the Opportunity East report which highlights the significant economic potential of our region and how this can be unlocked through greater support for the region's infrastructure. These themes were repeated across many of the talks and discussions held throughout the Summit, particularly those with a focus on climate change mitigation.



The Summit brought together more than 200 experts, practitioners and interested parties from a diverse range of sectors including central and local government, academia, agriculture, private sector and third sector industry partners. The themes of the Summit emphasised the importance of collaboration and innovation, as well as the need to close the gap between building understanding and driving the action needed for change in this area. Continuing to build 'one voice' for the East of England on these important topics is essential.

Opportunity East Report

At the Net Zero Conference in July, LGE launched Opportunity East – a landmark document developed in partnership with Metro Dynamics and in close collaboration with LGE members and partners from across the region. Announced by Daniel Zeichner MP, Minister for Food Security and Rural Affairs, Opportunity East provides a shared evidence base for the East of England and serves as a call to action for decision-makers to view the region through a renewed, strategic lens.



The document has proven to be a powerful unifier for the East of England, helping to position the region as a coherent and coordinated voice. It has led to stronger collaboration, with important advocacy being reflected at the national level through the Chambers of Commerce, the presentation of the region's unified transport asks from the Subnational Transport Bodies, and key input from local authorities about sectoral strengths and clusters. The support of Freeport East has further amplified this message, bringing valuable industry perspective into the conversation.

Since publication, the government has swung its support behind several of the key policies asked for within the report. These include:

- Support for East-West Rail
- Continued exploration of community benefit for energy infrastructure
- More funding to address road repair
- Continued support for key water infrastructure, including reservoirs in Lincolnshire, Fenlands and Suffolk
- Support for local government funding simplification
- Funding for Sizewell C nuclear power station
- Further devolution of skills funding, and a continuation of Local Skills Improvement Plans beyond 2025

This work has also been the springboard for several collaborative events. In September, it formed the backbone of a Labour Party Conference fringe event in Liverpool, bringing together voices from across the East of England to make sure the region's voice was heard.

It also formed one half of the East of England Parliamentary reception, with Baroness Taylor, the Lords Minister for Housing and Local Government, and Gareth Thomas MP, the Minister for Local Growth, praising the region for its key sectoral strengths in areas linked to the government's Industrial Strategy.

It also formed the foundation of the East of England's first Infrastructure and Growth Conference. This received much praise, with the event forming a core pillar of the regional news that day.

Beyond events, the findings and branding from Opportunity East have been embraced across the region—whether by Luton Airport in support of its expansion advocacy, or in the Bennett Institute's recent report on the regional economy.

Looking ahead to 2025/26, we are refreshing the document to align closely with the priorities of the new administration. Our aim is to continue demonstrating how delivering on the government's five missions is deeply interwoven with unleashing the full potential of the East of England economy.



Gareth Thomas said during his keynote speech at the event attended by 66 delegates,

“Government has made no secret that we want to go for growth.

The East of England has an important part to play in realising our ambitions.

”

Opportunity East: Infrastructure and Growth Conference

The Opportunity East: Infrastructure and Growth Conference, held at the Living Lab of Anglia Ruskin University in Peterborough, marked a significant milestone for the region's development agenda. Delivered in partnership with Infrastructure Matters, the event was organised by LGE and brought together a distinguished lineup of speakers for a dynamic, full day programme.

115 people attended the conference and heard from key industry figures such as Julia Pyke, the Managing Director of Sizewell C, and Kate Kenny, the Europe Executive Vice President and General Manager of Jacobs. Key regional figures also spoke, including Andrew Pakes MP and Jess Asato MP, the then joint-chairs of the East of

England All Party Parliamentary Group, and Rob Bridge, the Chief Executive of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

Beyond networking, the day offered practical engagement through afternoon workshops. These sessions brought together local authorities and business leaders to explore and identify key barriers to infrastructure development across the East of England.

Following the success of this year's conference, planning is already underway for the next Infrastructure and Growth Conference in 2026, with a venue to be confirmed.



Apprentice of the Year – 2024

This fantastic annual national event, delivered in partnership with the LGA and South-West Councils, took place in May 2024 with 119 apprentices taking part.

They were set various challenges throughout the day and worked in teams to produce the outcomes required. This is an amazing event where the apprentices have the chance to take on the role of a leadership team in a fictitious council and have to tackle a challenge. Last year the theme was Health and Wellbeing, and they really pulled out all the stops! Here is the team summary illustration – each team's ideas around health and wellbeing in local government:



And the overall winner was...

The Local Government Apprentice of the Year 2024



Sara Jenner-Akehurst
from Cambridgeshire
County Council has been
named as the 2024 Local
Government Apprentice
of the Year.

"I was really nervous when I went into the Apprenticeship of the Year Event but I was assisted throughout by organisers who made it really accessible for my disabilities.

"Throughout the day and event I received encouragement, as well as from my Mentor Georgia and my Line Manager Liz. To think that I had given it my all and really connected with people I had never met was a big achievement, let alone be crowned the Local Government Apprentice of the Year 2024.

"I really believe that my confidence has grown by attending this event. It has allowed me to see that I am capable and can be confident despite my disabilities and anxieties. Thank you again to everyone involved in the organisation of the event, as well as to my fellow colleagues for supporting me through this."

National Recruitment Campaign – 2024/25

Following a successful pilot in the North East region, the Local Government Association (LGA) launched a National Recruitment Campaign in all regions in January 2024. Each Regional Employer's Association (LGE for the East of England) had to launch its own campaign for its respective region. The campaign was fully funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

We launched our campaign with an in-person event at Newmarket Racecourse. The event was well attended, and we were joined by guest speakers from Opus People Solutions and the LGA. Feedback was gathered from HR and Recruitment colleagues from our members to inform the look and feel of the campaign for this region.

Materials were then produced by the LGA and the campaign went live in January 2024. The majority of our members got involved in the campaign and used the materials, tailored to their own organisation, to recruit staff. The LGA created a national website for potential applicants to use which identifies the nearest organisations to the residential location of the applicant and takes them directly to the relevant vacancies page – see below:

www.localcounciljobs.gov.uk

The campaign's success was evaluated at various points during 2024, and it proved to be a valuable asset to bring vacancies and careers in local government to the attention of the

general public. Here is an example of the materials used in during the campaign: www.youtube.com/watch?v=GVVg4dsvX20.

The success of the campaign in 2024/5 has meant that MHCLG has already agreed to fund the campaign again in 2025/6 – great news for our sector! Using the opportunity created by the National Recruitment Campaign, we extended our reach to particularly target overseas nationals, both encouraging overseas nationals to consider work in the public sector and highlighting to our members the benefit of simplifying recruitment processes to encourage applications to ensure a more diverse workforce.

The campaign ran over a 6-week period across social media (LinkedIn), Facebook (Hong Kong Hub) and direct information to community groups and centres:



Local Government Essentials East

In response to the unique challenges facing our members due to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution as well as new legislation, rising demand, and increasing costs, in February 2025 we launched Local Government Essentials East.



Local Government Essentials East (LGEE) are bi-annual training events specifically for our member authorities. They are designed to provide elected members and officers with insights, training, and development on a wide range of topics that will help them to tackle those challenges. These events are tailored to the needs of our members and developed based upon their feedback.

The event in February, held at Chesterford Research Park in Saffron Walden, attracted around 70 delegates who were offered the opportunity to attend three seminars/workshops and hear from keynote speakers on a range of topics relating to LGR. There was ample opportunity for networking and useful conversations were had and contacts made throughout the event.

In addition to the in-person events, a toolkit containing slides, case studies and other useful information will be available in a member only area on our website:

www.localgoveasteng.gov.uk

The 2025/26 financial year features further LGEE events in October 2025 and February 2026. Each event is sponsored, and we were pleased to partner with Opus People Solutions who will also be our supporting partner for 2025/26 events.



Home Affairs Committee Inquiry into Asylum Accommodation

Following information submitted by the Strategic Migration Partnership in January 2025, the Home Affairs Committee requested to hear evidence about the way in which asylum accommodation has been procured and delivered across the UK. With just four representatives from local councils giving evidence, we were delighted that the East of England was represented by Natasha Beresford from Dacorum Council at a meeting of the committee. Click [here](#) to hear the session: **29 April 2025 - Asylum accommodation - Oral evidence - Committees - UK Parliament.**

Our evidence acted as a counterpoint to areas also giving evidence to the committee which have taken on the greatest load regarding housing asylum seekers – the North West, Glasgow and London. Natasha was able to talk about the pressures a region like ours faces when procurement of dispersed asylum accommodation remains focused on just seven local council areas despite the ambition of the Home Office being, since 2022, to spread the load across all councils. Natasha spoke to this pressure, and that faced by councils where contingency asylum accommodation has been concentrated for far longer than was planned, using the written submission that we placed before the committee at the start of the year.



New inquiry into Asylum Accommodation launched

19 December 2024



Employability for Overseas Nationals (EON) Project

The Strategic Migration Partnership's EON project 2024/25 has been a huge success in terms of the number of clients reached, the assistance provided and client satisfaction. We reached **741** clients in the region, which is 26% above the target of **590**.

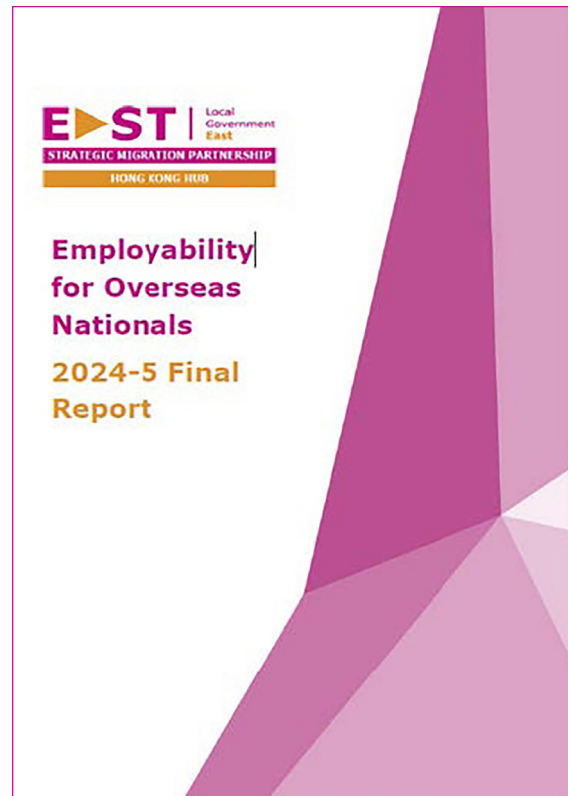
We rapidly increased the number of asylum seekers supported over the course of the year. Of the **457** clients who were able to work, we saw a **25%** employment rate.

We worked with **30** highly skilled clients, helped clients to open **19** businesses and provided high level and specialist English classes for **93** people. Integration classes were delivered to **322** attendees.

38% of our clients were asylum seekers and, of the remaining 457, 31% were invited to interview during the last financial year. 82% of these people secured work, indicating that they were very well prepared for the employment process.

This represents a 25% employment rate for eligible clients, which compares very favourably with the national Refugee Employability Project (REP) (15%).

The feedback given in the satisfaction survey showed the extremely high value placed by the clients who responded on the support they had received from EON during the year.



Regional Resettlement and Ukraine Conference in Cambridge

In July 2024, the East of England Strategic Migration Partnership (SMP) resettlement team hosted their annual in-person resettlement and Ukraine event in Cambridge. The meeting was attended by regional Local Authority Resettlement and Ukraine leads, the Home Office and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), as well as representatives from Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations who provide integration support to resettled refugees and Ukrainian guests in the community.

The Home Office and the SMP resettlement team provided an overview of both the national and regional picture in relation to the resettlement schemes: UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) and the Afghan Resettlement Programme (ARP), formerly known as ARAP and ACRS.

The theme of the meeting was 'integration', with a specific focus on English as a Second or Other Language and employability. Speakers from Get Set UK, World Jewish Relief and the SMP Employability for Overseas Nationals (EON) team provided updates on their respective programmes and achievements over the previous year.

A practical session on how best to provide integration support to households in the community whilst managing expectations, was also delivered by one of the region's commissioned integration support providers, the King's Arms Project in Bedford.

Finally, regional colleagues were treated to a two-part presentation delivered by Norfolk County Council (NCC), firstly, on how the county was preparing for the new Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) scheme, given the limited information local authorities had on the process at the time, which opened to applications on 4 February 2025. The second part of the presentation offered regional colleagues an insight into the benefits of having an Immigration Advice Authority (formerly OISC) specialist trained team, the model used by NCC to train their staff, and how the council went about achieving this.

The East of England SMP collated key points and recommendations made by colleagues at the meeting relating to how to improve the integration of refugees in UK society; all of which were drafted into a letter from the region to government ministers, providing suggestions on how these points and recommendations could best be implemented.

Drinks Reception at the LGA Conference

On 22 October 2024, we held our annual drinks reception for council Leaders and Chief Executives at the LGA Conference. 72 Leaders and Chief Executives were in attendance for this and a special meeting of our Assembly.



Forward look from our Chief Executive



Local Government East stands at a pivotal moment for councils, their partners and the region, ready to embrace a dynamic and evolving future. The East of England is an extremely special place which continues to grow and change, with the communities we serve facing a diverse range of challenges and opportunities. From addressing climate change to fostering inclusive economic development, and from enhancing local services to strengthening regional collaboration, the path ahead is filled with both promise and responsibility. With the paths of devolution and local government reorganisation laid firmly out before us, we know that our members, and their needs, will change and evolve in the coming years, and that the local government landscape will look very different.

As the membership body and voice for local government in the East of England, we will support our members to tackle these challenges, and harness opportunities. Whilst we know that the future is changing for our member authorities, we stand ready to support them, provide expertise and create capacity where it is most needed.

Our work will be underpinned by collaboration and partnerships, ensuring that we achieve greater impact by working together, with shared goals and mutual respect.

As I look forward to the months and years ahead, I am excited about the future of Local Government East, our members, and our region, and remain committed to fostering an environment where innovation, collaboration, and inclusivity thrive. Together, we will continue to make the East of England a region where everyone can prosper and be proud of the place they call home.

Cairistine Foster-Cannan
Chief Executive

Thank you to sponsors and partners

One of our driving principles at LGE is collaboration and partnership working. We could not have achieved as much as we did in 2024-25 without the support of our amazing partner organisations and sponsors.

We would like to say a huge thank you to the following organisations for their support in 2024-25:

Sponsors

MadeTech Group Plc Jacobs
Anglian Water
Morgan Sindall
IMPOWER
Manchester Airports Group
Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
Freeport East
Bevan Brittan
LLP Sizewell C
ABP Ports
Opus People Solutions Ltd

Partners

The East of England All-Party Parliamentary Group	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Transport East	Department for Business and Trade
England’s Economic Heartland	Home Office
Chambers East	Department for Education
Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
Association of Directors of Adult Social Services	Ministry of Defence
Association of Directors of Children’s Services	Department of Health and Social Care
Eastlight Community Homes	Office of Health Improvement and Disparities
NHS East of England	Infinistats
Local Government Association	National Association of Regional Employers
District Councils Network	South West Councils
County Councils Network	Other regional employer’s organisations nationally
Federation of Small Businesses	
Confederation of British Industry	



