

We're delighted to share some highlights since our last update. Over the past few months, we've delivered **EQIA training** for several member councils and, through the **Regional EQIA Forum**, developed a **regional framework** to support your work.

In October, we were pleased to assist **East Suffolk Council** with their successful **Community Partnerships** event. We also co-hosted the **East of England All Party Parliamentary Group** and **Local Government East Parliamentary Reception**, where we proudly launched **Opportunity East**—a fantastic step forward for our region.

Our **Talent Bank Associates** have been hard at work, supporting members with mediation and investigations, LGR preparation, communications and media training, and project management.

Thank you for your continued collaboration. We look forward to working with you and supporting your priorities in 2026.

## Quick overview of upcoming events and training (January - March 2026)

- **13 January 2026** - LGE Roundtable Discussion: Temporary Accommodation Solutions in the East
- **27 January 2026** - Supporting Migrant Families in Maternity Care (Free Session)
- **24 February 2026** - LGE Roundtable Discussion: Sustainable Construction Methods in the East
- **5 March 2026** - Opportunity East: The Infrastructure and Investment Conference
- **10 March 2026** - Water Futures: Wastewater - how to keep our rivers clean while delivering growth
- **10 March 2026** - An Introduction for HR Leads New to Local Government
- **17 March 2026** - LGE Roundtable Discussion: Delivering Neighbourhood Health and Improving Mental Health

*For more information please visit the event section of our website -*  
[\*www.localgoveasteng.gov.uk/events/\*](http://www.localgoveasteng.gov.uk/events/)

If you have any queries regarding upcoming events or would like to be added to our mailing list, please email; [events@localgoveasteng.gov.uk](mailto:events@localgoveasteng.gov.uk)

# LGE Roundtable Discussions 2026/ 2027

The sessions are open to all councils in the East of England and their partner organisations. At the LGE Roundtable Discussions, you will hear from a guest speaker on each theme and have the opportunity to learn from, and share, your own examples of best practice, opportunities, and challenges.

More information to follow soon. Please keep an eye out for this on our website.

If you have any queries, please email [events@localgoveasteng.gov.uk](mailto:events@localgoveasteng.gov.uk)



## Opportunity East: The Infrastructure and Investment Conference

5 March 2026, The Hold, Ipswich

Building on the success of our debut event in March 2025, the Opportunity East conference returns as the essential gathering to unite public and private sector leaders in shaping the future of the East of England.

The East of England requires a unified voice to secure the infrastructure investment it needs to thrive. This conference will help create that united vision by bringing together local authority leaders, industry experts, parliamentarians and infrastructure projects.

For further information please visit the event section of our website.

## SAVE THE DATE



Local Government  
**Apprentice of the Year**

On the 12–13 May 2026, apprentices from across the UK will come together online via Zoom to collaborate in virtual teams, tackle real local-government challenges and compete for the title of Local Government Apprentice of the Year 2026.

Please keep an eye out for further information or visit our website.

## Are You Part of Procurement East Network?

If you work in procurement within one of our member councils, **Procurement East Network** is here for you. This established network meets quarterly and brings together procurement professionals to share knowledge, discuss sector-specific challenges, and stay up to date with the latest information, legislation, and guidance from central government.

Members also support each other with insights around **Local Government Reorganisation** and other key developments affecting our sector.

The next meeting is on **2nd March** – don't miss out! If you're not already on the mailing list, simply email [sharon.bleese@localgoveasteng.gov.uk](mailto:sharon.bleese@localgoveasteng.gov.uk) to join.

### Spotlight on Talent Bank Associates

#### **Jill Korwin Wroblewski**

Jill is an experienced, politically astute and high achieving public sector leader, with a breadth of public sector experience at both county and district level. Her experience ranges from running and transforming a Trading Standards service, developing a national competency framework through to working as a Strategic Director at a large district council.

She has successfully led teams including performance, programmes and project management, external funding, housing, communities, and has a track record of developing and establishing successful partnerships, across the public sector and beyond. She has a proven commercial approach, delivering leisure and environmental investment programmes as well as being a director and chair of board for a number of local authority trading companies. Jill takes people with her, delivers results and is committed to successful public services.

#### **Key Strengths/Area of Expertise**

- Transformation
- Public Sector Reform
- Programme and Project Management
- Partnership and Strategy Development
- Commercialisation of services



## Jane Cox

Jane is an independent **executive coach, supervisor, and facilitator** with over 40 years of experience in International and National business and change consultancy.

She began her coaching career in the late 1990s as an external consultant managing large redundancy programmes for two major national outplacement consultancies. A key part of her role involved providing coaching support to senior managers as they implemented challenging change programmes. Jane was there to support them during difficult times, earning their trust by listening unconditionally as they worked through plans, shared concerns, and expressed emotions.

After five years as Development Director for an East Anglian-based management consultancy, Jane transitioned to independent practice to focus on her passion for coaching and for supporting and developing current and future generations of coaches and supervisors through training, supervision, and mentoring. She has designed and delivered training for coaches, mentors, and managers across multiple sectors.

As a coach and supervisor, Jane's clients particularly value her ability to listen deeply and remain fully present to what emerges in each moment of the relationship. From experience, she knows this is where insights surface and meaningful change occur.

### **Key Strengths / Areas of Expertise**

- Executive Coaching at all levels
- Change Management and Career Transition Coaching
- Supervision and Mentoring of Internal and External Coaches
- Basic to Advanced Coaching Skills Training for Coaches and Managers
- Team Facilitation – CEX Development Workshops



**Introduction to Tom Bedford, the lead of ENB Recruitment and Training limited, a brand new offering on our Talent Bank, specialising in providing bespoke e-learning programmes to suit every training requirement!**



Tom Bedford is Director of ENB, with over 17 years experience with talent attraction and development, supporting clients from within private and public sector to attract talent, develop teams and facilitate change.

ENB have a supportive group of colleagues who design, develop and deliver a range of classroom and elearning modules including leadership, personal development, sales, customer services, housing, HR and IT.

Their modules are designed to suit the learning needs and outcomes of your organisation, they want you to have the training necessary to your organisations objectives, whether that is leading a change programme, managing your team's performance with confidence, handling and managing conflict, giving and receiving feedback, executive coaching – they have you covered.

Everyone associated with ENB, from Tom the director to their elearning developers and classroom trainers have a fine eye for detail, an incredibly diverse and rich background spanning across the whole employee lifecycle and they love to engage with their clients to support with all things talent attraction and development.

- Need to develop leadership accountability – they can help.
- Want to increase customer experience ratings – they can help.
- Need to cross skill departments – they can help.
- Want to design bespoke, engaging and interactive elearning courses – they can help.

If you think Tom or any of our Associates can support your Team, get in touch with [paige.oconnell@localgoveasteng.gov.uk](mailto:paige.oconnell@localgoveasteng.gov.uk) to discuss.

## Expert Support, Lasting Impact

The landscape of local government is changing.  
Talent Bank can support you through those changes.

At **Local Government East**, we're here to make the journey smoother, whether you are planning for Local Government Reorganisation or tackling business as usual, from early planning through implementation and well beyond Vesting Day. Our **Talent Bank Task Force** gives councils access to the right people, at the right time, with the right skills to deliver both transformation and day-to-day services.

All our Associates bring **real-world experience across the public sector**, with many having led complex change and transformation programmes themselves. We understand the pressures you face.

We're **not-for-profit**, **owned by our members**, **for our members**, and any surplus goes back into supporting core services. Thanks to **Teckal exemption**, procurement is simple and fast, so we can provide resources quickly and flexibly, whenever you need them.

Our Task Force model is built on **local knowledge, lasting capability, and practical delivery**. We embed your people into the process so knowledge stays local and capacity grows. We also support staff with induction and cultural alignment – helping maintain morale and credibility through change. And because we know business-as-usual can't stop, we make sure your core services keep running smoothly while transformation happens.

### What you get with Local Government East's Talent Bank Task Force:

- **Ready from day one** – everything in place to meet legal and operational requirements without disruption.
- **Confidence you can see** – clear progress, strong governance, and no last-minute surprises.
- **Future-proof capacity** – your team strengthened, transformation built in, and resilience for what's next.

We're here to help with the credibility and expertise you can trust.

Contact Sharon Bleese [sharon.bleese@localgoveasteng.gov.uk](mailto:sharon.bleese@localgoveasteng.gov.uk) or Paige O'Connell [paige.oconnell@localgoveasteng.gov.uk](mailto:paige.oconnell@localgoveasteng.gov.uk) to build the right support for you.

# Welcome to the Team!

## Spotlight on Paige O'Connell, Commercial Coordinator, LGE Talent Bank

After relocating from Essex to Suffolk in 2016, I left behind a career in Social Care, unsure of my next step but eager for a change. A chance visit to a local recruitment agency in Bury St Edmunds set me on an unexpected path. One conversation later, I discovered the recruitment industry might be a perfect fit—and it was.

I spent the next nine years growing within that same agency, starting as a Resourcer and eventually becoming Principal Consultant. In that role, I led the Commercial, HR, Sales, and Marketing support desk, partnering with businesses across Bury St Edmunds and beyond. I built strong relationships with decision-makers and helped them grow their teams, expanding my network and deepening my expertise.

After welcoming my son in 2023, I felt ready for a fresh challenge and joined a specialist insurance recruitment firm. While the experience was valuable, I quickly realized my passion lies in generalist recruitment—the variety, the people, the problem-solving.

That's why the opportunity at Local Government East as Commercial Coordinator for the Talent Bank was such a perfect fit. Working in the public sector and engaging with a diverse range of talent – from HR and Procurement to Communications, Housing, and more – has been incredible. I love uncovering people's unique skill sets and matching them to projects where they can truly make an impact. It's rewarding, dynamic, and plays to my strengths.

Looking ahead, I'm excited to help shape the future of our Talent Bank. With the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation, my focus is on positioning our offering to proactively support member authorities through change, while continuously evolving to meet the needs of both our Members and Associates.

I'm genuinely looking forward to building these relationships and making a meaningful difference.

Paige O'Connell  
Email: [paige.oconnell@localgoveasteng.gov.uk](mailto:paige.oconnell@localgoveasteng.gov.uk)



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# Introduction to the Regional EQIA Forum

The Regional Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Forum was established in early 2024 to strengthen, streamline, and modernise Equality Analysis practices across public bodies in the East of England. Initiated by Lila Begum, EDI Lead at Bedford Borough Council, the Forum brings together councils, fire services, and NHS partners to tackle a shared challenge: delivering consistent, high-quality Equality Analyses amid increasing workloads, ongoing budget pressures, and reduced EDI capacity.

With no formal national EQIA framework, organisations across the region have historically adopted varied approaches. The Forum was created to close this gap by promoting collaboration, sharing effective practice, and co-designing tools that enhance quality while reducing duplication.

Following a series of meetings, training sessions, and design workshops, we are pleased to confirm that a regional EQIA framework has now been created. This practical, scalable guidance supports organisations of all sizes and is now available to access through the Local Government East (LGE) Member Forum. Please register here to access the framework: <https://www.localgoveasteng.gov.uk/>

We invite colleagues from all public bodies to join our **next regional EQIA Forum meeting on 10th March, 11:00–13:00**, where we will share feedback, discuss implementation, and plan next steps for continued regional collaboration. **Join the session using this link:** <https://www.localgoveasteng.gov.uk/event/eqia-forum-feedback-session/>



## Explore the New Members Area

In November 2025, we launched the **Members Area** on the Local Government East website, your hub for resources, networks, and support. Inside, you'll find the **Local Government Essentials East toolkit and training**, updates from the **Procurement East Network**, the **EQIA Forum**, and more. The area is still developing, and we'll be adding even more content this year.

Got ideas for what would be useful? We'd love to hear them, email [sharon.bleese@localgoveasteng.gov.uk](mailto:sharon.bleese@localgoveasteng.gov.uk). To register, visit [www.localgoveasteng.gov.uk](https://www.localgoveasteng.gov.uk) and click on **Members Area** on the homepage.

# Looking to organise an event in 2026?

Our experienced event management team provides a flexible, tailored service designed to meet your needs — whether you're looking for comprehensive, end-to-end support or simply assistance with attendee management through our bespoke event booking system.

Please get in touch with Jayne Cole, Events Manager, who would be happy to help discuss this with you in more detail and help bring your event to life.

[jayne.cole@localgoveasteng.gov.uk](mailto:jayne.cole@localgoveasteng.gov.uk)

To learn more about our Event Management Service and the range of support we offer, please visit our website: <https://www.localgoveasteng.gov.uk/events/>

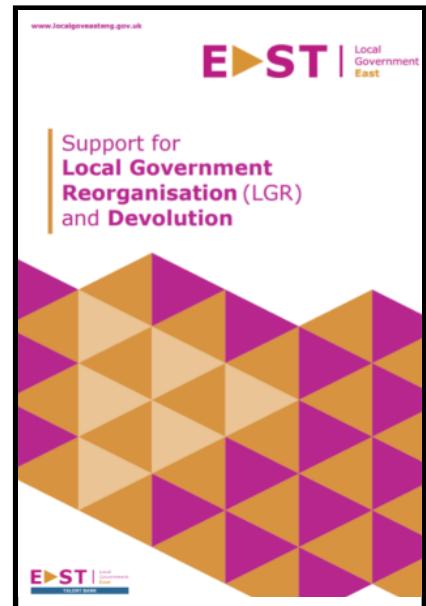
Here's what one of our happy clients had to say:

*'Excellent value for money. the support and planning provided has been exceptional throughout and enabled an amazing event to run smoothly. We truly appreciate the support and efforts of the team. Thank you so much'* – Andy Jolliffe, East Suffolk Council

## Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution

Discover our **LGR and Devolution brochure** — your concise, go-to guide for navigating the changing landscape of local government. Whether you're seeking clarity on reorganisation, devolution deals, or the support available, this brochure brings complex policy, essential tools, and strategic guidance into one powerful package. Designed for our member authorities, it's your roadmap for building capacity, driving collaboration, and achieving a smooth transition into the future of local governance.

For a more detailed overview of how Local Government East can provide support with LGR and Devolution, please view our website: <https://www.localgoveasteng.gov.uk/content/uploads/2025/07/Final-LGR-Brochure.pdf>



# Meet the Commercial Services Team



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