



# THE LOCAL AUTHORITY CHALLENGE...

## ...WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?!



**Breckland  
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## INTRODUCTION

The Local Authority Challenge will offer you, as an aspiring (or new) manager a rare opportunity to gain exposure to issues outside of your normal working life and to give you a taste of what senior management is like.

The challenge is open to teams of up to six people from any area of the public (or indeed the private) sector. You will spend the day as the management team of one of four fictional local authorities. These four authorities (referred to as 'independent authorities' (IA's) for the context of the challenge) are all located on the Isle of Linfolk, a fictional island of the coast of East Anglia. This year these local authorities are based on the 'unitary' model albeit with a few bespoke changes to ensure that the playing field, in terms of knowledge and experience, is as level as possible. More detail on this will be provided in your joining instructions and on the challenge day itself. Needless to say all four councils have issues that need resolving! This has not been helped by the resignation/removal of the previous senior management team. You are one of their replacements!

Throughout the day you will encounter many of the tasks that a real senior management team would deal with. You will have to work as a team, with neighbouring councils and with partner organisations to deliver a new strategy for the council. You will need to deal with the Council leader, the media and a wide range of other interested parties (including local businesses and members of the public).

Ultimately, you will have to choose which areas to prioritise, decide how to deal with politically sensitive issues and still keep your focus on how to give the public the best services with limited resources.

## PARTNERS

This year, teams will be able to nominate an additional person to attend (at no extra charge) to act as a Partner during the event. This role needs to be filled by those with experience in, or a good understanding of, local government. Partners will role-play whichever organisations the participating teams wish to meet with. This can range from the Police and Crime Commissioner, through County Council staff (of all levels) to representatives of Training Organisations. Because of the nature of the event, and the uncertainty in which direction individual teams may go, the key attributes required for this role are flexibility (in terms of being able to prepare for a required role with as little as 15 mins notice), the ability to think on one's feet and a sense of humour!

Furthermore, in terms of length of day, this role is probably the longest – all the partners need to be available between 8.30am and 4.45pm with at least 50% of the partners need to be able to commit to continuing supporting the event through to 1800 hrs.

Partners will meet with teams up to 10 times throughout the day. Each meeting will last 5 minutes and will be assessed, by the partner, against a given set of criteria.

Once all of the meetings are completed the partners will be swiftly re-designated as either Chair or back bench members on the Overview and Scrutiny Presentations. On average, each individual will sit through 4 presentations. Each presentation is 10 mins long followed by a 5 min Q&A session.

Finally, with the presentations over the partners will be re-designated as Resident Magazine assessors where they will, individually, assess the Residents Magazine against a set of marking criteria.

**Nominating an office to a Partner role is optional.**

## PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

The North East event will be held on Thursday 26 November 2020, in the Riverside Suite, Durham County Cricket Club, Riverside, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3UT.

The dress code for the whole day is normal **business attire**.

The day starts with tea and coffee from 8.45am with the event proper starting at 9.30am. A packed lunch will be provided at lunch time with tea and coffee 'on tap' throughout the day. Please note that there will not be any formal breaks— it is up to you as a team to manage this aspect of your lives!

The challenge itself will end at 5pm. There will then be a buffet supper followed by the awards ceremony, with the event finishing at approx. 7.30pm.

All times are approximate and subject to change – exact details will be provided in your Joining Instructions.

## COST

The cost to attend is £650 + VAT per team.

## REASONS TO ATTEND

So why attend?

- Gain an understanding of issues beyond your normal role and see the bigger picture of how local authorities operate.
- Develop the skills needed to deliver more for less in a tighter fiscal climate.
- The chance to test and hone many skills including interpersonal, communication and time management skills.
- Discover your strengths and weaknesses, and how to develop them, in a safe environment.
- Use the days experience as an opportunity to help progress to the next level career-wise.
- An opportunity to be part of an extraordinary (and highly enjoyable) event.
- To work with a wide range of colleagues from across the region.

## IMPORTANT OUTCOMES FROM THE CHALLENGE

- To better understand the need to build partnerships with relevant organisations and have the opportunity to practise these skills in a variety of different settings.
- To further develop inter-personal skills when working with partner organisations, both internal and external.
- To develop and practise media handling skills, including press releases, social media management and direct media interaction.
- To develop and practise communication and presentations skills (in a variety of mediums) across a broad range of customers, both internal and external, whilst maintaining sound political awareness.
- To practise organisational, team building and time management skills.
- To develop resilience to rapidly changing priorities, demands and timescales.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

In the process of being updated as we refine this year's scenario – however, previous FAQ's can be found on the challenge website – [www.localauthoritychallenge.com/faq.html](http://www.localauthoritychallenge.com/faq.html)

## SIGN UP NOW

Please advise whether your authority/organisation is interested in taking part and how many teams you would nominate by **Monday 17 August** by emailing Maureen O'Keefe – [mokeefe@nereo.gov.uk](mailto:mokeefe@nereo.gov.uk). A Commitment Form will be issued to all organisations to complete after Tuesday 18 August.

## MORE INFORMATION

[www.localauthoritychallenge.com](http://www.localauthoritychallenge.com)

For general information regarding the Challenge, or to discuss running an 'in-house' challenge then please contact Breckland Training Services on either 01362 656282 [or info@breckland-training.co.uk](mailto:info@breckland-training.co.uk)

For more detailed information on your local regional event then please contact Maureen O'Keefe, [mokeefe@nereo.gov.uk](mailto:mokeefe@nereo.gov.uk) Feedback from 2019 event can be found [here](#)