



**WELCOME TO THE  
NORTH EAST LOCAL AUTHORITY  
CHALLENGE...  
...FIRST STEPS!**



**Breckland  
Training Services**  
Delivering skills and experience

## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your entry to the **Local Authority Challenge – North East**, an exciting and innovative learning and development event that takes place on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2019. This is the first of two documents you will receive prior to the event and covers the more general aspects of the Challenge, sets down expectations and lays out any requirements that are going to be made upon delegates. It is also a great source of information to individuals who may be unsure as to whether to put their name forward or not.

The second document (the joining instructions), which is aimed at the selected team members, will be released about 2-3 weeks prior to the event itself. It will cover more about the challenge (including any background reading etc.), how the day unfolds, how the scoring works, and to give more guidance on how to prepare for it. Please note there will be a duplication of information across the two documents. This could, of course, mean that this particular information is important!

## SCENARIO

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.

## PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

### Venue

The Challenge will be held at Durham County Cricket Club, Riverside, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3QR. Ample free parking is available on site.

### Timings

The day starts with tea and coffee from 8.45 am with the event proper starting at 9.30 am. A packed lunch will be provided at lunch time with tea and coffee 'on tap' throughout the day.

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

## Dress Code

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

## Equipment Requirements

You will be provided with all the necessary equipment needed to undertake the challenge including a laptop, telephone and stationery. Please note printing facilities will not be available (nor are they required so **please do not bring a printer with you**).

Projectors and projector screens are **not** required as the use of PowerPoint for the presentation to committee is forbidden. The telephone is **incoming calls** only. There is no requirement within the challenge itself to make outgoing calls.

## Miscellaneous Equipment

In theory you will be provided with everything you need. Space within the event room, and on your tables, is likely to be very tight so do not bring unnecessary items with you. **Flip chart stands – no**. In trays – your call. Sweets and chocolate – YES!

## Social Media

Part of the challenge includes the use of social media. **It is not necessary to create new Twitter accounts** for the challenge as, due to staff limitations, these cannot be monitored. The procedures for how we will run social media throughout the event will be given on the day. **However**, should you wish to 'tweet' about the challenge in general, either before, during or after the event then please include, at the very least, **#lachallengenortheast** and **@brecktraining** in your messages. Also, consider requesting access to your (real world) council's Twitter feed for the day.

## Team Organisation

The primary focus of the Challenge is the learning and developmental aspects. Whilst we strongly advise that team selection should be made accordingly (e.g. not fill it with Senior Managers only) we respect that this is entirely down to individual Organisation discretion. In order that all teams are playing to the same 'rule book' the organisational structures of the councils have been standardised. Further information of this structure is provided in the joining instructions. We recommend meeting up as a team before the event once you have received your joining instructions.

## Assessment

Whilst the primary focus of the Challenge is learning and developmental there are still prizes to be won including Best Chief Executive, Best Team and Best Partnerships. Points can be scored across many areas including:

- Meetings with your Leader
- Contact with partner organisation
- Handling the media
- Handling the general public
- Presentation skills

Further details, and guidance, will be given nearer the event.

## 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 one of 10 organisations considered the most important 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 0830hrs and 1645hrs 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 Performance Board Presentations. On average, each individual will sit through 4 presentations. Each presentation is 10 mins long followed by a 5 min Q&A session.

**Nominating an office to a Partner role is optional, please indicate on reservation form.**

## WHAT NEXT

Once all the teams have been confirmed you will be allocated to one of the district councils. Wherever possible this will be one of a different political persuasion than the one you work for in the 'real world'. You will discover your allocation about 2 weeks prior to the event when you will also receive the second pre-event document.

We wish you the best of luck and we look forward to seeing you on the day.

For general information regarding the Challenge, 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, please contact Maureen O'Keefe – [mokeefe@nereo.gov.uk](mailto:mokeefe@nereo.gov.uk).