

Ann McCoy (Cllr), Chair of NEREO and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Councillor

“A very worthwhile event. I believe there were things we could all learn and understand. It was interesting to see how different teams approached and dealt with similar issues and concerns. I am looking forward to being part of the event next year.”

Chantelle Woodbridge, Principal Consultant, West Midlands LGA

“I was a Cluster Leader at the NE Challenge and my role was to be the eyes and ears of what was taking place at each of the team’s tables and was responsible for capturing how the teams worked together, how they interacted with the Leader and Partners during their scheduled appointments and to observe their team dynamics.

“Having never been to a Challenge before I was really excited to attend and be involved. The morning of the Challenge I had a nervous excited energy as I didn’t know what to expect. As soon as the teams were provided with their packs, the atmosphere in the room was buzzing!! It was great to hear the conversations and decisions being made. It was especially interesting to see how the teams reacted when faced with unforeseen challenges and how they overcame certain issues and pulled together as a team.

“It was a brilliant day and an amazing opportunity to observe future leaders of the North East all in the same room, and even though teams were competing, there was a real sense of “We’re all in it together”.”

Charlotte Burnham, Head of Health Partnership Working, Sunderland City Council

“It was great to be involved in the LG Challenge, seeing first-hand the region’s future leaders in action!”

Dave Lawrence, Client Services Director, Spacehouse (MJ)

“A terrific management simulation competition at Emirates Riverside which was so well organised once again by NEREO and ably delivered by Breckland Training Services.

“Acting as one of the Media role players is always great fun and the contestants throw themselves into the day with such passion, enthusiasm and professionalism it’s amazing to see! The quality of the event and slickness of the day makes for a superb day and, I have to say, I feel as challenged as the contestants on occasions. Already looking forward to next year’s event and, if you can get involved do, you won’t regret it!”

Emily Sweetman, NEREO Associate

“It’s a brilliant, fun and fast-paced day which pushes all of us out of our comfort zone in the service of a great learning experience.”

Frances Marshall, Adviser – LG Support (East Midlands, Yorkshire & Humber, North East), LGA

“The Local Authority Challenge is a great development opportunity to put future local government officer leaders through their paces, as well as hopefully whet their appetite for potential future career opportunities.

“As a role player, it is exhilarating to see talented colleagues develop, strive and rise to the challenges that are constantly thrown their way. On a personal level it is also a nice opportunity to do something slightly different from the day job, meet colleagues from across the region, and a chance to channel your inner resident, partner or councillor!

Whilst the day is a lot of fun, it is also a powerful workforce tool to help develop a local government talent pipeline within the region.”

Gateshead Council Team

“Many thanks for this, much appreciated. It was a thoroughly worthwhile event, and I take the view that you learn more when things don’t go exactly to plan than if they do”

Jeff Dean, NEREO Associate

“It was great to be part of the Local Authority Challenge event again this year.

“Congratulations to all involved for what I thought was once more a very well run and organised day. Clearly, there is an immense amount of preparation and on-going work behind the scenes that make it all flow so well on the day. I hope the delegates learned a lot and enjoyed themselves in the process, despite (or because of?) the sometimes-frantic pace.”

Jill Rouse, NEREO Associate

“This was an action-packed day for both Partners and participants. It is encouraging to see such talent in the regions and this event gives them the opportunity to show leadership in a safe but dynamic environment. All the teams I was involved with showed professionalism and respect to Partners.”

Judith Clewlow, NEREO Associate

“I would just like to say I really enjoyed this event. It was very interesting and very professional from the organisers and participants to the volunteers.

“The buzz and enthusiasm during the event were amazing. It was one of the most engaging training events I have ever been involved in and I would recommend it.

“I hope I can be involved again.”

Lesley Shore, Director – HR, Membership and Business Services, West Midlands LGA

“As a Council Leader for the day the event provided me with valuable insight into the way teams can come together under pressure to deliver in a demanding and unfamiliar environment. The way the teams progressed and refined their approach through the day showed how exposure and challenge in a safe environment can act as a catalyst for personal and team growth.”

Mark Edgell, Principal Adviser, LGA

“Highly enjoyable, helping teams to learn and develop while playing senior roles in challenging, but often amusing, scenarios. The expert assessors/role players bring real life experience and expertise, such as my own Council Leader history.”

North East Lincolnshire Council Team

“Just wanted to say that, as a team, we were very impressed with the event organisation and the learning opportunity it afforded us.

“We will encourage other colleagues to take part next year.”

Nicola Shelley, Associate Director, NEPO

“Another non-stop fantastic Local Authority Challenge! Great opportunity as a Partner in the challenge to be exposed to the wealth of Collaboration that needs to undertake to truly be able to deliver the challenges and opportunities Local Government face.”

Rachel Gascoigne, Psychologist, Wickland-Wescott

“I supported the LAC as an independent Assessor and was impressed with the smooth running of the event. It certainly is an intense and challenging day for all the participants, yet I have no doubt they will all have come away with valuable learning experiences to reflect on themselves and take forward.”

Shirley Janes, Housing Manager, Durham County Council

“I enjoyed the day playing the role of partner at the Local Government Challenge, it is a busy, full-on day with a real buzz.

“I would love to do it again next year if you need volunteers.”

Steven Sinclair, Head of Procurement, NEPO

“Taking the role of Media allowed me to see ‘from the other side’ the need for a robust partnership with the media. Clear messages that land well and help us connect with our residents. The day allowed for teams to experience a truly turbulent day in a local authority and tested their resolve in a number of areas. A valuable day for all.”