



# New Member Peer?

Everything you need to know



# Presenters

- Lord Gary Porter CBE – Conservative National Lead Peer and Leader of South Holland
- Cllr Lisa Smart – Liberal Democrat Regional Lead Peer and Deputy Leader of Lib Dems, Stockport Council
- Mark Edgell – Principal Advisor (NE, Y+H, EM), LGA

# Today's session:

## To help you become an effective peer

- “Sector Led Improvement”
- Types of peer work
- How the activity is delivered
- Support to you in your peer work
- Benefits and impact of peer support

# “Sector Led Improvement”

The LGA’s work is guided by a Sector Led Improvement (SLI) approach, which recognises that the responsibility for local government improvement should sit with councils.

SLI is based on 4 underlying principles:

1. That councils are responsible for their **own** performance;
2. That councils are accountable **locally**, not nationally;
3. That there is a sense of **collective responsibility** for the performance of the sector as a whole.
4. That the role of the Local Government Association is to provide effective tools and support to councils to enable them to drive improvement, and to maintain an overview of the performance of the sector.

# Types of Peers Work

Member Peers help enable the SLI approach by ensuring council insight is embedded across the tools and support options the LGA provides.

The [Sector Support Programme](#) includes numerous offers for councils which Member Peers enable. Some examples include:

- Peer Challenges
- Member Training and Member Development Workshops
- Peer 1-2-1 Mentoring
- Sharing experiences and insight via events/publications

Peers are used across the workstreams of our Sector Support Programme including Leadership, Adults, Childrens, Finance, Economic Growth, Behavioural Insights, Climate Change, Procurement, PAS, OPE, Digital and Cyber Security, Workforce and Research and Data.

# Hopes and Fears?

What do you hope you will get out of being a peer?

What are those “fears” you have as you start your peer career?

# How the Activity is Delivered?

**Identifying a piece of work:** The need/request for the work comes either through the Principal Adviser or Lead Peer or Group Office.

**How are placements decided?** Member peer placements are handled by the relevant LGA political group office (PGO), who will make first contact with a peer about interest and availability. Contact to confirm a placement and contact with unsuccessful peers will also come from the relevant PGO.

**Time commitment:** The time required from peers varies across the different improvement activities, ranging from one to two days to help design and deliver a councillor development module, through to six to seven days for peer challenges. The time we are asking you to commit will be made clear when we contact you to ascertain your interest and availability.

**Expenses:** All reasonable travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses incurred while engaged in peer support work will be paid for by the LGA - in accordance with our expenses policy.

The make-up of the team will reflect the requirements and the context of the local authority receiving the peer challenge.

Peers will be recruited to the peer team from our database of peers on the basis of their expertise, knowledge and experience.

The information you provided via the application process will be used to inform our search for peers and help determine the people we suggest to the authority.

# Support to you in your peer work?

Advice from lead political peer

Asking a more experienced peer

Briefing on context for work from lead political peer and principal adviser

Taking a lead from the peer challenge manager

Written guidance on, for example, approach to mentoring

# Benefits and Impact

“The Peer Review process has not only provided much-needed validation that we are on the right track in terms of cultural shift and future ambition for improvement within the organisation, but has also given us the added impetus to continue with our ambitious agenda around transformation, place-shaping, and playing a more prominent strategic role on a sub-regional and regional basis.” **Councillor whose council received a Corporate Peer Challenge**

“By taking part in the review, I learned skills that I could take back to my own authority... The Corporate Peer Challenge process teaches you to give things a shake and see what falls out – and what does is really interesting.”  
**Councillor Peer**

"Being a peer is a fantastic opportunity to learn from other authorities, expand your knowledge, and also enable to time to reflect on best practice. I feel that anyone can be a peer – we all have different skills and experience to bring to the table. I found it to be an extremely rewarding, challenging and, yet, fun process to be part of and would highly recommend it. **Councillor Peer**

# Benefits and Impact

“I really enjoyed and found value in the whole experience. Particularly after the past couple of years working from home to have the opportunity to be part of a team and observe how experienced, senior level staff operate and observe their behaviours was a great learning experience.

It was also great to delve into the inner workings of other councils and take elements of what they are doing well and reflect on where there have been struggles. I learnt more in the week of the peer challenge than the entirety of the past two years of working from home during the pandemic.” **Officer Peer**

“Being part of a corporate peer challenge for the first time was an intense and worthwhile experience.

There’s plenty of reading about the host council(s) and a great many meetings with members, officers, and partners while we develop our take on the council delivery of its objectives.... While we’re drawing up our recommendations I was also identifying many thoughts and reflections on how we deliver our own services and priorities. I think it’s a two way process and found it enjoyable and productive to be a corporate peer.” **Cllr Peer**

Questions?

Please contact  
..... for any  
further details  
and questions