

# HOUSING ADVISERS PROGRAMME 2018/19



# HOUSING CONTEXT

**The Housing Advisers Programme is designed to support councils seeking to innovate in meeting the housing needs of their communities.**

Most partners now acknowledge that the housing market is broken, and needs fixing.

The housing crisis is forcing difficult choices on families, distorting places, hampering growth, and putting untold pressure on a range of local authority services and budgets.

Ultimately there is a crisis because housing is unavailable, unaffordable, and is not appropriate for everyone that needs it. While there are a number of explanations for this, the reality is that housing markets are complex and interconnected systems, both within and with other parts of our economy and society, varying significantly around the country.

As housebuilders, housing enablers, and landlords; as planners, place-shapers, and agents of growth, transport and infrastructure; as responsible guardians to the vulnerable and the homeless; and as democratically accountable to communities – local government is at the heart of the solution.

There is impressive innovation emerging across local government's housing activities and a renewed emphasis from central government

on the need to build homes, which includes an acknowledgement of the role councils can play in achieving this.

The LGA wants to help promote, facilitate and enhance the role and capacity of councils to meet local housing need. This is the ambition of the Housing Advisers Programme.

**To find out more:**

[housingadvisers@local.gov.uk](mailto:housingadvisers@local.gov.uk)



# THE OFFER TO COUNCILS



**The programme funds the provision of an independent adviser to offer bespoke expert support to local authorities undertaking a specific project that works towards – delivering homes, reducing homelessness, or generating savings or revenues.**

The local authority will lead on the project, with the advisor providing expert support.

The advisor might provide help with:

- scoping out the project
- identifying skills need
- technical expertise
- relationship development
- advising on delivery.

The programme will fund adviser support for up to £14,000 to each council. This has been calculated on the basis of 20 days at a set day rate of £700.

This year the programme will also consider supporting a smaller number of larger projects, by funding adviser support for up to £28,000 for these projects. This has been calculated on the basis of 40 days at a set day rate of £700.

However, flexibility is key and councils could reduce the number of days to seek a higher day rate should they wish, and the allocation of days to the local authority may be spread over the course of the project as appropriate.

Councils can choose to receive funding via a grant from the LGA, and procure the adviser support themselves in line with a grant agreement with the LGA.

Alternatively, the programme will identify potential advisers based on the requirements of individual projects. With this option the LGA

will conduct the procurement of the adviser on behalf of the council, and we anticipate there being a tripartite contractual relationship for the duration of the funding period.

**The projects will need to complete before the end of March 2019.**

Participating local authorities will be asked to write up their experiences in undertaking the project and its impact for the benefit of sharing the learning across the sector, and participate in learning events and other activities as appropriate.

The programme will coordinate and oversee the delivery of projects and their outcomes, and integrate findings and learning into the LGA's wider improvement offer.



**Last year the LGA ran the Housing Advisers Programme for the first time. It funded over 40 projects across every region of the country.**

The programme helped councils to appraise options for building more homes; to set up housing companies and support joint ventures; to plan for the future needs of students and older people; to unblock stalled sites; to source new temporary accommodation options; to prepare for the Homelessness Reduction Act, and more.

An evaluation found that the overwhelming majority of councils were satisfied with the advice and support they received, and over 70 per cent were 'very satisfied'.

Further details from the projects are available online, and projects will participate in a series of regional learning events throughout 2018.

# AREAS OF SUPPORT

## HOUSING

- Delivering housing on an identified site
- Understanding the housing market
- Exploring options for delivering new homes
- Scaling up delivery through a local housing company
- Developing joint ventures
- Identifying sources of funding
- Accessing institutional investment
- Land assembly and remediation
- Delivering housing through Housing Revenue Account
- Reviewing housing management approaches
- Developing new models of tenant engagement and empowerment
- Supporting SME developers

The 2018/19 programme aims to support projects that help meet local housing need. Possible areas of support are given below, though the programme welcomes bids outside these options.

## PLANNING

Using compulsory purchase order powers to unblock sites

Understanding the market and enabling building through partnership

Planning for specific groups, such as older people or students

Responding to the new National Planning Policy Framework

Action planning and responding to the delivery test

Succeeding in viability negotiations

Use of development appraisals

Acquiring land

Capturing land value uplifts

Attracting investment through master planning

Strategic planning across local authority areas

## HOMELESSNESS

Procuring support services effectively

Delivering the Homelessness Reduction Act duties, including the 'duty to refer'

Preventing youth homelessness

Developing partnerships with other public services to end homelessness

Working well with homeless households

Sustainably sourcing temporary accommodation

Reducing use of bed and breakfast and 'nightly rated' accommodation

Adapting to Universal Credit

Reducing rough sleeping



# APPLICATION PROCESS

**The programme is now open for bids from English local authorities, the bidding round will close on 26 June 2018.**

Depending on demand from this first bidding round, the programme may run further calls for bids.

Prospective applicants must:

- have already agreed corporate buy-in/support from the relevant lead officer(s) and/or portfolio holder(s)
- contribute to the project to ensure success
- be open to the prospect of external input and challenge from their adviser
- have the officer capacity to enable the project to succeed
- share their learning with the LGA and others as appropriate.

Applicants should set out, on less than five sides of A4, minimum font size 11, why they should receive the support of a housing adviser, including:

- What is the project for which you are seeking adviser support?
- What are the outcomes that you aiming to deliver through the project?
- In what areas do you need support, and how can an adviser help you/provide added value?
- How will you contribute to the project to ensure that it is a success?
- How many days of adviser support are needed (up to 20 days or up to 40 days)?
- What are the anticipated timescales for the project, and how could the delivery of successful outcomes be captured?
- At what points would the adviser's help be sought, for instance in a single block, or at different points over the course of a project?

# OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT

- How will the learning from your approach be transferrable to other local authorities?
- Whether you would like to receive a grant to be used by your council to procure an adviser through a supplier, or prefer for the LGA to procure an adviser on your behalf?

The application must be signed off by the local authority's leader and chief executive, or appropriate lead member and senior officer (including the S151 officer where there are financial implications).

The programme aims to provide genuine added-value to local authorities, and will co-ordinate its activity with other offers of support from the LGA and our partners.

Local authorities might also consider other support available, including from:

- LGA Peer challenge
- One Public Estate
- Planning Advisory Service
- Housing Finance Institute
- Local Partnerships.





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