

exec Development

Local Government Executive
Leadership Programme 25



Why create the Leadership Programme?

In the past decade, Local Government has faced unprecedented change.

The 2021 APSE report, entitled **Local by Default** and produced in partnership with De Montfort University identified several pressures on future council Chief Execs and Senior Directors including:

- ✓ Austerity has led to a reduction in strategic policy-making capacity across authorities.
- ✓ Cuts have led to a change in skills required, through the creation of 'super directorates', with the strategic leaders of the Council being increasingly drawn into 'firefighting' and operational detail.
- ✓ Chief Officers have reported the absence of time and space for strategic reflection, as well as the difficulties of coordinating across the boundaries of large multi-focussed departments.
- ✓ Reductions in 'back-office' policy capacity have knock-on effects over time, making it more difficult for local actors to formulate and implement effective policies.

In addition to these findings, the sector has also seen unprecedented levels of movement at Executive level, with a considerable number of Chief Executives leaving the profession, having guided their organisations through the pandemic.

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*The LGEL programme was superb. Just the right balance of external speakers, classroom theory and action learning with peers. The core team are great and created a really supportive and challenging environment for us to develop our skills. The programme really helped me to reflect on, and then develop, my leadership and self-management at a critical time in my career. **I thoroughly recommend it.***

Samantha Mowbray
Chief Executive Swindon Borough Council

New ways of working

Research conducted by Commercial Services Group and Professor Steven Griggs – Staffordshire University, has identified the need for Local Government Executives to adapt to these changes, to embrace new ways of working, through an expansion of skills and learning, through sector and external collaboration.

This research identified three key pillars of learning:



Local Government Executive Leadership programme overview

The programme will bring together 12 senior Executives from a cross-section of Local Government. The programme introduces a bespoke leadership model built from listening to Local Authority Executives and in response to Professor Steven Griggs and APSE's research.

The evidence base is hugely significant to our approach, but equally so is the action and social oriented learning. Participants will work within smaller action learning groups to address, develop thinking, implement solutions, and reflect on the execution to give a full 360 learning and development experience.

Deeper embedding of learning, knowledge and skills is supported by mentorship from a dedicated leadership academy comprising of current and former CEOs, and senior leaders who have significantly contributed to the sector.

Furthering the evidence base is a key objective (continuous learning in action!) and participants will be invited to contribute to the ongoing academic research led by Professor Steven Griggs.

This is what you can expect

- ✓ A programme backed by academic research and evidence-based content to support your executive development.
- ✓ A leadership model originating from the specific contexts and challenges facing Local Government executives.
- ✓ Participation in ongoing experiential research to answer ongoing executive leadership challenges for local authorities.
- ✓ External global experts delivering bespoke sessions.
- ✓ Listen to current and contemporary figures in Local Government for personal and authentic accounts of the how they have overcome setbacks and barriers.
- ✓ Develop a network that will support your personal and professional impact.
- ✓ Direct insight and opportunity to engage in wider research through Professor Steven Griggs' academic study into the impact of leadership development in the context of Local Government
- ✓ Growth through challenge and going beyond your comfort zone.
- ✓ Residential sessions based around the three pillars of Resilience, Collaboration and Insightful Thinking.
- ✓ Mentorship for each participant is provided by the Leadership Academy alumni, including Local Government Leaders, Chief Executives and Academics from across the UK.
- ✓ Pre & Post programme support for tangible impact and knowledge transfer.

What we expect of you

A contribution of £2,495 ex VAT per person is required for attending. As part of its ongoing support to Local Government, Commercial Services Group will fund the remaining costs, including residential expenses, training delivery, coaching, sector speakers, and external experts.

Please note you will be responsible for your own travel.



It's not a 'one-day per month' event – the value lies in your total commitment.



Be open to learning new skills and drop any remnants of ego.



Put into practice what you learn as soon as possible.



Allow yourself to focus 100% on the sessions.

How the Local Government Executive Leadership programme is shaped

SUMMER 2025

Date to be agreed with attendees (Online)

- Orientation session and pre-course work.
- Introduction to the programme – including facilitators, format, peers, research base and the three Pillars of Leadership.
- Action and social learning.
- Operating context and the landscape of Local Government leadership challenges faced today and mid to long term horizons.
- Action learning sets.

MODULE 1

Personal & Organisational Resilience

1-3 OCTOBER 2025

Warwick Conferences, Coventry (Residential)

- Group introductions and course introduction refresher.
- Personal and organisational resilience topic and context introduction.
- Workshop with leading expert – Dr Dorian Dugmore.
- Audience with Leadership Academy member.
- Facilitate action learning sets integrating module insights on contemporary challenges.

MODULE 2

Collaboration

19-21 NOVEMBER 2025

Warwick Conferences, Coventry (Residential)

- Collaborative leadership – foundations in Trust and emotional Intelligence for high-performance teams working in demanding and intense situations – topic and context introduction.
- The value of psychological safety and debunking the myths.
- Workshop – leading expert, Helen Sullivan.
- Audience with Leadership Academy member.
- Facilitate action learning sets integrating module insights on contemporary challenges.

MODULE 3

By the fireside – Lessons from Sector Leaders

29-30 JANUARY 2026

Warwick Conferences, Coventry (Residential)

- A series of fireside chats covering perspectives of leadership across the spectrum of a local authority CEO – from a ministerial central government, a local authority leader and a local authority CEO.
- Hear what a 'typical' day consists of; what comes across their desk; the wins, learns and concerns at this level of leadership.

MODULE 4

Time For Thinking Differently

4-6 MARCH 2026

Warwick Conferences, Coventry (Residential)

- A new dimension to problem solving – topic introduction and context.
- Creating the conditions and opportunities; and identifying the behaviours for identifying solutions from insight.
- Workshop with leading expert Kirk Vallis, Google's Global Head of Creativity. Learn tools to increase your capacity to think creatively and understand the conditions for innovation and disruption.
- Audience with Leadership Academy member.
- Facilitate action learning sets integrating module insights on contemporary challenges.

MODULE 5

Consolidation

24 APRIL 2026

Warwick Conferences, Coventry

- Programme consolidation, action learning.
- Research update.

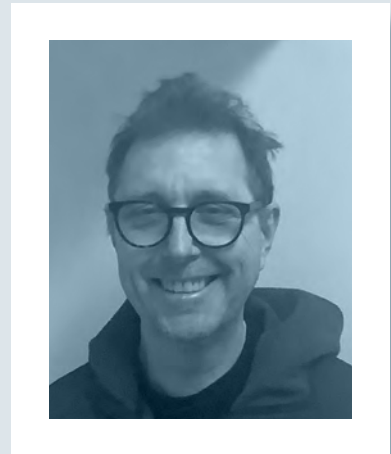
Programme Facilitators

Steven Griggs

Professor of Public Policy and Director of the Centre for Business, Innovation and the Regions at the University of Staffordshire.

Steven jointly leads our programme utilising his research which investigates democratic governance, collaboration and sustainability. He has spent much of his career in town halls and communities exploring the workings of Local Government and the dynamics of leadership and collaborative policymaking.

Steven continues to undertake policy development work with local authorities and public sector organisations, as well as contributing to senior management leadership programmes. He has a well-established research partnership with the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) and he is currently a member of the Advisory Group for the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Public Policy and Public Administration. He was one of the founding editors of the international peer-reviewed journal, Critical Policy Studies.



Karina Rook

Entrepreneur, founder and CEO of Ventures Green Ltd, a consulting and coaching practice for leaders.

Karina jointly leads our Executive Leadership Programme, and her approach pioneers the new world of people, culture and comms. She combines insights from neuroscience, psychology, physiology, lifestyle medicine, elite sport as well as business and leadership to personal development.

Karina's background spans roles in Private, Public and Not for Profit sectors. To help attendees uncover their own leadership style she uses her unique insights and philosophy of empowerment, enabling and collaborating to get optimum results.



Visiting Expert Guest Speakers

Kirk Vallis

Google's Global Head of Creativity

With a background in communications and corporate innovation, Kirk is on a mission to ensure that people get the credit for their part in creativity. People innovate, not technology. Kirk's session looks at what behaviours, attitudes and dynamics sit behind people when they are at their most creative and how to create the environment for more creativity.

Dr Dorian Dugmore

Chief Executive at Wellness Academy, PhD Cardiovascular Medicine

Dorian is an internationally recognised expert in cardiovascular health, preventative medicine and wellness. He has been working in Cardiovascular Medicine and Wellness for 30 years and has written extensively on health, exercise and heart disease. His programmes have won World and European Best Practice awards for corporate wellness. Dorian's session looks at the importance of self-care for leaders and what to focus on.

Professor Helen Sullivan

Dean, College of Asia and the Pacific at The Australian National University

Helen is a public policy scholar whose work explores the nature of state-society relationships, and their interaction with public policy systems. She is the author/editor of nine books, including Collaboration and Public Policy. Helen is a National Fellow of the Institute of Public Administration Australia, a Fellow of the UK based Higher Education Academy and Past President of the Australian Political Studies Association (2020-21).

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The LGEL is more than 'another course', it is an investment in you, your leadership and in those that are led by you. Building your personal resilience so that you can create the space and patience, to challenge your thinking and develop truly collaborative relationships with colleagues and partners. Give yourself the time you need!

Dan Quin, Executive Director – Community Protection and Emergencies (Chief Fire Officer)
Surrey Fire & Rescue Service/Surrey County Council

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This was the best leadership course I've ever been on. It provided an excellent combination of theory and practical learning. I met some amazing people across the sector which enabled me to learn from the experiences of others and reflect upon my own leadership style and journey.

Sara Turnbull
Service Director Strategy, Improvement
& Governance Adults and Health
Directorate, Buckinghamshire Council

Research

Throughout the programme, the cohort will be asked to diarise their experiences, learnings and how they have embedded the programme in their day-to-day duties. Cohort members will be interviewed at key stages and at the end of the programme.

These findings will form the basis of a research paper, jointly created by Commercial Services Group and its research partners, to be shared with the sector, to enable insight and sustainable change.

Interested...

Although focused on Local Government, previous cohorts have included senior executives from other public sector organisations. If this programme is of interest to you, please contact us for a discussion.

To register your interest for the **Local Government Executive Leadership Programme 25**, or for more information on this programme, please contact **Steve Wilson**, Commercial Director stephen.wilson@csltd.org.uk or call 07885 823393.