

POS Lunch and Learn Roundtable – Implementing LGR, a follow up session

18 attendees – including authorities where LGR decision has been made (3), those awaiting a decision in summer 2026 (9) and POS staff / specialists (6).

Overview of POS research into LGR and Topic Guides presented, followed by discussion focused on 2 key topics (staffing and the role of planning) and a key action to capitalise on the opportunities from LGR. Further details on LGR research and support for POS members is available on POS website: <https://www.planningofficers.org.uk/lgr-and-devolution>

Further discussion to take place at POS Conference (July 2026) with a follow-up Roundtable organisation for September 2026.

## Staffing, skills and capacity

Participants noted they are being asked to complete multiple spreadsheets on existing staff roles / complements.

Need to make sure this data is not just headline numbers but reflects a proper understanding of job roles and future requirements

The role of Heads of Planning Groups generated a good discussion

- Where these exist they are found to be very useful - not just at Head level but also at manager grade
- Some areas have recently reinstated at a cross county level - this has found to be beneficial
- Where they do not exist, POS recommendation is to establish - POS can support through POSE

Consistent terms and conditions for all staff - to be agreed before new authorities are created. Ensure commensurate pay across authorities, address terms such as home working.

## The role of planning in new authority

Merger of departments across multiple authorities is leading to very different approaches to the role of planning

Positive example given of planning being a key strand in the PLACE theme - along with property, econ dev, NSIPs and capital, environment - discover what currently exists, design new approach then implement

Further area noted that voluntary committees are being established - working well to date

Concern expressed in another area where 6 departments are coming together - incl Place, Adult and Children Services - planning is not overtly recognised at the top tier

POS has a key role to play in promoting what a **GOOD** planning department looks like in a new unitary

- includes legal, IT and GIS teams
- links with strategic transport and public health
- ensures planning policy and DM functions are kept together
- works hand in hand with property team - particularly where authority is applicant

## One key action

Equal opportunities for recruitment to promoted posts from across all existing authorities into new roles - do not just move existing staff into new roles

Areas where there is a new Local Plan have an opportunity to use this as a promotional tool for not only the role of planning, but wider communications about the role of the Authority.

- Don't lose sight of the smaller issues
- e.g. in some areas paper files still exist. How and when will these be digitised?
  - Land Registry records to be updated prior to creation of new authorities