

# HOUSING ADVISERS PROGRAMME 2020/21



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

**To find out more please visit [www.local.gov.uk/housingadvisersprogramme](http://www.local.gov.uk/housingadvisersprogramme)  
or contact us on [housingadvisers@local.gov.uk](mailto:housingadvisers@local.gov.uk)**



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# HOUSING CONTEXT

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**There was a significant nationwide housing crisis before COVID-19, but the virus has had, and will continue to have, an impact on the national economy, including the delivery of new homes.**

The pandemic has also highlighted stark inequalities within our society, especially in health outcomes due to poor quality housing and a lack of green space. It has exacerbated the housing challenges already facing individuals, couples and families, hampered growth ambitions and put additional pressure on council services and budgets already facing significant financial strain.

Ultimately there is a crisis because housing is often unavailable, unaffordable, built in the wrong places and not appropriate for those that need it. There are multi-faceted reasons for this, which vary significantly across the country. There is no simple single housing market in England. Instead housing markets vary considerably both between and within local authority areas and the housing need and demand profiles of different areas are perhaps even more varied. What this means is that the national housing debate is often over-simplified and lacks recognition that housing is a complex and interconnected system within the economy and society.

That is why local government needs to be at the heart of the solution; 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; as democratically accountable leaders in the communities we serve.

There continues to be impressive innovation emerging across the breadth of local government's housing activities and an ongoing emphasis from central government on the need to build homes. This includes an important acknowledgement of the role councils can play in achieving this.

The Local Government Association (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 (HAP), now in its fourth year.



# THE PROGRAMME SO FAR

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**The Housing Advisers Programme is designed to support councils by helping them meet their local housing need. It aims to be simple, flexible and locally led.**

In the previous three years of the Housing Advisers Programme we have funded over 100 projects to help councils build homes, reduce homelessness and rough sleeping, plan for ageing populations, improve the quality of the private rented sector, understand the student housing market, increase supply of modular housing and more. We have funded a diverse range of projects from a variety of councils to help assist and advise local authorities on real-time housing issues.

We continue to work hard to embed and share the learning from the Programme through the creation of networks of participating councils, case study development and events.

For further details on the programme so far, plans for sharing the experiences to date and our wider support offer to councils, including our recent toolkit for councils on how to improve standards in the private rented sector, please visit [www.local.gov.uk/housingadvisersprogramme](http://www.local.gov.uk/housingadvisersprogramme).



# THE OFFER TO COUNCILS FOR 2020/21

**The programme will continue to fund the provision of bespoke expert support to councils – or groups of councils – wanting to transform the delivery of homes and places, the quality and security of existing homes and/or to prevent and reduce homelessness.**

This year the programme will prioritise strategic housing projects that will support councils and their communities to address COVID-19 and its wider impacts.

**For 2020/21 the programme will aim to:**

- make a significant difference to the housing crisis
- build capacity in councils, so there is a lasting impact long after the HAP funding ends
- ensure that projects can become sustainable in the longer term
- create learning about what works, so that the wider sector can benefit from the programme.

The programme will award up to £20,000 to each project for the purpose of securing expert advice in transforming how a service or partnership meets the housing need of communities.

It will be for the local authority to 'own' the project, around which the advice would provide additional expert support in helping deliver transformation.

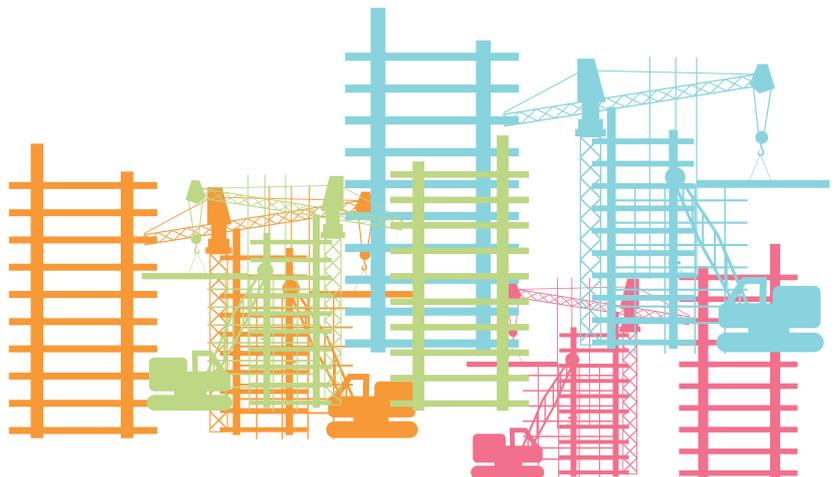
Successful councils will be awarded a grant through which to procure advice for the project, details of which will be discussed and agreed with the LGA.

The LGA will have a continuing role as part of the project governance.

The programme will coordinate and oversee projects, as well as integrate findings and learning into the LGA's wider improvement offer.

**We will support councils to lead and contribute to activities that enable the sharing of experiences across the sector through a learning programme which includes:**

- pre-application support
- learning events
- an online learning hub.



# AREAS OF SUPPORT

**Councils are invited to submit an application to the programme for adviser support with projects that would transform how they meet a local housing need and help with the challenges presenting now, and in the future, as a result of COVID-19.**

**The programme will fund ambitious projects seeking to improve outcomes. This might involve looking at:**

- strategy
- service design
- delivery operations
- workforce
- partnership.

**The projects might focus on opportunities to:**

- support zero-carbon home ambitions
- meet housing and wider support needs of low-income families
- refresh homelessness services and partnerships to focus on prevention
- sustainably provide temporary accommodation
- directly build homes of the right mix of products, tenures and techniques
- proactively enable the development of the right types of homes to meet local need
- meet needs of groups at risk of homelessness to prevent it happening
- support improvements in the private rented sector
- improve the quality of existing housing
- reform the end to end planning process and the relationship with developers
- achieve fair returns to communities from planning gain
- empower council housing tenants.

**Our ask is that the projects are innovative and meet the following principles:**

- they are focused on local need and involve local people and partners
- they demonstrate how they will address the impacts of COVID-19
- they use and create evidence about what works well to address local need
- they will have a sustainable impact beyond the period of the funding.



# THINKING ABOUT APPLYING?

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**Large or small, urban or rural, we are looking for applications led by councils across England. The programme is open to councils at all levels, either individually or as a partnership. If you are forming a partnership of councils (and other organisations), a single council must lead the project.**

**What is essential is that prospective applications:**

- tackle a local housing need challenge
- are led by a council but involve wider partners from across the public sector
- have corporate endorsement from the relevant lead officer(s) and/or portfolio holder(s)
- have the officer capacity to enable the project to succeed
- are open to the prospect of external input and challenge from their adviser
- are willing to share learning and experience from the programme with other councils.

## APPLY NOW

You can find out more about the programme, read case studies and view frequently asked questions via our website.

Find out more and apply online at [www.local.gov.uk/housingadvisersprogramme](http://www.local.gov.uk/housingadvisersprogramme)

# APPLICATION TIMELINE

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## **Applications open**

Midday 12 November 2020

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## **Applications close**

5.00pm 7 January 2021

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## **Successful and unsuccessful applicants notified**

22 January 2021

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## **Signed grant agreement returned to LGA by**

5 February 2021

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**Grant funding allocations paid within two weeks of return of signed grant agreement.**

## WHAT IF YOUR PROJECT IS NOT SELECTED?

We want to ensure that the learning from this project reaches as many councils as possible, and all councils which submit an application will be invited to participate in the learning programme, which will be led and delivered by successful councils and the LGA.

In cases where commonalities are identified across a number of councils, we may suggest a joint solution or approach where appropriate. We will discuss this with you if this is the case.

We may also offer councils alternative support through another LGA programme, where appropriate.

The Housing Advisers Programme team can be contacted by emailing [housingadvisers@local.gov.uk](mailto:housingadvisers@local.gov.uk)



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