



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

**Lee Rowley MP**

*Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for  
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***Department for Levelling Up, Housing and  
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27 April 2023

Dear Leader,

**Office for Local Government**

I am writing to share more detailed information on how we are developing the Office for Local Government (Oflog), and how we will be stepping up our programme of engagement activity as we work towards an initial launch later in the spring.

Firstly, I would like to thank local government colleagues for their collaboration so far, from participating in co-design sessions, to meeting myself, Lord Morse and DLUHC officials.

I wanted to take this opportunity to further set out the Government's vision of what Oflog will be and why it is needed now. Oflog is intended to be an authoritative and accessible source of information about the performance of local authorities and how well services are being delivered. The purpose of Oflog will be to increase transparency, foster accountability, and help drive the improvement of local government performance.

Oflog's strategic objectives will be to:

- Empower citizens with further information about their local authority, enabling them to understand more about the services they receive;
- build on local leaders' and councils' knowledge of their services, offering a more convenient data set which enables them to further innovate and improve; and
- increase central government's understanding of local government performance, and offer timely and targeted support, and also strengthen the foundation of its advocacy to other points of Whitehall.

The purpose of Oflog is to:

1. Increase transparency – councils, the public and central government should have a clear understanding of how decisions are being made, how money is

being spent in local areas, and how this impacts outcomes and delivery of key services.

2. Foster accountability – Oflog should improve local scrutiny by councillors and the public alike, and enhance the transparency which supports democratic accountability to the public.
3. Use data to further improve local government performance and help identify problems at an earlier stage – in order to better understand performance we will all need to draw on the best available data and evidence. Quality and meaningful data will be the cornerstone of Oflog.

We know that it is important to get Oflog right and that is why we are taking the journey step by step. As you will know the first step was appointing Lord Morse as interim chair. Lord Morse has already met with a number of you as well as with several sector bodies. These initial conversations have been very helpful including for example, the importance of recognising the need to contextualise the data to ensure that it is an accurate representation. We are looking to talk further to the sector in the coming weeks about how best to utilise the Oflog model metrics.

We are developing Oflog in phases. During Oflog's first phase it will initially cover four policy areas – adult social care; adult skills, waste management, and reserves – with a view to expanding the range of subjects later in the year. We are very interested in hearing what themes you would like us to prioritise for future iterations of the tool.

The metrics sitting underneath these initial policy areas have been discussed in a series of co-design workshops and meetings with sector colleagues. This is a first step, and clearly the initial policy areas do not cover the full range of what local government delivers. We have also heard loud and clear that we should be aware of the burdens created with new data requests to local government. Therefore, in its initial phase Oflog will use existing data and metrics. In subsequent phases, we hope to explore with you and other Government Departments how to iterate, improve and even streamline the data to offer a clear focus on outcomes.

Through co-design one of the strong messages we have heard is that the outcomes which are most meaningful for the public are often affected by the decisions of multiple different bodies. In the next phase, we want to think through how we can show these outcomes in a way that encourages effective partnership working. During the next phase we will also build on what we have learned and scale up the number of policy areas and metrics being utilised. This will help us to understand how the data that Oflog is publishing is interpreted and used. Our long-term ambition is for Oflog to become the authoritative source of information for local government. We remain committed to working with you throughout Oflog's development.

One of the key pieces of feedback we have received is the importance of clarity on Oflog's journey. We are pleased to confirm, based on your feedback, that we will publish a policy document at the initial launch later in the spring.

I want to thank you again for working with us as we develop Oflog. I have had good, productive discussions with the Local Government Association, and held a roundtable with representatives from the District Councils Network to discuss the purpose of Oflog. Lord Morse and DLUHC officials will continue their engagement with a range of

local government members and officers, as well as with sector bodies to ensure that we are building Oflog together so that Oflog works as best for you as it can.

I also have recently held the first of regular meetings with key sector leaders from across the political spectrum, where we discussed the work underway, and the progress being made. Understanding these perspectives will be vital in ensuring Oflog provides value for all and supports you in utilising the data and analysis in the best possible way. Along with this enhanced engagement to obtain your valued and important views, we have established an Advisory Group, made up of a panel of experts including a cross-party group of very experienced former local government leaders and others, initially set up on an interim basis before becoming formalised further on in the process.

We will shortly be recruiting a chief executive to lead Oflog and I will continue to share more information about the development of Oflog through regular newsletters and webinars. Should you have any further questions then please contact the Oflog Team using [oflog@levellingup.gov.uk](mailto:oflog@levellingup.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lee', is centered below the text 'Yours sincerely,'.

**LEE ROWLEY MP**  
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**Local Government and Building Safety**