



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**Jim McMahon OBE MP**

*Minister of State for Local Government and  
English Devolution*

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**Josh Goodman**

Chief Executive

Office for Local Government

September 2024

Dear Josh,

### **Office for Local Government – review of long-term role, and short-term remit**

I am committed to resetting the relationship between local and central government and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of central government and the sector. I have therefore decided to review the role of Oflog by the end of 2024 to ensure that it will add the greatest possible value to the system of transparency, accountability and support of local government. I will welcome the views of the sector over the coming months.

In the meantime, I would like Oflog to continue to deliver its previous remit, with the exception that we have agreed that Oflog should pause on piloting and rolling out its current model of ‘early warning conversations’ while we consider the Government’s overall approach to early warning and interventions.

Oflog’s short-term remit, effective immediately, is as follows:

#### **Inform**

We need to empower communities to have a voice on what their local authority is doing. It can be hard to navigate the wealth of available data – we are rich on data but poor on insights. Although the current Oflog Data Explorer is live, it is incomplete and covers only a fraction of local authority activity. Oflog will:

- continue to update data for existing metrics on the Data Explorer;
- continue to add new metrics to the Data Explorer, with a focus on areas most relevant to the government’s missions;

- continue to improve the Data Explorer, including ensuring it better explains the data's limitations and how it should be used responsibly by third parties; and
- develop options for new, additional, or alternative data tools to help citizens understand local authorities' performance, being clear about how these would add value to existing tools and reporting provided by central government and the sector.

As Oflog is an office within my department, I will approve all new metrics for the Data Explorer prior to publication.

### **Support**

Oflog will continue its work to understand the current landscape of support available to local authorities and, where there are gaps, will inform discussions with MHCLG officials about how these gaps might be best filled.

In parallel, Oflog should continue its programme of webinars that convene groups of similar LAs to learn from each other. It should also continue to take a "test and learn" approach to new forms of support. This could include publishing new analysis, research or tools on local authority performance and best practice.

I am interested in what Oflog could do to improve LAs' digital and data capability. Oflog should develop a proposition, working across government.

### **Warn**

We have agreed that Oflog should pause on piloting and conducting its current model of 'early warning conversations' while we consider the Government's overall approach to early warning and interventions. I would like Oflog to work with MHCLG officials on options to help identify when LAs might need support to recover, rebuild or reform.

This remit will be updated after further consideration of Oflog's role in the sector.

**Yours sincerely**



**Jim McMahon OBE MP**

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