Inspiring Women Connect

2nd December, Globe Suites, Hilton London Bankside

A morning of discussion, peer support and practical ideas for women in local government and their allies, ahead of the Inspiring Women in Local Government Awards. Open to all finalists attending the Awards.

09:00 Registration & Networking

09:25 Welcome from the Chair
Sarah Calkin, editor, **Local Government Chronicle**

09:30 The Leadership Journey: Finding your voice, backing yourself and opening doors for others
Leadership journeys are shaped by the opportunities we seize, the challenges we overcome and the people who support us along the way. Drawing on personal experiences and defining career moments, this opening keynote explores what it takes to find your voice, build confidence and navigate the path to senior leadership. An inspiring reflection on resilience, embracing new challenges and using your influence to champion others and create opportunities for the next generation.

10:00 Change Makers – Roundtable Discussions
Bringing together this year's awards finalists, judges and senior sector leaders, these interactive discussions offer an opportunity to share experiences, challenge thinking and explore the issues shaping women's careers in local government. From overcoming barriers and navigating career decisions to championing others and driving meaningful change, each roundtable will focus on practical insights, shared learning and actions that can help women progress, thrive and shape the future of the profession.

1. **Mind the gap**: What's really holding women back from the top?
2. **Career crossroads:** Backing yourself and making your next move
3. **A seat at the new table:** Will reorganisation and devolution create opportunities for women?

4. **Breaking new ground:** Where are the women in place, technology and technical leadership?
5. **Seen, heard and valued:** Getting recognition for the work that matters
6. **Beyond encouragement:** Who's really opening doors for women?

Facilitators:
Ann Carruthers, Director of Growth, Environment and Transport, **Leicestershire County Council**
Susan Parsonage, Chief Executive, **Wokingham Borough Council**
Kathryn Rees, Executive Director, Corporate and Support Services, **Stockport Council**
Adele Wylie, Chief Executive, **North Northamptonshire Council**

10:35 Group Feedback

The session closes with feedback from every topic, bringing together the insights and ideas from across the room to set the agenda for the closing panel.

10:45 You can only be what you can see: the next generation of local government leadership

Local government needs a strong pipeline of future leaders to meet the pressures ahead, from workforce shortages to rising demand for services. This closing panel brings together established leaders and women earlier in their careers to discuss what it takes to step up, how to back each other, and what the sector can do to develop and keep its future leaders. Expect honest career stories, practical advice and a challenge for everyone in the room to take away.

Chair:
Sarah Calkin, editor, **Local Government Chronicle**

Panellists:
Rebecca Lea, Head of Workforce Collaboration, **Greater Manchester Combined Authority**
Catherine Mbema, Director of Public Health, **Lewisham Council**
Che-Kwon Sterling, Programme Manager, **North Northamptonshire Council**

11:25 Closing remarks from the Chair
Sarah Calkin, editor, **Local Government Chronicle**

11:30 End of Inspiring Women Connect

11:45 Awards Drinks Reception