



Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee

Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP

Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities

Minister for Intergovernmental Relations

2 Marsham Street London

SW1P 4DF

24 November 2023

Dear Michael,

I am writing to you with regards to the recent creation of the Office for Local Government (Oflog) and our anticipated work in this area.

We are now launching an inquiry into Oflog. Before we begin taking oral evidence in connection with this inquiry, we would be grateful if you could respond to the following questions about Oflog:

1. What degree of independence does the Office for Local Government have from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities? Please set out this response in detail with examples, if necessary.
2. How will Oflog contribute to the work of the Spatial Data Unit (if at all); or how will the Spatial Data Unit support Oflog?
3. Will Oflog support the Government's Levelling Up policy and if so, how?
4. How does Oflog intend to select data and how will these data sets be used to develop outcomes and measures?
5. Will Oflog make it easier to identify financial problems for councils in advance and if so, how?
6. How will Oflog improve central Government's understanding of local areas and the challenges communities face?
7. What is Oflog's main priorities and what problems is it seeking to solve?
8. What can Oflog contribute to local government that is not already being done by bodies such as the Local Government Association?
9. We previously wrote to you, on different occasions, about holding pre-appointment hearings including the pre-appointment hearing for the Chair of Oflog. We have not yet



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received a satisfactory response to our letters. Please can you confirm (i) when you plan to recruit for a permanent Chair of Oflog; and that (ii) we will be invited to hold a pre-appointment hearing with the Government's preferred candidate for this role?

We understand that Oflog has already set out the metrics it will begin to focus on during its initial stage of work. Please can you therefore provide us with information on Oflog's intended outputs especially those that are not currently included on the Department's website or otherwise publicly available.

We would be grateful for a response to the above questions by **11 December 2023**.

Best wishes,

Mr Clive Betts MP
Chair, Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee