



IDeA/LGA/SOLACE Survey of the Impact of the Economic Slowdown on Local Authorities 2008

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**THE IMPACT OF THE
ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN ON LOCAL AUTHORITIES: NOVEMBER 2008
SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

INTRODUCTION

1. This survey was conducted by the Local Government Association Analysis and Research team for the Improvement and Development Agency for local government (IDeA), the Local Government Association (LGA) and Local Government Employers in partnership with the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE). The purpose was to establish an early assessment of how the current economic downturn climate is affecting the people and localities that councils serve, and therefore councils themselves.
2. The results provide a start point in building a national picture of how councils are experiencing the impact of economic downturn in their localities on a consistent basis by examining these experiences as we enter an uncertain period of economic austerity.
3. The survey was sent to all 388 chief executives of local authorities in England on 10th November 2008. At the close (30th November) 155 (39.9%) responded, broken down as follows:

Response		
Type	Numbers	%
Counties	17	50.0%
Shire districts	89	37.4%
London boroughs	15	45.5%
Metropolitan districts	13	36.1%
Unitaries	21	45.7%
Total	155	39.9%
Region		
Eastern	31	57.4%
East Midlands	11	24.4%
Greater London	15	45.5%
North East	9	36.0%
North West	13	28.3%
South East	31	41.9%
South West	22	44.0%
West Midlands	12	31.6%
Yorkshire & Humberside	11	50.0%
Total	155	39.9%

4. The response is moderately high with a relatively uniform distribution across all types of authority and all regions. The results therefore provide a broadly representative picture of the overall impact as seen to date and as predicted by respondents at this early stage in the downturn.
5. Disaggregated data by authority-type or region should be treated with more caution as they are based on smaller numbers of responses. Also, some authorities did not answer every question so the response base to individual questions can be lower than indicated in the table above.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

6. In summary at the time of the survey (10th – 30th November), respondents told us that:

Council Services

- 90% have or expect additional demands on services, with, for example, 53.8% already experiencing additional demands on welfare / debt advice services and 45% additional housing benefits applications.

Infra Structure and Capital Investment

- 60.4% had received fewer major planning applications than expected over the past two months, and 69.5% received fewer minor applications.
- 50.0% indicated that existing public sector capital schemes had been adversely affected, and 79.2% that private sector schemes had been adversely affected.

Impacts on the Locality

- 81.7% reported that so far local community cohesion had not changed adversely, but 49.7% anticipated that it would slightly deteriorate over the next twelve months.
- 20.9% anticipate local employment levels falling greatly and a further 59.5% anticipate levels falling slightly over the next twelve months.
- 88.2% reported either a moderate or slight impact on local businesses so far, with most of the remainder reporting a significant impact, and 54.3% predicting significant impact over the next twelve months: the response is a likely reflection of a general expectation that impacts will vary in severity across the country.
- 68.8% reported that they were aware of local voluntary organisations experiencing increased demand for services.

Council Action

- 37.7% had taken additional action to protect vulnerable households and 58.3% plan to: activities initiated or planned range widely and include: mortgage assistance, creating credit unions, insulation or free energy efficiency advice, encouraging take up of benefits and enabling or providing debt or financial advice.
- 39.4% had already taken specific action to protect local businesses, and 58.7% plan to: action or planned action includes paying bills quicker, business advice and support, encouraging take up of rate relief and more widely publicising contracts for local business.
- 16.3% had already taken action to support local voluntary organisations, and 27.6% plan to: actual or planned help includes offering hardship assistance, helping to make services more accessible (e.g. hosting) and financial assistance.

Impact on Councils

- 72.9% had revised their overall budget position in the current year, most commonly due to the loss of expected income from fees and charges or pressure from increased demand for services.
- 13.0% had cut council jobs and 22.1% had introduced a recruitment freeze.
- 85.7% thought that the slowdown would make it more difficult for the authority to achieve Local Area Agreement targets; however

- 47.1% indicated that despite the difficulties for people and businesses (and councils), there are opportunities to help that arise from the downturn: the two main ones being the chance to improve inter-agency co-operation and cross other local barriers to tackle local problems, and possibilities for buying land given falling land values, for example to provide affordable housing.

7. More detailed findings are set out below.

EFFECT OF INFLATIONARY PRESSURE AND LOSS OF INCOME ON OVERALL BUDGET POSITION

8. Almost three-quarters of respondents (72.9%) had revised their overall budget position since the start of year budget planning as a result of the economic slowdown, either expecting reduced income or greater demands on expenditure through higher demands for services.

Since your start of year budget planning, has your authority had to revise its overall budget position as a result of the economic slowdown?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	113	72.9%	9	52.9%	67	75.3%	11	73.3%	9	69.2%	17	81.0%
No	38	24.5%	5	29.4%	22	24.7%	4	26.7%	3	23.1%	4	19.0%
Don't know	4	2.6%	3	17.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	7.7%	0	0.0%
Total	155	100.0%	17	100.0%	89	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	21	100.0%

9. Those respondents revising budget positions were asked to indicate the factors contributing to their decision. The most common ones were the loss of expected income from fees and charges (83.2%), a reduction in receipts from the sale of assets (65.5%), a reduction in interest received (65.5%) and inflation costs (58.4%).

Which of the following contributed to your decision to revise your budget position?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Increased demand for services	29	25.7%	3	33.3%	16	23.9%	2	18.2%	4	44.4%	4	23.5%
Loss of expected income from council tax revenue and rents	27	23.9%	1	11.1%	16	23.9%	1	9.1%	3	33.3%	6	35.3%
Loss of expected income from fees and charges	94	83.2%	4	44.4%	59	88.1%	10	90.9%	8	88.9%	13	76.5%
Reduction in receipts from the sale of assets	74	65.5%	5	55.6%	37	55.2%	10	90.9%	8	88.9%	14	82.4%
Loss of expected income from Section 106 agreements	44	38.9%	5	55.6%	19	28.4%	4	36.4%	8	88.9%	8	47.1%
Reduction in interest received	74	65.5%	7	77.8%	48	71.6%	7	63.6%	5	55.6%	7	41.2%
Inflation costs	66	58.4%	6	66.7%	39	58.2%	8	72.7%	5	55.6%	8	47.1%
Other	16	14.2%	1	11.1%	9	13.4%	1	9.1%	1	11.1%	4	23.5%
Total	113	100.0%	9	100.0%	67	100.0%	11	100.0%	9	100.0%	17	100.0%

ADDITIONAL DEMANDS ON SERVICES

10. The proportion of respondents who had already experienced additional demands on services as a result of the economic slowdown was highest in relation to people seeking welfare/debt advice (53.8%), housing benefits applications (45.0%), business support (38.5%) and homeless persons (25.0%). With the exception of homeless persons (higher) and requests for school places (lower), between around a third and a half anticipated future additional demands. In some cases, almost a half of respondents were unable to say.

Has your authority experienced, or do you anticipate, additional demands on its services as a result of the economic slowdown?												
Number of housing benefits applications												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Already experienced	67	45.0%	2	16.7%	44	50.0%	6	40.0%	9	69.2%	6	28.6%
Anticipated	67	45.0%	1	8.3%	42	47.7%	9	60.0%	4	30.8%	11	52.4%
Neither experienced nor anticipated	6	4.0%	5	41.7%	1	1.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Don't know	9	6.0%	4	33.3%	1	1.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	19.0%
Total	149	100.0%	12	100.0%	88	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	21	100.0%
Number of homeless persons												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Already experienced	37	25.0%	0	0.0%	25	29.1%	3	20.0%	6	46.2%	3	14.3%
Anticipated	83	56.1%	4	30.8%	55	64.0%	9	60.0%	4	30.8%	11	52.4%
Neither experienced nor anticipated	12	8.1%	3	23.1%	5	5.8%	2	13.3%	1	7.7%	1	4.8%
Don't know	16	10.8%	6	46.2%	1	1.2%	1	6.7%	2	15.4%	6	28.6%
Total	148	100.0%	13	100.0%	86	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	21	100.0%
Requests for school places												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Already experienced	6	6.2%	3	21.4%	0	0.0%	2	13.3%	1	9.1%	0	0.0%
Anticipated	12	12.4%	4	28.6%	0	0.0%	5	33.3%	2	18.2%	1	5.3%
Neither experienced nor anticipated	35	36.1%	1	7.1%	13	34.2%	5	33.3%	6	54.5%	10	52.6%
Don't know	44	45.4%	6	42.9%	25	65.8%	3	20.0%	2	18.2%	8	42.1%
Total	97	100.0%	14	100.0%	38	100.0%	15	100.0%	11	100.0%	19	100.0%
Requests for free school meals												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Already experienced	5	5.1%	1	7.1%	0	0.0%	1	7.1%	2	16.7%	1	5.0%
Anticipated	35	35.7%	9	64.3%	0	0.0%	9	64.3%	7	58.3%	10	50.0%
Neither experienced nor anticipated	19	19.4%	1	7.1%	12	31.6%	4	28.6%	0	0.0%	2	10.0%
Don't know	39	39.8%	3	21.4%	26	68.4%	0	0.0%	3	25.0%	7	35.0%
Total	98	100.0%	14	100.0%	38	100.0%	14	100.0%	12	100.0%	20	100.0%
Children's services												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Already experienced	6	6.1%	1	6.7%	0	0.0%	1	6.7%	3	27.3%	1	5.0%
Anticipated	30	30.3%	9	60.0%	0	0.0%	6	40.0%	5	45.5%	10	50.0%
Neither experienced nor anticipated	23	23.2%	1	6.7%	12	31.6%	5	33.3%	1	9.1%	4	20.0%
Don't know	40	40.4%	4	26.7%	26	68.4%	3	20.0%	2	18.2%	5	25.0%
Total	99	100.0%	15	100.0%	38	100.0%	15	100.0%	11	100.0%	20	100.0%
Mental health services												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Already experienced	4	4.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	25.0%	1	4.8%
Anticipated	35	35.4%	8	57.1%	2	5.3%	9	64.3%	6	50.0%	10	47.6%
Neither experienced nor anticipated	15	15.2%	0	0.0%	11	28.9%	2	14.3%	1	8.3%	1	4.8%
Don't know	45	45.5%	6	42.9%	25	65.8%	3	21.4%	2	16.7%	9	42.9%
Total	99	100.0%	14	100.0%	38	100.0%	14	100.0%	12	100.0%	21	100.0%
Numbers seeking welfare/debt advice												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Already experienced	70	53.8%	7	46.7%	34	51.5%	11	73.3%	8	61.5%	10	47.6%
Anticipated	47	36.2%	5	33.3%	26	39.4%	3	20.0%	3	23.1%	10	47.6%
Neither experienced nor anticipated	3	2.3%	0	0.0%	2	3.0%	1	6.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Don't know	10	7.7%	3	20.0%	4	6.1%	0	0.0%	2	15.4%	1	4.8%
Total	130	100.0%	15	100.0%	66	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	21	100.0%

Business support												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Already experienced	52	38.5%	7	46.7%	21	29.2%	7	50.0%	9	69.2%	8	38.1%
Anticipated	64	47.4%	7	46.7%	44	61.1%	2	14.3%	2	15.4%	9	42.9%
Neither experienced nor anticipated	13	9.6%	0	0.0%	6	8.3%	4	28.6%	1	7.7%	2	9.5%
Don't know	6	4.4%	1	6.7%	1	1.4%	1	7.1%	1	7.7%	2	9.5%
Total	135	100.0%	15	100.0%	72	100.0%	14	100.0%	13	100.0%	21	100.0%

CAPITAL PROJECTS AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

11. Around three in five respondents (60.4%) had received fewer major planning applications than expected over the past two months, and slightly more (69.5%) had received fewer minor applications.

Was the number of planning applications received by your authority over the past two months lower than you would normally expect?												
Major applications												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	87	60.4%	3	27.3%	53	63.1%	9	60.0%	9	69.2%	13	61.9%
No	47	32.6%	3	27.3%	29	34.5%	4	26.7%	4	30.8%	7	33.3%
Don't know	10	6.9%	5	45.5%	2	2.4%	2	13.3%	0	0.0%	1	4.8%
Total	144	100.0%	11	100.0%	84	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	21	100.0%
Minor applications												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	98	69.5%	3	30.0%	59	71.1%	8	53.3%	12	92.3%	16	80.0%
No	35	24.8%	2	20.0%	23	27.7%	6	40.0%	1	7.7%	3	15.0%
Don't know	8	5.7%	5	50.0%	1	1.2%	1	6.7%	0	0.0%	1	5.0%
Total	141	100.0%	10	100.0%	83	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	20	100.0%

12. A half of respondents (50.0%) indicated that existing public sector capital schemes had been adversely affected by the economic slowdown, and more than three-quarters (79.2%) that private sector schemes had been adversely affected.

Have existing capital schemes been adversely affected by the economic slowdown?												
Public sector												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	74	50.0%	10	58.8%	37	44.6%	7	50.0%	10	76.9%	10	47.6%
No	68	45.9%	4	23.5%	43	51.8%	7	50.0%	3	23.1%	11	52.4%
Don't know	6	4.1%	3	17.6%	3	3.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	148	100.0%	17	100.0%	83	100.0%	14	100.0%	13	100.0%	21	100.0%
Private sector												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	118	79.2%	12	70.6%	64	77.1%	11	73.3%	13	100.0%	18	85.7%
No	18	12.1%	2	11.8%	12	14.5%	2	13.3%	0	0.0%	2	9.5%
Don't know	13	8.7%	3	17.6%	7	8.4%	2	13.3%	0	0.0%	1	4.8%
Total	149	100.0%	17	100.0%	83	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	21	100.0%

13. Three-quarters of respondents who indicated that public sector schemes had been affected reported that they had been affected by falling land values (75.7%), with the next most common factor being developers' lack of business confidence (50.0%). Private sector schemes had mostly been affected by developers' lack of business confidence (89.0%), developers' lack of finance (77.1%) and falls in land value (50.8%).

How have capital schemes been affected?												
Public sector												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Fall in land value	56	75.7%	7	70.0%	29	78.4%	6	85.7%	8	80.0%	6	60.0%
Developers' lack of finance	29	39.2%	4	40.0%	16	43.2%	3	42.9%	4	40.0%	2	20.0%
Re-negotiation of Section 106 agreements	11	14.9%	1	10.0%	6	16.2%	0	0.0%	3	30.0%	1	10.0%
Developers' lack of business/market confidence	37	50.0%	5	50.0%	17	45.9%	3	42.9%	6	60.0%	6	60.0%
Other	4	5.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	10.0%	3	30.0%
Total	74	100.0%	10	100.0%	37	100.0%	7	100.0%	10	100.0%	10	100.0%
Private sector												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Fall in land value	60	50.8%	7	58.3%	27	42.2%	7	63.6%	9	69.2%	10	55.6%
Developers' lack of finance	91	77.1%	10	83.3%	47	73.4%	7	63.6%	11	84.6%	16	88.9%
Re-negotiation of Section 106 agreements	32	27.1%	5	41.7%	13	20.3%	3	27.3%	7	53.8%	4	22.2%
Developers' lack of business/market confidence	105	89.0%	12	100.0%	56	87.5%	8	72.7%	11	84.6%	18	100.0%
Other	3	2.5%	0	0.0%	2	3.1%	0	0.0%	1	7.7%	0	0.0%
Total	118	100.0%	12	100.0%	64	100.0%	11	100.0%	13	100.0%	18	100.0%

OTHER ISSUES FOR COMMUNITIES

14. Four-fifths of respondents (81.7%) reported that local community cohesion had not yet changed as a result of the economic slowdown, with half the remainder unable to say. This proportion was lower in counties (47.1%), where there was a correspondingly higher proportion unable to answer the question.

In your opinion, how has local community cohesion changed as a result of the economic slowdown?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Greatly improved	1	0.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	7.7%	0	0.0%
Slightly improved	5	3.3%	1	5.9%	3	3.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	4.8%
Not changed	125	81.7%	8	47.1%	73	83.9%	14	93.3%	11	84.6%	19	90.5%
Slightly deteriorated	7	4.6%	2	11.8%	5	5.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Greatly deteriorated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Don't know	15	9.8%	6	35.3%	6	6.9%	1	6.7%	1	7.7%	1	4.8%
Total	153	100.0%	17	100.0%	87	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	21	100.0%

15. A half of respondents (49.7%) anticipated that local community cohesion would slightly deteriorate over the next twelve months, with just over a quarter anticipating no change (28.8%) and around one in six (15.0%) unable to say.

How do you anticipate local community cohesion changing over the next twelve months as a result of the economic slowdown?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Greatly improving	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Slightly improving	9	5.9%	1	5.9%	7	8.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	4.8%
Not changing	44	28.8%	4	23.5%	26	29.9%	5	33.3%	5	38.5%	4	19.0%
Slightly deteriorating	76	49.7%	7	41.2%	43	49.4%	8	53.3%	6	46.2%	12	57.1%
Greatly deteriorating	1	0.7%	1	5.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Don't know	23	15.0%	4	23.5%	11	12.6%	2	13.3%	2	15.4%	4	19.0%
Total	153	100.0%	17	100.0%	87	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	21	100.0%

16. More than half of respondents (59.5%) anticipated local employment levels slightly falling over the next twelve months, with a further fifth (20.9%) anticipating levels greatly falling. However, 17.0% anticipated levels either slightly or greatly increasing.

How do you anticipate local employment levels changing over the next twelve months as a result of the economic slowdown?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Greatly increasing	8	5.2%	1	5.9%	4	4.6%	3	20.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Slightly increasing	18	11.8%	1	5.9%	10	11.5%	2	13.3%	2	15.4%	3	14.3%
Not changing	2	1.3%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%	1	6.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Slightly falling	91	59.5%	8	47.1%	54	62.1%	7	46.7%	8	61.5%	14	66.7%
Greatly falling	32	20.9%	6	35.3%	18	20.7%	2	13.3%	3	23.1%	3	14.3%
Don't know	2	1.3%	1	5.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	4.8%
Total	153	100.0%	17	100.0%	87	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	21	100.0%

17. Almost nine out of ten respondents (88.2%) reported that the slowdown had had either a moderate or slight impact on local businesses so far, with most of the remainder reporting a significant impact. Over the next twelve months, more than half (54.3%) predicted the slowdown having a significant impact.

How would you rate the impact of the economic slowdown on local businesses so far?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
A significant impact	15	9.9%	0	0.0%	8	9.2%	0	0.0%	5	38.5%	2	10.0%
A moderate impact	67	44.1%	13	76.5%	34	39.1%	5	33.3%	3	23.1%	12	60.0%
A slight impact	67	44.1%	4	23.5%	44	50.6%	8	53.3%	5	38.5%	6	30.0%
No impact at all	3	2.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%	2	13.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	152	100.0%	17	100.0%	87	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	20	100.0%

What do you anticipate the impact being on local businesses over the next twelve months?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
A significant impact	82	54.3%	10	58.8%	43	50.0%	6	40.0%	9	69.2%	14	70.0%
A moderate impact	59	39.1%	4	23.5%	40	46.5%	7	46.7%	3	23.1%	5	25.0%
A slight impact	6	4.0%	2	11.8%	2	2.3%	1	6.7%	1	7.7%	0	0.0%
No impact at all	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Don't know	4	2.6%	1	5.9%	1	1.2%	1	6.7%	0	0.0%	1	5.0%
Total	151	100.0%	17	100.0%	86	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	20	100.0%

IMPACT ON LOCAL THIRD SECTOR/VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

18. Four-fifths of respondents (81.8%) had not been asked to give emergency grants to local third sector/voluntary organisations in trouble as a result of the slowdown, one in ten (10.4%) had been asked.

Has your authority been asked to give emergency grants to local third sector/voluntary organisations in trouble as a result of the economic slowdown?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	16	10.4%	2	11.8%	7	8.0%	0	0.0%	3	23.1%	4	18.2%
No	126	81.8%	10	58.8%	77	88.5%	15	100.0%	8	61.5%	16	72.7%
Don't know	12	7.8%	5	29.4%	3	3.4%	0	0.0%	2	15.4%	2	9.1%
Total	154	100.0%	17	100.0%	87	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	22	100.0%

19. Just over two-thirds of respondents (68.8%) reported that they were aware of local voluntary organisations having experienced increased demand for services, with most of the remainder (28.6%) being unable to say. Almost all of those which were aware of increased demand (93.4%) reported that

debt counselling services had been affected. Other commonly affected services were housing advice (68.9%) and employment advice (50.0%).

As far as you are aware, have voluntary organisations in your area (e.g. CAB) experienced increased demand for services as a result of the economic slowdown?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	106	68.8%	12	70.6%	61	70.1%	8	53.3%	8	61.5%	17	77.3%
No	4	2.6%	0	0.0%	2	2.3%	2	13.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Don't know	44	28.6%	5	29.4%	24	27.6%	5	33.3%	5	38.5%	5	22.7%
Total	154	100.0%	17	100.0%	87	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	22	100.0%
For which services have local voluntary organisations experienced increased demand as a result of the economic slowdown?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Debt counselling	99	93.4%	11	91.7%	57	93.4%	8	100.0%	7	87.5%	16	94.1%
Relationship counselling	18	17.0%	2	16.7%	10	16.4%	2	25.0%	3	37.5%	1	5.9%
Housing advice	73	68.9%	9	75.0%	45	73.8%	6	75.0%	5	62.5%	8	47.1%
Employment advice	53	50.0%	5	41.7%	31	50.8%	6	75.0%	3	37.5%	8	47.1%
Migrant unemployment advice	12	11.3%	3	25.0%	5	8.2%	0	0.0%	1	12.5%	3	17.6%
Legal advice	13	12.3%	2	16.7%	6	9.8%	1	12.5%	2	25.0%	2	11.8%
Other	4	3.8%	0	0.0%	2	3.3%	0	0.0%	1	12.5%	1	5.9%
Don't know	6	5.7%	1	8.3%	3	4.9%	0	0.0%	1	12.5%	1	5.9%
Total	106	100.0%	12	100.0%	61	100.0%	8	100.0%	8	100.0%	17	100.0%

IMPACT ON LAA PERFORMANCE

20. Almost nine out of ten respondents (85.7%) thought that the slowdown would make it more difficult for the authority to achieve LAA targets. Targets most likely to be affected were those in employment and skills (84.1%) and housing (79.5%).

In your opinion, will the economic slowdown make it more difficult for your authority to achieve LAA targets?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	132	85.7%	16	94.1%	70	80.5%	12	80.0%	12	92.3%	22	100.0%
No	11	7.1%	0	0.0%	10	11.5%	0	0.0%	1	7.7%	0	0.0%
Don't know	11	7.1%	1	5.9%	7	8.0%	3	20.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	154	100.0%	17	100.0%	87	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	22	100.0%
In which areas will the economic slowdown make it more difficult for your authority to achieve LAA targets?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Housing	105	79.5%	13	81.3%	59	84.3%	10	83.3%	10	83.3%	13	59.1%
Employment and skills	111	84.1%	16	100.0%	55	78.6%	11	91.7%	12	100.0%	17	77.3%
Health	24	18.2%	4	25.0%	13	18.6%	4	33.3%	3	25.0%	0	0.0%
Community safety	46	34.8%	6	37.5%	25	35.7%	4	33.3%	6	50.0%	5	22.7%
Stronger communities	32	24.2%	2	12.5%	18	25.7%	3	25.0%	6	50.0%	3	13.6%
Climate change and sustainability	34	25.8%	4	25.0%	19	27.1%	3	25.0%	3	25.0%	5	22.7%
Transport and access	31	23.5%	5	31.3%	16	22.9%	1	8.3%	1	8.3%	8	36.4%
Other	6	4.5%	0	0.0%	2	2.9%	1	8.3%	0	0.0%	3	13.6%
Total	132	100.0%	16	100.0%	70	100.0%	12	100.0%	12	100.0%	22	100.0%

21. Around two-fifths of respondents (39.5%) thought that the slowdown was likely to make partnership working slightly harder, while just under a third (30.3%) thought it would have no effect, and around a fifth (21.7%) thought it would become slightly or much easier.

In your opinion, how is the economic slowdown likely to affect your authority's partnership working?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Make it much easier	2	1.3%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%	0	0.0%	1	8.3%	0	0.0%
Make it slightly easier	31	20.4%	6	35.3%	13	14.9%	4	26.7%	5	41.7%	3	14.3%
No effect	46	30.3%	3	17.6%	27	31.0%	4	26.7%	4	33.3%	8	38.1%
Make it slightly harder	60	39.5%	6	35.3%	38	43.7%	5	33.3%	2	16.7%	9	42.9%
Make it much harder	8	5.3%	1	5.9%	5	5.7%	1	6.7%	0	0.0%	1	4.8%
Don't know	5	3.3%	1	5.9%	3	3.4%	1	6.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	152	100.0%	17	100.0%	87	100.0%	15	100.0%	12	100.0%	21	100.0%

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S WORKFORCE

22. Just under one in seven respondents (13.0%) had cut jobs as a result of the slowdown, and around a fifth (22.1%) had introduced a recruitment freeze (though none in London).

Has the economic slowdown resulted in any job losses in your authority?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	20	13.0%	1	5.9%	11	12.6%	1	6.7%	3	23.1%	4	18.2%
No	130	84.4%	13	76.5%	76	87.4%	14	93.3%	9	69.2%	18	81.8%
Don't know	4	2.6%	3	17.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	7.7%	0	0.0%
Total	154	100.0%	17	100.0%	87	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	22	100.0%

Has your authority introduced a recruitment freeze as a result of the economic slowdown?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	34	22.1%	4	23.5%	22	25.3%	0	0.0%	3	23.1%	5	22.7%
No	120	77.9%	13	76.5%	65	74.7%	15	100.0%	10	76.9%	17	77.3%
Don't know	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	154	100.0%	17	100.0%	87	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	22	100.0%

AMELIORATING THE IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN ON LOCAL COMMUNITIES

23. Just over a half of respondents (56.2%) had already taken a briefing to members on the impact of the slowdown and around a further quarter (27.5%) were preparing to do so.

Has your authority taken a briefing to members on the impact of the economic slowdown?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes, already taken briefing	86	56.2%	8	50.0%	47	54.0%	9	60.0%	8	61.5%	14	63.6%
No, but currently preparing to take briefing	42	27.5%	7	43.8%	21	24.1%	5	33.3%	5	38.5%	4	18.2%
No, but considering preparing a briefing	19	12.4%	1	6.3%	14	16.1%	1	6.7%	0	0.0%	3	13.6%
No, and no plans to prepare a briefing yet	6	3.9%	0	0.0%	5	5.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	4.5%
Total	153	100.0%	16	100.0%	87	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	22	100.0%

24. A little under a half of respondents (44.6%) had held an event or summit with partner organisations to discuss the slowdown, and in a little over a third (36.3%) the strategic partnership had held such an event.

Has your authority held any events or summits with partner organisations to discuss issues raised by the economic slowdown?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	66	44.6%	10	62.5%	27	31.8%	6	46.2%	9	69.2%	14	66.7%
No	82	55.4%	6	37.5%	58	68.2%	7	53.8%	4	30.8%	7	33.3%
Don't know	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	148	100.0%	16	100.0%	85	100.0%	13	100.0%	13	100.0%	21	100.0%

Has your strategic partnership held any events or summits with partner organisations to discuss issues raised by the economic slowdown?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	53	36.3%	7	53.8%	22	25.9%	4	26.7%	8	61.5%	12	60.0%
No	86	58.9%	6	46.2%	58	68.2%	10	66.7%	4	30.8%	8	40.0%
Don't know	7	4.8%	0	0.0%	5	5.9%	1	6.7%	1	7.7%	0	0.0%
Total	146	100.0%	13	100.0%	85	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	20	100.0%

25. Slightly more than a third of respondents (37.7%) had taken action to protect vulnerable households as a result of the slowdown, and around three-fifths (58.3%) were planning to do so.

Has your authority taken any action to protect vulnerable households as a result of the economic slowdown?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	46	37.7%	4	33.3%	23	31.5%	6	40.0%	6	66.7%	7	53.8%
No	68	55.7%	7	58.3%	47	64.4%	9	60.0%	1	11.1%	4	30.8%
Don't know	8	6.6%	1	8.3%	3	4.1%	0	0.0%	2	22.2%	2	15.4%
Total	122	100.0%	12	100.0%	73	100.0%	15	100.0%	9	100.0%	13	100.0%

Is your authority planning to take any action to protect vulnerable households as a result of the economic slowdown?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	74	58.3%	9	56.3%	36	51.4%	8	57.1%	8	80.0%	13	76.5%
No	32	25.2%	4	25.0%	23	32.9%	4	28.6%	0	0.0%	1	5.9%
Don't know	21	16.5%	3	18.8%	11	15.7%	2	14.3%	2	20.0%	3	17.6%
Total	127	100.0%	16	100.0%	70	100.0%	14	100.0%	10	100.0%	17	100.0%

26. Of those which had already taken action, almost three-quarters (73.9%) had encouraged take-up of benefits, around a half (52.2%) had provided free energy efficiency advice, and slightly smaller proportions had formed or supported a credit union (45.7%) and provided or augmented debt of financial advice (43.5%). A wide range of actions had been taken by smaller numbers of authorities.

Actions taken												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. Districts		Unitaries	
Provision of mortgage assistance loan scheme	8	17.4%	0	0.0%	6	26.1%	0	0.0%	1	16.7%	1	14.3%
Formation of or support for credit unions	21	45.7%	2	50.0%	10	43.5%	2	33.3%	5	83.3%	2	28.6%
Provision of free or discounted home insulation	15	32.6%	0	0.0%	8	34.8%	1	16.7%	4	66.7%	2	28.6%
Provision of free energy efficiency advice	24	52.2%	1	25.0%	13	56.5%	3	50.0%	5	83.3%	2	28.6%
Encouraging take-up of benefits	34	73.9%	2	50.0%	17	73.9%	5	83.3%	5	83.3%	5	71.4%
Development of plans to build more council houses	5	10.9%	0	0.0%	2	8.7%	0	0.0%	3	50.0%	0	0.0%
Provision of council tax rebate scheme	4	8.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	16.7%	3	50.0%	0	0.0%
Provision or augmentation of debt or financial advice	20	43.5%	2	50.0%	8	34.8%	2	33.3%	5	83.3%	3	42.9%
Other	4	8.7%	0	0.0%	2	8.7%	1	16.7%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%
Total	46	100.0%	4	100.0%	23	100.0%	6	100.0%	6	100.0%	7	100.0%

27. The actions most commonly planned were similar to those already taken: encouraging take-up of benefits (68.9%), provision of debt of financial advice (45.9%) and formation of or support for credit unions (33.8%).

Actions planned												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Provision of mortgage assistance loan scheme	9	12.2%	0	0.0%	6	16.7%	1	12.5%	1	12.5%	1	7.7%
Formation of or support for credit unions	25	33.8%	3	33.3%	11	30.6%	3	37.5%	3	37.5%	5	38.5%
Provision of free or discounted home insulation	15	20.3%	0	0.0%	10	27.8%	2	25.0%	1	12.5%	2	15.4%
Provision of free energy efficiency advice	20	27.0%	1	11.1%	11	30.6%	1	12.5%	4	50.0%	3	23.1%
Encouraging take-up of benefits	51	68.9%	5	55.6%	29	80.6%	5	62.5%	6	75.0%	6	46.2%
Development of plans to build more council houses	9	12.2%	0	0.0%	2	5.6%	1	12.5%	3	37.5%	3	23.1%
Provision of council tax rebate scheme	3	4.1%	1	11.1%	2	5.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Provision or augmentation of debt or financial advice	34	45.9%	4	44.4%	18	50.0%	6	75.0%	3	37.5%	3	23.1%
Other	4	5.4%	1	11.1%	2	5.6%	0	0.0%	1	12.5%	0	0.0%
Total	74	100.0%	9	100.0%	36	100.0%	8	100.0%	8	100.0%	13	100.0%

28. Two-fifths of respondents (39.4%) had already taken action to protect local businesses, and almost three-fifths (58.7%) were planning to do so.

Has your authority taken any action to protect local businesses as a result of the economic slowdown?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	50	39.4%	7	58.3%	24	31.6%	3	23.1%	7	63.6%	9	60.0%
No	73	57.5%	4	33.3%	51	67.1%	10	76.9%	3	27.3%	5	33.3%
Don't know	4	3.1%	1	8.3%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%	1	9.1%	1	6.7%
Total	127	100.0%	12	100.0%	76	100.0%	13	100.0%	11	100.0%	15	100.0%

Is your authority planning to take, any action to protect local businesses as a result of the economic slowdown?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	74	58.7%	12	85.7%	36	50.0%	5	41.7%	10	90.9%	11	64.7%
No	34	27.0%	0	0.0%	27	37.5%	3	25.0%	0	0.0%	4	23.5%
Don't know	18	14.3%	2	14.3%	9	12.5%	4	33.3%	1	9.1%	2	11.8%
Total	126	100.0%	14	100.0%	72	100.0%	12	100.0%	11	100.0%	17	100.0%

29. Three-quarters of respondents (74.0%) had started to pay bills quicker, almost two-thirds (62.0%) had stimulated local regeneration or development, around a half (52.0%) had provided tailored business advice or support, and around a third had changed contracts to lawfully give preference to local contractors (34.0%), publicised contracts for local businesses more widely (32.0%) and encouraged take-up of small business rate relief (30.0%).

Actions taken												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Paying bills quicker	37	74.0%	5	71.4%	19	79.2%	2	66.7%	5	71.4%	6	66.7%
Changing contract arrangements to lawfully give preference to local contractors	17	34.0%	5	71.4%	6	25.0%	0	0.0%	3	42.9%	3	33.3%
Provision of tailored business advice or support	26	52.0%	4	57.1%	13	54.2%	0	0.0%	4	57.1%	5	55.6%
Encouraging take-up of small business rate relief	15	30.0%	0	0.0%	8	33.3%	2	66.7%	3	42.9%	2	22.2%
Deferring business rates	7	14.0%	0	0.0%	2	8.3%	1	33.3%	3	42.9%	1	11.1%
Stimulating local regeneration or development	31	62.0%	6	85.7%	14	58.3%	0	0.0%	3	42.9%	8	88.9%
Wider publicising of contracts for local businesses	16	32.0%	2	28.6%	7	29.2%	0	0.0%	4	57.1%	3	33.3%
Local labour clauses	4	8.0%	0	0.0%	2	8.3%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	1	11.1%
Other	10	20.0%	1	14.3%	4	16.7%	0	0.0%	3	42.9%	2	22.2%
Total	50	100.0%	7	100.0%	24	100.0%	3	100.0%	7	100.0%	9	100.0%

30. The main actions being planned to protect local businesses were again similar: paying bills quicker (55.4%), stimulating local regeneration or development (47.3%), provision of tailored business advice (40.5%) and encouraging take-up of small business rate relief (39.2%).

Actions planned												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Paying bills quicker	41	55.4%	8	66.7%	20	55.6%	5	100.0%	3	30.0%	5	45.5%
Changing contract arrangements to lawfully give preference to local contractors	10	13.5%	1	8.3%	4	11.1%	1	20.0%	2	20.0%	2	18.2%
Provision of tailored business advice or support	30	40.5%	4	33.3%	14	38.9%	3	60.0%	5	50.0%	4	36.4%
Encouraging take-up of small business rate relief	29	39.2%	3	25.0%	18	50.0%	3	60.0%	2	20.0%	3	27.3%
Deferring business rates	7	9.5%	0	0.0%	4	11.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	27.3%
Stimulating local regeneration or development	35	47.3%	4	33.3%	19	52.8%	2	40.0%	6	60.0%	4	36.4%
Wider publicising of contracts for local businesses	19	25.7%	4	33.3%	8	22.2%	3	60.0%	2	20.0%	2	18.2%
Local labour clauses	6	8.1%	2	16.7%	1	2.8%	0	0.0%	2	20.0%	1	9.1%
Other	3	4.1%	1	8.3%	1	2.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	9.1%
Total	74	100.0%	12	100.0%	36	100.0%	5	100.0%	10	100.0%	11	100.0%

31. 16.3% of respondents had already taken action, and just over a quarter (27.6%) planned to do so.

Has your authority taken any action to support local voluntary organisations as a result of the economic slowdown?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	21	16.3%	3	23.1%	13	17.1%	0	0.0%	3	27.3%	2	11.8%
No	89	69.0%	4	30.8%	59	77.6%	11	91.7%	4	36.4%	11	64.7%
Don't know	19	14.7%	6	46.2%	4	5.3%	1	8.3%	4	36.4%	4	23.5%
Total	129	100.0%	13	100.0%	76	100.0%	12	100.0%	11	100.0%	17	100.0%
Is your authority planning to take any action to support local voluntary organisations as a result of the economic slowdown?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	37	27.6%	6	37.5%	20	26.7%	4	30.8%	2	18.2%	5	26.3%
No	55	41.0%	3	18.8%	37	49.3%	7	53.8%	0	0.0%	8	42.1%
Don't know	42	31.3%	7	43.8%	18	24.0%	2	15.4%	9	81.8%	6	31.6%
Total	134	100.0%	16	100.0%	75	100.0%	13	100.0%	11	100.0%	19	100.0%

32. Of those respondents which had taken action, two-fifths (42.9%) had made voluntary services more accessible, slightly fewer (38.1%) had offered financial assistance and just over a quarter (28.6%) had provided hardship schemes.

Actions taken												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Provision of hardship schemes (one-off assistance)	6	28.6%	0	0.0%	2	15.4%	0	0.0%	2	66.7%	2	100.0%
Making services more accessible (e.g. hosting at council offices)	9	42.9%	0	0.0%	6	46.2%	0	0.0%	1	33.3%	2	100.0%
Offering financial assistance	8	38.1%	0	0.0%	5	38.5%	0	0.0%	2	66.7%	1	50.0%
Other	2	9.5%	0	0.0%	2	15.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	21	100.0%	3	100.0%	13	100.0%	0	100.0%	3	100.0%	2	100.0%

33. The two most commonly planned actions were offering financial assistance (48.6%) and making services more accessible (40.5%).

Actions planned												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Provision of hardship schemes (one-off assistance)	2	5.4%	0	0.0%	2	10.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Making services more accessible (e.g. hosting at council offices)	15	40.5%	5	83.3%	5	25.0%	4	100.0%	0	0.0%	1	20.0%
Offering financial assistance	18	48.6%	1	16.7%	13	65.0%	2	50.0%	1	50.0%	1	20.0%
Other	5	13.5%	1	16.7%	3	15.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	20.0%
Total	37	100.0%	6	100.0%	20	100.0%	4	100.0%	2	100.0%	5	100.0%

34. Respondents were asked to describe up to two main things they would like the LGA group to do to help authorities ameliorate the impact of the slowdown on their communities.

35. The most frequently cited action (40 authorities) was the need for some kind of additional funding to help authorities with the extra pressures placed upon them by the economic slowdown and to encourage economic development in their local area. With regard to existing funding, respondents commented that the LGA should lobby government, firstly to ensure that coming funding settlements take account of the local effects of the slowdown (17 authorities), and, secondly to introduce more flexibility into the way current funds can be used (17 authorities).

36. Thirty authorities requested that the LGA group disseminate advice and examples of good practice of successful interventions (some acknowledging that this was already being done). In addition, a number of respondents asked for regular data and intelligence on the local impacts of the slowdown. A number of respondents asked for the LGA group to facilitate joint working between authorities, and partners more widely.

37. Twenty-six authorities stated that the LGA should be lobbying government to reduce burdens of new initiatives, simplify existing initiatives, and push for new initiatives that would encourage economic growth or infrastructure development. Respondents were also keen for the LGA to lobby government to revise LAA targets to reflect the economic pressures local authorities face.

38. Eighteen authorities asked that LGA champion the leadership role of local authorities and the key part they play in solutions to the economic issues, but also raise awareness of the pressure the slowdown is placing on authorities.

39. Other lobbying actions cited by respondents included: encouraging government to communicate quickly and clearly their plans to local authorities, lobbying for revision of business rates, encouraging government to lobby banks on interest rates and lending terms for SMEs and lobbying government for further initiatives to support SMEs.

OPPORTUNITIES AFFORDED BY THE ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN

40. Almost half of respondents (47.1%) indicated that the economic slowdown had presented the authority with opportunities.

Has the economic slowdown presented your authority with any opportunities?												
	Total		Counties		Shire districts		London boro's		Met. districts		Unitaries	
Yes	72	47.1%	10	62.5%	35	40.2%	9	60.0%	7	53.8%	11	50.0%
No	69	45.1%	3	18.8%	50	57.5%	4	26.7%	3	23.1%	9	40.9%
Don't know	12	7.8%	3	18.8%	2	2.3%	2	13.3%	3	23.1%	2	9.1%
Total	153	100.0%	16	100.0%	87	100.0%	15	100.0%	13	100.0%	22	100.0%

40. A number of respondents provided further details. The two main opportunities identified were the chance to form or improve local partnerships with other sectors and/or across political divides (18 authorities), and greater possibilities for buying land for housing or other development as a result of falling land values (17). Smaller numbers of respondents referred to the opportunity for local authorities to assume a community leadership role ("the opportunity to prove the value of local government in being responsive", one said), better value for money from contracts, added impetus for regeneration, opportunities to promote the green agenda and an easier labour market. One authority remarked on increased domestic tourism.

**Local Government Association
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