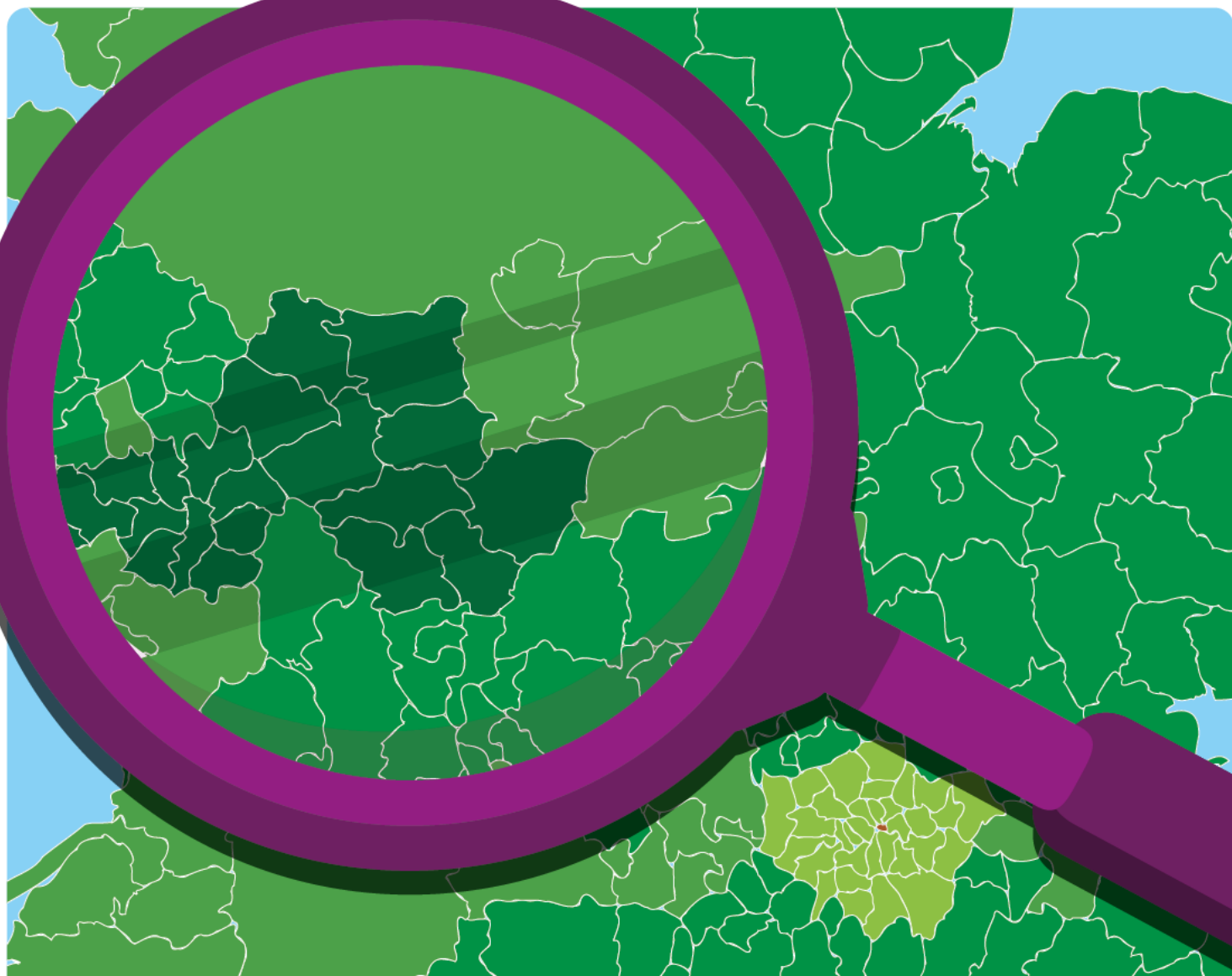


First readership survey

September - October 2025



Research report

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Summary

Background

In September 2025 the Local Government Association (LGA) surveyed readers of its membership publications, first magazine, first online and the first e-bulletin, to gather their feedback on their content. A total of 727 responses were received, representing 4 per cent of those surveyed.

Key findings

- Most respondents (73 per cent) were either very or fairly satisfied with the quality of first, taking into account the look, feel and content of the magazine.
- Over half (52 per cent) of respondents always or regularly read the printed first magazine, a quarter (24 per cent) do so occasionally while just one in ten (10 per cent) of respondents never read the magazine.
- A third (34 per cent) of respondents would like the frequency should remain the same, at ten times a year, a quarter (25 per cent) felt it should become quarterly and 23 per cent felt that it should be published every other month.
- More than half (54 per cent) of respondents would prefer to keep receiving first as a printed magazine while a third (33 per cent) would prefer to receive it as an email (first e-bulletin) with links to stories first on first online.
- Most respondents (88 per cent) were positive about the usefulness of first said in keeping them informed about local government news and policy issues and a similar proportion (87 per cent) said it was very or fairly useful in keeping them informed about what the LGA is doing.
- Over half (57 per cent) of respondents said that they received the first e-bulletin and of those, around half (47 per cent) always or regularly read it, just under a third (30 per cent) occasionally read it.

Introduction

This report outlines the findings of a survey of readers' views on first magazine, first online and the first e-bulletin. These are the Local Government Association's (LGA) membership publications; first magazine is published in print monthly, first online is a web version of the printed magazine and the e-bulletin is a fortnightly newsletter sent via email.

The survey was undertaken to gain reader feedback to inform improvements and development of the publications. The survey findings will enable the LGA to ensure they are meeting their readers' needs, addressing their concerns and providing more useful content.

Methodology

The invitation to take part in an online survey was distributed via email by the LGA's Research and Information team to 16,209 councillors in England and Wales. A link to the survey was also circulated in the e-bulletin, to coincide with a reminder email that was sent to non-respondents. The survey was open from 15 September to 8 October 2025. Responses were received from 727 councillors, giving a response rate of 4 per cent.

This level of response means that these respondents should not necessarily be taken to be widely representative of the views of all councillors. Rather, they are a snapshot of the views of this particular group of respondents.

In addition, the following should be considered when interpreting the findings of this survey:

- Where tables and figures report the base, the description refers to the group of people who were asked the question. The number provided refers to the unweighted number of respondents who answered each question. Please note that bases can vary throughout the survey.

- Numbers and percentages are provided for any questions where the base was less than 50. To calculate the number of respondents who provided a certain response for other questions, simply multiply the percentage provided by the base.
- Throughout the report, percentages may not appear to add up to exactly 100 per cent due to rounding. Where two categories are combined together, for example 'very satisfied' and 'fairly satisfied', the figure may differ from the sum of the individual categories. This is due to the fact the individual figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

As shown in Table 1, there were broadly similar response rates across all types of councils. These ranged from 6 per cent for county councils and Welsh unitaries to 3 per cent for London boroughs, with districts and unitaries both on 5 per cent and metropolitan districts on 4 per cent. At least one response was received from 274 of the 339 councils in England and Wales, and the number of responses per council ranged from one to ten.

Table 1: Response rate by type of council

Type of council	Number of questionnaires	Number of responses	Response rate
County	1370	78	6%
District	5861	265	5%
London borough	1853	61	3%
Metropolitan district	2339	86	4%
English Unitary	3532	165	5%
Welsh Unitary	1197	70	6%
Other/unspecified	57	2	4%

Respondents in the 'other/unspecified' category completed the survey anonymously.

The highest response rate amongst the regions was from Wales at 6 per cent, this was followed by East Midlands, Eastern, South East and West Midlands which all saw 5 per cent of councillors completing the survey. The lowest response rate was in London, at 3 per cent, while the rate for all other regions was 4 per cent. A complete breakdown of the response rates by region is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Response rate by region

Region	Number of questionnaires	Number of responses	Response rate
East Midlands	1536	70	5%
Eastern	2171	106	5%
London	1836	61	3%
North East	739	32	4%
North West	1947	79	4%
South East	2896	136	5%
South West	1413	61	4%
West Midlands	1462	72	5%
Yorkshire and Humber	955	38	4%
Wales	1197	70	6%
Other/unspecified	57	2	4%

Respondents in the 'other/unspecified' category completed the survey anonymously.

First readership survey

This section contains analysis of the full results from the survey.

Reading first magazine

Over half (52 per cent) of respondents always or regularly read first magazine, while a quarter (24 per cent) do so occasionally and 13 per cent rarely read it. Just one in ten (10 per cent) of respondents never read first, of whom a number clarified that the reason for this was that they were not receiving the print copy of the magazine. This was rectified as a result of their response to the survey. Table 3 shows a breakdown of these findings.

Table 3: How often do you read first?

	Per cent
Always (every issue) or regularly (most issues)	52%
Always (every issue)	23%
Regularly (most issues)	29%
Occasionally (some issues)	24%
Rarely (the odd issue)	13%
Never (not at all)	10%

Base: all respondents (727).

Almost half (46 per cent) of respondents who read the magazine read all or most of it, 27 per cent read some of it and 26 per cent read odd article here and there, while just 1 per cent don't read any of it. These findings are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: How much of each edition of first do you read?

	Per cent
All or most of it (more than half)	46%
All of it	13%
Most of it (more than half)	33%
Some of it (a quarter to a half)	27%
The odd article here and there (less than a quarter)	26%
None of it	1%

Base: respondents who read first (653).

When asked how often they would like to receive first magazine in future, if the LGA were to change the frequency, a third (34 per cent) of respondents felt that the frequency should remain the same, at ten times a year.. A quarter (25 per cent) thought it should become quarterly and 23 per cent felt that it should be published every other month. As shown in Table 5, smaller numbers of respondents supported the other frequencies with 5 per cent opting for once every two weeks and the same number choosing two or three times a year. Just 4 per cent thought that the magazine should not be published at all while a further 5 per cent did not know.

Table 5: How often respondents would like to receive first in the future, if the frequency were changed

	Per cent
Once every two weeks (fortnightly)	5%
Ten times a year, as now (no change)	34%
Every other month	23%
Quarterly (once every three months)	25%
Two or three times a year	5%
Never	4%
Don't know	5%

Base: respondents who read first (653).

More than half (54 per cent) of respondents would prefer to keep on receiving first as a printed magazine, delivered by post in the future. A third (33 per cent) would prefer to receive it as an email (first e-bulletin) with links to stories on first online, 17 per cent would prefer a page-turning PDF of the magazine available online while 16 per cent would prefer to access it online on their preferred device. A further 5 per cent did not have a preference for how they received it and 1 per cent expressed another preference, as shown in Table 6.

Most of the respondents who selected 'other' said that they did not want to receive it in any format. A couple would like to receive it by email in an accessible format for their particular needs and preferences, while another would like an email with a PDF version that could be read offline.

Table 6: In which format(s) would you prefer to receive first magazine in the future?

	Per cent
Printed magazine, delivered by post	54%
An email (first e-bulletin) with links to first stories in first online	33%
A page-turning PDF of the magazine available online (first online/LGA website)	17%
Online (first online/LGA website) via my PC/laptop/tablet/smartphone	16%
No preference	5%
Other	1%
Don't know	0%

Base: respondents who read first (653). Respondents were able to select more than one answer.

Respondents were asked what they thought of first magazine’s new design which was introduced in October 2024. Of those who had seen the old version, a third (33 per cent) thought the new version was somewhat better, a quarter (26 per cent) felt it was about the same, 21 per cent found it much better, and just 2 per cent thought it was somewhat worse. A further 17 per cent did not know, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Compared to the old design, do you think the new design is:

	Per cent
Much better	21%
Somewhat better	33%
About the same	26%
Somewhat worse	2%
Much worse	0%
Don't know	17%

Base: Respondents who read first and had seen the old version of first (580).

Respondents were positive about the usefulness of first in keeping them informed about the LGA with 87 per cent reporting they found it very or fairly useful in keeping them informed about what the LGA does and 84 per cent stating it was very or fairly useful in telling them about key LGA events and publications. A similar proportion (88 per cent) said it was very or fairly useful in keeping them informed about local government news and policy issues while two-thirds (68 per cent) found it very or fairly useful in supporting them in their role as a councillor. These findings are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: How useful is first...?

	Very or fairly useful	Not very or at all useful	Don't know
In keeping you informed about what the LGA does	87%	9%	3%
In telling you about key LGA events and publications	84%	12%	4%
In keeping you informed about local government news and policy issues	88%	10%	2%
In supporting you in your role as a councillor	68%	28%	4%

Base: respondents who read first and provided an answer for each statement (651, 643, 641 and 641 respectively).

In general, respondents felt that the number of articles written by different groups of people were about right. The groups who respondents thought were the most underrepresented were local residents (41 per cent), other councillors (23 per cent) and partners and stakeholders (e.g. charities, think tanks, housing associations) (21 per cent). There were smaller numbers of groups deemed to be overrepresented by respondents with just 13 per cent selecting ministers/national politicians and 11 per cent naming LGA officers. A full breakdown of these findings is shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Are there enough articles in first written by the following people:

	About right	Not enough	Too many
LGA members	63%	10%	8%
LGA officers	62%	7%	11%
Councillors with executive responsibilities	61%	13%	9%
Local government officers	58%	14%	7%
Experts/academics	56%	18%	8%
Other councillors	52%	22%	5%
Ministers/national politicians	48%	18%	13%
Partners and stakeholders (e.g. charities, think tanks, housing associations)	48%	21%	9%
Local residents	26%	41%	4%

Base: respondents who read first and provided an answer for each type of person (638, 624, 624, 629, 631, 630, 627, 623 and 623 respectively).

As can be seen in Table 10, over three-quarters (77 per cent) of respondents felt that first maintains a political balance in its content. Just 7 per cent did not think that it maintains a political balance, while 15 per cent didn't know.

Table 10: Do you think that first maintains a political balance in its content?

	Per cent
Yes	77%
No	7%
Don't know	15%

Base: respondents who read first (653).

Most respondents (73 per cent) were either very or fairly satisfied with the quality of first, taking into account the look, feel and content of the magazine. A further 18 per cent were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, while 3 per cent were fairly dissatisfied and just 2 per cent were very dissatisfied, as shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Satisfaction with the quality of first, taking into account the look, feel and content of the magazine

	Per cent
Very or fairly satisfied	73%
Very satisfied	33%
Fairly satisfied	39%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	18%
Fairly dissatisfied	3%
Very dissatisfied	2%
Don't know	4%

Base: respondents who read first (653).

Respondents were asked what, if anything, would make or encourage them to give up their copy of the magazine and read first online instead. From a list provided, the

most commonly chosen options were more frequently updated local government news, a page-turning online version of the magazine and email reminders when new content is added, each of which were selected by 27 per cent of respondents. The least commonly chosen options were videos and podcasts (14 per cent), member only content (11 per cent) and rewards and incentives (7 per cent). Just over one in five (22 per cent) said nothing would make or encourage them to give up their copy of the magazine and read first online instead.

A further 10 per cent chose the 'other' option, most of these were respondents who already wanted to stop receiving paper copies of first, with some pointing to the lack of timely articles. Conversely, some respondents stated that they wished to continue receiving the printed magazine. Their reasons included a preference for reading the printed word, too much screen time and accessibility issues. Most of the remaining respondents who chose the other option made content suggestions. A breakdown of these findings is shown in Table 12.

Table 12: What, if anything, would make or encourage you to give up your copy of the magazine and read first online instead?

	Per cent
More frequently updated local government news	27%
A page-turning online version of the magazine	27%
Email reminders when new content is added	27%
More localised content (e.g. links to LGA member councils)	22%
More detailed stories (e.g. case studies)	21%
Publication of opinion polls	19%
Publication of relevant regulations and legislation	19%
More frequently updated LGA news	15%
Videos and podcasts	14%
Member only content	11%
Rewards and incentives	7%
Other	10%
Nothing	22%

Base: respondents who read first and provided an answer (645)

first e-bulletin

As shown in Table 13, over half (57 per cent) of respondents said that they received the first e-bulletin, while 16 per cent did not receive it and a quarter (27 per cent) did not know.

Table 13: Do you receive the first e-bulletin, currently send out fortnightly from LGA Chair Cllr Louise Gittins?

	Per cent
Yes	57%
No	16%
Don't know	27%

Base: all respondents (727).

Of those who received the bulletin, around half (47 per cent) always or regularly read it, just under a third (30 per cent) occasionally read it and 17 per cent rarely read it. A further 6 per cent never read it. These findings are shown in Table 14.

Table 14: On average, how often do you read the first e-bulletin?

	Per cent
Always (every bulletin) or regularly (most bulletins)	47%
Always (every bulletin)	13%
Regularly (most bulletins)	34%
Occasionally (some bulletins)	30%
Rarely (the odd bulletin)	17%
Never (not at all)	6%

Base: respondents who received the first e-bulletin (418).

When asked how often they would like to receive the first ebulletin, if the frequency were to be changed in the future, a third (31 per cent) answered monthly and 29 per cent wanted it to remain at twice a month. A further 11 per cent wanted to receive it

quarterly while 8 per cent wanted it weekly and 4 per cent did not want it at all. Table 15 shows a full breakdown of these findings.

Table 15: How often respondents would like to receive the first e-bulletin in the future, if the frequency were changed

	Per cent
Weekly	8%
Twice a month, as now	29%
Monthly	31%
Every other month	8%
Quarterly (once every three months)	11%
Never	4%
Don't know	9%

Base: respondents who received the first e-bulletin (418).

first online

A third (34 per cent) of respondents were aware of first online, 56 per cent were not aware of it and 10 per cent did not know. These findings are shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Are you aware of first online, our website for first magazine?

	Per cent
Yes	34%
No	56%
Don't know	10%

Base: all respondents (727).

Of those who were aware of first online, 29 per cent read it some months and a fifth (21 per cent) read it every month with a similar number (19 per cent) reading it most months. Just 6 per cent read it weekly while 26 per cent don't read it at all. Table 17 shows these findings.

Table 17: On average, how often do you read first online?

	Per cent
Every week	6%
Every month	21%
Most months	19%
Some months	29%
Never	26%

Base: respondents who were aware of first online (246).

Content of first, the first e-bulletin and first online

From lists provided, respondents were asked to indicate what content they would like to see more, less, or about the same of in first, the first e-bulletin and first online.

Over half (52 per cent) of respondents said they would like to see more council good practice and case studies. This was followed by articles relevant to the councillor role and national issues affecting local government, both selected by half (50 per cent) of respondents. The content respondents most commonly said they would prefer to see less of was Welsh LGA and Welsh local government (31 per cent), this was followed by partner organisations/stakeholders (20 per cent) and comment from LGA political groups (19 per cent). Support to keep content about the same was generally higher with 69 per cent selecting LGA events, 68 per cent choosing LGA news and 66 per cent picking LGA campaigns. Table 18 provides a full breakdown of these findings.

Table 18: Respondents' views about first content

	More of	About the same	Less of
Council good practice and case studies	52%	33%	4%
Articles relevant to the councillor role	50%	36%	2%
National issues affecting local government	50%	43%	3%
Local government news	38%	51%	3%
Views of residents	38%	43%	10%
Local and by-election analysis	38%	46%	8%
Policy-related features/analysis	32%	56%	5%
Legislation, regulation, parliament	29%	53%	6%
A diverse range of voices from under-represented groups	26%	48%	9%
Combined authorities, mayors and regions	23%	46%	16%
Research and academic reports	23%	57%	13%
LGA membership benefits	22%	57%	11%
Opinion, comment and debate	20%	60%	14%
LGA news	16%	68%	7%
LGA campaigns	15%	66%	8%
Comment from LGA political groups	14%	53%	19%
LGA events	12%	69%	9%
Partner organisations/stakeholders	10%	61%	20%
LGA publications	8%	65%	14%
Welsh LGA and Welsh local government	8%	39%	31%

Base: respondents who answered the question (628).

As shown in Table 19, just 14 per cent of respondents had attended a conference, webinar or event because they had seen it advertised or featured in first magazine, the first e-bulletin or first online, over the last 12 months. A similar number (16 per cent) had requested or downloaded a publication or report after seeing it in first.

Table 19: Over the last 12 months, after seeing a feature or advertisement in first magazine, the first e-bulletin or first online, did you...?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Attend a conference, webinar or event	14%	82%	4%
Request or download a publication or report	16%	79%	4%

Base: respondents who answered the questions (722 each).

Just 3 per cent of respondents had ever bought a product or service after seeing it advertised in first magazine, the first e-bulletin or first online. A fifth (21 per cent) had drawn their council's attention to a product or service having seen it in first. These findings are shown in Table 20.

Table 20: Having seen an advertisement in first magazine, the first e-bulletin or first online, have you ever...?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Bought a product or service	3%	93%	4%
Drawn your council's attention to a product or service	21%	76%	4%

Base: respondents who answered the questions (718 and 720, respectively).

Respondents were asked to indicate which areas of their council's work they were actively researching or seeking solutions for at the moment, by selecting these from

a list provided. Almost half (45 per cent) reported that were looking into Housing and planning, this was followed by environment and waste management (35 per cent) and homelessness and temporary accommodation (30 per cent). Answers provided by those who said they were looking at other areas included community issues, council finances and local government reorganisation. Table 21 provides a full breakdown of these findings.

Table 21: Areas which respondents' councils are actively researching or seeking solutions for at the moment?

	Per cent
Housing and planning	45%
Environment and waste management	35%
Homelessness and temporary accommodation	30%
Infrastructure and transport	29%
Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including home-to-school transport	25%
Technology, artificial intelligence and digital solutions	22%
Adult social care	22%
Children's social care, including placements	19%
Green and sustainable suppliers	18%
Training and development providers	14%
Recruitment and staffing services	7%
Consultancy and professional services	7%
Other	12%
Not currently researching or seeking solutions	18%

Base: respondents who answered the question (699).

To ensure that future advertising content of first magazine is relevant to its readers, respondents were asked to select the areas they were personally interested in or actively researching from a list provided. A third (33 per cent) selected health and wellbeing, while continuing education or training and home improvement or property were both chosen by a quarter (25 per cent) of respondents. A full breakdown of these findings is shown in Table 22.

Table 22: Respondents’ areas of personal interest

	Per cent
Health and wellbeing	33%
Continuing education or training	25%
Home improvement or property	25%
Cars or electric vehicles	23%
Travel or holidays	23%
Financial services (e.g. pensions, investments, insurance)	17%
Technology and gadgets	17%
Watches, fashion or luxury goods	4%
None of the above	22%
Prefer not to say	14%

Base: respondents who answered the question (636).

Respondents were invited to give further feedback on anything that could be done to improve their experience of first magazine, the first e-bulletin or first online. The 191 comments received have been analysed and grouped into common themes.

The **format of the magazine** was mentioned by around a quarter of respondents, most were expressing a preference for either the paper or digital version. A number of those in receipt of the e-bulletin had suggestions for how it should be presented and a few respondents thought it should be published in an app.

“When I sit down to my council email, I rarely have time to read the articles in First Online as I will almost always have too much to do. I tend to read the magazine in my downtime - on the train or in bed. I think if it went online, I just wouldn't read it.”

“I'd happily not have a printed copy. I think it's a waste of money and the environment. The news reported comes out too long after it's out and known about already. The print just doesn't feel current or dynamic enough.”

“Emails tend to be very wordy. In a councillor's inbox it does not stand out. Comms need to be made more 'snackable'.”

“I would give up my copy of the magazine if I could just download it in app form. I don't want more e-mails and links as this clogs my inbox but an app that notifies me when there is a new issue would be a winner.”

Around one in five comments related to the **style of first**, with some respondents looking for thought provoking pieces, while others wanted it to have more bite.

“I get a bit tired of some of the nebulous articles which tend to be so general and a bit happy clappy - not addressing hard problems, to the point that when I've read them there's nothing I have learnt. Need harder hitting more problem solving material..”

“Articles are written in general neutral terms with no real information or needed future direction, therefore any critical element is missing and therefore no specific way forward. Each contributor has the objective to give only information and views in a general form. The effect of a kind of 'overglossing' of the subject with no bite.”

Around an eighth of respondents mentioned the **content of first**, in terms of subject matter, with a number of respondents calling for it to highlight more innovation, while others wanted articles which provided more practical help.

“I think Cllrs need a resource that showcases good practice, new ideas and thinking, not presented as news puff pieces but as thoughtful and more detailed articles.”

“What is needed are articles with specific information, presenting actual problems and giving non-political solutions.”

Also in relation to content, a number of respondents commented that it would be helpful to have more articles relevant to devolved administrations, and for it to be easier to identify.

“Very little content in relation to Wales is shown at the moment”

“Inform us what region each article is relevant for England/Wales/Scotland/Ireland/UK - a simple flag system would suffice”

Profile of respondents

Most (86 per cent) respondents had been and continued to be a serving councillor as of the 1st May 2025 local elections and two in five (39 per cent) also had additional responsibilities as a councillor (e.g. council leader, group leader, portfolio holder, cabinet member, committee chair), as shown in Table 23. Those who answered other included those who sat on more than one type of council and officers working within local government.

Table 23: Please select the following options that apply to yourself as of the 1st May 2025 local elections

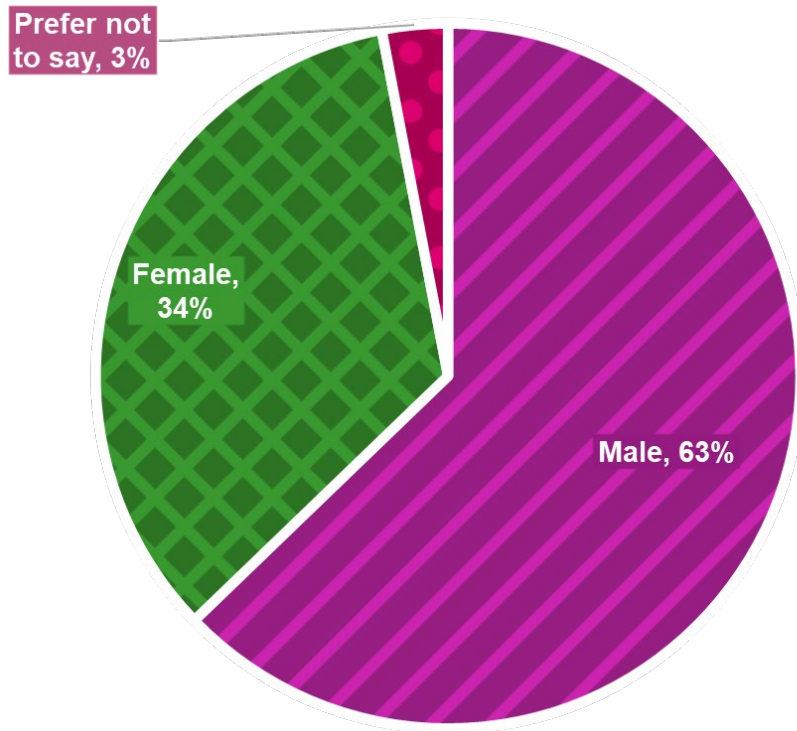
	Per cent
I have been and continue to be a serving councillor	86%
I have been elected as a new councillor	12%
I have additional responsibilities as a councillor	39%
I am a local authority chief executive or senior officer	1%
Other	2%
I prefer not to say	2%

Base: all respondents (727). Respondents were able to select more than one answer.

The survey also collected special category data in relation to age group, gender and ethnicity, to ensure that the advertising and editorial content in first remains relevant and appropriate. Only respondents who agreed to the LGA collecting and processing their data saw these questions. The categories used to collect this information are the same as those used in the 2021 Census.

Almost two-thirds (63 per cent) were registered as male at birth, whilst one third (34 per cent) were registered female at birth and no respondents reported that they now identify as a different gender. These findings are shown in Figure 1 and Table 24.

Figure 1: What is your sex, as registered at birth?



Base: respondents who agreed to the LGA collecting and processing their special category data and answered the question (630).

Table 24: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

	Per cent
Yes	97%
No	0%
I prefer not to say	3%

Base: respondents who agreed to the LGA collecting and processing their special category data and answered the question (614).

Just under half (48 per cent) of respondents were aged 65 years and above, a third (34 per cent) were in the 50-64 age group and 11 per cent were 35-49 years old. A further 3 per cent were 25-34 while no respondents were up to 24 years old, as can be seen in Table 25.

Table 25: What is your age group?

	Per cent
Up to 24 years	0%
25-34	3%
35-49	11%
50-64	34%
65 years and above	48%
I prefer not to say	4%

Base: respondents who agreed to the LGA collecting and processing their special category data and answered the question (633).

Most (86 per cent) respondents were white English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British, 2 per cent were from other white backgrounds and 1 per cent were white Irish. A further 2 per cent were Indian, while 1 per cent were Pakistani, 1 per cent were from other Asian backgrounds, 1 per cent were Caribbean and 1 per cent were African. These findings are shown in Table 26.

Table 26: What is your ethnic group?

	Per cent
English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	86%
Irish	1%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0%
Roma	0%
Any other White background	2%
White and Black Caribbean	0%
White and Black African	0%
White and Asian	0%
Any other Mixed or Multiple background	0%
Indian	2%
Pakistani	1%
Bangladeshi	0%
Chinese	0%
Any other Asian background	1%
Caribbean	1%
African	1%
Any other Black, Black British or Caribbean background	0%
Arab	0%
I prefer not to say	4%

Base: respondents who agreed to the LGA collecting and processing their special category data and answered the question (625).

Annex A: Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. You can navigate through the questions using the buttons at the bottom of each page. Use the 'previous' button at the bottom of the page if you wish to amend your response to an earlier question.

Please complete this survey in one go - if you exit before submitting the survey your answers may be lost. If you would like to see an overview of the questions before completing the survey online, you can access a PDF here: <LINK>

All responses will be treated confidentially. Information will be aggregated, and no individual or authority will be identified in any publications without your consent. Identifiable information may be used internally within the LGA but will only be held and processed in accordance with our privacy statement. We are undertaking this survey to aid the legitimate interests of the LGA in supporting and representing authorities.

We would be grateful if you would complete the survey at the earliest opportunity and by Monday 29 September 2025 at the latest.

The survey asks about:

- reading first and first online
- useful content
- further improvements
- first e-bulletin

The survey will take around 10-12 minutes to complete, depending on the answers you provide. If you have any queries regarding the content of the survey, please email karen.thornton@local.gov.uk. For queries about completion of the survey, please email helen.wilkinson@local.gov.uk.

Reading first

We would like to know what you think about first magazine. Later in the survey we will ask for your views on our first e-bulletin and first online website.

How often do you read first?

- Always (every issue)
- Regularly (most issues)
- Occasionally (some issues)
- Rarely (the odd issue)
- Never (not at all)

How much of each edition of first do you read?

- All of it
- Most of it (more than half)
- Some of it (a quarter to a half)
- The odd article here and there (less than a quarter)
- None of it

If we were to change the frequency of first magazine in the future, how often would you like to receive it?

- Once every two weeks (fortnightly)
- Ten times a year, as now (no change)
- Every other month
- Quarterly (once every three months)
- Two or three times a year
- Never
- Don't know

Please tell us, in which format(s) would you prefer to receive first magazine in the future?

Please select all that apply.

- Printed magazine, delivered by post
- An email (first e-bulletin) with links to first stories in first online
- Online (first online/LGA website) via my PC/laptop/tablet/smartphone
- A page-turning PDF of the magazine available online (first online/LGA website)
- Other (please specify in the box below) *Text box*
- No preference
- Don't know

first magazine was redesigned in October 2024. [The changes included moving to a smaller size, changes to fonts and typefaces, and design changes intended to make the magazine easier to navigate and access.]

Compared to the old design, do you think the new design is:

- Much better
- Somewhat better
- About the same
- Somewhat worse
- Much worse
- Never saw old version
- Don't know

How useful is first...?

Please select one answer for each statement.

Grid

Rows

- In keeping you informed about what the LGA does

- In telling you about key LGA events and publications
- In keeping you informed about local government news and policy issues
- In supporting you in your role as a councillor

Columns

- Very useful
- Fairly useful
- Not very useful
- Not at all useful
- Don't know

Are there enough articles in first written by the following people:

Grid

Rows

- Councillors with executive responsibilities
- Experts/academics
- LGA members
- LGA officers
- Local government officers
- Local residents
- Ministers/national politicians
- Other councillors
- Partners and stakeholders (e.g. charities, think tanks, housing associations)

Columns

- Not enough
- About right
- Too many
- Don't know

Do you think that first maintains a political balance in its content?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of first, taking into account the look, feel and content of the magazine?

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

The LGA, like councils, is focused on reducing costs and providing value for money for its members.

What, if anything, would make you/encourage you to give up your copy of the magazine and read first online instead?

Please select all that apply.

- Member only content
- More frequently updated local government news
- More frequently updated LGA news
- A page-turning online version of the magazine
- Email reminders when new content is added
- Rewards and incentives
- More detailed stories (e.g. case studies)
- More localised content (e.g. links to LGA member councils)
- Videos and podcasts

- Publication of opinion polls
- Publication of relevant regulations and legislation
- Other (please specify in the box below) *Text box*
- Nothing

first e-bulletin

Now thinking about the first e-bulletin, please answer the following questions:

Do you receive the first e-bulletin, currently send out fortnightly from LGA Chair Cllr Louise Gittins?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If answered yes to 'Do you receive the first e-bulletin?'

On average, how often do you read the first e-bulletin?

- Always (every bulletin)
- Regularly (most bulletins)
- Occasionally (some bulletins)
- Rarely (the odd bulletin)
- Never (not at all)

If answered yes to 'Do you receive the first e-bulletin?'

If we were to change the frequency of the first e-bulletin in the future, how often, would you like to receive it?

- Weekly
- Twice a month, as now
- Monthly
- Every other month

- Quarterly (once every three months)
- Never
- Don't know

first online

Now thinking about first online (www.local.gov.uk/first). Are you aware of first online, our website for first magazine?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If answered yes to 'Are you aware of first online, our website for first magazine?'

On average, how often do you read first online?

- Every week
- Every month
- Most months
- Some months
- Never

We would like your views about the content featured in first, the first e-bulletin and first online. Please select whether you would like to see more of the following content, about the same amount of the following content or less of the following content for each of the listed areas:

Grid

Rows

- A diverse range of voices from under-represented groups
- Articles relevant to the councillor role
- Comment from LGA political groups

- Council good practice and case studies
- Combined authorities, mayors and regions
- Legislation, regulation, parliament

Columns

- More of
- About the same
- Less of
- Don't know

We would like your views about the content featured in first, the first e-bulletin and first online. Please select whether you would like to see more of the following content, about the same amount of the following content or less of the following content for each of the listed areas:

Grid

Rows

- LGA campaigns
- LGA events
- LGA membership benefits
- LGA news
- LGA publications
- Local and by-election analysis
- Local government news

Columns

- More of
- About the same
- Less of
- Don't know

We would like your views about the content featured in first, the first e-bulletin and first online. Please select whether you would like to see more of the following content, about the same amount of the following content or less of the following content for each of the listed areas:

Grid

Rows

- National issues affecting local government
- Opinion, comment and debate
- Partner organisations/stakeholders
- Policy-related features/analysis e.g. on housing, social care, etc
- Research and academic reports
- Views of residents
- Welsh LGA and Welsh local government

Columns

- More of
- About the same
- Less of
- Don't know

Thinking about the last 12 months, did you attend a conference, webinar or event because you saw it advertised or featured in first magazine, the first e-bulletin or first online?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Thinking about the last 12 months, did you request or download a publication or report because you saw it advertised or featured in first magazine, the first e-bulletin or first online?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Have you ever bought a product or service after seeing it advertised in first magazine, the first e-bulletin or first online?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Have you ever drawn your council's attention to a product or service after seeing it advertised in first magazine, the first e-bulletin or first online?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Which areas of your council's work are you actively researching or seeking solutions for at the moment?

Please select all that apply

- Technology, artificial intelligence and digital solutions
- Training and development providers
- Green and sustainable suppliers
- Recruitment and staffing services
- Consultancy and professional services
- Infrastructure and transport
- Environment and waste management

- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including home-to-school transport
- Adult social care
- Children’s social care, including placements
- Housing and planning
- Homelessness and temporary accommodation
- Other (Please specify below) *Text box*
- Not currently researching or seeking solutions

first magazine is looking at ways to generate additional revenue to offset costs which may include different types of advertisements. To ensure that these are relevant to first readers, please indicate which, if any, of the following areas you are personally interested in or actively researching at the moment?

This question is voluntary

- Cars or electric vehicles
- Home improvement or property
- Financial services (e.g. pensions, investments, insurance)
- Technology and gadgets
- Travel or holidays
- Watches, fashion or luxury goods
- Health and wellbeing
- Continuing education or training
- None of the above
- Prefer not to say

Please let us know if there is anything we can do to improve your experience of first magazine, the first e-bulletin or first online, or if you have any further comments or suggestions on the topics covered by this survey?

Text box

About you

Finally, we would like to know more about our readers to develop first magazine, first online and the first e-bulletin in ways that would best meet your needs. Your replies will be treated confidentially and will help ensure advertising and editorial content is relevant and appropriate.

Please enter your details below.

Please note this question is voluntary so if you would prefer to remain anonymous please skip this question.

Name *Text box*

Authority *Text box*

Role *Text box*

Email address *Text box*

Please select the following options that apply to yourself as of the 1st May 2025 local elections.

- I have been and continue to be a serving councillor
- I have been elected as a new councillor
- I have additional responsibilities as a councillor (e.g. council leader, group leader, portfolio holder, cabinet member, committee chair)
- I am a local authority chief executive or senior officer
- Other (please specify in the box below) *Text box*
- I prefer not to say

Your consent

The following section of the survey will collect and process special category data in relation to your age group, gender and ethnicity to ensure advertising and editorial content is relevant and appropriate. We are collecting this data under condition (a) of

Article 9(2) that the subject has given explicit consent for the processing of their data for such purposes and conditions. In line with our privacy policy, which is published at www.local.gov.uk/privacy-notice, you have the right to withdraw your consent at any time. If you do not consent for the LGA to collect and process your age group, gender and ethnicity information, these questions will not be displayed.

Please confirm whether you agree to us processing and holding this data:

I agree to the LGA processing my special category data as laid out in Article 9(2)(a) of the Data Protection Act 2018

- Yes, I agree
- No, I do not agree

If answered yes to 'I agree to the LGA processing my special category data'

What is your sex, as registered at birth?

This question is voluntary.

- Male
- Female
- I prefer not to say

If answered yes to 'I agree to the LGA processing my special category data'

Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

This question is voluntary.

- Yes
- No, write in gender identity *Text box*
- I prefer not to say

If answered yes to 'I agree to the LGA processing my special category data'

What is your age group?

This question is voluntary.

- Up to 24 years
- 25-34
- 35-49
- 50-64
- 65 years and above
- I prefer not to say

If answered yes to 'I agree to the LGA processing my special category data'

What is your ethnic group?

This question is voluntary

- English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Roma
- Any other White background (please specify in the box below) *Text box*
- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed or Multiple background (please specify in the box below)
Text box
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background (please specify in the box below) *Text box*
- Caribbean

- African
- Any other Black, Black British or Caribbean background (please specify in the box below) *Text box*
- Arab
- Any other ethnic group (please specify in the box below) *Text box*
- I prefer not to say

END



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