

Total Place is here to stay, whoever's in power

By Vivienne Russell

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The flagship Total Place programme, which is re-examining spending patterns across all public services, is likely to continue under a new government, *Public Finance* has been told.

John Atkinson, managing director of the Local Government Association's Leadership Centre and national lead of Total Place, said all parties backed the core principles of the programme.

'Within the LGA there is very clear endorsement across the political groups... The government is obviously fully behind it, the level of ministerial support is incredible and our sense is that the shadow Cabinet sees it in exactly the same way,' he said.

Total Place is being piloted in 13 areas across England. Local Strategic Partnerships in these areas are counting up all the money going into public services to see if it might be used more effectively.

Its conclusions will feed into both the Pre-Budget Report later this year and next year's Budget.

Local government leaders and commentators echoed Atkinson's confidence that the programme was unlikely to fall victim to a government change.

Stephen Hughes, chief executive of Birmingham City Council – one of the participating authorities – told *PF*: 'If you look across the political spectrum, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats are equally committed to delivery in local places.'