

Subject: Chief executive's bulletin - 20 February 2025
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From: National Association of Local Councils
To: clerk@bulkington.org.uk



20 February 2025

NALC calls for the inclusion of parish and town councils in the government's reorganisation guidance

Our chair, Cllr Keith Stevens, has written to the Minister for Local Government and English Devolution, Jim McMahon MP, [expressing our concern over guidance to local authorities regarding local government reorganisation](#). The letter highlights our dissatisfaction with the guidance emphasising engagement with local partners, stakeholders, and public sector providers such as mayors, police and crime commissioners, and the voluntary sector but fails to include parish and town councils. We seek urgent clarification and have urged the government to include parish and town councils as key partners in shaping proposals for new unitary authorities. This week, the government also launched the [Devolution Priority Programme consultations](#) in six areas (Cumbria, Cheshire and Warrington, Norfolk and Suffolk, Greater Essex, Sussex and Brighton, and Hampshire and the Solent) on proposals to establish mayoral combined authorities or mayoral combined county authorities as part of its devolution agenda.

NALC supports plans to strengthen compulsory purchase for affordable housing

We have welcomed the government's proposal to [strengthen the compulsory purchase order process](#) for parish and town councils. It would enable small affordable housing schemes where back-to-back agreements could be arranged with registered affordable housing providers. We also agreed with the evidence collected by other government departments on compulsory purchases that some parish and town councils are eager for a more proactive approach to using compulsory purchase orders on their behalf. The [consultation](#) sought views on reforming the

compulsory purchase process and compensation rules and on various proposals to implement technical reforms to make it cheaper, quicker, and fairer.

Smaller Councils Committee

The [Smaller Councils Committee](#) held its first meeting of the year on 13 February 2025, with the chair hosting from Thailand! The committee welcomed the new County Officer Forum representative, Sheena Spence, to the committee. Sheena will consult county officers about which principal authorities in their areas have parish liaison teams and will report back. We will work with the Law Commission on any key smaller council burial authority implications of its grave re-use proposals and keep the committee updated on the Law Commission's recommendations to the Ministry of Justice on parish and town council re-use of burial grounds. Alex Howell, policy advisor at the Local Government Association (LGA), joined the meeting to speak about the LGA's take on the English Devolution White Paper. The committee also heard updates on the recent meetings of the national network on micro councils and Martyn's Law Steering Group. We will update the committee on any post-Royal Assent implications of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill for smaller councils. The committee also agreed that the in-person meeting would take place on 31 July 2025 at our partner, CCLA, London office.

On the blog: Shrewsbury Town Council

[In this week's blog](#), Shrewsbury Town Council clerk Helen Ball explores the financial pressures facing parish and town councils and the innovative ways they can adapt. With principal authorities struggling with rising social care costs, parish and town councils are asked to do more with limited resources. From funding cuts to increased demand for services, the challenges are real, but so are the opportunities. Through localism, partnerships, and more innovative financial planning, parish and town councils can take control and shape the future of their communities. Read the full blog to learn how parish and town councils navigate these challenges and what this means for you.

Fortnightly county officers call

In this week's fortnightly meeting between NALC and county associations, Eden Project Communities joined us to discuss [The Big Lunch](#), an annual get-together for neighbours and communities that several parish and town councils already support. We provided an overview of plans for an in-person county officers' day and proposed

updates to advice notes. There was also an information exchange on proposals in different counties to respond to the English Devolution White Paper.

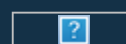
NALC and London School of Economics emergency planning survey

Promoting the role of parish and town councils in community safety is one of our major campaigns this year, and our [community safety webpage](#) provides plenty of information about what they can do. Emergency planning is one of the key roles, and we have collaborated with the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) on a joint community resilience survey about parish and town councils' role in preparing for emergencies. The survey is being conducted and administered by a team led by Professor Edward Page of the Department of Government at the LSE. The results will help us make the case for further support for parish and town councils and enhance their role in resilience forums. [Please fill out this short survey \(20 questions\)](#) and pass it on to colleagues. If you have any questions about this research, please email chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk or e.c.page@lse.ac.uk.

And finally...

We're [proud to announce that we have successfully achieved Cyber Essentials accreditation](#) for the third consecutive year. This milestone underscores our commitment to maintaining high cybersecurity standards and protecting data across its operations. Cyber Essentials is a government-backed certification that helps organisations guard against the most common cyber threats and demonstrate their dedication to cybersecurity. Learn about [Cyber Essentials](#) and how it can benefit your parish and town councils.

10 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SL



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