

## Shaun Jones - Locum Clerk

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**From:** Gail Power <Gail.Power@shropshire.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 21 July 2020 06:05  
**Subject:** FW: EPC4 – Communities framework & the devolution white paper

Forwarded to member local councils on behalf of NALC.  
cc: SALC Executive Committee

Dear Colleagues.

I hope you are very well.

Please forward on the below NALC policy consultation e-briefing to inform NALC's positions on the upcoming Devolution White Paper - to all member councils in your areas – thanks:

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### Summary

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is highly likely to be issuing its long awaited devolution white paper in the Autumn. NALC has been in various discussions with the Ministry over the last six months regarding likely implications for parishes for the white paper and the communities framework, which the previous government consulted on last year. NALC is consulting the sector now on its views so as to be ready in the Autumn to fully inform the white paper.

### Context & proposals

The Ministry confirmed to NALC earlier in 2020 that the white paper is likely to cover the below themes (it could be even more radical as significant local government re-organisation is also expected). These areas will “strengthen and extend community rights, and provide a framework for further ‘onward devolution’”:

1. Mayoral Combined Authority/combined authority: ‘devolution deals’ and economic planning over a functional economic area;
2. Local authority: local services and place-making (social care; prevention and troubled families; regeneration and housing); &
3. Town/parish councils and communities: ‘onward devolution’ direct to people and places, by strengthening community rights and role in community assets and public realm (e.g. parks, footpaths, community centres, toilets).

You have already been e-mailed a copy Cllr Lillian Burns’ very helpful report on the latest state-of-play with devolution in local areas across England at the time of writing. We look forward to receiving your local updates to [Claire.Goldfinch@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.Goldfinch@nalc.gov.uk) by 17:00 on Monday 17 August 2020.

### Consultation questions:

The Ministry approached NALC with various questions it wanted feedback on regarding strengthening the role of local councils in the communities framework and the likely devolution white paper. Please also have a read of the below context and questions which were delivered at NALC’s Lobby Day on 10 March 2020 and which were also discussed by the February 2020 meeting of the MHCLG Communities Partnership Board. NALC would appreciate sector responses to [chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk) by 17:00 on Monday 17 August 2020 please to frame evidence for the NALC response – thanks:

## General:

1. Are these (the three points raised above) the correct priority areas to strengthen community rights and encourage greater onward devolution through the devolution white paper?
2. What else could local government do (apart from the three points made above) to incentivize the kind of local partnerships highlighted as good practice: such as Cornwall, Wiltshire, Wigan?
3. How else (apart from the three points mentioned in bold above) can we strengthen accountability and engagement with communities at the higher tiers (e.g. Mayoral Combined Authority?)

## Governance

MHCLG wants to strengthen the role of local councils and other community governance arrangements by:

- Simplifying the process to establish a town/parish council where communities wish to, and allowing community groups to appeal decisions by principal authorities.
  - Strengthening rights for existing town / parish councils to request and agree transfer of assets, functions and funding, such as community spaces and neighbourhood services.
  - Triggering an automatic Community Governance Review looking at 'onward devolution' arrangements where wider, local government reform is part of a devolution deal.
4. What additional changes are needed to make the process of forming parishes / other local governance structures easier?
  5. What additional powers and functions could neighbourhood forums take on, without adopting more formal parish structures?

## Services

MHCLG wants to strengthen the power of community groups, and local councils, to shape local services that matter to them by:

- Establishing a new 'Right to Community Partnership' to trigger a service review in partnership with the local authority.
  - Requiring local authorities to co-design services with communities earlier in the commissioning process.
  - Strengthening the rights of community groups to takeover and run local assets of community value ('Community Right to Buy').
6. How would a "right to community partnership" / service partnership power be triggered and who should be able to trigger it?
  7. What services should be considered in scope for local councils - of MHCLG strengthening the power of local councils to shape services which matter to them?

## Strategy

MHCLG wants to build on existing Neighbourhood Planning rights by:

- Supporting greater use of neighbourhood planning in urban areas and towns; &
  - Giving a stronger status to a range of community-led local strategies, ensuring that local authorities and, where appropriate, mayoral or combined authorities having regard to community economic development plans and other strategies established by town / parish councils or neighbourhood forums.
8. What community led strategies could be given stronger status?
  9. What support is needed to encourage greater use of neighbourhood planning in urban areas?

## Your views

Please e-mail your evidence back to [chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk) by latest 17:00 on Monday 17 August 2020. County associations are asked to forward this e-briefing onto all member councils in their areas.

Many thanks,

Chris

Chris Borg FSLCC, ACMI