

24 APRIL 2024

POLICY REGISTER

The Policy Register outlines what National Association of Local Councils' (NALC) policy positions are for the coming year. With this online version of the register, we have tried to make it as simple as possible for you to see what our positions are. If you would like to see our extended version, which includes dates, legal references and evidence on why we are taking the position forward, please email policycomms@nalc.gov.uk with your request.

Empowering communities

Policy	Notes
1a) Planning, development and housing	
Planning appeals	Government to change the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) so that local councils [and Neighbourhood Planning bodies*] have the same right as promoters/developers to appeal planning decisions.
Neighbourhood planning 2013	The mandatory provision of protection for parishes from speculative development during the creation of neighbourhood plans and greater certainty that 'made' plans will be upheld.
Neighbourhood planning	The government to ensure that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) can only rely on accountable and transparent evidence of housing needs which they are obliged to share with Local Councils regarding progressing Neighbourhood Plans; ensuring that a failure to do so should result in the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) being payable as if relevant councils had adopted a neighbourhood plan.
Planning enforcement	Government to strengthen legislation to ensure that local planning authorities are consistent in applying a robust policy to deal effectively and quickly with any breaches of planning control.
S106 agreement enforcement	Local Planning Authorities to ensure there is effective local enforcement around developers being held to account in adhering to <u>Section 106 Agreements</u> and planning conditions.

Planning conditions	The government to ensure that planning conditions imposed to allow grant of planning permission are enforced.
Section 106 consultation	Local councils to be meaningfully consulted on the provisions, new or renegotiated, of <u>S106 Agreements</u> prior to their being finalised.
Expansion of S106 use and fair division of CIL money	The government to give parish councils the freedom to spend <u>S.106</u> monies (developers' contributions) on leisure and recreation facilities as they judge to be necessary.
Mobile telephone and broadband	A change in government policy on planning applications for mobile telephone masts to ensure that all heights of masts are subject to a full planning application and proper consultation with local councils.
Electronic communications networks	To give local councils the legal power to promote, contribute towards and/or run electronic communications networks and services for the benefit of their local communities.
Electronic communications support network	DEFRA, ACRE, BDUK and other partners in principle to offer support to local councils who are seeking to develop broadband improvements in their communities.
New build internet infrastructure	New build houses and business to be provided with in-built infrastructure to enable connection to fibre-optic broadband.
Energy and carbon saving measures	Government to bring planning laws and guidance in line with government policy by making it conditional for energy saving and carbon neutral measures to be included in all relevant planning applications.
Planning dimensions	A requirement when submitting planning applications that all plans should have dimensions for all proposed buildings, including the height above ground level, and the distance from the plot boundary.
Planning maps	Planning authorities to include 'Insert Maps' for all villages, regardless of whether or not they have been allocated development growth in the Local Plan or Local Development Framework. The delineation of the village envelope is an important tool in development control and in halting encroachment into the countryside.
Planning White Paper 2020	1. NALC has signed up to the proposition that there is a climate emergency and will therefore, as a general principle, promote and support moves and policies which help to mitigate it. For instance,

	<p>NALC supports the need for Local Plans and large developments to be subject to environmental appraisals and it supports energy efficient homes and more trees.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. NALC will support a planning system which incorporates a significant role for local councils. It will not support any diminution of town and parish Councils' statutory right to comment on planning issues at all stages of their evolution, whether they be development planning matters or spatial planning policies. 3. NALC will support a soundly based planning system which represents the most reliable tool for the sustainable allocation of land and which represents the three pillars of sustainability equally, ie. social, economic and environmental factors. 4. NALC will support changes to the planning system which it perceives will strengthen the system and the voice of democracy and lead to better quality, appropriately sited developments. It will not support planning changes which it perceives will work in the opposite direction. 5. NALC would support a very much strengthened version of the 'duty to co-operate' between neighbouring local authorities or an alternative policy which made it compulsory for neighbouring LAs to work in close co-operation with each other on spatial planning. 6. NALC does not support an across-the-board extension of permitted development rights in the planning system. Policies on permitted development rights should be the prerogative of LAs in their Local Plans or Neighbourhood Planning Groups. 7. NALC supports the recommendations of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission. 8. NALC recognises the need for more affordable housing and would welcome initiatives that would enable LPAs and local councils to deliver some. In addition, NALC would like to see more housing delivered that is suitable for the disabled and those with mobility impairments and also a range of different types of tenures facilitated.
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	<p>9. NALC wants to see a fair infrastructure levy system which gives local councils a voice and benefits them financially so that they in turn can deliver more for their local communities.</p> <p>10. NALC has concerns about housing tests based on standard methodologies or algorithms. It wants to see a planning system which recognise that every planning application and every location is different.</p>
Cross border planning applications	Government to amend planning legislation to require local planning authorities to consult with or inform all local councils and parish meetings affected by planning applications, not just those in their own area; or the affected neighbouring planning authority is required to consult with or inform the relevant local council or parish meeting.
Affordable social housing	Government to reverse the negative impact on the availability of affordable social housing caused by factors such as the reduced contribution to housing associations and a failure to make use of empty properties that could be used for housing for local people.
New Homes Bonus	It to be mandatory for principal authorities to pass on a significant share of the New Homes Bonus to communities that have been required to accept new homes.
Assets of Community Value	It to be mandated that any Asset of Community Value be subject to the removal of Permitted Development Rights by imposing Article 4. An article 4 direction is made by the local planning authority. It restricts the scope of permitted development rights either in relation to an area or site, or a development anywhere in the authority's area.
Rural Right to Buy Extension	An exclusion of the proposed Right to Buy extension to housing in rural areas and, where this is not possible, for priority to be given to land already pre-allocated by Local Planning Authorities for local need.
Consequence Tax	Local councils to be empowered through legislation to levy a 'consequence tax' on second homes.
Five-year housing land supply	The requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for a five-year land supply for housing needs to be amended and clarified in a way which prevents developers riding roughshod over Local Plans, contrary to the wishes of local

	communities, endorsed planning policies and emerging and 'made' Neighbourhood Plans.
Housing test	NALC also calls on the government to establish a housing delivery test focused on developers which requires them to build out sites for which they have planning permission - rather than allowing a punitive system which punishes local authority areas for not meeting their five-year housing land supply and forces them to accept even more planning.
Tree Preservation Orders	Government to make parish councils statutory consultees on tree applications in their parishes.
Statutory Right of Appeal	Strengthen the role of local councils in the planning and licensing system through the introduction of a statutory 'right to be consulted' and 'right of planning appeal'.
Community benefit	To ensure communities really do benefit from development through new statutory measures to provide local councils with a share of Community Infrastructure Levy, New Homes Bonus and underground exploration funding.
Strengthening neighbourhood plans	NALC is petitioned to do everything it can to bring to the MHCLG's attention the disaffection being felt in a growing number of communities about the neighbourhood planning system as it stands and to lobby for a genuine strengthening of neighbourhood plans.
Housing land supply	NALC is also petitioned to try and persuade the MHCLG to drop the standard housing supply land requirement (three years where a land specific Neighbourhood Plan is in place and five years in other instances). Local circumstances vary enormously, and a standard requirement is inappropriate.
National Planning Policy Framework	NALC is also petitioned to express opposition to those measures introduced by the revised NPPF that came into effect in July which further weaken Neighbourhood Plans and the local empowerment they promised to deliver - most particularly the housing delivery test. This is yet another criterion over which local communities have no control but which, if not met, can nullify Neighbourhood Plans.
Class Q Planning Consent	NALC lobbies the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to request a review of Class Q planning consent which allows

	agricultural buildings to be converted to dwelling houses without the benefit of planning permission.
Positions adopted in neighbourhood planning recommendations report	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The government should routinely monitor, and periodically evaluate, the Neighbourhood Planning system. 2. NALC should make the case to MHCLG that communities preparing neighbourhood plans need a 'breathing space' in which to plan and should ask for national planning policy and guidance to explicitly recognise this. 3. There is a need for planning applications to be found to be premature from the very early stages of neighbourhood plan preparation, depending on the scale and significance of any unresolved objections and the scale of community support. 4. NALC should ask MHCLG to reconsider its decision to require local authorities to review their Local Plans every 5 years. 5. NALC needs to lobby for a national housing land supply policy which does not have such a totally negating effect on so many neighbourhood plans. 6. NALC needs to emphasise to MHCLG that the ability for a community to shape its area through neighbourhood planning is an important part of the social role of planning. 7. NALC should suggest that when the MHCLG commissioned research into neighbourhood planning has been completed, the Housing, Communities and Local Government parliamentary select committee should conduct its own review into the effectiveness of neighbourhood planning. 8. NALC should ask the MHCLG to expressly set out the relationship that will exist between neighbourhood plans and the new types of spatial plans. 9. NALC should make the case to the MHCLG that if it goes ahead and reduces the timeframes involved in planning appeals, it must factor in the need to ensure that local communities are given sufficient time to take part in the process. 10. NALC should formally endorse the recommendations in the report 'Re-imagining neighbourhood governance: the future of neighbourhood planning in England' by Matthew Wargent and Gavin Parker.

Land management companies	NALC lobbies government for the regulation of land management companies in relation to management charges and shared facilities.
Building control	That Building Control becomes a local authority function or, if not, that Building Control bodies are required to notify planning authorities if they believe that building may be proceeding in breach of the approved plans and planning conditions. It further proposes that mechanisms be put in place to make Building Control bodies accessible to the public.
Timeshare regulation	We call for national mandatory registration and strengthened legislation would bring Airbnb under the ambit of regulation as other landlord systems, with powers of inspection and monitoring delegated to local planning enforcement. We urge NALC and KALC to liaise with other local authorities and organisations such as Cornwall County, Lake District National Park and Yorkshire Dales to campaign on the issue of regulation of Airbnb, to introduce appropriate measures.
Neighbourhood planning committees	For NALC to lobby government to define the production of a Neighbourhood Plan as a 'parish council function' under the Parish and Community Councils (Committees) regulations 1990 (1990/2476) to allow non-parish council members to have voting rights on a NP committee on the same basis as committees dealing with land management, harbour, tourism or festival functions.
Management Companies	To make provision for the regulation of fees, charged by management companies to freeholders of residential properties, to ensure legal step-in rights, in perpetuity, for the self-management of shared facilities by such freeholders, parish & town Councils, or other appropriate community groups. And that the principle of the statutory right be communicated to the CMA (Competition and Markets Authority) as part of their [current] investigation / consultation.
Battery Energy Storage Systems	The YLCA Joint Annual Meeting has resolved that NALC lobby HM Government for: the Fire and Rescue Service to be designated a statutory consultee for the purpose of development of Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) sites of one megawatt or greater; that it be mandatory that applicants of a BESS site of one megawatt or greater must consult with the Fire and Rescue Service before submitting a

	planning application; that local planning authorities must consider guidance produced by the National Fire Chief's Council when determining applications; and that the local planning authority must consult with local fire and rescue services before issuing decisions on BESS applications as described above.
Pre-application consultation	That the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations and the National Association of Local Councils lobby HM Government to seek a change in national planning policy that would make it mandatory on local planning authorities that they must engage with affected local councils regarding formal pre-application discussions involving major developments.
Listed building energy efficiency	Listed building energy efficiency 2024 Request that NALC lobby central government for changes to planning policy guidance to improve the consistency between Conservation's adherence to less effective standards and Building Regulation's requirements to improved environmental and energy efficient insulation methods and materials, whilst respecting the value of listed buildings.
Neighbourhood plans and the greenbelt	Clarification within planning guidance of the process under which a neighbourhood can use the powers granted in the National Planning Policy Framework.
Right to challenge planning decisions inconsistent with a Neighbourhood Plan	Seek an amendment to the existing legislation that would require the local planning authority to consult with the Secretary of State before granting permission for certain types of development that are contrary to the provisions of a neighbourhood plan.
1b) Licensing	
Licensing	Government to establish once and for all, local councils as legitimate consultees in all aspects of the processes outlined in the <u>Licensing Act</u> , including appeals.
Local licensing	Government to include alcohol licenses in the areas to be devolved to local councils but if that proves impossible to seek to achieve the addition of local councils to the list of responsible authorities (<u>Home Office Guidance par. 8.16</u>).

More devolution and engagement

Policy	Notes
2) Transport	
Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs)	Government to introduce controls on satellite navigation systems installed in HGVs to ensure that these vehicles are not routed along inappropriate roads.
HGV parking	Government to consult with local councils on HGV parking sites in suitably sustainable locations within their boundaries.
Traffic commissioners	Government to change the law relating to traffic commissioners, making local councils statutory consultees.
Road Fund licence allocation	Government to allocate a greater proportion of the Road Fund Licence money collected to the maintenance and improvement of safety on Local Authority roads.
20 MPH speed limit enforcement	Greater enforcement of 20 mph limits.
PCSO traffic powers	Legislation to allow Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) the power to stop moving traffic.
Parking enforcement	To introduce measures to make it easier to decriminalise breaches of parking regulation for the purposes of allowing local councils to enforce those regulations.
Traffic noise	Highway authorities to use noise reducing surfaces and noise attenuating barriers and take other measures to minimise traffic noise, especially from new roads that pass near to residential properties and, within 5 years, to upgrade all existing roads with these measures where the traffic noise exceeds the specified level – currently 68 decibels at the nearest residential property façade.
Road fuel prices	The government to address the considerable problems created for communities and local.
Notice of public highways works	For highway authorities to consult parish councils in whose areas where they are about to undertake non-emergency works to public highways under the <u>New Roads and Streets Act, 1991</u> .
Temporary Events Notices	The law to be changed to ensure that parishes are statutory consultees in all aspects of the TENS (<u>Temporary Events Notices</u>).
Community transport	To request that DfT ensures there is clarity on the practical application and protection of community

	transport in section 19 of its guidance on community transport.
Quad bike legalisation	To back the need to support the amendment of current legislation to have off road quad and motorbikes included within the definitions in the Road Traffic Act 1988 to ensure they meet the legal requirements of registration, tax, MOT and insurance.
Red diesel	That NALC lobbies central government on behalf of local councils that they should be exempt from the Red Diesel regulations. NALC supported this motion from a fiscal perspective and is entirely supportive of the sector not using carbon based fuels.
Speed limits	That principal authorities should be required to consult all local councils in their area when maintaining or amending speed limits within their boundaries.
3) Environment and sustainability	
Household waste	The government shall apply a similar duty of care to householders regarding the disposal of waste that applies to commercial premises under provisions of Sections 33 & 34 of the <u>Environmental Protection Act, 1990</u> .
Alternatives to Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Waste Projects	The encouragement of principal authorities to procure alternatives to PFI (<u>Private Finance Initiative</u>) waste projects, such alternatives to be based on higher recycling and material recovery, which would save money, reduce the impact of spending cuts and eliminate the need to build large and expensive waste incinerators.
Waste incinerators	The revision of existing legislation regarding the building of waste incinerators close to centres of population and environmentally sensitive areas and to strengthen the regulations regarding emissions there-from.
Local Nature Partnerships	Central government to fund properly, beyond the £1m. initial set-up fund, Local Nature Partnerships.
Polytunnels	Government to strengthen the National Planning Policy Framework to regulate the encroachment of plastic cloches and poly-tunnels.
Hedgerow protection	Achieve an amendment to the <u>1997 Hedgerow Acts</u> so that the criteria and associated features for a hedgerow to be deemed 'important' are relaxed and

	more types of hedgerow (many hundreds of years old) can be protected.
Offshore Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects	Norfolk and Suffolk county associations fully support the national transition to renewable energy. There is however serious concern regarding the “in isolation” examination of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) submissions to the Planning Inspectorate, given that we are experiencing numerous (5 in Norfolk and 7 in Suffolk) NSIPs in a confined geographical region and timeframe. The current onshore grid connection arrangements will entail devastating adverse impacts for many local communities and the environment. We call on NALC to lobby government, as a matter of urgency, to ask National Grid and OFGEM to demonstrate that a co-ordinated, strategic approach is being taken towards national energy options and that the best environmental and economic solution is being delivered for the residents of Suffolk (as well as other coastal communities so affected) and the national energy need.
Climate emergency	NALC has signed up to the proposition that there is a climate emergency and will therefore, as a general principle, support moves and policies which help to mitigate it.
Urban gull population	That Natural England rethink its licensing criteria for urban gull management.
4) Community facilities	
Public conveniences	Government to make the provision of public toilets a statutory duty on principal authorities.
Churchyards	Changes in burial legislation to allow local councils to enter into some form of joint arrangement with churches of all denominations, to enable them to manage and maintain a churchyard.
Village halls	Government to increase the current restrictive number of annually permitted events for village and community halls under the licensing laws and review the onerous requirement of personal licence holders for village and community halls.
Asset transfer	Government to give legal redress to enable principal authorities to return town halls to those Town Councils that handed them over during previous local government reorganisation.

Village green registration	A more rounded application process, whereby there is a legal mechanism in place, which would take account of the views of people who do not want an area of land to be registered as a [village] green.
Ambulance response times	Government to ensure that cuts to funding for the Ambulance Service do not result in increased response times, particularly to rural communities, due to local stations disappearing.
Post offices	Government to provide an appropriate programme of continuing and realistic revenue support for the Sub Post Office network, including PO Local and Outreach.
Funding church building repairs	The EALC tasks NALC with seeking clarification from the Ministry of Justice to verify if there are any circumstances under the 1894 Act in which parish councils may be able to grant fund the church to undertake repair works on church buildings or maintenance in open churchyards.
Local council amenities	Local (parish and town) councils (where they exist) should be given the option, in the first instance, of taking on the provision of amenities for new developments, including green spaces, before land management companies. Legal provision to this effect should be built into the planning system.

Flexible and diverse funding

Policy	Notes
5) Local government, finance, audit and risk	
Participatory budgeting	The example of Essex County Council's Community Initiative Fund to be taken up by principal authorities to give capital budget funding for community projects and devolved to local communities and local councils to agree where the money is spent through participatory budgeting.
Allowances	A change to the rules regarding member allowances to ensure that the provision of allowances be extended to co-opted members.
Rating liability	Statutory partial relief from rating liability for non-commercial property owned by local authorities for the benefit of the community.
Risk assessments	Guidance for local councils on conducting risk assessments, particularly aimed at the needs of

	smaller councils who may not have the capacity to call on specialist local help.
Double taxation	Government to remove the iniquity of double taxation and ensure equitable costs and local authority services for council tax payers in parished areas and to have regard to the provision of sufficient funding to local councils where local services are devolved by agreement, or otherwise, by principal authorities without adequate finance following the function.
Public Works Loan Board	The abolition of the premium charged by the Public Works Loan Board for early repayment of loans.
Business Rates	Government to distribute to Town and Parish Councils an appropriate share of the National Non-Domestic Rates (business rates) collected in their areas to enable them to fund the service improvements suggested by the new coalition government in their localism agenda.
Dependants Carers' Allowance	The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations, 2003 to be amended so that the provisions of paragraph 7 apply equally to local councils as to principal authorities.
Local councils and overseas forces	Local councils to be compensated from funding made available by central government for the loss of precept due to the presence of overseas forces within their area.
Charity muggers	The early introduction of legislation to enable local authorities to regulate the activities of face-to-face charity fundraisers through statutory provisions – to include the power to impose conditions relating to the frequency, location and the way such collections are carried out.
Surplus council tax	For amendments to legislation that would allow any surplus in the Council Tax Collection account to be proportionately returned to local councils.
Localisation of support for council tax	For Government to re-consider its Localisation of Support for Council Tax proposals contained in the Local Government Finance Bill, due to their possible effect on parish precepts.
Business Rates and public toilets	Free non-domestic rates on public toilets.
Rate relief on community owned buildings	Mandatory rate-relief on parish council owned buildings.

Referendum principles	The removal of provisions within the <u>Localism Act 2011</u> which enable Government to introduce automatic precept referendums on local councils.
Parish meetings and VAT	For parish meetings to be able to reclaim VAT in the same way as parish councils.
100% Business Rate exemption on public conveniences	Government to legislate during the current parliament to grant parish councils mandatory 100% rate relief on public conveniences they own or manage on the same basis as charities.
Data protection officers	For clear guidance to be issued immediately to local councils on how to proportionately apply the forthcoming data protection requirements, including the requirement for local councils to have a Data Protection Officer. Additionally, for Government to reconsider the burdens on local councils of having to pay for both a Data Protection Officer and a fee to the Information Commissioner's Office and, should such additional burdens proceed, to confirm the availability of New Burdens Funding for local councils.
Council tax support funding	To ensure council tax support funding is passed on to local councils by principal councils.
Referendum principles	Referenda principles should not be extended to local councils over the life of this Parliament and the power of the secretary of state in the Localism Act 2011 should be repealed.
Share of the Business Rate	The business rate system should be reformed to provide a 5% share for local councils, government should work with NALC and LGA on local pilots, and public conveniences should be exempted from national non-domestic rates.
Smaller council impact assessment	To require NALC to lobby government to provide funds to enable transport authorities to award subsidies for bus services in rural areas which will enable residents to make essential sustainable travel and help to combat loneliness. Loneliness and isolation are known to exacerbate mental health problems. This is also to discourage the use of individual private car journeys with such negative consequences for the environment.
Financial ombudsman service	That NALC writes to the Financial Ombudsman Service to set out that Local Councils (Parish and Town Councils) are local authorities in their own right and that they are not controlled by the principal authority (e.g. borough/district council). NALC

	should point out that principal authorities have no power or discretion over the collecting and passing on of the precept and are acting solely as agent for the Local Council under a statutory duty. The principal authority cannot alter the amount of the precept and has to raise it and pass it over. NALC should also seek clarification from the FOS that if a Local Council, as a local authority, is unhappy with the service provided by a bank, and are not satisfied with the bank's response, where does the local council go to make a complaint?
Dedicated funding package to fight COVID-19	SALC calls on Shropshire's MPs and NALC to make direct representations to the Secretary of State for MHCLG to put in place ring fenced financial support specific to local councils to compensate them from losses arising from the COVID-19 crisis.
Financial Services Compensation Scheme	The Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils asks the NALC to lobby for an increase in the maximum threshold of the definition of "small local authorities" from 500,000 Euros to trigger protections for local (parish and town) councils under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS).
Smaller Authorities' audit and transparency	That NALC lobby for an increase in the £25,000 audit threshold, for the introduction of a transparency code for councils with annual turnover between £25,000 and £200,000, and for sector to promote good practice in internal audit and compliance.

Build capacity and support councillors

Policy	Notes
6) Governance and standards	
Representation on Regional Bodies	Government to ensure that local councils are given representation within any regional framework.
Ombudsman	Government to bring local councils within the remit of the Local Government Ombudsman.
Standing for elections	A mechanism which is simpler in both application and timescale to encourage members of the public to seek nomination in local council elections.
Parish meetings	The law (to) be changed to enable the convenor of the / (a) Parish Meeting to fix the time of the meeting to commence before 6 pm.

Elected councillors	Government to ensure that a future Statutory Instrument enacting Section 76 of the Local Government & <u>Public Involvement in Health Act 2007</u> defines the term 'elected councillor' as 'having gone through the electoral process'.
By-election costs	Legislation to be amended to provide an exemption for local councils from having to pay for by-election costs.
Local Standards Committees	Co-opted members of local standards committees, where they exist, to have voting rights. Government be requested to reinstate the arrangement where a Standards Committee has the power to suspend local councillors for up to three months. This would follow a complaint under the Code of Conduct, properly investigated by the Monitoring Officer and where a local councillor has been found to have transgressed the Code.
Principal authority decisions	The procurement of a change in the remit of the Local Government Ombudsman to allow town and parish councils to challenge the administrative decisions of principal authorities, at low cost.
By-election timescales	A review of the parish and town council by-election process, which would address both the cost and timescales.
Access to the Electoral Register	The law to be changed such that parish meeting Chairmen (in areas where there is no parish council) can obtain a free copy of the full Electoral Register for their parish area.
Office of National Statistics Population Data	Access to individual parish level data for small parish councils and parish meetings with populations of less than 100 to be allowed by altering the threshold levels.
Local Standards Committee sanctions	An amendment to the <u>Localism Act 2011</u> to grant increased power of sanctions to a local Standards Committee where a member's behaviour falls short of criminal misconduct.
Post-election rules	Changes to current statutory post-election processes for town councils and parish councils, as present legislation leads to considerable delay in forming a new council, if a quorum is not reached on the statutory ordinary election date or where the election is countermanded due to death of a candidate.
Fourteen-day casual vacancy rule	The statutory time limit for the calling or demanding of a parish election following the occurrence of a Casual Vacancy to be amended to give the parish a

	further (maximum) six-week period to find candidates willing to stand for a contested election to fill the vacancy.
Community Governance Reviews	Changes into the process of governance reviews to recommend parish councils to decide the number of councillor seats they require - always providing they remain changes into the process of governance reviews to recommend parish councils to decide the number of councillor seats they require - always providing they remain quorate and have the support of their electorate; and subject to a nationally agreed minimum and maximum number of council seats and maintaining balance in warded parished areas.
Grouped parish councils	Changes in the law necessary to simplify, as far as possible, the procedure by which parish councils may be grouped.
Election costs	That the AEA ensure election fees charged to parishes are of a regulated level by the introduction of a standard published system for charging and final bills should be restricted to no more than 15% on estimated charges made to parishes in order that Parishes can budget more accurately.
Promote creation of new parish councils	To promote and support the creation of new local councils.
Introduction of a Community Right of Appeal	To introduce a community right of appeal.
Introduction of a mandatory referenda	To introduce mandatory referendums, using 'direct democracy' to test public opinion and support for a new local council.
Sustained national new councils' programme	The government should continue to provide investment in a national new council support programme.
Mayors and Community Governance Reviews	Mayoral and combined authorities should be required to conduct a community governance review within two years of the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act coming into force.
Local Democracy Fund	The government should work with NALC on a local democracy programme aimed at encouraging more people to become local councillors.
Sanctions of Code of Conduct breaches	To allow local councils to impose sanctions for breaches of the code of conduct.
Devolution	NALC and LGA to come together again to follow up this project, undertaking a further phase of work to

	capture and share more recent examples of joint working and devolution.
Introduction of the Right to Engage	The government should therefore introduce a new 'right to engage' which will help local councils work more equitably and effectively with principal councils and other public services.
Parish Councils' Bill	Government should bring forward a Parish Councils' Bill, which will also include new powers to deliver local services.
Review of Localism Act 2011	Government should undertake a review of the <u>Localism Act 2011</u> .
Executive style governance	To allow a town council to adopt 'executive style' governance arrangements including a leader and portfolio holders.
Principal authority complaints	Motion to NALC Policy Committee concerning parish councils seeking a mechanism for making a complaint against a principal authority if not satisfied with the principal authority complaints mechanism. Enabling a parish council rather than an individual to make a complaint to Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
Local council elections review	Northants ALC calls on NALC to collect and analyse data on the local election performance of parish and town councils in England, identifying factors that influence councillor participation, examples of good practice and areas for improvement, and to report to National Assembly by the end of October 2019.
Casual vacancies	Kent Association of Local Councils Executive Committee urges NALC to lobby Government to change legislation to require 5% (five percent) or 25 electors, whichever is greater, of the parish electorate, to sign a petition to call an election to fill a casual parish councillor vacancy (in place of the current requirement of 10 electors).
Local council election nomination forms	That the nomination process and election pack for prospective parish and town councillors deters candidates, wastes time, and is not fit for purpose. It is proposed that KALC and NALC lobby the Electoral Commission to review the nomination process, and that the nomination pack be re-drafted into a logical, coherent, well-designed document. This pack should aim to attract candidates and be a crystal mark for clarity.
Annual parish meeting timings	That KALC and NALC should lobby Government to extend the time period for holding the Annual Parish

	Meeting to allow it to be held between 1 March and 30 June.
Local Standards Committees	Co-opted members of local standards committees, where they exist, to have voting rights.
7) Democracy and training	
Media	Greater recognition of the importance, relevance and successes of local councils in the media and also in schools to improve long term knowledge of democracy and the democratic process.
Training	Training for local council clerks and councillors to be very strongly encouraged at county, regional and national level.
Information Commissioner's Office	Discussions with ICO [the Information Commissioner's Office] to represent parish and town councillors who are subject to the legal implications of the Act regarding the need for Councillors to register with the ICO and pay the £35 annual fee when using their personal computers in order to undertake resident case work or for campaigning.
Training and reimbursement	The introduction of legislation to allow parish councillors and clerks to attend recognised training sessions in connection with their council without loss of pay.
Parish sector to lead its own improvement	To develop an improvement strategy to provide a framework for good governance, community engagement and council improvement, a welcome step forward in ensuring the sector is able to step up, lead its own improvement and make the most of devolution.
Government websites	GAPTC asks NALC to lobby the government to recognise parish and town councils on its website.
Extraordinary parish council meetings	The County Durham Association of Local Councils in support of one of its larger town councils, expresses its concerns over the use of paragraph 9 (2) of schedule 12 to the 1972 Local Government Act. The county association is asking NALC to lobby government to make the number of councillors necessary to call such meetings whatever is the quorum of the local council.
Parish polls	- That the electors demanding the poll constitute at least 10% of the electors for the parish, or 60 electors, whichever is the lesser.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That the poll is supported by the majority of local government electors present at the relevant meeting. - That the subject matter of the poll was discussed at the relevant meeting; and the subject matter of the poll directly affects those who live and/or work in the community served by the parish. - That the parish council is capable of making a decision on the subject matter of the poll including any decision as a statutory consultee, excluding a decision simply to agree a declaratory statement on the matter.
Training	That NALC continue to strongly encourage new councillor training especially in the areas of corporate governance, behaviour at meetings and sharing good practice.

Lobbying achievements of note

Position	Delivered
Non-cheque payments	Parish councils thanks to sustained NALC and sector lobbying are now able to make dual and electronic payments and not just rely on cheque payments - this was delivered on in 2014.
Audit	The Local Audit and Accountability Act, 2014 removed the need for smaller councils with annual turnover of less than £25k from having and needing to pay external audit fees providing they attempted to comply with the Smaller Authorities' Transparency Code. This was largely down to NALC and sector lobbying.