

Jonathan Owen

Chief Executive

AVON LOCAL COUNCILS

ASSOCIATION

AGM

OCTOBER 20

Historic opportunity to put local councils at the heart of building back better!

- Growing reputation with national government, think tanks and political parties
- Demonstrated to residents ability to support communities during pandemic
- Delivering on climate emergency, health and wellbeing and much more!
- NALC supporting county associations, councils and councillors
- Strong county associations key.
- Together building capacity, competence and confidence!

Parishes lined up for greater powers in devo White Paper

By Michael Burton

More powers for town and parish councils are earmarked in a radical shake-up of town and county hall structures due in the autumn White Paper on devolution.

Confirming last week the Government will be 'pressing ahead with the publication of our White Paper on devolution and local recovery this autumn' local government minister Simon Clarke said the plans would 'remove the complexity of governance and reduce costs to the taxpayer while making space for town and parish councils to be genuinely empowered'.

Speaking at the Local Government Association virtual conference he added: 'I'm acutely aware of the vital contribution that town and parish councils make to everyday life, whether it's keeping public toilets open, running our parks or maintaining natural spaces which have been a lifeline to many throughout this time.' He added: 'I really do want to say a thank you to parish and town councils who have been doing amazing work.'

Justin Griggs, head of policy at the National Association of Local Councils, said: 'We need to recognise that many parish and town councils have stepped up during the pandemic and must be part of the devo agenda. When reorganisation takes place



Simon Clarke (pictured with chancellor Rishi Sunak) had praise for parish and town councils

He said the paper would include plans for 'more elected mayors and unitaries as in Dorset, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire'

he said: 'We don't want councils to make serious in-year savings or issue s114 notices when it's not required.'
In advance of the White Paper many

Councils still at risk despite £500m boost

The head of Parliament's financial watchdog has warned 'a lot' of councils remained at risk of 'effectively going bankrupt' despite a £500m cash injection.

Communities secretary Robert Jenrick last week announced an unruffled £500m and will allow council and business rates tax deficits to be repaid over three years instead of the usual one. In addition, where losses are more than 5% of a local authority's planned income from sales, fees and charges, the Government will cover 75p for every pound lost.

Despite the latest package, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has conceded that councils could still be left with unmanageable pressures and urged any authority thinking of issuing a Section 114 notice to contact the department.

But chair of the Public Accounts Committee, Meg Hillier, said this week: 'My concern is that s114 notices could effectively be delayed rather than prevented, that local government is already having to make tough decisions about its spending, notwithstanding the announcement made



EXTRAORDINARY RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC FROM LOCAL COUNCILS



- Speed of response
- [400 case studies](#)
- Local knowledge
- Human focussed, not weighed down by process or bureaucracy
- Generally coping with new ways of working including remote meetings
- Interested to hear your views on continuation

SOME GREAT EXAMPLES FROM AVON!

- Bathford: volunteer deliveries
- Freshford: home deliveries
- Patchway: information brochure & cash donation to foodbank
- Portbury: whats app group and emergency hotline
- Yate: emergency grants to community groups and easter eggs!

NALC AND ALC HERE TO SUPPORT YOU

- On 13 March NALC launched a dedicated Coronavirus webpage. Since then the webpage has received almost 130,000 hits, with regular emails sent to our mailing list to highlight changes to the information provided.
<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/coronavirus>
 - NALC has also produced a range of guidance and advice covering
 - Remote/hybrid meetings and checklist for face-to-face
 - Risk assessments and templates for opening facilities, play areas etc
 - Cyber security
 - HR matters
- Much material available from ALC too and from SLCC for clerks

NALC AT A GLANCE

- Partners with 43 county associations
- 10000 councils across England – very diverse
- 85% in membership NALC
- 100,000 Councillors, £600m precept, £2bn contribution to local communities
- Work with LGA, DCLG, Locality, CPRE, SLCC etc.
- £1m budget – employ around 15 people
- 7.42p per elector affiliation fee (capped at £1900)
- 109 Great Russell Street
- 7 committees (including AGM) - councillors and county associations in control

COUNCILLORS AND COUNTY – ASSOCIATIONS IN CONTROL

- Annual General Meeting
- National Assembly
- Officeholders- Chair and Vice-Chairs (Finance and Member Services leads)
- Committees - (Management Board, Policy, Finance and Scrutiny, Lagers, Smaller)
- Task and finish groups
- (Improvement & Development Board – with SLCC)
- Supported by: Corporate Management Team
- (County officers forum)
- We'd like more people from all backgrounds to get involved with their county and national association

SERVICES TO YOU – MEMBER SERVICES

- 100 legal topic notes, briefings and financial briefings including standing orders, financial regulations and practitioners advice
- 900 legal and financial queries dealt with last
- Resources, toolkits (including GDPR), advice - 325,000 web page views, 6.5m twitter reach
- Good councillors guides – employment, planning, social media, finance.
- Working with SLCC on sector improvement : CILCA, Local Council Award Scheme (600 and growing)
- Corona Virus resources on website 130000 hits

SERVICES TO YOU – LOBBYING GOVERNMENT (POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS)

- Successfully lobbied Government not to impose referendum principles or capping for 3 years, subject to sector behaving itself!
- Persuaded Government to exempt sector from the requirement in the Data Protection Bill to appoint an external DPO officer. Saving £3m (But you still have to comply with other requirements!)
- Government announced mandatory rate relief on public conveniences saving sector 4m
- Corona virus – lobbying re remote meetings and financial support
- Agreed to make vexatious parish polls more difficult (subject to parliamentary time)
- Lobby Day

BUILDING BACK COMMUNITIES

[Open letter to the sector](#)

This crisis has demonstrated how important our sector is in building stronger communities, and we will continue to make the case to the government and others that we should be at the heart of building back communities as we move into the recovery phase.

If there are any positives to come from this, it is the greater sense of community spirit and civic action. Our task now is to harness this to support the work of our councils and encourage more people to stand at future elections.

I want to pay particular tribute to clerks and council staff, who have diligently kept the show on the road. They are working under immense pressure — having to not only cope with the anxieties we all share but additionally the difficult task of balancing home working with other responsibilities. It is crucial as councillors and local leaders that we recognise their challenge and support their efforts.”

Cllr Sue Baxter, Chairman NALC

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Leaders talk: The future of health challenges post COVID-19

28 October 2020

Leaders talk: Collaboration for health and wellbeing

29 October 2020

Leaders talk: Local councils and hidden disabilities

30 October 2020

Leaders talk: Supporting mental health in your community

30 October 2020

In conversation: Frome – youth first

17 November 2020

In conversation: Biggleswade virtual study tour

26 January 2021

Building back communities week

22 – 25 March 2021

Find out more about these events at
www.nalc.gov.uk/rebuildingcommunities

|nalc

**Rebuilding
communities.**

THANK YOU

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