

The future of local councils

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NALC Vice-Chairman*



The National Association

- Recognised national body providing support and representation for the local councils
- Provide national leadership, information, support and services: legal, policy/parliamentary, training, conferences and events
- Work with range of stakeholders and government to support and develop the role of local councils
- Partnerships/collaboration with CALCs, SLCC, ACRE, LGA, CCN, One Voice Wales

The local council model – close to people and communities



- 9000 local councils in England, £600m+ expenditure
- 80,000 councillors, 25000 staff
- 16+ million people in England covered by local councils, 30% of population
- Diverse sector, covering 100-80000, urban and rural
- 212 new local councils created in last 10 years,

The political framework and background



- 2008: Secretary of State heralds *'new era of parish power, a real purpose in modern society, addressing issues that make a real difference to people's quality of life, important contribution in reinvigorating local democracy, very effective at connecting with local people'*
- Developments in the new unitary counties
- Community Empowerment White Paper and Local Democracy Bill
- Cross party support

The 2007 Act

- Power of well being
- Power to appoint additional local people to councils
- New procedures for creating local councils
- New local councils in London
- Power to change the name of the council

Community Empowerment White Paper – key points for local councils



- Recognition and support
- Recognition of QPS and encourage more
- Encourage the creation of new neighbourhood councils, especially in urban areas
- Right of appeal to the Secretary of State, both for creation and abolition of local councils
- Make the rules on parish polls more accessible and better understood



Local Democracy Bill

- key points for local councils

- New duties on principal local authorities to promote democracy, respond to petitions, prepare an economic assessment of their area
- NALC pressed for:
 - local councils to be informed and involved in the functions of key public authorities
 - local councils to contribute to local economic strategies
 - address anachronisms regarding electronic payments
 - protection against vexatious and costly audit
 - improve the parish polls mechanism



New national programmes

- DCLG/NALC Community Empowerment Programme
- Promotion of QPS/NTS
- Devolution of decisions, services and assets
- Creation of new councils, especially in urban areas
- Promotion of participatory budgeting
- Develop a new national database

New national funding



- CLG National Partnership Programme: £740,000 over three years
- Defra funding: to NALC & ACRE £300,000 over three years
- CLG funding includes £160k for regional groupings for creation of new local councils
- Defra funding includes £60k for Clerks' Bursary Scheme

Other national empowerment programmes

- NI4 Strategy: national indicator 4 – target %ages of local people who feel they influence decisions in their area
- Community Asset Transfer
- Participatory Budgeting
- Community contracts
- Community Builders

New regional programmes

- Government Office initiatives
- Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (**RIEPs**) and Regional Empowerment Partnerships (**REPs**)
- IDeA Network of Empowering Authorities
- Community Development Foundation
- Critical for CALCs and regional groupings to engage and influence principal local authorities and at regional level

Conservative Green Paper on Localism

- New power of general competence
- Scrapping most regional government and quangos
- No forced unitaries
- Abolition of SfE (and code of conduct?)



NALC/CALC Review

- Review Group
- SOLACE report
- National workshop
- One Organisation culture
- Work groups and regional leads
- National Council endorsement and report to all CALCs
- Work on new Quality standard for CALCs
- Executive Committee monitoring outcomes

Reputation Matters

- Standards and effectiveness: QPS and training
- Community engagement
- NALC's website www.nalc.gov.uk
- LCR
- LCR Online
- DIS
- E-bulletin
- NALC's conferences and events
- Local Council Awards

Manifesto to the political parties on the future of local councils

- Recognise local councils as the first tier of local government and grass-roots of our democracy
- Recognise local councils in legislation, statutory guidance and all policy documents, as local authorities and the lead bodies democratically representing all parts of a community
- Ensure that local councils (and their representative bodies) have representation on regional and county level strategic bodies such as the RDAs, Leaders' Boards, Local Strategic Partnerships and Fire and Rescue Boards

Manifesto

- Establish local councils throughout England, in urban as well as rural areas, giving all communities representation and opportunities for local service delivery
- Complete the simplification of local government and reduce the burden of public expenditure by establishing unitary principal authorities across England?
- Strongly encourage principal authorities to work with local councils to provide efficient and economic services, providing principal authorities with detailed statutory guidance to avoid double taxation, and ensure equality across communities benefiting from devolved functions and joint funding

Manifesto

- Ensure that local councils are statutory consultees on all matters affecting their area
- Introduce a new concordat between the local council sector and Government, and the LGA
- Encourage local councils to make use of the power of well being/general competence

Manifesto

- Invest funding to increase the capacity and effectiveness of local councils
- Reform outdated legislation to allow local councils to operate more efficiently
- Introduce a volunteering programme for 11-16 year olds with local councils, including shadowing, as part of the citizenship curriculum

A limited window of opportunity

- **Maximise the opportunity**
- **Maximise resources**
- **Organise effectively**
- **Deliver results**
- **Invest for the future**
- **Cooperation and campaigning**
- **Unified message on behalf of local councils**

**A great opportunity for the
future**

Questions and discussion

**Further information:
www.nalc.gov.uk**

