

Rt Hon Dame Angela Eagle DBE MP
Secretary of State
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Via email: Ministerial.Correspondence@defra.gov.uk

4 August 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Congratulations and invitation to meet with NALC

On behalf of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), congratulations on your appointment as Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). We look forward to working with you and your ministerial team.

NALC represents England's 10,000 parish and town councils, the tier of local government closest to communities, with a vital role in protecting the environment, supporting local services and helping sustain thriving rural communities.

As the government pursues its ambitions for nature recovery, cleaner rivers and waterways, flood resilience, food security and a green economy, parish and town councils stand ready to help deliver these priorities locally. Through biodiversity projects, tree planting, community green spaces, local food initiatives and action on climate adaptation, our councils are already helping to create greener, more resilient and thriving communities across England.

As a member of the Rural Taskforce that helped shape the Future of Rural England Report, NALC was pleased to see the report's emphasis on stronger rural proofing, the establishment of a cross-government Rural Board, and recognition that devolution must not overlook the needs of rural areas. Our councils cover most of rural England and we look forward to working with all tiers of government to help rural communities realise their full potential.

We also welcome the government's commitment in the Rewiring the State policy paper to move powers and resources closer to communities, enabling decisions to be made locally and strengthening collaboration between national, regional and local government. Parish and town councils are already the most local and accountable part of the democratic system and can play an important role in helping government, mayors and local authorities deliver better outcomes for people and places.

Thriving rural communities are central to the nation's future prosperity and all government departments, not just Defra, have a role to play in unlocking their potential. We have therefore also particularly welcomed the government's commitment to stronger rural proofing, improved accountability and better measurement of outcomes for rural communities.

NALC and the parish and town council sector can help Defra deliver its ambitions locally, but government needs to give the sector greater recognition, direct access to funding, and the powers and assets to act.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how parish and town councils can be recognised as delivery partners in creating thriving rural communities and achieving the government's environmental, rural and community objectives.

Congratulations again, and I look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cllr Iain Hamilton', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Iain Hamilton,
NALC chair