

Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP
Secretary of State
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

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

27 July 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 reappointment as Secretary of State. It is one of the most consequential portfolios in government, shaping the daily lives of people and places across the country, and we wish you every success.

As the body representing 10,000 parish and town councils across England, NALC welcomes this Government's commitment to devolution, and we broadly support your ambitions in this area. We have been pleased to see the Government's recognition and support for parish and town councils – including facilitating stronger, more effective relationships with principal authorities – reflected in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act.

We therefore welcome the Prime Minister's ambition to go further — delivering good growth in every postcode and putting places first. Devolution must also reach the rural and coastal areas too often overlooked, and it should not stop at mayors and combined authorities: every city, town and village deserves a pathway to greater power and fiscal autonomy, with parish and town councils, as the tier closest to communities, part of that settlement. This matters in practice as much as in principle. As local government reorganisation continues, councillors and clerks are adapting to increasingly complex demands, acting as connectors, communicators and catalysts to make a difference for their communities.

But strengthening democracy must also mean protecting those who serve it. Recent tragic events have been a devastating reminder of the risks faced by those in public life at all levels. And while most parish and town councils function well and uphold high standards, some councillors and staff are subjected to intimidation, abuse and poor behaviour. The current standards regime is undermining public trust, making it harder to retain councillors and staff, and deterring people from standing for office.

Which is why the Government must use its current momentum to act now and get things done, giving councils breathing space from these pressures. In October 2024, you rightly acknowledged that councils lack a system to protect victims or act on unacceptable conduct, and you committed to reforms including stronger sanctions. We strongly urge you to bring forward new legislation immediately.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your ministerial team to discuss the Government's wider devolution agenda, Ten-Year Plan and standards reform. I would be grateful if your office could contact nalc@connectpa.co.uk to arrange a meeting.

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