

IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD | AGENDA

17 March 2022, 11:00 – 13:00.

The meeting will be open from 10:50 for pre-meeting conversations and to resolve any technological issues. If the meeting extends beyond 12.00 there will be a short comfort break and the meeting will then continue if necessary.

Via Zoom.

1. Apologies for absence

2. Minutes from previous meeting and matters arising

- 2.1. Recommended action: to approve the minutes of the last meeting of the Improvement and Development Board held on 18 November 2021.

Appendix 2.1

3. Discussion item: Implications of Levelling Up White Paper (formally known as Devolution)

Government White Paper - [Levelling Up the United Kingdom - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/white-papers/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom)

- 3.1. Board to discuss and give views on the implications for the sector's improvement strategy (NALC summary of the government's 'Levelling up the UK' white paper attached). National Improvement Strategy -

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/our-work/2403-national-training-strategy-march-2017/file>

Appendix 3.1

- 3.2. At a recent NALC event the senior cabinet office civil servant stressed the importance of the super local to levelling up and suggested there was a real opportunity to shape the future direction of travel. An open door – you need to shape it!

- 3.3. Others may have different views, the district councils network in its response expressed concerns about empowering parishes: “town and parish councils play an

important role at the hyper local level, however their capacity is variable and not all areas have parishes. DCN's response - <https://districtcouncils.info/press-releases/district-councils-network-responds-to-levelling-up-white-paper/>

4. IDB Forward Work Programme:

Appendix 4.1

- 4.1. Board to agree 2022/23 work programme.

Updates

5. Councils: raising the standard

IDB National Intervention Panel

- 5.1. Peer Review: Update on peer reviews and support. Including recruitment, undertaking 2 reviews and Nottinghamshire support.
- 5.2. NALC update on improvement matters including: an update on Local Council Award Scheme and the E-Learning Project.

Verbal report

Appendix 5.2

6. Officers: professional development

- 6.1. Board to receive an update on Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) and Financial Introduction to Local Council Administration (FiLCA)
- 6.2. SLCC update on improvement matters

Verbal report

Verbal report

7. County Officers: professional development

- 7.1. Board to receive an update (CALC summary attached).

Appendix 7.1

8. Updates on improvement and development initiatives

8.1. Local Government Association (LGA) update

Board to receive an update

Verbal report

8.2. Department for Levelling up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) update

Verbal report

Board to receive an update

9. Dates of future meetings

The next meeting of the Improvement and Development board will be on 22 June 2022.



NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT
STRATEGY FOR PARISH
& TOWN COUNCILS

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APPENDIX 2.1 DRAFT MINUTES | IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

18 November 2021

Present:

Jonathan Owen, NALC chief executive; Helen Quick, SLCC head of conferences, training & education; Pauline Whitehead, SLCC; Sue Hobbs, SLCC; Wendy Amis, Derbyshire county officer; Cllr Richard Parry, Kent Association of Local Councils; Adam Keppel-Green, SLCC branch rep; Rob Smith, SLCC chief executive and Elisabeth Skinner MBE, SLCC academic leader; Alison Robinson, Gloucestershire county officer.

Also present:

Jane Moore, NALC senior solicitor and head of member services; Anders Hanson, NALC project manager, Lisa Etchell, NALC project officer, Jon Sutcliffe, LGA, senior advisor, workforce team and Helen Reeves, LGA, programme manager – leadership.

1. Apologies for absence and introductions

Apologies were received from Cllr Sue Baxter, NALC national chairman; Sally Longmate, Suffolk county Officer (Alison Robinson in attendance for Sally), Lusi Manukyan, LGA Senior Advisor - Improvement & Policy (Helen Reeves in attendance for Lusi)

Board members were also provided the opportunity to introduce themselves.

Board noted Lusi Manukyan had replaced Helen Jenkins as LGA representative.

2. Minutes from previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2021 were approved.

3. Matters arising

Devolution update:

- 3.1 The Onward think tank report promoting the sector had been published last week and welcomed by the Board. (Link to report:

<https://www.ukonward.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/double-devolution-council.pdf>).

Jonathan Owen reported that following the board's last meeting an updated proposal, with scaled back funding figures, had been submitted to DLUHC following their initial feedback to NALC's original proposal (circulated to the Board prior to the meeting). NALC were currently awaiting the bid feedback.

An article in the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) reported on a meeting between NALC and the LGA's People and Places Board. It showed concerns from upper tier councils over proposals to devolve powers down to town and parish councils. Cllr Sue Baxter had addressed some of these issues at the meeting with the LGA, but it reflected the need to raise the standard of the sector and its reputation.

The board noted that the government's devolution white paper was still yet to be published.

Action: LGC article to be circulated with the minutes of the meeting.

Resolved: The Board noted NALC's updated funding proposal to DLUHC.

4. Discussion item: Workforce Strategy

- 4.1 Jon Sutcliffe gave a presentation on LGA's 'Observations on developing a national workforce strategy'. This included 5 key priority areas: Leadership, Organisational Change & Development, Skills Development, Recruitment & Retention and Pay & Reward systems. He invited the Board to focus on questions such as developing actions/priorities, creating a shared vision, the availability of sufficient information and promoting ownership and agreement.

He suggested the LGA were willing to offer assistance with arranging a workshop around workforce planning; and welcomed the use of LGA's style and framework in developing a strategy for the sector. He emphasised that a sense of shared ownership was critical, highlighting the need to understand data capacity/capability in its development. The LGA were also available to help with materials or commissioning surveys, through the usual tender process.

Cllr Parry mentioned that due to the diverse size, scale and expertise in town and parish councils that any strategy would need to be sectionalized to accommodate differences.

Wendy Amis raised the issue of how a workforce was defined and whether the LGA strategy worked across both national and local levels. Jon added that nationally it aimed to show vision/priorities across all areas, but noted the challenges involved in mapping and keeping track at regional level due to some workforce visions being more devolved than others with differing plans. He urged the Board to get in touch with any ideas.

Rob Smith mentioned that many councils and the SLCC were already holding large amounts of data that could help supplement any information.

Jonathan Owen suggested that each organization look at the questions on the first slide of the presentation and be prepared to answer them at the next board meeting. In parallel NALC would identify options for developing a national survey.

Action: Presentation slides and LGA workforce document to be circulated with minutes of the meeting.

Resolved:

That the Board reflect on key questions from the Workforce Planning presentation, and NALC explore survey options including commissioning. To be further discussed at the next meeting of the Board.

5. Discussion item: Promoting take up of CiLCA, LCAS and General Power of Competence

- 5.1 Elisabeth Skinner mentioned there was scope to promote the value and benefits of CiLCA training to councillors. enabling clerks to get the support and encouragement needed. She advised that the SLCC has a brief 2-sided CiLCA publicity document, a copy of which she can provide to members.

Adam Keppel-Green suggested the SLCC document could be turned into a template report to use in promotion. He also mentioned that some clerks were daunted by the volume of work required for CiLCA and that cost was often an issue. Smaller parishes were interested in investing in training, but the overall package was deemed expensive. He believed there was a lack of incentives/personal benefits to both councillors/clerks from LCAS.

Discussions also took place around streamlining the LCAS guidance and application form process, a video 'journey through the process' and getting principal councils on board offering incentives to councils, such as discount/access to courses.

Anders Hanson suggested that better promotion on the NALC website of the benefits of LCAS/CiLCA would help and could be sold as ways to improve both the council and the clerk. Promotion on social media and providing case studies were also good ways to humanise the experience.

Wendy Amis put forward the idea of taking a coherent 3-pronged objective approach to include: professional clerk qualification (CILCA), professional council qualification (LCAS) and a professional councillor qualification.

Further discussions also took place around consistency of guides/documents on various websites and the importance of Community Governance.

Resolved:

That the Board agreed to take forward the 3-pronged approach suggestion of: a professional clerk qualification (CILCA), a professional council qualification (LCAS) and a professional councillor qualification; and to ensure consistent information is presented across all platforms.

Action: Anders Hanson and Helen Quick to take forward and commence marketing. Progress to be reported back at the next meeting of the Board

6. Councils: raising the standard

IDB National Intervention Panel

- 6.1 Draft Terms of Reference (TOR's) from the current pilot for the IDB National Intervention Panel were circulated to the Board prior to the meeting.

Jonathan Owen reported that NALC had been working with a principal council on the improvement strategy and that the TOR's had proved useful. Keighley Town Council was also cited as an example. The start date was 9th

December after which he would report back with further progress to the Board.

- 6.2 The board received a report from Anders Hanson on various project areas and improvement matters as outlined in the report. Key points included: Local Council Award Scheme statistics, promotional events; an update of the on-line learning pilot scheme and an outline of the website redevelopment.

He reported that now the on-line learning pilot scheme had concluded, further development of courses and materials would take place. In addition, 3 new courses on communications and data protection would soon be added; and he welcomed any ideas for new subject courses from members. A further update of on-line learning will be given at the next meeting of the Board. Plans for the new website were also still in progress, of which further updates will be given once a timeline had been established.

Wendy Amis requested feedback on County Associations that hadn't taken up the pilot scheme; ideally in January, ahead of the end of the financial year in 2022.

The Board welcomed the addition of new on-line learning courses and looked forward to the improvement of the LCAS application process.

- 6.3 A CALC update and county association workstream from Sally Longmate was circulated prior to the meeting.

Wendy Amis reported that there had been some enthusiasm amongst county officers for the 'buddy system', but there was lots of work involved trying to get it off the ground. Capacity was also an issue.

She mentioned currently working with NALC to get central government funds for additional resources and thanked Jonathan for his support so far. Sally was continuing to push the agenda on this.

It was agreed that this should be a standing item on future agendas.

7. Officers: professional development

- 7.1 The board received a verbal update from Elisabeth Skinner on CiLCA statistics and improvements. She reported that CiLCA 2021 was going well, with two discussion forums recently taken place. The new training guide

had been well received and registrations had been good, with a hybrid of both virtual/in-person attendance.

She highlighted the issue of encouraging councils that the qualification should be achieved in the first 2 years of a clerk starting, rather than within the first year. There was also a challenge over reporting statistics, with new statistics for CiLCA 2021 to be set up once 2015 had been signed off.

Elisabeth also advised that Sue and Pauline would be taking over the operations side of CiLCA at the end of the year, but that she would be staying as co-course leader for Community Governance. She suggested that members encourage applications to this important advanced clerk qualification.

Jonathan Owen requested sight of any promotional materials and information on who had been awarded degrees once determined. Helen Quick would action this request.

Helen Quick reported that new qualification FiLCA had so far received 150 registrations with good initial feedback. FiLCA Wales was also due to be launched soon. 2022 dates had now been published and included an in-person/virtual/hybrid mix of events.

- 7.2 Helen Quick advised that higher level course promotion commenced at the point of achieving ILCA. Once passed, clerks were advised of the next stages of qualifications and information given on how to work towards achieving them.

County associations were reminded to contact Helen with details of CiLCA courses they offered so that SLCC could publicise them on their website.

8. Updates on improvement and development initiatives

8.1 LGA

The Board received a verbal update from Helen Reeves on LGA matters. She reported that LGA representatives had attended the recent COP26 and that their Net Zero Innovation Programme received a 'Highly Commended' award in the final of the Climate Challenge Cup. Attendance at the conference had also helped raise the profile of what climate change means for the local government community.

Helen also mentioned that as part of the LGA's civility in public life programme, there was an event on 'Personal Safety for Councillors' taking place on 8th December. Further events/packages were also planned with a focus on disability, women and young people. The LGA were also seeking feedback from councillors on their experience, which had included parish and town councillors.

Jonathan Owen suggested that NALC would help to promote the 8th December event and would share the results of the LGA survey to town and parish councils with the Board when available.

The Board congratulated the LGA on their COP26 award.

8.2 **DLUHC**

No report was received.

9. IDB forward work programme

- 9.1 The board noted the items already submitted for the forward work programme.

Workforce Strategy and promotion of CiLCA and LCAS to be added to the work programme.

Wendy Amis requested that professional development of CALC officers be added to future agendas as a regular item.

Resolved: That these items be added to the forward plan and Board members identify any future items and the IDB secretariat will use to inform future agendas.

10. Dates of future meetings

Draft meeting dates for 2022 to be circulated to the Board.

Cllr Parry suggested that an in-person meeting of the Board would be useful to members.



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APPENDIX 3.1 IMPLICATIONS OF LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER | IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Levelling up the UK white paper: summary

Key highlights

- A review of neighbourhood governance, including looking at the role and functions of parish councils and how to make them quicker and easier to establish.
- Explore how the existing Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) can be used to support neighbourhood and community activity where parish councils do not exist and continue the neighbourhood portion of CIL as it introduces a new Infrastructure Levy.
- No top-down restructuring of local government.
- A new Strategy for Community Spaces and Relationships.
- Enhance the offer in the Community Ownership Fund, learning lessons from the first bidding round to maximise the impact of the fund.
- Consider how the existing Community Asset Transfer and Asset of Community Value Schemes can be enhanced.
- Councils and communities will create new local design codes to shape streets as residents wish, widen the accessibility of neighbourhood planning, encouraging more accessible hybrid models for planning committees in England and look to pilot greater empowerment of communities to shape regeneration and development plans.
- The ability to have a meaningful say on individual planning applications will be retained and improved through new digital technologies.
- Work to build local government capacity and capability through ongoing sector support and funding a programme of improvement covering a range of priorities which is reviewed periodically.
- Extend centrally designed training, advice and guidance, and market and supplier intelligence to the sector.
- Introduce an obligation for the UK Government to publish an annual report on delivery against the levelling up missions
- A new approach to place through Levelling Up Directors, providing a key point of contact for local areas, acting as a bridge between local leaders and central government.
- Setting up local panels, drawn from a wide range of stakeholders, to serve as a sounding board on levelling up delivery and implementation, working closely with new Levelling Up Directors.
- Engage with local government and key stakeholders on the simplification of the local growth funding landscape with respect to the publication of further plans later this year.
- Explore piloting local votes for funding, putting choices in the hands of local communities to let them decide what matters most.
- Launch the UK Shared Prosperity Fund providing funding of £2.6 billion by March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the Fund via a funding formula rather than a competition.
- Establish a body to focus on local data, transparency and outcomes.

Overview

- The [Levelling up the United Kingdom \(UK\) white paper](#) was published on 2 February 2022 and sets out how the UK Government will spread opportunity more equally across the UK.
- It covers the scale and causes of geographic disparities across the country, as well as a programme of change grounded in twelve missions, improved central and local decision making through better information, incentives and institutions, and rigorous and independent monitoring and evaluation.
- Its programme of change has four pillars with aims to:
 - help ensure everyone, wherever they live, has the opportunity to succeed and thrive
 - ensure that businesses can invest, create jobs and drive productivity, particularly in areas that have previously struggled
 - empower local leaders and communities
 - enable people to take pride in the places they live and have a good quality of life.
- It is a critical stepping stone on the UK Government's ambition to radically alter spatial disparities, ensuring that geography is no longer destiny and that all people and places in the UK are equipped to share in the country's substantial economic, social and cultural wealth.

NALC's initial response

In NALC's on the day response to the white paper, our chair, Cllr Keith Stevens, said:

- *"Today's white paper is a welcome and positive first step down the long road ahead to levelling up, further devolution and empowering local communities.*
- *The government has rightly recognised the local leadership role of England's 10,000 local (parish and town) councils. They are the first tier of local government in England, closest to the people, and play an essential part in improving and strengthening communities. But they have the potential to do so much more. That is why I strongly welcome the review of their role and functions and make it quicker and easier to set them up.*
- *In England, local councils are already putting pride in place through the provision of parks and open spaces, markets, support for high streets and town centres, and so much more, and taking action on other local priorities.*
- *This review provides an opportunity to strengthen our first tier of local government and ensure their 100,000 councillors have the necessary powers, support, and direct access to existing funding to provide high-quality local facilities and services and further improve people's sense of belonging and community.*
- *Given the main areas for investment by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, its design must give local councils direct access to this funding to tackle locally identified priorities.*
- *I also welcome the government's commitment to publish the second report on rural proofing in England this spring. Levelling up must also include levelling out and ensuring rural communities are not ignored.*
- *Measures to strengthen local leadership must also extend to all levels and not be confined to just county or regional level, which are still far removed*

from people's everyday lives and experiences. This should include greater recognition of the support needed for the 100,000 local councillors who provide local leadership every day in their communities.

- *Local councils must also not be overlooked by new structures such as the levelling up directors and advisory council or independent bodies set up to strengthen the transparency of local government.*
- *I look forward to discussing the white paper in more detail with the government and working together to maximise the potential of local councils to levelling up our nation and communities."*

Measures of particular relevance or interest to local councils are below.

Community empowerment and review of neighbourhood governance

- The UK Government will begin work with partners in local government and civil society on a programme to put in place a bold new approach to community empowerment.
- This includes launching a review of neighbourhood governance in England, looking at how to make it easier for local people and community groups to come together, set local priorities and shape the future of their neighbourhoods.
- The review will also look at the role and functions of parish councils in England and how to make them quicker and easier to establish.
- The UK Government will also pilot new models for community partnership that can help make local power a reality. These will empower local people to shape the place they live, influence local services and take control of community spaces.
- One model the UK Government will test is Community Covenants. These would be agreements between councils, public bodies and the communities they serve, seeking to harness the energy, know-how and assets of local communities.
- Communities also need strong community infrastructure and social capital, but this is lacking in many places and tends to be particularly weak in the most deprived places.
- The UK Government will set out a new Strategy for Community Spaces and Relationships. The strategy will be underpinned by the following guiding principles:
 - community power – making it easier for local people and community groups to come together to set local priorities and shape their neighbourhoods
 - understanding “what works” – building the evidence base to better understand how to support communities and put them in the driving seat to level up
 - listening to communities – engaging with communities, local government and civil society to identify priorities, the assets that matter to local places, and the policies and actions needed to strengthen community infrastructure
 - every community matters – reaching out to engage with the most disconnected communities, and ensuring funding reaches those most in need. This will be matched by a better understanding of the facts and figures behind community activity.

- The UK Government will work with partners to bring together economic data on the value of civil society, working with the ONS to develop a civil society satellite account, so that estimates more fully reflect the scope of the sector and fill a longstanding gap in official statistics.
- In order to deliver substantive and sustainable change, local places need the power to create and deliver solutions to local challenges. This is not only about transferring power from central to local government.
- Power is also generated locally, by the voluntary collaboration of citizens and public servants taking responsibility for realising the changes they want to see.
- One model the UK Government will test is Community Covenants. These would be agreements between councils, public bodies and the communities they serve, seeking to harness the energy, know-how and assets of local communities. They would also set out how local social capital and infrastructure can be built and sustained to encourage confident and active communities.
- A Covenant approach would see local authorities and communities work together to take a holistic look at the health of local civic and community life, set out a driving ambition for their area, and share power and resources to achieve this. The UK Government will now begin testing with partners in local government and civil society to design an approach to community partnership.
- Alongside this, local people will also be given a greater role in decision making and delivery in their area.
- The UK Government will make the following commitments to empower local communities.
 - Assets: The UK Government will enhance the offer in the Community Ownership Fund, learning lessons from the first bidding round to maximise the impact of the fund across the UK. As part of the strategy for community spaces and relationships, the UK Government will consider how the existing Community Asset Transfer and Asset of Community Value Schemes can be enhanced, and consult on options to go further to support community ownership.
 - Planning: Councils and communities will create new local design codes to shape streets as residents wish; widen the accessibility of neighbourhood planning, encouraging more accessible hybrid models for planning committees in England; and look to pilot greater empowerment of communities to shape regeneration and development plans. The ability to have a meaningful say on individual planning applications will be retained and improved through new digital technologies.
 - Social economy: The UK Government will consider how best to encourage social organisations and entrepreneurship to flourish in left-behind places across the UK, building on and augmenting existing support, generating evidence on what social enterprises need to do to thrive in disadvantaged places, and encouraging the next generation of social entrepreneurs
- Procurement: As part of the UK Government's plans to reform the way the public sector procures services it will improve transparency, provide greater flexibility and put greater emphasis on social value. New reforms will include awarding contracts on the basis of Most Advantageous Tender, encouraging a greater consideration of social value across the c.£300bn of public procurement contracts.

- The UK Government will explore piloting local votes for funding, putting choices in the hands of local communities to let them decide what matters most.
- Alongside this, new sources of funding will be made available for community activity.
- The UK Government will help charities, social enterprises and vulnerable individuals, by unlocking £44m through the Dormant Assets Scheme. This includes:
 - £20m through the Youth Futures Foundation to help break down barriers and improve accessibility into employment for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds
 - £20m to Access – The Foundation for Social Investment – which will provide urgently-needed finance to over 1,000 charities and social enterprises, particularly in more deprived areas in England
 - £4m to Fair4All Finance to accelerate their work on affordable consolidation loans for people in financially vulnerable circumstances.
- The UK Government will launch a public consultation in 2022 to invite input on what social or environmental purposes the English portion of the Dormant Assets Scheme should fund. This will include options on youth, financial inclusion and social investment, as well as considering a new Community Wealth Fund proposal to distribute funding to local communities.
- In addition, the UK Government will:
 - provide community investment as part of the £2.6bn UKSPF, including new investment opportunities in community-led activity. The UK Government will support places in every corner of the UK to combine strategic investments with community and neighbourhood activity, including in the places where social capital is weakest.
 - explore further collaboration between lottery funders for arts, heritage, sport and community projects within the UK to ensure that £1.7bn in National Lottery funding every year reaches the people and places that need it most.
 - explore how the existing Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) can be used to support neighbourhood and community activity where Parish Councils do not exist across England and continue the neighbourhood portion of CIL as it introduces a new Infrastructure Levy.
 - consider ways to further develop the role of government in leveraging private investment into community and neighbourhood infrastructure, community activity and wealth building, which will include building on and extending the evidence base for de-risking interventions, as well as exploring new opportunities for working with the financial sector to test and scale innovative approaches.

Local government reorganisation

- The UK Government will not impose top-down restructuring of local government.
- Local government reorganisation can help to simplify the patchwork of local government structures, creating institutions with strong and accountable leadership over an optimal geography for delivering high quality public services.

- While there is a case for wholesale institutional reform, this could distract from the implementation of improved local government services and outcomes, and delay the agreement and implementation of devolution deals.
- Reorganisation will remain a locally-led avenue available where there is broad local support, but will not be a requirement for a devolution deal.
- The UK Government intends to follow an incremental approach, using existing legislation to work with areas which are seeking to establish reformed local governance structures.

Supporting local leaders and the local government sector

- Stronger local leadership is essential to raise living standards, improve public services, and increase people's pride in place. This goes beyond elected councillors and mayors, to include the broader public, private and voluntary sectors.
- As new powers are devolved, the UK Government will provide support to build local capacity and capability.
- The UK Government will empower local leaders with the resources they need to level up their communities. This means a commitment to ensuring that funding allocations for councils are based on an up-to-date assessment of their needs and resources.
- The data used to assess this has not been updated in a number of years, with some dating back as far as 2000. Over the coming months, the UK Government will work closely with the sector and other stakeholders to update this and to look at the challenges and opportunities facing the local government sector before consulting on any potential changes.
- The UK Government will also work to build local government capacity and capability through ongoing sector support and has funded a programme of improvement covering a range of priorities. This is reviewed periodically. Strengthening the sector's commercial and procurement capacity and capability will also be a key focus of this review.
- The UK Government will extend centrally designed training, advice and guidance, and market and supplier intelligence to the sector. This will enable local authorities to make sound commercial decisions, achieve savings and service improvements, and support commercial delivery that represents best value to citizens.

Supporting private sector partnerships

- The UK Government is encouraging the integration of LEPs and their business boards into MCAs, the GLA and County Deals, where these exist.
- Where a devolution deal does not yet exist, LEPs will continue to play their vital role in supporting local businesses and the local economy.
- Where devolution deals cover part of a LEP, this will be looked at on a case by case basis.
- Further detail on this transition will be provided in writing to LEPs as soon as possible.

Transparency and accountability

- The cornerstone of a credible policy regime is the combination of well-defined policy goals and policies, alongside mechanisms to ensure that decision-makers are held to account transparently for the choices they make and whether objectives are being met.
- The UK Government is putting in place a new accountability regime for the design and delivery of levelling up.
- First, a statutory obligation to report annually on progress towards meeting the Levelling Up missions. The report will draw on the metrics set out in this White Paper and provide rigorous analysis and monitoring of progress in reducing regional disparities. It will also provide progress updates on policy related to addressing spatial differences in living standards and social outcomes across the UK. This annual report will be published and be subject to external and Parliamentary scrutiny.
- Second, to bring a diverse, independent and expert group of voices into the policymaking process, the UK Government is creating a Levelling Up Advisory Council. The Council will be charged with providing independent expert advice on matters relating to the design and delivery of levelling up. Its analysis will be commissioned and published, at the discretion of the Levelling Up Cabinet Committee, chaired by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, working with other ministers. The Council will consider a range of themes relevant to the levelling up challenge articulated in this White Paper.

High street rejuvenation

- The UK Government announced the next 68 local authorities to receive expert support from the High Streets Task Force, allocated using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), together with a measure of retail exposure.
- Delivery to these local authorities will be staggered, starting from summer 2022 until the end of the programme in 2024. This builds on the Task Force's wider offer to all communities, which includes online resources and training modules, webinars and access to data dashboards.
- In addition, the UK Government will bring forward further measures to make high streets and town centres the thriving hearts of communities again.

Green Space

- The UK Government plans to empower local leaders and communities to reimagine their urban green space and improve access for communities who lack it. This includes enhancing and maintaining protection of the Green Belt.
- The UK Government will develop plans for: further greening the Green Belt in England; bringing wildlife back, aimed at increasing public access while simultaneously delivering nature recovery; securing further environmental improvements.
- A wider rethinking of urban green space, including considering new ownership and management models and locally-determined access targets to improve access to the outdoors in towns and cities across the UK.
- The UK Government will also radically expand investment in parks. Access to safe, attractive communal green spaces is critical to enhancing the

attractiveness of towns and cities. Alongside the existing £9m UK-wide Levelling Up Parks Fund which provides direct grants to deliver over 100 green spaces in the communities with the lowest access, a new £30m parks fund will deliver up to £1m to at least 30 local parks in England for

- The UK Government will also invest over £750m in this Parliament on tree planting and peatland restoration in England, helping to increase tree planting rates across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by the end of this Parliament and support the creation of new community forests in the North East, Cumbria and Plymouth to improve access to woodlands where these are needed most.

Supporting young people

- The UK Government will invest £560m of funding over the next three years to deliver a new National Youth Guarantee that reflects young people's priorities, with a focus on levelling up.
- This will ensure that, by 2025, every young person in England will have access to regular out of school activities, adventures away from home and opportunities to volunteer, supported by:
 - investing £288m of capital to deliver up to 300 new and refurbished youth facilities, ranging from small modular buildings to flagship youth zone projects, which will be supported by revenue funding to give young people access to support from youth workers, creating over 45,000 extra youth activities per year
 - funding a reformed National Citizen Service programme for the next three years, with a year-round offer for thousands of young people
 - providing £4m to the #iwill fund to create thousands of new youth volunteering opportunities.
- An additional £10m will be spent this year in areas in need of levelling up, this will enable local youth providers to invest in capital projects that expand the reach, number and range of services they currently offer.

Culture, Heritage and Sport

- Tackling disparities in access to culture and delivering a truly national cultural offer should be a defining feature of levelling up. The UK Government will make changes to transform the landscape for arts, culture and heritage by significantly increasing cultural investment outside London.
- In the spring, DCMS will set out further plans over the next three years and beyond, this will include:
 - £40m of successful projects in England as part of the Cultural Investment Fund, with the majority of this being spent outside of London on over 50 projects involving cultural assets, libraries, museums and creative industries
 - Identifying over 100 levelling up priority places outside of London that will be the focus for additional ACE engagement and investment.
 - This will mean that places like Stoke-on Trent, Barnsley, Rochdale and Wigan are given the support they need to build on their rich cultural heritage.

Reforming the planning system in England

- The current planning system enables some developers to benefit disproportionately and unfairly from the land they develop.
- The UK Government is developing models for a new infrastructure levy that will enable local authorities to capture value from development more efficiently, securing the affordable housing and infrastructure communities need.

Homeownership and housing quality

- The UK Government is giving communities in England more powers to develop a shared vision of the future of their area.
- Since 2012, over 2,800 groups have started the neighbourhood planning process in areas that cover more than 14m people.
- The UK Government has made available over £34.5m of support for Neighbourhood Planning in 2018 to 2022, enabling communities to shape the places in which they live, decide the location of new homes, employment, shops and services, as well as protection for green spaces and heritage assets.

Rural proofing

- We will publish the second report on rural proofing in England this spring.
- This report will set out how government departments are working to support levelling up in rural areas, through targeted approaches where needed, and how we are strengthening the rural economy, developing rural infrastructure, delivering rural services and managing the natural environment.

Restoring order, tackling anti-social behaviour and boosting quality of life

- The UK Government recognises the impact that litter, graffiti, and broken windows have on people's pride in where they live and the impact it has on crime and fear of crime and will bring forward plans for a National Spring Clean.
- This will see Community Payback leveraged in support of cleaning up neighbourhoods, simultaneously delivering real improvements for local people while ensuring that justice is seen to be done.
- Additionally, the UK Government will also publish a new plan for anti-social behaviour and quality of life issues, to ensure that those who are terrorised, intimidated, and impacted by this behaviour can be sure that government is on their side and determined to swiftly and effectively tackle the perpetrators.

Local devolution

- Around 40% of the population of England are currently covered by a devolution deal.
- Extending devolution in England means:
 - inviting Cornwall; Derbyshire and Derby; Devon, Plymouth and Torbay; Durham; Hull and East Yorkshire; Leicestershire; Norfolk; Nottinghamshire and Nottingham; and Suffolk to start formal negotiations to agree new

County Deals, with the aim of agreeing a number of these deals by autumn 2022

- taking forward negotiations to agree a MCA deal with York and North Yorkshire and an expanded MCA deal for the North East
- confirming that other areas, particularly those with broadly similar circumstances to North Yorkshire and York have the opportunity to consider their interest in a MCA devolution deal – for instance, the UK Government will work to secure a mayoral deal in Cumbria and similar areas.
- Deepening devolution in England means:
 - the UK Government will open negotiations immediately on trailblazer deals with the West Midlands and Greater Manchester, which will act as the blueprint for other MCAs to follow
 - working with MCAs, initially as part of the trailblazer deals, to explore options to streamline the funding landscape for MCAs
 - inviting other MCAs and the GLA to bid for sweeping further powers, through the new devolution framework.
- Simplifying devolution in England means:
 - setting out the UK Government's new devolution framework to provide greater clarity on the devolution offer across England
 - seeking to legislate to establish a new form of combined authority model to be made up of upper-tier local authorities only (e.g. a county council and its associated unitary councils), providing a single, accountable institution across a functional economic area or whole county geography; district councils can be non-constituent members; and, as set out in Chapter 2, county councils will be expected to work closely with their district councils.
- The Levelling Up Fund (LUF) is investing in capital infrastructure that improves everyday life and has a tangible impact on local places. For round one, the fund invested in projects across three themes: regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport and investing in cultural and heritage assets. Funding is targeted towards places with the most significant need, as measured by the index of priority places, 443 which takes into account places' need for economic recovery and growth, improved transport connectivity and regeneration, in line with the fund's objectives. The LUF will allocate £4.8bn over the period to 2024-25 and details of future rounds of the fund will be set out soon
- The £3.6bn Towns Fund aims to unleash the economic potential of towns and high streets in England. Towns have been encouraged to make interventions that contribute to the UK's overarching goal of reaching Net Zero by 2050, showing practically how levelling up and Net Zero can go hand in hand. This will be delivered through two elements:
 - Town Deals, which aim to regenerate towns and deliver long-term economic and productivity growth through investments in urban regeneration, planning and land use, skills, heritage and enterprise infrastructure. Up to £25m, and more in exceptional cases, is being invested in each town. All 101 participating towns have had a deal announced, totalling £2.3bn.
- The Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) which aims to renew and reshape town centres and high streets in England in a way that drives growth and ensures future sustainability. In total, 72 places will share over £830m.
- The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will increase life chances and build pride in place across the UK, by empowering places to invest in local

priorities across three priority areas: communities and place, people and skills, and local business.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

- [Pre-Launch Guidance for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#) was published alongside the Levelling Up White Paper.
- The fund is a central pillar of the levelling up agenda and a significant component of support for places across the UK, providing funding of £2.6 billion by March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the Fund via a funding formula rather than a competition.
- In England, the fund will primarily operate over the strategic geographies of the Mayoral Combined Authorities and the Greater London Authority, and lower-tier or unitary authorities elsewhere.
- In February and March, the UK Government will run a series of webinars and engagement activities with local authorities and other stakeholders.
- Local authorities with responsibility for the Fund can start preparing for the launch of the fund by starting early conversations about how the Fund can best support the people and businesses in their community to thrive and grow, and identifying local partners and stakeholders who can provide advice and insight on local needs.
- Comprehensive and balanced local partnerships will be a core component of how the Fund will be administered locally. Local leaders will be tasked to work with a diverse range of local stakeholders, civic society organisations, employer bodies responsible for identifying local skills plans, and businesses to achieve Fund outcomes in their areas.
- Local partners will support the authority leading the Fund in each place to develop an investment plan, which we will commission from each place later in the spring.
- Working to a UK-wide framework published by the UK Government, local partners will influence the Fund through development and delivery of an investment plan for each place.
- Investment priorities for the Fund are communities and place, local businesses, people and skills and the Multiply programme.
- Further information on the Fund will be published in the Spring.

Engagement and Informal Consultation

- Levelling up is a collective endeavour. Success in closing spatial disparities across the UK will rely on input, buy-in and partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, including local leaders, devolved administrations, businesses, civil society, academics and think tanks.
- Many of the policies contained within the programme of change will need to be co-designed and co-delivered. To that end, the UK Government will put in place a comprehensive process of engagement and informal consultation to inform levelling up delivery and future policy-making, and avoid the siloed, short-term and small-scale approaches that have hindered attempts to tackle spatial disparities in the past.
- Some of the key elements of this process include:
 - structured process of visits, at ministerial level, across the whole of the UK in the months following publication of this White Paper, to discuss how

levelling up can be successfully achieved in that area and to gather feedback

- an ongoing, long-term commitment for further ministerial visits across the whole of the UK, to update on progress on the policy programme and missions
- setting up local panels, drawn from a wide range of stakeholders, to serve as a sounding board on levelling up delivery and implementation, working closely with the new Levelling Up Directors once established
- annual reports summarising key messages from these local panels, which will feed into the UK Government's Cabinet Committee on Levelling Up
- an online space where local ideas, proposals and initiatives around levelling up can be heard and co-ordinated, to spread knowledge and understanding of what has worked locally and to foster innovation and experimentation.
- The UK Government will work with local leaders, citizens and sector experts to establish a body to focus on local data, transparency and outcomes.
- Strengthening local data will be the cornerstone for this body, to empower citizens with a greater knowledge of their place and support local authorities to learn from one another and be more user-focused.
- The UK Government is exploring a new approach to place through Levelling Up Directors. They will provide a key point of contact for local areas, acting as a bridge between local leaders and central government. The UK Government will work with local partners to tailor and develop the model to ensure that it is rooted in what places need.
- The UK Government will engage with local government and key stakeholders on the simplification of the local growth funding landscape with respect to the publication of further plans later this year. There will be a specific role for expert advisory committees, run as sub-groups of the Levelling Up Advisory Council. These will serve as a confidential forum for engagement between experts on the major cross-cutting themes of this White Paper. Themes covered by these expert sub-committees are likely to include:
 - regional adoption and diffusion infrastructure
 - the role of private sector capital in levelling up and strategies for encouraging more institutional investment
 - local communities and social infrastructure – the role of neighbourhood policies and strategies for building community capacity in left-behind areas.

Future Legislation

- The UK Government will bring forward legislation to put in statute some of the key pillars of levelling up to ensure this new framework is built on strong foundations.
- Provisions will include:
 - introducing an obligation for the UK Government to publish an annual report on delivery against the levelling up missions
 - strengthening devolution legislation in England in order to expand devolution to more places, deepen current devolution deals and enable the devolution process to be simpler and more transparent
 - implement reforms to the planning system including provisions around compulsory purchase powers and support for reusing brownfield land.
- More details on these reforms will be published in due course.

17 March 2022

APPENDIX 4.1 IDB 2022/23 WORK PROGRAMME | IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Recruit chair	
Q1	Specify role etc and agree at IDB
Q2	Advertise role and interviews
Q3	Appointment of chair
Q4	

Devolution/ levelling up	
Q1	Assess and agree I@D requirements emerging from white-paper
Q2	DLUHC funding bid
Q3	
Q4	Initiate improvement strategy refresh with new chair

Peer review and support	
Q1	Recruit peers and identify peer councils
Q2	Feedback from Notts pilot Train peers, prep for
Q3	Peer review 1
Q4	Peer review 2

Workforce strategy	
Q1	
Q2	Strategy workshop
Q3	Commission strategy development
Q4	Consult on strategy

Promoting CiLCA, LCAS and GPC	
Q1	Establish base-lines and develop marketing strategy
Q2	Marketing/ publicising phase
Q3	
Q4	Evaluate and measure take-up

Review and update of IDB “training material” (LCE, Good councillor guides, CiLCA training guides etc)	
Q1	
Q2	Mapping: Identify and prioritise review schedules/ identify gaps etc
Q3	Commission priority reviews

Q4	Publish updated material
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Other items

Future agenda item suggestions	Author /Originator	Target date	Board meeting dates 2022
Communications – How we can better work together	?		- 17 March - 22 June - 14 Sept - 17 Nov
Knowledge bank	?		
Civility and Respect project	NALC/SLCC	Last update: 6/9/21 Further updates and clarification of relationships required Next update 22 June	
Apprenticeships	?		
County association development	CALCS	Will feature in other projects above including funding bid Standing item	
Board members are invited to identify other matters			



NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT
STRATEGY FOR PARISH
& TOWN COUNCILS

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17 MARCH 2022

APPENDIX 5.2 MEMBER SERVICES REPORT | IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

This is a summary of some of the current work being undertaken by the member services team.

Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS)

The first round of the award scheme for 2022 is currently underway. The triage stage has been completed and the applications will soon be going to panels. There are 11 applicants in this round (5 Quality Gold, 2 Quality and 4 Foundation) with 3 of these smaller councils (2 going for Foundation and 1 going for Quality).

We have recently made some changes on the internal admin side which should help make the scheme run more efficiently. We are also currently working on a new grid that will help applicants, panel members and county associations have a better understanding of what each of the criteria mean and how they are assessed. We continue to attend occasional meetings with CALCs to explain how the scheme works and to encourage participations with the most recent being with Northamptonshire on 2 March.

Marketing of CiLCA and LCAS

At the previous meeting, Helen Quick from SLCC and Anders Hanson from NALC discussed joint marketing of both CiLCA and LCAS. As a result an advert has been produced that can be used as appropriate which promoted 'professional clerks' i.e. CiLCA and 'professional councils' i.e. LCAS. We will look at how we can add a 'professional councillors' strand to this when we have identified the best route to achieving this. We would also be keen to hear from members of IDB on other routes to marketing this joint approach.

Online learning

Our online learning offer provided through the platform Nimble is developing new momentum thanks to the civility and respect project. Our intention is that by the end of March all county associations will be able to sign up learners for the courses that are provided. Many of these are generic courses on key HR/workplace topics such as health and safety, diversity, and leadership skills and these are written by Nimble themselves. We also offer three courses written by

Warwickshire ALC, and some bespoke civility and respect course will be available. Most courses are £14 with the income shared between CALCs, Nimble and NALC.

A further report concluding our pilot and with recommendations for the future will be circulated before IDB.

Peer challenge

We have discussed with the LGA undertaking two peer challenges later in the calendar year – probably around September 2022. Although a couple of councils have previously expressed an interest neither have committed yet and so we would welcome interest from other larger councils, especially those who have achieved Quality Gold in the Local Council Award Scheme. These will be fully funded by the LGA.

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ACTION PLAN – county officer support and development

Last update 07.03.2022

THEME - support for new county officers		STATUS – in progress			
Desired outcome:	Actions to do:	Who is responsible	Start date	End date	Notes
A buddy scheme that offers one to one support, enhances local and national induction activities, regional support (if any) that helps to inform the early stages of personal development plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and promote to county officers, consider review mechanism to keep up to date 	Chris Wayman	Jan 2022	April 2022	Added to County Officer MS Teams page. Process for promotion and alignment underway some new officers already offered buddies
					Mentoring training complete funded by NALC
THEME - support for experienced county officers		STATUS – in progress			
Desired outcome:	Actions	Who is responsible	Start date	End date	Notes
A 'next stage' pathway/offer that assists more experienced county officers develop strategic leadership / thinking skills, business development options, marketing, communications and managing demanding workloads, explore partnership and collaborative options. One to one mentoring/coaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SL to work with Sheena Spence at Yorkshire to develop pathways SL to discuss with SLCC following interest in IDB paper IDB accepted paper, NALC to progress/seek funding Identify key leads on specialist areas to share knowledge and expertise and potential leads for topics 	Sally Longmate Suffolk ALC	19.8.21	2022/23	SL and SS have met – outline plan started to be progressed April onwards
					Biographies of experienced county officers collected and published on MS Teams site NALC advised that any–proposals to be developed further – bid in 2022/23.

					No clarity yet on what could be included. LINK TO IDB MINUTES
THEME – communication strategy		STATUS – not yet started			Notes
<p>Desired outcome:</p> <p>Awareness of the work of the task and finish group across all stakeholders including the opportunity to influence and benefit from the outcomes.</p> <p>Extend use of MS Teams site for county officers to improve communication, networking and avoid duplication. To include a training session on using MS Teams</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SALC keeping all stakeholders updated MS Teams site to be reviewed with Cloudy IT and SALC to look at SharePoint to improve navigation 	Sally Longmate Suffolk ALC Cara Soddard Devon ALC	29.10.21	Started	<p>Meeting set with Cloudy IT to review MS Teams site . SALC looking at design of the SharePoint site to see if this assists with navigation.</p> <p>Use this link to the site</p>
THEME – smarter working		STATUS – in progress			Notes
<p>Desired outcome:</p> <p>Identification of processes and opportunities for standardisation, potential centralisation of through OneDrive of resources to benefit network. Potential template development and early stages of workflow mapping</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing advice – draft mapping to identify variances Re-occurring theme relating to access to legal support Link to COF legal services user group/review Outstanding themes to be established to consider further task and finish groups 	Suffolk ALC	01.09.21	Started	<p>Fed into Legal Services Review or any NALC review of processes – the potential to look at this more widely suggested in report to IDB.</p> <p>No response from NALC.</p> <p>Research in progress by new NALC Legal user group exploring a number of things</p>

Task and finish group – county officer support and development
v.3

					<p>including process and degree of support across the network in view of the changing landscape and wider requirements for county associations</p> <p>Biographies of county officers now captured and added to team site.</p>
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