

5 JUNE 2021

## **PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING | ENVIRONMENT BILL – HOUSE OF LORDS SECOND READING, 7 JUNE 2021**

### **Summary**

- The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) is the nationally recognised membership and support organisation representing around 10,000 local (parish and town) councils and their 100,000 councillors.
- NALC welcomed the reintroduction of the Environment Bill as it is vital as a nation and in our communities we tackle the climate emergency and protect and enhance our natural environment.
- Local (parish and town) councils are increasingly playing their part in tackling the climate emergency and creating greener, more environmentally-friendly and sustainable communities. Areas of activity and projects they are leading or involved in include solar panels, reusable energy, plastic-free initiatives, litter picks and clean-ups, electric cars and charging points, wind farms and tree planting.
- Climate change is one of NALC's key areas of work and to support local councils deliver on their environmental ambitions we have launched a [climate change web page](#) which includes resources, tips and advice for local councils as well as a comprehensive [Climate Change Case Studies publication](#) featuring numerous examples, established a network to help councils and councillors connect, learn and share, and held events as part of our Rebuilding Communities series of online events.
- But to help local councils do even more for their communities and the nation, NALC wants to see a more community-friendly Environment Act to unleash community power and the role of local councils. We propose a number of new measures to improve and strengthen the Bill and support the Government's wider objectives:
  - The Government wants to use the Bill to strengthen partnerships framing Local Nature Recovery Strategies and create a Nature Recovery Network. Local communities must have a strong voice and involvement in these arrangements such as Nature Recovery Partnerships including a representative from local councils and involving and consulting local councils on the development of the strategy.
  - To support the delivery of The England Trees Action Plan 2021-24, the Bill should provide local councils with the power to undertake tree-planting and other

specified environmentally friendly activities on a much wider range of land beyond just their own recreational spaces and highway verges, with landowner agreement.

- Other new powers for local councils should include the ability to promote and operate schemes to re-use and/or up-cycle goods and materials, greater protection of the removal of trees including mature ancient trees, and the extension of the General Power of Competence to all local councils.
- The Government should also take the opportunity to introduce a new Community Environment Fund aimed at supporting local councils and community groups in unparished areas to deliver environmental projects which support the overall objectives of the Bill and The England Trees Action Plan.
- And to ensure local councils are able to access directly the Community Environment Fund and any other appropriate funding regarding climate change and the environmental, the Bill should amend Section 33 of the Local Government Act 2003 to provide ministers of the crown the power to grant fund local councils.
- Many communities are left behind in being able to take community-led action on climate change and the environment because they do not have a local council to act as a local institution providing accountable and democratic local leadership. The Government should use the Bill to deliver on the ambitions of its communities framework [By deeds and their results: strengthening our communities and nation](#) by levelling up local democracy and creating local councils across all of England.
- All drive-through food outlets should be required to print on all packaging of sold items the vehicle registration number from which occupants made the purchase and such printing include the time, date and venue of that purchase. Packaging is defined as materials used to wrap or pack food or drink.
- NALC supports points being made by the Local Government Association regarding the continuation of improved air quality, protection against flooding, ensuring transport, energy and waste policies are sustainable, fully funding any new duties, and consulting local government further on the implementation of the Bill's policy proposals.

### **More information and contact**

Justin Griggs, head of policy and communications M: 07894 937885 E:  
[Justin.griggs@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:Justin.griggs@nalc.gov.uk) and [policycomms@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:policycomms@nalc.gov.uk)