Draft Letter for CALCs to support Town and Parish Councils respond to local consultation:

Dear [NAME OF CHIEF EXEC. / LEADER OF PRINCIPAL /COMBINED AUTHORITY] ,

**RE: DEVOLUTION**

The *INSERT NAME OF COUNTY ASSOCIATION* would welcome the opportunity to discuss how local town and parish councils could work collaboratively with you towards effective delivery of the devolution agenda.

We are asking to have a conversation at an early stage recognising that there isn’t a one size fits all solution to the fiscal challenges faced by local government; notwithstanding the fact that communities must be at the very heart of devolution in order to ensure success at the grass roots level of local need.

The town and parish sector is well placed to support devolution and wants to have a positive and active role. The special report by the Local Government Chronicle acknowledged the town and parish sector as a vital part of local government in representing and delivering services to rural and urban communities; with up to 10,000 councils serving 15 million people with a total annual investment of £2billion - 250 new local councils have been established over the past 13 years.

Local Councils want to discuss the feasibility of potentially taking the lead on or sharing responsibility for:

* Activities for older people;
* Economic growth and business support;
* Highways;
* Traffic Calming;
* Youth Services and activities.

Together with the Local Government Association, County Councils Network and District Councils Network we have identified various models of best practice for joint working including Cornwall Council’s devolution framework which in recognising resource and capacity factors has enabled all town/parish councils and community groups to play an active part from influencing and shaping services right through to direct delivery.

Another example is in Gloucestershire where the County Council has provided Councillors with a range of participatory funding streams relating to highways, youth and health & well-being; enabling Councillors to engage more effectively at a local level, directly prioritising local needs and improvements.

In West Suffolk there is an innovative district-wide programme of co-location and integration of services including a town council, the police and care commissioning group. The project is maximising cost efficiencies and service integration and has also released various development sites for regeneration.

Recognising the challenges faced by all tiers of government, the town and parish sector, through the National Association of Local Councils, supports stronger local democracy, greater local powers and fairer funding of local services. NALC has published a white paper titled DEVO LOCAL within which a range of key objectives have been identified, including:

* establishing new local community councils in urban and rural areas;
* producing an improvement framework for good governance and community engagement;
* promoting collaborative joint working between the tiers of local government;
* encouraging neighbourhood planning;
* access to funding at a local level through CIL, New Homes Bonus and Business Rates.

We would welcome the opportunity to work together in a joined up way to ensure the success of the devolution agenda and look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours faithfully,

NAME OF COUNTY OFFICER / COUNTY OFFICER CHAIRMAN