

## **Statement from Lord Porter of Spalding to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) conference**

I'm delighted to have this opportunity to send my best wishes to you for your annual conference. I'm really sorry that I've not been able to make it today, but unfortunately parliamentary business in the House of Lords has meant that I've been unable to make the trip to Milton Keynes.

This civic year is my last as LGA Chairman, and I'm proud to have played my part in a local government family and to have worked with many of you at NALC over the years. Like all families, we may not always agree on every point of detail, but together we've delivered some really important changes for our residents. I'd like to thank Cllr Sue Baxter and Cllr Ken Browse, both of whom are brilliant colleagues to work with in their roles leading NALC. I know from experience that Sue and Ken are excellent champions for Parish and Town Councils.

NALC and the LGA enjoy a strong working relationship as we both work to get the best for local government. I know that many councillors at the LGA have really strong working relationships with town and parish councils in their own communities. It has also been great that our organizations have worked together on a range of projects, both showing the value of partnership working and promoting our priorities for local government.

Now of course, you wouldn't expect to hear from me without hearing about housing. In my fifteen years at the LGA, I have always made the case for councils building homes. Having spent most of my time campaigning for the borrowing cap to be scrapped, it feels extra special that a Prime Minister has now recognised the essential role of councils in building new homes. It is bang on.

We now need to encourage people to build their own homes and let them design the things they want to live in. As part of this the local knowledge and influence of Parish and Town councils will be vital to helping us find the sites to build these homes.

This is an important time for local government, with the Budget hot off the press and our thoughts turning to the Spending Review. It is vital that we continue to work together. Whether it is to share best practice, promote new ideas or to lobby central government for the positive changes our communities need.

More than ever, councillors are finding new ways of working to deliver the best possible public services for local people and communities. I'm proud to be the Chairman of an Association that supports this work and I'm proud to have worked with colleagues at NALC to make sure we are supporting all areas of local government.

Councils remain the most trusted part of the public sector and, together, we can help make sure our communities continue to thrive. Your conference is an opportunity to celebrate what you do, to learn from each other and to share thoughts on things we should be lobbying on as a sector. Have a great conference.