



**Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government**

**Jim McMahon OBE MP**

*Minister of State for Local Government and  
English Devolution*  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Our reference: MC2025/05093

Cllr Keith Stevens  
Chair  
National Association of Local Councils

28 February 2025

Dear Keith,

Thank you for your letter of 13 February, and for your support for our hugely ambitious programme of devolution.

This Government absolutely values the crucial role played by town and parish councils in local Government. We know people value the role of governance at the community scale. We want to see stronger community arrangements when reorganisation happens in the way councils engage at a neighbourhood or area level. We will also rewire the relationship between town and parish councils and principal Local Authorities, strengthening expectations on engagement and community voice.

My letter to Leaders in two-tier areas set out a clear criteria for proposals for unitary local government; one of them being that proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views. As such, in working up their proposals, I expect local leaders to be seeking views from their Members of Parliament, as well as ensuring wider engagement with other local partners and stakeholders, residents, workforce and their representatives, and businesses. This should include parish and town councils in the spirit of that guidance.

My invitation letter also set out that it is essential that councils continue to deliver their business-as-usual services and duties, which remain unchanged until reorganisation is complete, that proposals should show how new structures will improve local Government and service delivery, and should avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.

I am pleased to hear you have spoken with Minister Norris and Baroness Taylor of Stevenage, and want to assure you that this does reflect how much we value the role of parish and town councils. However, given my role in the final decision-making process, it would be inappropriate to meet at this time. However, I recognise there are many difficult issues you may wish to discuss, and my officials are available to work directly with town and parish councils to make sure these are addressed.

Thank you again for writing to me on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim McMahon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

**JIM MCMAHON OBE MP**

Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution