

20. The sector changing to deliver the vision

21. Over the coming months we will be seeking views from councils and councillors as to whether they share this vision, narrative and how the sector might need to change to enable it to achieve this. For example some questions which might need consideration include:
- a. Do you support the vision outlined?
 - b. How do we improve the reputation of the sector with key players and get their support for this vision?
 - c. How do we promote the creation of community councils across England?
 - d. Do parish meetings continue to have a meaningful and relevant role?
 - e. How can community councils be encouraged to work together and cluster or merge in some circumstances?
 - f. Do we need to encourage councils and councillors to do more (such as increasing the number of councils exercising the General Power of Competence and finding funding to meet community needs)?
 - g. Do we need to think about how to build the capacity of councils and councillors through training and development?
 - h. How can we ensure there are enough well trained, properly remunerated clerks and who are respected and working sufficient hours to meet the demands of its modern role?
 - i. What help do councils and councillors need from NALC and county associations to achieve this potential?
 - j. In what other ways do community councils, councilors and their staff need to change?
22. Both NALC and county associations will also need to develop and change to support this vision, so there are a number of questions for members of our National Assembly and county associations too:
- a. Do you agree with this vision?
 - b. How can we raise the profile and reputation of the sector, both locally and nationally?

- c. What help and support should be provided by NALC and/or county associations?
- d. What should our core offer be as a benefit of membership paid for by the affiliation fee?
- e. How do we ensure our services are the right ones for the future and not the past?
- f. What should our relationship be with organisations like the Society of Local Council Clerks, the Local Government Association and potentially other bodies?
- g. How do we ensure NALC and county associations are working closely together?
- h. How can we ensure NALC's services meet the expectations of county associations and councils (for example through the introduction of an Annual Membership Survey and/or Service Level Agreement)?
- i. How best can we communicate with county associations and councils especially identifying, developing and sharing good practice?
- j. How can we get more councillors involved in the work of NALC and county associations and increase our diversity?

23. Next steps and timescale

- 24. The time is right for us to revisit what grassroots, community councils are for and start a big, radical conversation about our future and potential, including that of NALC and county associations.
- 25. But it is important this landmark debate is as open and inclusive as possible, engaging as many county associations, community councils, councillors, council staff and other organisations as we can.
- 26. There are a number of elements to this conversation:
 - a. To understand and assess whether county associations and councils see this as the future for the sector and if so what changes need to be made;
 - b. Seeking views from other organisations including wider local government, think tanks and parliamentarian on how they see the sector, whether it is

part of the solution and what barriers need to be removed or improvements made;

- c. To foster change in NALC and county associations to be able to support this new vision and future.

27. Our proposed methodology and timescales are set out below:

Timescale	Engagement with county associations/councils	Changing NALC	Engagement with external bodies
May/ June/July	Questionnaire/ survey Presentations at events NALC committees	Management Board Service Level Agreement consultation	Round tables (supported by CCLA) for local government, think tank, academic and parliamentary stakeholders Questionnaire/ survey of other organisations
July	As above plus National Assembly	National Assembly	LGA annual conference
Sept/October	Annual conference	Annual general meeting	Political party conferences
November/December	Revise proposals		
Early 2019	Final proposals to National Assembly		

28. County associations are strongly encouraged to consider this discussion paper through their respective management boards or executive committees and at their events, and send their response to policycomms@nalc.gov.uk by 1 July.
29. If you would like to discuss our big conversation further please contact Justin Griggs, head of policy and communications at justin.griggs@nalc.gov.uk or via 020 7290 0317.