

Local Government Ombudsman & Larger Parish Councils

Executive Summary

- DCLG have issued a consultation on whether individuals should be able to refer larger parish councils to the Local Government Ombudsman when they feel let down by that council's corporate governance;
- Views are sought on proposals relating to the following two areas:
 - Whether the jurisdiction of the Local Government Ombudsman should be extended to larger parish and town councils;
 - How larger parish and town councils should be defined for this purpose.

Scope and Impact of Consultation

The purpose of the consultation is to set out the Government's proposals for improving the options for redress by the public when they are let down by their local authority.

Any change to the jurisdiction of the Local Government Ombudsman requires a change to primary legislation, specifically the Local Government Act 1974.

Issues

Our initial thinking on this consultation has identified several points;

- *We have a longstanding policy position that the remit of the Local Government Ombudsman should be extended to all parish and town councils, therefore we welcome views on whether this policy should still apply or whether the appetite in the sector for this has changed;*
- *Identifying interest groups and types of council is always a difficult issue, given the changing nature of council budgets, services and populations. We would welcome comments on whether larger parish councils be defined as with either a population of 35,000 or an annual pre-cepted income of greater than £500,000 per annum;*
- *There needs to be a further open question on how long larger parish councils would fall within the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman, given population or budgets will fluctuate, and there would be the need to specify a review period to take this into account;*
- *We would also want to press for an overarching review to take place at a specified point to look at whether any change in remit had met its policy objective.*

The link to the full DCLG consultation documentation is:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/extending-the-remit-of-the-local-government-ombudsman-to-larger-parish-and-town-councils>



Policy Consultation

PC02-15

25 March, 2015

DCLG had originally intended to run the consultation until the end of May. NALC made strong representations on this timescale and has persuaded DCLG to now run the consultation for a longer period until **30 June 2015**.

This matter will be considered by the meetings of the Larger Councils Committee on 28 April and the Policy Committees on 12 May. Therefore we would welcome receiving any outline responses to the consultation from county associations before these meetings.

Please send comments you may have either directly to DCLG via the above link, or to inform NALC's own response please send your response to chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk by Thursday 18 June 2015.

Recommended Circulation:	County Associations
	All larger councils

This briefing was issued by Chris Borg, Policy and Development Manager

© NALC 2015