



# Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Jim McMahon OBE MP**

*Minister of State for Local Government and  
English Devolution*  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
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June 2025

*By email only*

Dear Leaders and Mayors,

Yesterday, on 24 June, I updated Parliament on the Government's plans to introduce legislation which will simplify governance arrangements for local authorities in England. As part of fixing the foundations of local government and empowering communities, we intend to deliver simplified, resilient and sustainable structures to improve local decision-making. Through this legislation, we will abolish the committee system of governance and accept the continuation of the legacy directly elected local council mayors, whilst ensuring a more consistent approach by preventing the creation of new ones.

Every place will benefit from our agenda to push power out of Whitehall, into the hands of local leaders. People will see it in more regular bus services, more affordable housing, or the simple fact of having a local champion with regional influence or a frontline councillor championing their neighbourhoods. This government is committed to resetting the relationship with local and regional government, empowering local leaders to make the right decisions for their communities, and working together to grow an inclusive economy, reform public services, and secure better outcomes for working people.

In the English Devolution White Paper, the Government committed to bring in consistent and accountable structures across local government by considering which governance models available to local authorities will best support their decision making.

At present there is a complex and opaque system which allows councils to pick and change between one of three governance models: cabinet arrangements with a directly elected council mayor, leader and cabinet, or the committee system. As a result, councils are left with a complicated governance system. This can be confusing to the taxpayer, particularly in the case of the committee system, which can be unclear, duplicative, and wasteful, leading to slower, less efficient decision-making.

The government plans to legislate to abolish the committee system, requiring those councils currently operating this model to transition to the leader and cabinet model (which the vast majority of councils already currently operate). This will simplify the governance system and ensure all councils operate an executive form of governance, providing clarity on responsibility and accountability, and improving efficiency in decision making.

This change will provide clearer, more easily understood structures at a local level, improving efficiency and preventing authorities from wasting taxpayer funds on needless changes to

systems of governance. The law already allows for and requires overview and scrutiny arrangements to be in place.

The Government recognises there are several directly elected local council mayors currently in place, and we propose to accept the continuation of the legacy 13 council mayoralities while introducing measures to ensure a more consistent approach by preventing the creation of new ones, including any councils undergoing local government reorganisation now or the future. This will avoid the potential confusion caused by the establishment of new mayors for strategic authorities and for councils. Directly elected regional Mayors continue to be a prerequisite for significant devolution of powers and funding: it is at this strategic level that the single focal point of leadership for the area and direct electoral accountability is considered to work best.

Taken with our commitment to support frontline councillors to lead positive change in their communities we believe this delivers the right powers in the right places. Ahead of introducing primary legislation I intend to make regulations to pause any change processes between governance models in order to allow time for Parliament to consider the Government's proposed measures.

These reforms are designed to empower local leaders, provide a consistent and accountable structure to help improve public service delivery, and ensure that local governance is more responsive and accountable to the needs of communities.

I would like to thank you for your cooperation and commitment to enhancing local governance and empowering communities.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim McMahon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**JIM MCMAHON OBE MP**

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