



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Alison McGovern MP

*Minister of State for Local Government and
Homelessness*

2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Your reference:

Our reference:

To: Secretary of State for Housing, Communities
and Local Government

23rd April 2026

Town and parish councils' dependent carers' allowances

Dear Cllr David Harris,

I want to start by extending my sincere apologies that this matter has taken so long to respond to.

Councillors play an incredibly important role in our society – they are the lifeblood of our democracy. And I very much want to see our elected members more closely reflect the communities they serve. The cohort is not nearly representative enough, and not diverse enough. I want to change that.

Your proposal highlights an important ambition – to remove barriers and encourage greater diversity and inclusion in the town and parish council sector. We fully recognise and support this aim. I want to thank you for your thoughtful and well-intentioned proposal.

But we should only change the law when strictly necessary. The proposals would impose financial and administrative costs on an already stretched sector. I carefully considered the available data and evidence. We have engaged with sector representatives. Based on the evidence available, our own research, and feedback from NALC, we have not seen evidence that supports the assertion that changing current legislation in the way proposed would materially improve diversity and inclusion in the town and parish sector. Nor does it appear that this issue is one that garners strong support or significant concern among members.

In light of this and after careful consideration of the evidence and the current context – particularly the significant reforms and financial pressures facing the local government sector – I have decided not to take forward the proposed policy change.

With your agreement, we will publish your proposal alongside our decision on GOV.UK in mid-May 2026, if you have any objections to this please get in touch with my office.

That said, we're committed to working with local councils to support them in delivering sustainable and effective representation for their constituents, and help advance the shared goal of a more inclusive and representative local government sector.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alison', written in a cursive style.

ALISON MCGOVERN MP

Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness