



# Coronavirus — information for parish & town councils

NALC has updated its dedicated webpage on the coronavirus. This includes further information on elections. See the updates below:

The Cabinet Office confirmed to NALC that the local elections scheduled on 7 May will be postponed until May next year, with legislation brought forward shortly in the Covid-19 Bill. The Electoral Commission wrote to the government on 12 March calling for elections to be delayed until the autumn.

On 18 March, Cabinet Office issued the below guidance to electoral administrators about forthcoming elections before legislation postponing them will come into force. We expect this information to be filtered down to local (parish and town) councils by principal councils:

- The government will give its full support to returning officers who make the decision to suspend their polls. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has provided assurance that criminal prosecution in these circumstances is highly unlikely.
- Bringing forward measures within the Covid-19 Bill to postpone the scheduled local and mayoral elections due to take place in England and the scheduled Police and Crime Commissioner elections due to take place in England and Wales on 7 May this year until the next ordinary day of the election on 6 May 2021.
- However, it's recognised that there will be a small number of polls between now and the date of Royal Assent which will not be covered by these provisions.
- The delivery of polls rightly sits with returning officers who are statutorily independent and responsible to the courts.
- Running a poll in present times is likely to come with significant concerns about the wellbeing of those involved, which may be thought to be unfair to both staff

the wellbeing of those involved, which may be thought to be unfair to both staff and the public.

- It would be both reasonable and consistent with the national position for a returning officer to suspend any poll scheduled within this period, including those due to take place on 19 March.
- The hard work of returning officers is appreciated during these difficult and challenging circumstances.

The Cabinet Office is responsible for the implementation of this legislation.

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This information forms part of a NALC's dedicated webpage on the coronavirus. It should not be used as a substitute for government advice, however, there are some practicalities specific to local (parish and town) councils where we hope this information will help you plan ahead and manage your risks. If you would like further advice and support on any of these topics for your local council then please **contact your local county association**. This is a fast-moving situation and we will be updating the webpage regularly.

[Find out more](#)

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