



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>APSE 2030 Commission Report</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20th January, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
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<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to highlight to the Committee the findings and recommendations of the APSE 2030 Commission, and to note that NILGA is engaging with APSE to seek, and jointly organise, a NI launch of the Commission's Report.</p> <p>This report can be accessed at: <a href="https://www.apse.org.uk/index.cfm/apse/research/local-government-commission-2030/commission-report-findings/">https://www.apse.org.uk/index.cfm/apse/research/local-government-commission-2030/commission-report-findings/</a></p>

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. note the contents of the report produced by APSE following the publication of its ‘Local by Default report’ which followed the work of the APSE 2030 commission; and</li> <li>ii. agree that officers continue to engage with colleagues in NILGA and APSE in terms of the outworking’s of this report to ensure our corporate interests and priorities are promoted alongside any associated lobbying of this report.</li> </ol>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>The Committee will recall that a report was presented to the Committee in February 2020 which endorsed key areas of interest for the Council on which officers could engage with the APSE Commission. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enhanced devolution to local government including regeneration, planning, skills investment and planning, and local transport planning;</li> <li>• enhanced local investment powers, to ensure that councils have the fiscal levers to tackle issues at community and city level; and</li> <li>• the introduction of legislation/measures that strengthen the relationship between central and local government, including a duty to collaborate to provide for responsive and integrated public services delivery at regional, city and community level.</li> </ul>
	<b>APSE 2030 Local Government Commission Summary</b>
3.2	<p>The APSE Local Government Commission (ALGC) 2030 was set up to explore what the next decade could hold for a revitalised local government. The final report recently published by ALGC, issued a drastic warning to UK Governments to ‘reset the system’ to avoid local councils failing the communities they serve.</p>
3.3	<p>The ALGC 2030 received hundreds of pieces of evidence, including oral witness testimonies from local councils and NILGA, during the course of its 18 months of work, and found that UK local government is facing its biggest economic, political, and social challenges since the Second World War.</p>
3.4	<p>Alongside multiple public policy crises in finance, adult care, housing and climate change, the Commissioners found that the system of local government itself has been hindered significantly by a lack of powers, resources, and the centralisation of decision making, which mistrusts and obstructs local councils, and ignores their democratic legitimacy.</p>

3.5	<p>APSE Chief Executive, Mr. Paul O'Brien, noted that "Evidence to the Commission, almost without exception, exposed frustration at a system which has, over a number of decades, relied upon the fanciful concept of all-seeing all-knowing central administrations, and yet local government, with the right powers and resources, can be a force for good, bringing about positive change at a community level and be best placed to understand and deliver on local economic, environmental, and social wellbeing for local areas. That is why we are calling for a fundamental reset to the system, including a new financial and constitutional settlement, for local government."</p>
3.6	<p>The detailed report sets out calls for a new relationship between central administrations across the UK and local government, challenging them to recognise that the levelling-up agenda cannot be delivered whilst local councils are forced to act as by-standers. The Commission warns the alternative will be the continuation of communities being disenfranchised by a system of local government, that is constrained and no longer fit for purpose.</p>
3.7	<p><b>Key Theme 'Local by Default'</b></p> <p>The theme of the report 'Local by default' suggests that powers and responsibilities should sit with local government unless the evidence or a reasoned argument shows it to be wholly inappropriate. This is not to endorse a naïve localism but instead recognises that different policy issues and contemporary challenges are best resolved by different parts of government working in collaboration. To ensure this, the report calls for local government to be assured of a new settlement, which enshrines its powers and responsibilities over local areas, with the right resources to deliver meaningful change.</p>
3.8	<p>The Commissioners recognised the binary opposition often drawn between central and local government, and the report advocates the move towards a mature relationship which clearly defines the roles and responsibilities between different spheres of government, accepting both as integral and equal parts of the system of governance.</p>
3.9	<p>The report finds that the absence of any clarity over the constitutional status of local government has contributed to a piecemeal and damaging systemic drift towards legalism in relation to central-local relations, which it is argued means representative localism remains stilted and at the whim of ministers.</p>

3.10	<p><b>Report Recommendations</b></p> <p>The 'Local by Default' report makes 29 recommendations which centre upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new relationship with local government</li> <li>• Adopting the principle of 'local by default'</li> <li>• Revitalising local government</li> <li>• The roles and powers of local government</li> <li>• A sustainable financial settlement for local government</li> <li>• Local democracy, representation, and accountability</li> <li>• The local government workforce</li> <li>• Addressing inequalities and engaging communities.</li> </ul> <p>Further detail in relation to the ALGC recommendations are contained within the Commission's report.</p>
3.11	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.12	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report</p>
4.0	<p><b><u>Documents Attached</u></b></p>
	<p>None</p>