



**Northumberland Association of Local Councils**

Dear Colleagues,

**County Committee**

There will be an electronic meeting of the County Committee on Friday 25 February 2022 at 10.00 am

The ZOOM link is in the accompanying email. The meeting will be recorded, and the link circulated to Members of the Committee. The recording will be deleted two weeks after the meeting.

Yours sincerely

**Stephen Rickitt**

**NALC Chief Officer**

9 February 2022

**AGENDA**

1: Welcome

2: Committee Membership and Appointments

At the time of agenda preparation, there are no candidates for co-option

3: Apologies for Absence

The Chief Officer will give details of any apologies received. Members of the Committee are reminded that if they are unable to attend, a substitute Councillor is welcome but please let the Chief Officer know so that they may be admitted to the meeting.

4: Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 December 2021

To agree the draft minutes as a true record

5: Matters arising, (if not otherwise on the agenda) including

- Election Recharges in Northumberland – See item 13 below
- Dormant Councils - At the date of agenda preparation, responses are awaited from the County Council
- Digital Meetings & Lobby Day – the national NALC have arranged for a Lobby Day on 23 March. Last year the chief officer offered to speak to the six MPs or their staff

via Zoom. It is recommended that is repeated and the opportunity taken to lobby for a power to hold digital meetings

#### 6: Coronavirus

The emergence of the Omicron variant and the reimposition of restrictions in England impacted on Parish Town and Community Councils. Are there any issues the County Committee wishes raised with the City or County Council, or Central Government?.

#### 7: Storm Arwen

The Committee is asked whether they wish to add anything to the items recorded in item 7 of the December 2021 meeting, particularly in the light of Storm Malik, to form a submission to the County Council's Storm Arwen Review?

#### 8: The Northumberland Local Council Charter

The survey on communications closed on 31 January and the results are attached for debate and consideration. **To follow**

#### 9: Councillors' Allowance and Expenses

The Honorary Treasurer has asked that this be considered by the Committee as several Councils are now mentioning paying their councillors an allowance to cover printing, stationery etc. A copy of the national NALC's Legal Topic Note 33 accompanies the agenda.

#### 10: The Levelling Up White Paper

The Committee are asked for any initial thoughts. The extracted Executive Summary accompanies the agenda. The full set of documents are at

[Levelling Up the United Kingdom - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom)

#### 11: Finance

Please see the accompanying report.

#### 12: A return to Physical Meetings of the Committee

In July 2021 the Committee discussed as possible return and minuted

##### 5: Style of Meetings

5.1 The Committee considered the information provided in the agenda and after discussion agreed

- a) To continue with digital meetings until Members feel confident enough to resume some face-to-face meetings
- b) The informal digital Friday morning meetings should continue as they had proved their usefulness in having focussed and in-depth discussions, being led by an external speaker

5.2 Various views were expressed about the desirability, or otherwise, of recording formal and informal meetings of the Committee, including whether discussion would be more inhibited or

external speakers more reluctant to attend. It was agreed that the Chief Officer should investigate the potential for making such recordings available to Committee Members only on a time-limited basis.

The time would seem appropriate to review the style of meetings and Members' views are requested.

### 13: Election Costs for the May 2021 Elections in Northumberland

On 2 February a discussion was held with the County Council

- The standard charge of £450 levied on the four inquorate councils is to be reconsidered
- The ballot paper printers had advised to place the Parish/Town/Community Councils' papers in a separate envelope. As far as the elections team were aware only one election authority had tried to combine them.
- Looking forward to 2025, the elections team will be issuing indicative costs for contested elections in the near future, which will enable Member Councils to start building a fund for potential use.

### 14: National Issues

A verbal update will be provided on key national issues.

### 15: Issues raised by Committee Members

This is the opportunity for Committee Members to raise matters which may be of general interest affecting Local Councils in Newcastle and Northumberland.

### 16: The Briefing Programme September 2021 – February 2022

The following is the current programme and outcomes as at 1015 30 November.

All on-line and starting at 7.00 pm

Ref	Date	Title	Presenter	Bookings	Attendance
1	Thurs 23 Sept	General Introduction to Local Councils	NALC / SER	5	5
2	Tues 5 Oct	Finance and Budgeting for Local Councils	NALC / SER	10	10
3	Thurs 14 Oct	Planning – Permitted Development and Prior Notification	NCC	10	10
4	Tues 26 Oct	Planning – Highway and Rights of Way Issues	NCC	4	Postponed

5	Mon 8 Nov	Common Land and Village Greens	NALC / SER	5	4
6	Mon 22 Nov	Planning -Section 106s and Developer Contributions	NCC	15	9
7	Thurs 25 Nov	Chairing a Local Council	NALC / SER	5	4
8	Tues 14 Dec	Planning – Conservation Areas	NCC	17	Postponed being rearranged
9	Thursday 20 January – Rearranged from 8 Dec	Planning - Neighbourhood Plans – Lessons Learnt	NCC	25	22
10	Monday 24 January	Planning - Enforcement	NCC	20	18
11	8 February	Planning – Highways and Rights of Way	NCC	16	13
12	10 February	Standards	Bethan Evans / NALC		

The Committee are asked to identify other topics for briefings during 2022 please.

#### 17: Any Other Urgent Business

Please let the Chairman and Chief Officer know of any items that you wish to raise.

#### 18: Future Meetings of the Committee

The chief officer will be on leave until 15 March. The date will depend on the outcome of the discussion in item 12 above.