

Northumberland Association of Local Councils

Meeting of the County Committee at 10.15 am on Saturday 18 November 2017 at the Storey Park Community Centre, Morpeth

Present:

Councillors Barrell, Dunn, Francis, Gillanders, Hood, Parks, Potts, Sambrook, Taylor, Tebbutt, Varley, Wallace (Chairman in the Chair), Wood and Woodard

Mrs M Anderton

Ms G Turner (Hon. Treasurer)

SE Rickitt (NALC Chief Officer)

1: Welcome, apologies for absence, changes to membership and declarations of interest

1.1 Cllr Wallace took the Chair and welcomed colleagues to the meeting.

1.2 The following apologies were noted:

Mr R Butler – Vice-President

Councillors Hedley, Hogg, Phillips, Pringle, Rook, Roughead, Stanners and Thompson

2: Committee Membership and Appointments

2.1 Councillor Wallace was elected as Chairman for the forthcoming year, and Councillors Hood, Potts and Wood were elected as Vice-Chairmen for the same term.

2.2 The Committee agreed to co-opt the following Councillors onto the Committee

- Cllr Tom Gillanders – Hexham
- Cllr Eleanor Phillips – non-constituency – Longhoughton
- Cllr Gregor Roughead – Berwick – replacing Cllr Karin Graham
- Cllr Malcolm Pringle – Glendale – replacing Cllr Rachel Sinton

2.3 Cllr Wood noted that his email needed updating on the membership list.

Action SER

3: Minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2017

3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3.2 The Chief Officer reported that only two Councils had responded to the question posed by Cllr Parks regarding event cancellation insurance. It seemed therefore this was not an issue amongst Member Councils as a whole.

4: Draft Minutes of the AGM held on 7 October 2017

4.1 The draft minutes were noted, with Members feeling it had been a positive and productive event.

4.2 Members were pleased to note that the 2018 AGM will be at the NNPA's new centre The Sill, Bardon Mill on Saturday 13 October 2018

5: Financial Issues

5.1 The Committee noted the current bank statement and schedule of payments. [Copies are attached to the signed minutes].

5.2 Councillor Francis asked if a high-level summary could be provided. The Chief Officer reported that work was underway to get a picture of the state of finances excluding the Transparency Funding. This was not yet fully complete that showed an operating deficit of about £400 in 2016/2017 (excluding Transparency Finance. As mentioned in his report, the surplus was training in 2017 would broadly off-set this. **Action SER**

5.3 The Committee agreed that it was operating a very tight ship but current pressures on Member Councils meant there is not the opportunity for significant rises in membership costs. The Chief Officer is contacting those Councils who have not yet paid their dues and also those who are not currently members.

5.4 The Chief Officer reported that he proposed that the subscription for the "Parish Portal" should be £75 per council, this being agreed.

6: Chief Officer's Report

6.1 The Committee considered and adopted the report of the Chief Officer with the further comments below. [A copy is attached to the signed minutes]

6.2 The Committee noted with approval the informal arrangements for assistance from the Local Governance Research Unit, De Montfort University regarding North-of-Tyne Devolution at no cost to the Association. **Action SER**

6.3 The Committee considered the draft Briefing & Training Programme for 2018 which received general support, especially briefings to attract the longer-serving Councillors. **Action SER**

6.4 Members also asked that priority be given to Social Media issues and Data Protection. The Chief Officer advised that he was to attend a national NALC briefing on the latter on 21 November and would then be circulating information. He feared however that the legislative programme might cause enactment of the

Data Protection Bill to be very close to the 25 May 2018 deadline with potentially vital detail remaining unclear. **Action SER**

6.5 Northumberland Members of the Committee remain concerned at the lack of appropriate *Development Control* training being offered by the County Council. The Chief Officer reported that the County Council's Planners had assured him that further training will be offered in the New Year.

6.6 The Chairman took the opportunity to report on the meeting he held with the Executive Member for Planning (Cllr John Riddle) and the Head of the Planning Service together with Cllrs Hood and Wood & the Chief Officer which had been productive and useful and would be repeated.

6.7 The Committee supported the Chief Officer's draft response on the DCLG Standards consultation. He took the opportunity to report that the County Council had considered the Committee's request for a member on the panel appointing Parish Members to the Standards Committee. This had been considered by the Standards Committee who decided accepting offering a place as two of their members were also members of Local Councils. The Chief Officer had been able to suggest areas for potential questions of the candidates. **Action SER**

6.8 The Committee noted the latest proposals for Parliamentary boundaries if the House of Commons were reduced to 600 MPs (most present being doubtful that would occur). Whilst Members were pleased that Ponteland was no longer to be split between constituencies, and Northumberland was to be treated as a discrete entity, Members were concerned at the continuing proposal to have Choppington Parish Council straddle a constituency boundary. The Committee agreed to make further representation to the Boundary Commission if Choppington Parish Council requested the Association to do so. **Action SER**

6.9 The County Committee agreed to accept the offer from Ian Clough, the County Council's Civil Contingencies Manager, to attend the March 2018 meeting, to discuss how better to involve and inform Local Councils. **Action SER**

6.10 The Committee were content with the new style of report separating items for probable debate from those being for report. [A copy is with the signed minutes]

7: Newcastle Issues

The City Council Planning Training on 4 December was noted

8: Northumberland Issues

8.1 The Action Points of the Chairman reported on the Town & Parish Council Conference held on 5 October were noted. Members were generally pleased with the event although felt that the Market Place should have had more planning input and the plenary session could have been extended. **Action SER**

8.2 The September planning discussion is reported at item 6.6 above.

8.3 The Chief Officer's agreed note of his discussion with the County Council's Elections Manager was noted. Members thought it would enable a greater discussion if the Elections Manager was to attend the next Town & Parish Liaison Working Group on 1 February 2018 rather than to accept his offer to attend a meeting of this Committee, an offer which was nevertheless appreciated. [A copy is with the signed minutes] **Action SER**

8.4 Membership of the County Council's Standards Committee is reported at item 6.7 above.

9: County Committee Member's Issues

None, not noted elsewhere

10: National ALC Issues

Councillor Francis and the Chief Officer had provided a written report of the national conference which was adopted with thanks. [A copy is attached to the signed minutes]

11: The Association's Constitution

Following a suggestion from the President it was agreed to establish a working party consisting of the President, The Chairman and Cllrs Francis, Hood and Sambrook to consider what changes (if any) might be suggested to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration as possible recommendations to the next AGM. **Action SER**

12: Memorandum of Understanding with CAN

The Report was agreed and the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen authorised to meet with CAN to consider potential renewal of the agreement. [A copy is with the signed minutes] **Action SER**

13: Media Releases

The report was agreed with the addition of website details on the media release format. [A copy is with the signed minutes] **Action SER**

14: The Business Plan

The Plan had been approved at the AGM with an additional target relating to new Local Councils in Newcastle and North Tyneside. Cllr Francis suggested seeking the support of Lord Shipley. The revised Plan was noted. [A copy is with the signed minutes]

15; Local Council of the Year

The Chairman commended the report to the Committee as a way of increasing the profile of the work undertaken by Local Councillors within Newcastle and Northumberland. The Committee were happy to endorse and adopt the report. [A copy is with the signed minutes] **Action SER**

16: Any Urgent Other Business

None not noted elsewhere

17: Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 20 January 2018 – please note the change of date

Further meetings of the County Committee are programmed for

- 24 March 2018 - (Easter Saturday is 31 March)
- 16 June 2018
- 8 September 2018
- 13 October 2018 – AGM – The Sill, Bardon Mill
- 17 November 2018

The meeting closed at noon.

Confirmed as a true record

and signed by the Chairman..... Date.....