

## **Northumberland Association of Local Councils**

### **Meeting of the County Committee at 10.15 am on Saturday 8 July 2017 at the ~~Storey Park~~~~East Bedlington~~ Community Centre, ~~Morpeth~~~~Bedlington~~ Station**

Present:

Councillors Barrell, Dawson, Dunn, Hogg, Parks, Potts, ~~Rook~~, Sambrook, Taylor, 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:

Councillors Askew, Collins, Francis, Graham, Hedley, Hood, Sinton, Tebbutt, and Thompson

#### 2: Committee Membership

2.1 The Committee co-opted the following Councillors for the constituencies shown

- Berwick & Islandshire – Cllr Ms Graham (Berwick-upon Tweed)
- Morpeth – Cllr Sambrook (Pegswood)
- Newcastle – Cllr Taylor (Woolsington)
- Prudhoe & East Tyndale – Cllr Gilmore (Prudhoe)
- Rothbury – Cllr Dawson (Rothbury)

The following Councillors were co-opted as non-constituency members of the County Committee

- Cllr A Tebbutt – Morpeth
- Cllr Trobe – Wylam

Both are within constituencies served by other members of the Committee but who represent other sizes of Council and can contribute through their experience.

2.3 The Chief Officer will circulate a revised membership list once remaining nominations have been received. **Action SER**

2.4 Cllr David Francis (Newton on the Moor & Swarland) was elected as the Association's representative on the national NALC Council for the forth-coming year.

### 3: Minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 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 ask the Committee to note that he had a number of actions outstanding

- Planning Issues – A training course in Newcastle and a meeting with the Cabinet Member in Northumberland (the discussion to include pre-applications as discussed in May)
- Analysis of the Councillor Census

### **Actions SER**

3.3.a The Committee asked that the Chief Officer meet the Northumberland Elections Manager to debrief the issues at the May elections. The Committee wanted to know if there had been an instruction to hold the count for parish elections on the Saturday, all at once, in one building and in alphabetical order or was it a decision based on costs?

3.3.b The Committee's preference would be for election results to be held in various towns at the same time, which were more accessible and involved less time in travelling and attendance, bearing in mind the role of a parish councillor was voluntary and costs could undemocratically debar members from attending the count.

3.3.c The Committee felt it was not appropriate for elected members to be present at such a meeting. **Action SER**

3.4 The Chief Officer reported that Northumberland's Monitoring Officer was conducting process for the selection of Parish Members on their Standards Committee.

3.5 The Association's Parish Portal had been nominated for a Star Council Award and the Chief Officer is seeking information from East Bedlington Parish Council regarding their nomination. **Action SER**

### 4: Financial Issues

4.1 The Committee adopted the accounts for 2016/2017. [A copy is attached to the signed minutes]. The Honorary Treasurer proposed that Margaret Tweddell is

thanked for her continuing work on the Association's financial transactions. The Committee happily endorsed this.

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

4.3 The Committee agreed that the Chief Officer be authorised to attend the National NALC Conference in October 2017 and, for the avoidance of doubt, that Cllr Francis and the Chief Officer be authorised to cast the Association's votes at that Conference. **Action SER**

4.4 The Chief Officer has yet to arrange the discussion with the Honorary Treasurer to consider financial reporting which may extend into consideration of financial and CRM systems. **Action GT, MT and SER**

#### 5: Chief Officer's Report

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

5.2 Training – the bookings were updated to show 11 bookings for the course on 12 July and 5 for the course on 15 July.

5.3 The County Council's planning training was endorsed even though short notice had been given. The Committee wished to urge Local Councillors to attend training on development control issues given the recent changes and the complexity. Members were of a view that long-serving Local Councillors should see such events as being essential refresher training and not just a course for newly elected Councillors.

5.4 The national pay claim lodged by the trade unions was considered. As the largest Council in the Association, Cllr Potts reported their concurrence in the claim. Members agreed that even a 5% rise would have a minimal impact on the budgets for nearly all Member Councils and the Trade Unions' case for a rise was compelling. The Committee resolved therefore to support the claim and asked the clerk to inform the national NALC of this position. **Action SER**

5.5 The Chief Officer briefed the Committee on a meeting attended on 6 July regarding the Death of a Senior National Figure. He will be sending Councils an updated note with particular reference to those with stations on the East Coast Main Line, but also those whose area includes that line. **Action SER**

5.6 The Committee were advised of the recent dispatch of a note on VAT.

#### 6: Newcastle Issues

Cllr Rook drew attention to a "*Transport for the North*" consultation. The Committee asked that the Chief Officer circulate details. Media reports were also

noted that Stagecoach were seeking discussions with the DfT regarding a possible surrender of the East Coast franchise. **Action SER**

### 7: Northumberland Issues

7.1 The County Council are seeking a limited updating of the Charter dealing with such matters as contact details but not seeking changes of substance. Northumberland Members of the Committee were asked to let the Chief Officer know if there were any issues of substance which should be reconsidered.

#### **Action All N'land Members of the Committee**

7.2 Area Local Councils (LACs) – One round had been held and Members noted it was early days but better arrangements were needed to avoid excessive gaps between sessions on the same day. There was concern about any slippage in the time for planning decisions given the Government's continuing reliance on this as one of the criteria for intervention. Councillors were also concerned about the confusion of the LAC title with Parish, Town and Community Councils.

7.3 The Committee noted the decision to withdraw the draft Core Strategy, which is to be the subject of discussion when a meeting with the Cabinet Member is arranged (see 3.2 above).

### 8: County Committee Member's Issues

None not noted elsewhere

### 9: National ALC Issues

Councillor Francis had provided a written report which was adopted with thanks. [A copy is attached to the signed minutes]

### 10: Annual Report

This item had been deferred at the previous meeting. Members were content with the broad thrust although noting that parts will require updating and amendment. [A copy of the draft report is attached to the signed minutes]

Action **SER**

### 11: Business Plan

This item had been deferred at the previous meeting. Members were content with the initial draft and asked that further work be carried out. [A copy of the draft is attached to the signed minutes] **Action SER**

### 12: Any Other Business

None not noted elsewhere

13: Next Meeting

A schedule of proposed meetings for 2017/2018 had been circulated and was agreed as set out below

- 9 September 2017 – County C'tee (No change)
- 7 October 2017 - AGM (No change)
- 18 November 2017 – County C'tee (slip back from 4 November?)
- 20 January 2018 – County C'tee (slipping back from early January as this will enable work on papers after the Christmas/New Year break)
- 24 March 2018 – County C'tee (Easter Saturday is 31 March)
- 16 June 2018 – County C'tee – slightly larger gap to avoid School half-term
- 8 September – County C'tee - - again a larger gap but avoiding August
- 6/13 October – AGM – to be decided
- 17 Nov 2018 – County C'tee

The meeting closed at Noon.

Confirmed as a true record

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