

Stephen Rickitt

From: Northumberland Association of Local Councils <info@northumberlandalc.uk>
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Northumberland Association of Local Councils

**NALC Enews
29 July 2020**

**Please forward to all Councillors
and Staff**

Introduction

My apologies for the recent silence and lack of response to emails but I have been off work and am now starting a phased return to NALC.

This edition is therefore somewhat larger than normal as it tries to capture the most significant publications during my absence.

In more normal times, announcements from Govt tend to ease off especially while Parliament is not sitting. I have noticed a number of nonCV-19 announcements in the past few weeks so there may be more to come.

I hope that a Member Council update will be sent out later this week to the Chairmen and Clerks of Member Councils

Stephen

Coronavirus

As we now expect, guidance and legislation remains a constantly moving picture.

For the most up-to-date advice please use the National NALC's dedicated webpage at

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/coronavirus>

The Govt's advice is obtainable via

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Virtual and In-Person Meetings

The national NALC and SLCC have produced a checklist on holding an in-person meeting, noting their strong advice to continue to hold virtual meetings.

The check-list can be obtained at

<https://www.slcc.co.uk/site/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/checklist-for-holding-in-person-meetings.pdf>

Please note that the 6-month rule for non-attendance still applies and has NOT been changed. Leave of Absence can be given by an virtual/electronic formal meeting of a Council. This must be before the 6-month period has elapsed.

Planning

There have been some significant changes particularly for permitted development rights.

The July 2020 "Dear Chief Planner" letter from MHCLG is a good round-up of the latest changes to law and policy.

It is available via

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-guidance-letters-to-chief-planning-officers#section>

There was also a recent High Court judgment which found that a local planning authority (Bath & North East Somerset) should have given adequate reasons when allowing a development against an officer recommendation. For those interested the judgment is at

<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2020/1836.html>

For those wanting to delve into the effectiveness of permitted development rights, MHCLG published research from UCL available via

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/planning/news/2020/jul/government-publishes-ucl-led-research-permitted-development-housing-quality>

In a blog, the Office for National Statistics looks at the future of retail sales

<https://blog.ons.gov.uk/2020/06/29/shopping-may-never-be-the-same-again/>

Standards

The Committee on Standards in Public Life has written to MHCLG asking when there will be a formal response to their report issued in January 2019, please see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-ethical-standards-letter-to-secretary-of-state>

The Committee has also written to principal councils saying they will be asked for details of progress during the autumn. The letter to principal councils is at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-ethical-standards-letter-to-local-authorities>

VAT and the hospitality etc sector

This association's VAT adviser has produced a note on the recent changes available at

https://mcusercontent.com/5060a2022e1081d67bbdd9b3a/files/3f388e6c-015d-4e29-a483-b330640681f6/Temporary_Reduction_in_VAT_rate.pdf

Removal of BT Phone Boxes

BT has proposed the removal of a further tranche of poorly used telephone kiosks. The County Council's Planning Dept have written to all affected Local Councils. Please respond to the planners as soon as possible.

The Northumberland list is at

https://mcusercontent.com/5060a2022e1081d67bbdd9b3a/files/465461b4-ebd7-4b78-bfa2-157171681eb0/2020_LIST_PHONE_BOX.pdf

Vacancy for a Clerk

Kielder Parish Council are seeking a clerk, details are at

[https://mcusercontent.com/5060a2022e1081d67bbdd9b3a/files/c161f7cc-a2b6-49b0-874f-bfa401a85e6d/Clerk and RFO Ad 2019 Kielder.docx](https://mcusercontent.com/5060a2022e1081d67bbdd9b3a/files/c161f7cc-a2b6-49b0-874f-bfa401a85e6d/Clerk_and_RFO_Ad_2019_Kielder.docx)

Healthwatch Northumberland

Their annual report is at

<https://indd.adobe.com/view/037d9dec-c506-4a3b-bc4c-a631702d914d>

The Police & Crime Commissioner

Her latest newsletter is at

<https://indd.adobe.com/view/b8a228c3-13f7-4110-82fc-9e8c58226a15>

Elections

The Electoral Commission have published their report into the December 2019 General Election at

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-04/UKPGE%20election%20report%202020.pdf>

Highways

The Govt have started a review of existing roads policing to:

- identify which current methods are most effective
- understand how the capability and capacity of enforcement services can be enhanced to improve safety and reduce future casualties on roads

Details are at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/roads-policing-review-future-methods-to-improve-safety-and-reduce-causalities>

On 28 July the Govt announced changes to policies affecting cycling and walking. Full details are available via

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-kickstarts-2bn-cycling-and-walking-revolution>

Allotments

This piece on the benefits of allotments may be of interest as it links to research undertaken by Northumbria University

<https://theconversation.com/why-allotments-offer-urban-oases-for-bees-and-butterflies-142529>

Local Plans

The Northumberland National Park Authority has now adopted its Local Plan with changes made to earlier drafts.

Full details are on their website at

<https://www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk/planning/planning-policy/local-plan/>

The County Council has written to all local councils in Northumberland with details of their consultation on further evidence for the Examination which will resume in the autumn. Their letter included all the documents on a memory stick.

The consultation closes at 5.00 pm on Monday 7 September 2020.

There are more details on their website at

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Planning-policy/Plan.aspx>



***If you have any comments or observations, please contact
Stephen Rickitt, NALC Chief Officer stephenrickitt@northumberlandalc.uk***

or

Louise Currie, Community Initiatives Officer louisecurrie@ca-north.org.uk

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