

Stephen Rickitt

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Northumberland Association of Local Councils

NALC Enews
30 May 2017

PAYE, Pensions and Auto-Enrolment

I expect that Councils will have received emails from The Pensions Regulator reminding them of their need to complete compliance information. As their website says

"Remember, even if you don't have staff who must be put into a pension scheme you still have other duties which include writing to all staff individually and completing your declaration of compliance."

If any Parish is having difficulties in complying, don't hesitate to contact me.

It's also an opportune moment to remind Councillors, that HMRC regard Clerks as PAYE Employees who should be paid Nett, with the Council paying the Tax to HMRC.

The Pensions Regulator's website is <http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/>

Fake News

Solace, the Centre for Public Scrutiny and The Alliance for Useful Evidence (supported by Nesta) have published guidance for local government scrutineers aimed at helping councils make better, evidence based decisions. Although it's aimed at principal councils, colleagues in local councils may find it of use.

The publication, Using evidence in scrutiny: A practice guide for local government scrutiny, sets out the importance of evidence-based decision making in local government policy, how to understand and use evidence effectively in scrutiny, and guidance on where to find 'good' evidence.

Solace said: "The challenge of working out what is 'good' and 'bad' evidence is not always straightforward, and this now sits alongside concerns about 'fake news' and a 'post truth' narrative in politics. Often there can be too much information and not enough expertise or confidence to work out what is good evidence, or how to use it to inform decision-making.

"Given the challenges facing councils over the coming years to ensure limited resources are targeted effectively, the role of scrutiny to influence and oversee the decisions will be crucial."

The guide is available at

http://www.solace.org.uk/knowledge/reports_guides/Using%20Evidence%20in%20Scrutiny.pdf

The History of Conservation Areas

Gresham College hold a series of public lectures on a range of topics. As they're held in London, they may have passed you by. The College now puts a video of the lectures on line, often with a transcript within a few days of delivery. My reason for drawing attention to the lectures is one

next week on the history of conservation areas.

For those wanting further information, the website is <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/>

Telephone Line Capacity

Glanton Parish Council recently wrote to Openreach regarding the infrastructure and connections to new homes, as some parishioners were experiencing delays in obtaining new lines.

Openreach have said that their policy is to build Fibre direct to the premises (FTTP) for all new developments of 30 homes or more.. Developments of less than 30 homes are usually connected via the existing Copper lines.

Developers are asked to register with Openreach 8-12 weeks before they start work on site.

There is more information at <https://www.ournetwork.openreach.co.uk/property-development.aspx>

Northumberland County Council

The County Council has now made the formal appointments and details are in the last three documents available via the link below.

<http://committee.northumberland.gov.uk/Meeting.aspx?MeetID=7719>

Annual Returns

Just to confirm that all Councils have to submit their Returns to BDO LLP. The changes take effect in 2018.



*If you have any comments or observations, please contact
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