

Northumberland Association of Local Councils

County Committee

16 November 2019

NALC Chief Officer's Report

Part A: Items for discussions and/or decisions

A1: Policy Developments

The uncertainty over a General Election seems to have delayed decisions emerging from Westminster and Whitehall. All Member Councils have been sent guidance on purdah and in particular on former MPs presence at Remembrance Commemorations.

The national NALC have published two new guides, all of which are available on the members part of their website

- The Good Councillors Guide to Transport Planning – jointly with the Transport Planning Society
- Loneliness Case Studies- jointly with the LGA

A2: North of Tyne Devolution and Borderlands

I attended the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Meetings of the Combined Authority on 8 October 2019. Although I was unable to address the meeting, I used the opportunity to speak informally to a number of those present.

The second Borderlands Conference is at Slaley Hall on 25 November 2019 and I hope to be able to attend. I understand that the County Council is to be the accountable body.

I have made contact with the relevant officer at Scottish Borders Council and it is possible that the Association will be invited to attend one of the meetings convened for their Community Councils.

A3: Briefings

The final briefing is on Monday 11 November and I shall bring the latest sheet showing attendance to the County Committee.

A4: The County Council's Town and Parish Liaison Working Group

The Group met on 31 October 2019 and received three useful briefings in addition to the usual updates. The briefings were

- A forthcoming consultation on the shape of Northumberland's Library Service – I suspect this has been delayed by the General Election
- The issues surrounding how Local Councils can engage with the Police and County Council to combat crime and anti-social behaviour.
- The County Council's work on Climate Change

It was encouraging to hear that the County Council's Members and Officers are receptive to the concerns expressed and expressed a clear desire to improve communications with Member Councils.

A5: The national NALC Conference

A note is in the course of preparation but is likely to be circulated after the agenda and this report.

Part B: Items intended for information but updates can be provided and/or concerns raised

B1: Significant Meetings attended

- Meeting with the County Council's Deputy Chief Executive
- The County Council's TPLWG
- County Officer Forum – at the national Conference 26 June

B2: Issues raised by member councils

These have included

- Co-option of new Councillors
- Insurance
- Common Land & Village Greens

- Highways
- Burial Committees, Precepts and Grouped Parish Councils
- Community Assets
- Grants to Organisations

B3: Member Bulletins sent to the Chairmen and Clerks of Member Councils

24 September 2019 comprising

- A link to a letter from the Chair of the National Committee for Standards in Public Life addressed to all public office holders
- Land Registration
- National Parks and AONBs
- Planning in Northumberland
- Dealing with the Press
- Red Telephone Boxes

8 October 2019 comprising

- Draft Minutes of the AGM held on 28 September 2019
- Draft Minutes of the County Committee held on 14 September 2019
- A note of a meeting with the County Council's Director of Planning
- A note on the Govt's recent announcement about council tax capping

17 October 2019 comprising

- Booking details for the Borderlands Conference in November 2019
- A request by Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council for information regarding the payment of the precept
- A note from the National NALC on Neighbourhood Planning and Community Health and Wellbeing
- A PDF of a PowerPoint presentation produced by the National NALC on the website accessibility regime
- A note of the first week of the examination of the Draft Northumberland Local Plan
- A link to latest newsletter from the Surveillance Camera Commissioner - I recommend it is read if your Council uses CCTV
- A request for possible topics for the 2020 programme of Briefings

22 October 2019 comprising

- Northumberland's Council Tax Base for 2020/2021
- Annual Meetings
- Cyber-Security
- The national NALC's Smaller Councils Committee

31 October 2019 comprising

- Purdah and The General Election 2019

5 November 2019 comprising

- Remembrance Ceremonies and General Election 2019

Stephen Rickitt

NALC Chief Officer

6 November 2019