

Northumberland Association of Local Councils

County Committee

23 March 2019

NALC Chief Officer's Report

Part A: Items for discussions and/or decisions

A1: Policy Developments

Brexit seems to be absorbing the energies of Govt. The result is that few policy initiatives have emerged from Whitehall.

There is a new NPPF with only minor changes from the revision issued in Summer 2018.

An announcement on Borderlands was made by both Governments on 14 March 2019 at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/total-investment-for-borderlands-reaches-up-to-447-million>

A2: North of Tyne Devolution

Following an informal discussion with Cllr Gregah Roughead (Berwick-upon Tweed) in his capacity as the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, I have indicated that the Association would be content with having "Observer Status" at this initial stage. A decision is awaited.

For information the timetable for the election of the Mayor is

- 26 March – publication of Notice of Election and beginning of the formal pre-election period;
- 27 March to 4pm on 3 April 2019 – period for potential candidates to submit their nomination papers;
- (By 4pm on) 4 April 2019 – publication of statement of persons nominated, ie the final list of candidates to appear on the ballot papers;
- 12 April – last date to register to vote;
- 15 April – first issue of postal vote packs begins;
- 15 April – deadline for postal vote applications;
- 24 April – deadline for applications for a proxy vote;
- 2 May – polling day;
- 3 May – count and declaration of result.

The effect is that purdah commences on 26 March 2019 and a note has been sent to all Member Councils.

A3: Training

The initial programme has now been sent to all Member Councils

A4: The County Council's 2019/2020 Budget

The proposals formed the major part of the discussion at the County Council's Town & Parish Liaison Working Group on 1 Feb 2019. There is a meeting to be attended by the Chairman on Vice-Chairmen on 21 March and the Committee will be updated on progress.

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

B1: Meetings attended

- County Council's TPLWG

B2: Issues raised by member councils

These have included

- Village Greens
- Increasing or decreasing the number of Councillors
- VAT Questions – to Steve Parkinson

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

- Communications from the national NALC – 22 January 2019
- Draft Social Media Policy – 24 January 2019
- Audit and Joint Committee/Partnerships - 24 January 2019
- Parish Councils and Community Companies – 30 January 2019
- County Council's TPLWG – 5 February 2019
- Member Information including HMRC Making Tax Digital, Flood Consultation and Leave – 13 February 2019
- Possible Vat Training – 14 February 2019
- Member Update including Hacking, National Legal Update and Changing Name – 6 March 2019
- Elections and Purdah – 13 March 2019

B5: Press Reports

Our concerns on the County Council's budget were reported by the Northumberland Gazette

<https://www.northumberlandgazette.co.uk/news/concerns-about-changes-to-council-s-grounds-maintenance-service-1-9576692?fbclid=IwAR00XBbZYM9dHqn9-SRgMT3M1XspMuV-jNzpGiTX65extPv1xgUq9gVHT3A>

Stephen Rickitt

NALC Chief Officer

18 March 2019