

## Northumberland Association of Local Councils

### Meeting of the County Committee at 9.30 am on Saturday 14 September 2019 at the Storey Park Community Centre, Morpeth

Present:

Councillors Barrell, Bowlas, De Simone, Francis, Gillanders, Hogg, Hood, Hull, Peden, Price, Rook, Sambrook, Thurgood, Varley, Wallace (Chairman in the Chair) and Wood

Mr D Woodard (President)

Mrs M Anderton

Ms G Turner (Hon. Treasurer)

SE Rickitt (NALC Chief Officer)

*For ease of reference, some items have been grouped together.*

*In These minutes NoTCA means the North of Tyne Combined Authority*

#### 1: Welcome, apologies for absence, changes to membership and declarations of interest

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and congratulated Cllr De Simone on being the first Town Mayor of Cramlington.

The Committee paid tribute to the late Cllr Eileen Burt who had been a dedicated servant for the people of Prudhoe.

The resignation of Cllr Iain Hedley (Glanton) was noted.

The following co-options were agreed

<b>Cllr</b>	<b>Council</b>	<b>Substitute for</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
<i>Alan Bowlas and Colin Wakeling</i>	<i>Berwick TC / NIPAC</i>	<i>Gregah Roughead</i>	<u>Berwick &amp; Islandshire</u> [NB both were co-opted]
<i>Christine Cuthbert</i>	<i>Prudhoe TC</i>	<i>Gerry Price</i>	<u>Prudhoe and East Tynedale</u>
<i>Lorraine De Simone</i>	<i>Cramlington TC</i>	<i>John Collins</i>	<u>Cramlington</u>
<i>Bob Hull</i>	<i>Hexham TC</i>	<i>Tom Gillanders</i>	<u>Hexham and Hexhamshire</u>

Apologies were noted from Cllrs Coates, Cuthbert, Dunn, Hillan, Hughes, Potts, Roughead, Tebbutt and Wakeling.

### 3: Minutes of the 8 June 2019 meeting

3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3.2 The survey on perceptions of crime is an outstanding item – **Action SER**

3.3 The Chief Officer is seeking to engage with the NoTCA to seek input on Transport issues - **Action SER**

### 4: Member Resolutions to the AGM

4.1 The Committee noted the following resolution submitted by Bywell Parish Council and Prudhoe Town Council (with the support of the East Tynedale Forum for consideration at the AGM.

“That the current Constituencies be reviewed by the County Committee and in particular that those seats in the East Tynedale area be reconfigured to take account of the East Tynedale Forum.”

4.2 The Committee agreed to recommend that the AGM agree to a working group comprising the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Committee, Cllr Francis, Mrs Anderton and the Chief Officer to prepare a report for a future meeting of the Committee following the AGM. **Action SER to convene (subject to the decision of the AGM)**

### 5: The Local Council of the Year 2019

5.1 The Chairman was delighted to announce that Hexham Town Council are the winners with Blakelaw & North Fenham Community Council and Longhorsley Parish Council being joint runners-up. The Chairman also congratulated Hexham Town Council on securing funding as one of the Historic High Streets.

5.2 The Committee congratulated all the Councils and noted that the Chief Officer would be arranging for formal presentations by the Chairman at meetings of the three Councils. **Action SER and AW**

### 6: Independent review of local authority audit

6.1 Member Councils have been circulated with details and the Committee were encouraged to have clerks send their thoughts to the Chief Officer. **Action All C'tee Members**

6.2 It was agreed that the Association's response would be compiled by Cllrs Francis & Wallace, Mrs Anderton and the Chief Officer. **Action SER**

### 7: Financial Issues

The Committee noted and adopted the financial summary. [A copy is attached to the signed minutes] The meeting was informed that only five Councils had not yet paid their 2019/2020 subscriptions. **Action SER to chase up**

### 8: NALC Chief Officer's Report

8.1 The NALC Chief Officer's Report was adopted subject to the following issues. [A copy is attached to the signed minutes]

8.2 Attention was drawn to the publication of the Parliamentary Select Committee's report on Pavement Parking. Committee Members agreed there are real difficulties for users of the pavement but on the other hand, most of our communities do not have the facilities to cope with the number of vehicles, particularly outside the relatively few and larger settlements with varying degrees of public transport.

8.3 The Chief Officer reported on making contacts with the Mayor's team at the NoTCA and with Scottish Borders Council where hopefully the Association might be invited to a meeting of a Community Council Forum. The Committee endorsed attendance at such a forum.

8.4 The Committee endorsed the suggested logo for Member Councils to use if they so wished. **Action SER to circulate.**

8.5 The Committee was updated on the two smaller working groups attended by the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen with key operational managers at the County Council. *NB: For Northumberland Planning Issues see item 10 below.*

8.6 The Chief Officer reported an upsurge in enquiries about bestowing the title of Honorary Freeman/Woman.

#### 9: Newcastle Issues

9.1 The report from Cllr Rook on NEbus was adopted. The Committee agreed that Cllr Rook should be the Association's representative on the City Council's Transport Forum. **Action VR.** [A copy of the report is attached to the signed minutes]

9.2 Members raised potential problems for rural bus services complying with the clean-air zone in the City. The Chief Officer was asked to prepare a report for a future meeting indicating how the Association might engage with the bus operators. **Action SER**

#### 10: Northumberland Issues

Members raised issues relating to development control

- Pre-application discussions – these remain a source of great concern with the non-application of the County Council's own procedure, non-involvement of Local Councils, inconsistent advice, personal preferences of individual planning officers being accorded weight and the often automatic application of secrecy to such enquiries, with failures to disclose advice on subsequent applications.
- Non-engagement of the Highways Development Control team with local councils, who have the local knowledge needed to properly inform recommendations
- Upward revisions of housing numbers on development sites
- The use and disclosure of Section 106 Funds [**SER to research**]
- Delay in decisions being made once an application is submitted leading to empty buildings and sites in prominent locations
- Sites being available for development but an apparent lack of pressure from the County Council on developers to use those sites.
- Parish Councillors not being allowed to speak at site visits

These will be raised by the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen at their forth-coming meeting with the County Council's Director of Planning. **Action AW**

11: County Committee’s Member Issues [Not noted elsewhere]

11.1 The loss of the page on the County Council’s website giving easy links to information for Local Councillors was regretted, as was the lack of an up-to-date Who’s Who of County Council officers.

11.2 One Council has had some success in using CCTV to combat anti-social gangs

12: National ALC issues

The report from Cllr Francis was adopted subject to the following issues. [A copy is attached to the signed minutes]

- The provision of a national HR service was welcomed
- The Committee endorsed the view that templates designed for all sizes of Local Councils was inappropriate. In particular, the national NALC should provide a range of templates for the smaller or less complex Councils.

13: Any other urgent business

None, at noted above

15: Date of next meeting

This was noted as 16 November 2019 at the usual start-time of 10.15 am.

The Committee were reminded of the Association’s AGM on 28 September 2019

Future meetings are

- 18 January 2020
- 21 March 2020
- 6 June 2020
- 5 September 2020
- 26 September 2020 – AGM
- 14 November 2020

The meeting closed at 1130

Confirmed as a true record  
and signed by the Chairman..... Date.....