

**Stephen Rickitt**

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**From:** Northumberland Association of Local Councils <info@northumberlandalc.uk>  
**Sent:** 16 January 2019 09:42  
**To:** Stephen Rickitt  
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Northumberland Association  
of Local Councils

# **NALC Enews**

## **16 January 2019**

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### **Member Emails**

The Chairmen and Clerks of Member Councils have been sent the following emails, please let me know if your Council has not received them

- Royal Garden Party - 3 January 2019
- The Newcastle & Northumberland Local Council of the Year

### **Northumberland's Draft Local Plan**

All Local Councils in Northumberland have been emailed a letter with details of the forthcoming formal consultation and the drop-in sessions across the County.

The Planning Inspectorate have also updated their guidance and explanation on the role of the inspector during a local plan examination process. It has considerably changed from the inquiries held some years ago.

Details are at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-plans>

## **Planning Issues**

### Use Classes and the High Street

Wardhadaway, a local firm of solicitors, have issued a bulletin including the following paragraph of potential changes to the Use Classes on the High Street

With famous high street names such as House of Fraser and Mothercare appearing to lose the battle against online retailers, proposed amendments to planning law could facilitate an easier transition between store uses. The Government are seeking responses on their consultation report, 'Planning Reform: Supporting the High Street and Increasing the Delivery of New Homes'. The consultation report is examining the use of new permitted development rights to allow for greater flexibility to change the use class of properties.

The consultation report is seeking opinions on how particular use classes can be simplified to allow for a fluid change of use and has suggested removing the current named use under Class A : "post office and retail sale of goods", and replacing these with a broad definition to help accommodate new and future business models. If implemented, this proposal would enable owners of existing units to diversify the use of the unit according to demand, without the need for planning permission.

Similar attempts to review the Use Classes Order were made in 2002 and 2015 but the changes were not far reaching and had limited impact. The consultation period will end imminently (on 14th January 2019) and it will be interesting to see if a radical approach will be taken to support the changing character and use of our high streets.

The full bulletin is at

<https://wardhadawaylawfirm.com/1JV9-62GRB-E5BRAN3V5D/cr.aspx>

### Challenge to Permissions

There's an interesting legal article on a parish council's challenge on two grounds - habitats and settlement boundaries-

[http://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=37793%3Apeople-over-wind-the-habitats-directive-local-plans-and-aarhus-convention-claims&catid=63&Itemid=31](http://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=37793%3Apeople-over-wind-the-habitats-directive-local-plans-and-aarhus-convention-claims&catid=63&Itemid=31)

### Role of Local Authorities in Housing Supply

Although aimed at upper-tier councils, the following article may be thought provoking.

<https://www.publiclawtoday.co.uk/planning/318-planning-features/39571-the-role-of-local-authorities-in-housing-supply-3>

## **The national NALC Spring Conference**

This is being held on at the Royal National Hotel, London on 11 February 2019

Ms Crouch will be speaking on rural isolation and the government's loneliness strategy.

Ms Crouch is MP for Chatham and Aylesford (Kent) and only as recently as last year was minister for Civil Society. In 2018 she was appointed to lead a government-wide group with a focus on policies connected to loneliness.

As well as speaking on rural isolation and the loneliness strategy, Ms Crouch will talk about the realities of

being a minister, the Civil Society Strategy, and the post-Brexit opportunities and challenges for local (parish and town) councils.

Please see the national website for more details

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

## **Society of Local Council Clerks - Training for new clerks**

The local SLCC Branch has asked that I remind clerks of the following

### **New Clerk Event**

As you may already be aware, the 'New Clerk Event' is aimed at clerks who have been clerking for 12 months or less. The event, sponsored by CCLA and Came & Company, is a new concept for 2019 and will be packed with best-practice advice, tips and information. The event will take place in two locations, CCLA in London on the 27<sup>th</sup> February and Hardwick Hall in Sedgfield on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July. The event is open to members and non-members and is only £10 + VAT to attend.

Bookings are now open on our website so please make members/non-members aware at your Branch meetings.

More information and the full agenda is available at

<https://www.slcc.co.uk/conference/new-clerk-event/37/>

## **Audit and Upper-Tier Councils**

The National Audit Office have recently issued two reports which may be of interest

### Local Authority Governance

Our report examines whether local governance arrangements provide local taxpayers and Parliament with assurance that local authority spending achieves value for money and that authorities are financially sustainable. The report addresses this question in three separate parts:

- Part One examines the pressures on the local governance system;
- Part Two explores the extent to which local governance arrangements function as intended; and
- Part Three assesses whether the Department is fulfilling its responsibilities as steward of the system.

<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/local-authority-governance-2/>

### Local Auditor Reporting

Our report describes the roles and responsibilities of local auditors and relevant national bodies in relation to the local audit framework and summarises

the main findings reported by local auditors in 2017-18. It also considers how the quantity and nature of the issues reported have changed since the C&AG took up his new responsibilities in 2015, and highlights differences between the local government and NHS sectors.

<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/local-auditor-reporting-in-england-2018/>

## **Flood Friday Video**

The latest video from the Environment Agency deals with the benefits of a Community Flood Plan.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAS4TfieEiQ&list=PLfQeDt\\_9dLX0rqRp75hG8HTQWpyPVdeVz&index=12](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAS4TfieEiQ&list=PLfQeDt_9dLX0rqRp75hG8HTQWpyPVdeVz&index=12)

## **Northumberland's Council Tax Base 2019/2020**

Local Councils in the county have been sent a letter by the County Council with details of their Council Tax Base for 2019/2020 following the decision on Council Tax Support. If your Council has not received a copy by email please let me know as it may mean your contact details need updating.



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*If you have any comments or observations, please contact*  
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**Our website is at** <https://northumberlandalc.uk/>

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