

Stephen Rickitt

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Sent: 19 September 2017 09:59
To: stephenrickitt@northalc.org.uk
Subject: NALC Enews 19 Sept 2017

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Northumberland Association of Local Councils

NALC Enews
19 Sept 2017

Referendums

a technical consultation on the principles for local government finance in 2018/2019. It was a simple one with very specific proposals which were not followed through following a vigorous campaign by NALC.

It does not contain detailed proposals but does say

Referendum principles for town and parish councils.

Government issued a challenge to town and parish councils to demonstrate restraint when setting precept in the result of taking on additional responsibilities, and to make precept decisions more transparent to local residents. The position in 2018-19 is contingent upon the Government receiving clear evidence of how the sector is responding. The Government expects parishes, in setting their precepts, to consider all available options to mitigate the impact of the use of reserves where they are not already earmarked for particular purposes or for "invest to save" to offset revenue costs. Any revised proposals will be set out at the time of the provisional local government finance settlement.

At the DCLG minister last week and the following is an extract from the note just circulated.

Minister on steps taken since December's welcome decision not to extend referendum principles, to encourage councils to be more transparent with residents on budget proposals and explore the use of other revenue streams in addition to raising the precept.

The minister has told us many parishes are actively engaging residents in budgeting process, take-up of the Transparency Fund is increasing and publishing financial information online. While Andrew's recent survey shows 60% of parishes were actively using other revenue streams to offset precept, rising external costs driven by greater involvement of parishes in delivering crucial services (from building dementia friendly neighbourhood planning) as well as taking over of discretionary services previously provided by principal councils (which local residents are continuing to place pressure on precepts.

The minister that ensuring effective engagement across the sector would take time, as would supporting councils to maximize other revenue streams to support this and help embed changes by giving the sector a period of certainty through a multi-year deal not to extend referendum. He is increasingly becoming involved in new services, which he welcomed, however he indicated that high precept increases with limited engagement led to resident complaints to MPs. He indicated that a technical consultation on the local government finance settlement would welcome continuing evidence on how the sector was working to address the current financial challenge. [The 2018-19 Local Government Finance Settlement Consultation](#) was subsequently published yesterday and we will be issuing further information on this next week.

It would take time to fully embed good practice across the sector and we want to work with the Government to deliver this. She also mentioned NALC's support for parishes receiving a share of business rates which the minister indicated was not on the table at present.

We will be updating member Councils aware of any further details.

We are offering free Introductory Training in Dinnington on Tuesday 26 September 2017 at 7.00 pm. Further details are available at <http://www.nalc.co.uk/e/nalc-introduction-to-local-councils-newcastle-tickets-37414416527>

should have received an email with the agenda and details of the AGM which is on Saturday 7 October at the Community Hub.

This is appreciated, so we know the numbers for tea and coffee.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/nalc-agm-pegswood-tickets-37905940689>

and further proposals designed in their words

first mooted in the government's [housing white paper](#), will help give a realistic picture of how many homes can be built now and in future years. It will also mean more homes are built in areas where it is unaffordable, particularly in the south-east.

proposal to underline the weight to be given to an emerging Neighbourhood Plan which has passed examination.

at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-planning-approach-to-speed-up-delivering-homes>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/644955/Planning_for_Homes_consultation

Department has issued a consultation which seeks views on new good governance guidance for statutory housing authorities in England and Wales.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/ports-good-governance-draft-guidance>

announced further funding for rural broadband. Details are at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-great-british-broadband-boost>

and 16/17 year olds

Commission has issued some interesting research into this year's Scottish Local Govt. elections, available at electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/journalist/electoral-commission-media-centre/news-releases-campaigner-wants-to-engage-more-eligible-voters,-but-call-for-further-modernisation-of-the-registration-process



*If you have any comments or observations, please contact
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