

POLICY COMMITTEE | MINUTES

12 JANUARY 2021

This meeting took place over Zoom.

Present:

Cllr David Francis (committee chairman and Northumberland), Cllr Lillian Burns (Cheshire), Cllr Sue Baxter (NALC chairman and Worcestershire), Cllr Peter Allison (Yorkshire), Cllr Colin Peacock (Lancashire), Cllr Malcolm Leeding, MBE (Oxfordshire), Cllr Rosie Weaver BEM (Warwickshire and West Midlands), Ms Carole Burslem (County Officer Forum representative and Buckinghamshire) and, Cllr Tony Hirons (Leicestershire and Rutland).

Staff present: Justin Griggs (head of policy and communications), Chris Borg (policy manager), and Claire Goldfinch (policy and communications project officer).

1. Welcome and apologies

Resolved: No apologies were received for this meeting.

2. Minutes from the previous meeting

Resolved (1) : That the Chairman be authorised to sign the draft minutes of the previous committee meeting from 6 October 2020 as a true record of the proceedings.

Resolved (2): That the action log be noted.

3. Motions from county associations

3.1 Kent county association - protections for the travelling community

The committee discussed the motion and supported the aim of retaining a balance between the needs of local communities and travellers, in the housing policies of local plans.

Resolved: The committee notes the issue and will consider it if planning regulations change. The committee will look to carry on the sentiment of this motion in enabling the protection of travelling communities in planning legislation.

4. Planning White Paper – Follow-up Engagement

4.1 Engagement

The committee received a short written report from the policy manager outlining NALC follow-up engagement after submission of NALC's three responses to the Planning White Paper consultations in October 2020. A report comprising summaries of other stakeholder views on the Planning White Papers was also considered.

Resolved: The committee notes the report.

4.2 HCLG Inquiry In Planning Reform

The committee received a verbal update on the advocacy of the policy manager on the written submission to the HCLG inquiry in planning.

Resolved: The committee thanked Cllr Burns for her work with the inquiry and noted the update provided on NALC's response to the inquiry.

4.3 The Parker Report on Neighbourhood Planning.

The policy manager agreed to circulate the analysis of the Parker Report and implications for local (parish and town) councils. The committee will circulate their views on the report via email (they had already been sent it in early December 2020).

Resolved: The committee noted the report and wished to consider it at a further date

4.4 MHCLG consultation on supporting housing delivery

The committee agreed the final response to the MHCLG consultation on supporting housing delivery and public services infrastructure.

Resolved: The committee endorsed the consultation response which would be duly submitted to MHCLG by officers.

4.5 Discussion – housing needs

Cllr Allison highlighted that though MHCLG were dropping their affordable housing algorithm there would be an increase to top 20 English urban centre housing needs figure by 20%. The Committee doubted the practicability of the new solution, which might require further revisions in due course. The Committee agreed to monitor the situation.

Resolved: The committee notes Councillor Allison's response to the changes of the planning algorithm and the effect that this will have on local areas.

5. Campaigns

5.1 Young people

The committee received a short written update from the head of policy and communications and agreed the programme of work on the theme of young people for 2021.

Resolved: The committee endorsed the report.

5.2 Climate change

The committee received a written report from the projects officer with an update on the latest work of the NALC Climate Change Task and Finish Group, including early findings from the group's survey which launched in October 2020.

Resolved: The committee noted the update and endorsed the policy position statement on behalf of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group.

5.3 Health and wellbeing

The committee received a summary of work on the theme of health and wellbeing completed in 2020 from the project officer.

Resolved: The committee noted the report and welcomed the honour of being the secretariat of the Prime Minister's Champion Group on Dementia.

5.4 Local council elections 2021

The committee received a verbal update from the projects officer on the launch of NALC's suite of materials for the local election campaign 2021 which went live in November 2020. Cllr Leeding stated that he had sent

some material for the attention of the Smaller Councils' Committee some while ago and was happy for this to be circulated as needed.

Resolved: The committee received the update.

5.5 Devolution White Paper and Comprehensive Spending Review

The committee received a verbal update on engagement with government on devolution and local government finance since the previous committee meeting from the head of policy and communications.

Resolved: The committee welcomed the update.

5.6 LGA Model Code of Conduct Update

The committee received a short written report from the policy manager on NALC's final response to the LGA on its further updated model code of conduct 2020 which has since been published by the LGA.

Resolved: The committee noted the update and welcomed the LGA code of conduct 2020.

6. Lobby Day

6.1 The committee received a short verbal update from the policy manager on progress with Lobby Day on 2 February 2021.

Resolved: The committee received the update and noted the date and importance of Lobby Day.

7. Rural Services Network AGM & Rural Assembly

7.1 The committee noted a report from Cllr Lilian Burns who attended the Rural Services Network (RSN) AGM and Rural Assembly on 16 November 2020.

Resolved: The council thanked Cllr Burns and noted her report. The committee chairman recommended that the report should be circulated to the Smaller Councils Committee for information.

8. Date and time of next meeting

8.1 To note the next meeting of the Policy Committee will be held on 30 March 2021 by Zoom (to be confirmed by NALC officers). © NALC 2021