

POLICY COMMITTEE | MINUTES

30 March 2021 -10:00-11:30

ZOOM teleconference

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: Dr Jonathan Owen (chief executive), Justin Griggs (head of policy and communications), Chris Borg (policy manager), and Claire Goldfinch (policy and communications project officer).

1. Welcome by the chairman

The committee chairman welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

2.1. To receive any apologies from the session

Resolved: No apologies were received

3. 5G Connectivity - Update From Mobile UK

3.1. To receive a verbal update from Mobile UK regarding the recent launch of communications/community assets regarding the benefits versus health factors of 5G roll-out.

Resolved: The committee heard from Mobile UK on 5G and health and thanked Gareth Elliot for his excellent presentation. The committee agreed to promote the fact sheets that Mobile UK produces to NALC members. The committee also urged the continuing efforts to extend the coverage of 4g to all parts of England.

4. Minutes of previous meeting - 12 January 2021

4.1. To approve the draft minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2021.

Resolved: The committee approved the draft minutes.

4.2. To note the action log and raise any other matters.

Resolved: The committee noted the action log.

5. Motions from county associations

5.1. To receive a motion from Wiltshire Association of Local Councils regarding the need for photo evidence for Tree Preservation Orders.

Lance Allen, clerk of Trowbridge Town Council, spoke about how it is difficult for councillors to make decisions on Tree Preservation Orders without physical evidence of the specific tree.

Resolved: The committee supports the motion and recognises the need for photographic evidence of trees before the council makes a decision. This will be included in all responses to planning as well as tree planting and protection.

5.2. To receive a motion from Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils on the extension of remote meetings legislation beyond 6 May 2021

Resolved: The committee notes the multiple benefits of remote meetings and supports the motion to campaign for remote meetings indefinitely.

5.3. To receive a motion from the Kent Association of Local Councils regarding litter enforcement.

The Association wants to enforce a way to clarify who has dropped litter and suggests that take away packaging from drive through facilities be stamped with the vehicle's car registration, date, time and retailer

Resolved: The committee heard from Terry Martin, KALC on the need to tackle fly tipping and discarded litter. The committee adopted the motion and will work with other interested parties (such as the LGA and the Keep Britain Tidy campaign) and will take the opportunity to include the principle in the Environment Bill amongst other consultation responses.

6. Consultation next steps

6.1. Committee engagement: To discuss informal and flexible engagement with the committee on consultations and other matters using Zoom and other media informally between meetings.

Resolved: The committee supported the use of informal meetings between formal meetings of the committee, as necessary and appropriate.

6.2. To receive a verbal update and short written report from the policy manager on the next steps after the recent response to the following consultations:

- MHCLG Right to Regenerate consultation.
- MHCLG Office for Beauty consultation.
- Transforming Public Procurement – Cabinet Office Green Paper.

Resolved: The committee thanked member councils for their responses to the inquiries and consultations. The committee supported the notion of encouraging members to respond directly to the call for evidence for reintroducing virtual meetings directly with government. This will ensure that the maximum number of councils will respond to the inquiry. NALC will also produce its own response to the inquiry in due course.

6.3. To confirm agreed principles for NALC to include in its short response to the MHCLG unitary consultations for Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset.

Resolved: The committee agrees the principles which are being taken to the next informal National Assembly meeting on 13 April 2021.

7. Campaigns

7.1. Local council elections 2021 – to receive a written report in summary of the Make A Change campaign so far.

Resolved (1): The committee supported the idea that election surveys will take place after the May 2021 election. Members of the committee came forward to assist with this project.

Resolved (2): The committee supported the notion for updated guidance on advice on cooption. Members of the committee came forward to assist with this project.

7.2. Devolution and creation of new councils – to receive a report from the head of policy and communications on NALC's policies on creating new councils.

Resolved (1): The committee welcomed the report and endorsed the main policy positions. The committee discussed how targeting of local (parish and

town) councils may be effective. The committee welcomed the principle of NALC lobbying government for a new national support programme and understood that this would be reliant on relevant resources.

Resolved (2): The committee supported the notion that the process and effort undertaken at the local level during a community governance review should be undertaken by the relevant principal local authority to create local councils. However, it also agreed that the oversight and decisions taken at the end of such reviews should be taken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as this would help ensure that more local councils are created.

8. Engaging with MPs

8.1. To receive a written report outlining Lobby Day on 2 February 2021.

Resolved: The committee welcomed the lobbying activity that took place within the disruption of COVID-19. The committee agreed that Lobby Day should be identified with the calendar of dates that are approved at National Assembly and that county associations are reminded with plenty of time to lobby their MP's. There was a request that all future lobby days take place in March annually for purposes of certainty and forward planning.

The committee thanked NALC staff for their contribution to Lobby Day, 2021.

9. Date and time of next meeting

9.1. To note the next meeting of the Policy Committee will be held on 29 June 2021 via Zoom.

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