

POLICY COMMITTEE | AGENDA

29 June 2021 –10:00–11:30

ZOOM teleconference

Any member wishing to submit an apology for this meeting please contact NALC at NALCcommittees@nalc.gov.uk or call on 020 7637 1865.

1. Welcome by the chairman [10:00]

2. Apologies for absence [10:00]

2.1. To receive any apologies from the session

3. Minutes of previous meeting – 30 March 2021 [10:00–10:05]

3.1. To approve the draft minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2021.

see appendix 3.1

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

see appendix 3.2

4. Motions from county associations [10:05–10:35]

4.1. To receive a motion from the Shropshire Association of Local Councils regarding fireworks (item to be attended by Cllr Ray Wickson, SALC, to speak to the item).

see appendix 4.1

4.2. To receive a motion from the Berkshire Association of Local Councils on flooding and new development (item to be attended by Geoff Harper c/o BALC to speak to the item).

see appendix 4.2

5. Consultation next steps [10:35–10:50]

5.1. 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 remote meetings consultation.

- MHCLG electronic communications infrastructure consultation.
- DCMS rural broadband consultation.

see appendix 5.1

6. Campaigns [10:50-11:10]

6.1 Toilet tax – to receive a verbal update on the progression of the Toilet Tax Bill.

6.2 Banking – to receive a short written report from the policy manager on the ongoing campaign to improve banking services for local councils.

see appendix 6.1

6.3. Local council elections 2021 – to receive a written report in summary of the Make A Change campaign following the local elections on 6 May 2021 (including updates on cooption and elections surveys).

see appendix 6.2

6.4 Climate change – to receive a written report on the analysis of the climate change survey, the future of the Task and Finish Group, the Environment Bill and Local Electricity Bill.

see appendix 6.3

6.5 Young People – to receive a written report on the case study document, a dedicated webpage, the NALC event on engaging young people, identifying barriers and lobbying areas.

see appendix 6.4

6.6 DEFRA Annual Rural Proofing report – to feed-back headline views on the DEFRA annual Rural Proofing report to officers [here](#) so that they can feed back views to the DEFRA rural policy unit in July 2021

6.7 To receive a verbal update on the content of the Queen's Speech from 11 May 2021

7. Review of NALC Prospectus [11:10-11:30]

7.1 To review the NALC Prospectus (link provided in appendix 7.1 and will be screen shared during the Zoom call).

see appendix 7.1

8. Date and time of next meeting [11:30]

8.1. To note the next meeting of the Policy Committee will be held at 10 a.m. on 5 October 2021 via Zoom.

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Appendix 3.1

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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Appendix 3.2

Action log

Date	Activity	Item number	Action Complete (Y / N)
30 March 2021	WALC Motion - TPOs. ACTION: 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.	5.1	Y
30 March 2021	GAPTC motion on remote meetings. ACTION: The committee notes the multiple benefits of remote meetings and supports the motion to campaign for remote meetings indefinitely.	5.2	Y
30 March 2021	KALC motion on litter. ACTION: 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.	5.3	Y
30 March 2021	Remote meetings consultation ACTION: The committee agrees the principles which are being taken to the next informal National Assembly meeting on 13 April 2021.	6.3	Y
30 March 2021	Elections surveys	7.1	Y

	ACTION: 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.		
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Appendix 4.1

Motion from Shropshire Association of Local Councils

Subject: Protection from Fireworks

1. Text

“SALC requests that NALC lobbies Government to further tighten controls on indiscriminate use of fireworks throughout the year and in particular to ban the use of Chinese lanterns as per the reasons set out in this submission.”

2. Reasoning for the motion

Many fireworks are now available to buy freely throughout the year. The volume made when some fireworks go off can affect many people's health and the welfare of some pets also (some are injured or even die if struck with fireworks). Chinese lanterns cause problems for animals in rural areas – legislation to protect people / animals needs to be tighter.

3. Prospectus theme

Building capacity

4. How affecting local councils

Noise, health issues, animal welfare and litter are among a long list of issues experienced by many across Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire and the country. Whilst many enjoy a fireworks display, concerns are for the safety of the community and animals.

5. Recommendation

That Policy Committee reach a decision after consideration of this motion at its session on 29 June 2021.

Contact officer: Chris Borg, policy manager T. 07714 771049; e. chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk © NALC 2021

Appendix 4.2

Motion from Berkshire Association of Local Councils

Subject: Flooding

1. Text

“BALC is requesting that the government implement this legislation [regarding the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 Section 42 and Section 43], immediately. This will enable the mandatory adoption of Surface Water Urban Development Systems and sewers and address issues which could be to the legal, financial and environmental detriment of homeowners.”

2. Reasoning for the motion

BALC spoke to the Newbury Town Clerk and put on a presentation at its AGM on 24 February 202 – where BALC members felt that if legislation was passed to make the adoption of the Surface Water Urban Development Systems scheme mandatory by developers there would be fewer problems caused by sewage developments to homes in urban areas.

3. Prospectus theme

Empower Communities

4. How affecting local councils

This matter has been a problem in particular for Newbury Town Council and some surrounding parishes. Newbury Town Council has raised this matter direct with MHCLG but had no response. Sewage systems which are being implemented in some urban parished areas without being part of the baseline Surface Water Urban Development Systems scheme, are flooding and causing huge problems to residents in those parished areas.

5. Recommendation

That Policy Committee reach a decision after consideration of this motion at its session on 29 June 2021.

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Appendix 5.1

Consultations update – next steps

1. Summary

NALC is due to respond to three consultations as below in mid-June 2021:

- Remote meetings (MHCLG);
- Rural broadband (DCMS); &
- Electronic communications infrastructure (MHCLG).

This is a short report to confirm some suggested next steps on lobbying on these three areas.

2. Context

Some brief context for each of the three consultations is shown below with suggested next steps on lobbying:

(a) Remote meetings, MHCLG

- Purpose – to gather evidence on why there should be a permanent extension of the legislation to allow local councils to hold remote meetings;
- NALC argued: that local councils and principal authorities should be able to conduct meetings remotely if they wish in perpetuity without having to consult the government.
- Suggested next steps: ongoing dialogue with MHCLG and local government stakeholders, provide ongoing updates and advice to member councils.

(b) Rural broadband, DCMS

- Purpose – MHCLG wanted to measure the difficulties in providing strong enough broadband connections to very hard to reach premises in rural areas.
- NALC argued: that it was imperative that at least a 4G signal and ideally a 5G signal or broadband be implemented to reach very hard to reach premises in rural parished areas as soon as possible.
- Suggested next steps – ongoing dialogue with DEFRA, MHCLG and DCMS and continue to take soundings from member councils on why and where this continues to be a problem.

© Electronic communications infrastructure, MHCLG

- Purpose – MHCLG wanted to measure the extent to which planning permissions should still be needed in order to build higher mobile masts or to build higher masts on top of current ones.
- NALC argued – that existing mobile masts should be extended where possible and that planning permission should be sought even if the government wanted to build fairly low masts on buildings.
- Suggested next steps – retain ongoing dialogue with MHCLG and government stakeholders and continue to take soundings from member councils on the issue.

3. Recommendation

That the written report be noted.

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Appendix 6.1

Banks campaign

1. Summary

NALC has met at the request of county associations with the trade association for banks (UK Finance) in February 2020 and has collated three surveys undertaken by county associations so far in 2021 which summarise poor banking services received by local councils across England. This is a short written report to summarise ongoing activity over the summer and positive engagement with UK Finance of late.

2. Context

Below is a list of recent and upcoming engagement on this campaign:

- December 2020 request made to meet with UK Finance- policy manager arranged session in February 2021;
- 9 February 2021 – Derek Kemp, policy manager and representatives from Lincs. and Norfolk associations met with Commercial Finance Director at UK Finance;
- March 2021 – Oxfordshire, Notts. And Lincs. association banks surveys are completed and sent back to NALC policy manager;
- May 2021 NALC vice chairman and policy manager meet with UK Finance to discuss next steps with campaign;
- June 2021 – meeting with NALC vice chairman, policy manager and three county associations forming de facto county banks group;
- July 2021 county banks group, policy manager and NALC vice chairman meet with UK Finance and senior representatives of high street banks; &
- Summer 2021 representatives from high street banks feed back to NALC on agreed solutions to single campaign ask.

3. Recommendation

That the written report be noted.

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Appendix 6.2

Local council elections 2021

1. Summary

At the last policy committee meeting in March 2021, the committee received a report on the latest update to the Make A Change campaign. The committee agreed that some advice should be provided for councils on co-option and that NALC should issue surveys after the May elections following a similar pattern to those in 2019.

2. Context- elections surveys

Dave Francis, Peter Allison and Rosie Weaver have met with Project Officer Claire Goldfinch three times since the last meeting to go through the surveys that were issued in 2019. The group spent a considerable amount of time analysing the questions in order to make sure that we were asking the right questions to the right people. Confirmation is needed about who would be taking over the production of a research report from Autumn 2021 if it was decided that such a report was going to be generated again in 2021. It is recommended that the surveys be issued for a full three month period.

3. Co-option advice

On the recommendation of policy committee, the Make A Change webpage was updated with advice around co-option. This includes adapting the section on how to become a councillor (i.e. through election, co-option and casual vacancy) and providing advice for councils on how to use the co-option process for the council's gain. This is now under the resources section of the Make A Change webpage.

4. LGA grant

NALC received a grant of £5,000 from the LGA to be spent on the Make A Change campaign. It was decided that this would be spent on social media advertising.

5. Recommendation

That the written report be noted.

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Appendix 6.3

Climate change

1. Climate change survey

A subsection of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group have undertaken the project of analysing the climate change survey results. One member has taken on most of this work single-handed. The analysis from the survey results will be e-mailed to NALC officers by 11 June and a decision will then need to be taken on whether a standard report (in the same way the lessons report 2019 was produced) should then be produced to house the report results.

2. The future of the Task and Finish Group

As the lead NALC officer of the Task and Finish Group left on the 27 May 2021, it was decided that this is the correct time to transfer the Task and Finish Group into a national network. This would reduce the amount of officer time spent on the group and widen the network to include more councillors and councils. This fits with the programme to create more themed networks of women, coastal communities and young councillors. A NALC officer (probably incoming) would need to drive this work moving forwards.

3. The Environment Bill

Day 2 of report stage of the Environment Bill took place in the House of Commons on 26 May 2021. A briefing containing the Kent litter motion recently adopted was drafted. Most meaningful lobbying for this bill will happen or NALC in the Lords by Autumn 2021.

The Environment Bill accordingly passed the Commons stages by end May 2021 and first and second readings of the Lords stages had completed by early June 2021. NALC issued a parliamentary briefing and media release at Lords Second Reading on 7 June 2021. Committee stages in the Lords commence on 21 June 2021 and end on 22 July 2021.

4. Local Electricity Bill

The names of 20 MPOs were pulled out of a hat on 20 May 2021 as eligible to potentially adopt a ballot (private members') bill. The top 7 MPs are regarded to have the best chance of succeeding with a ballot bill. At the request of Power for People NALC e-mailed county associations some standard text asking for them to write to the top 7 MPs to adopt the local electricity bill. NALC wrote to these top

7 MPs on 24 May with the same request. Realistically given that the bill was frozen in the Commons anyway for such a long time – if no MP runs with this bill through the ballot bill route this is probably the death of this well-meaning bill.

5. Recommendation

That the written report be noted.

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Appendix 6.4

Young People

1. Case study document

NALC issued a survey on what councils were doing for young people in their communities. We received 145 responses which are being turned into a case study document. The survey will end on 11 June 2021. NALC officers will then review the format of the document, removing weaker case studies and inserting late received strong ones. It is suggested that the completed case study document is then uploaded to the new youth web page by end June 2021.

2. Young people webpage

NALC is going to create a dedicated webpage on what councils can do for young people in their community. This will sit alongside the case study publication and the young people's network. It is hoped that the young people's web page will be completed after officers have finalised links and text – by end June 2021.

3. The NALC event on engaging young people

NALC held an online event which sold out for young people between Noon and 13:15 on 26 May 2021. The speakers were Cllr Katy Brooks, Pembury Parish Council, Cllr Chelsey Jay, Witham Town Council and Cllr Ollie Tucker, Axminster Town Council. The main feedback from the event delegates is as below:

- 90% of respondents rated pre event information as 'very good' or 'good'
- - 100% of respondents said the event met their expectations 'fully' or 'somewhat'
- - 100% of respondents would recommend NALC's online events to others
- - 80% of respondents would be interested in attending an all day online event organised by NALC

4. Recommendation

That the written report be noted.

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Appendix 7.1

Review of NALC prospectus

1. Summary

NALC's *Prospectus for ultra-localism* is the key corporate document in which NALC summarises its four main policy pillars, under which then its main campaigns sit, then its main headline positions for local councils. The current iteration can be viewed [here](#) and will be shared virtually at the 29 June committee session. It has not been revised since 2017 and needs to be refreshed.

2. Context

The purpose of bringing this document to the attention of Policy Committee at this time is so that the committee can fulfil part of its terms of reference by suggesting updates to a new edition. Committee members are asked to read this brief document ahead of the committee session on 29 June 2021 and to have regard to the below bullets ahead of making suggested changes to the document:

- Do the three prospectus pillars of Empowering Communities, Building Capacity and Supporting Councillors and More Devolution and Engagement accurately capture the overarching themes we want to headline in 2021?
- Does the current title "A Prospectus for ultra localism: working with government help communities help themselves pithily portray on the front of the tin what the document is for?
- Does the Our Offer section really serve a useful purpose?
- Is the At A Glance section adding value to the document?
- Is the length about right or does it need to be shortened / lengthened?

3. Recommendation

That the written report be noted and that the committee agree changes to the document at the 29 June committee session.

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