

POLICY COMMITTEE | I DRAFT MINUTES

13 December 2021 -10:30 a.m.-12:06 p.m. via Zoom

Present:

Cllr David Francis (Northumberland) (committee chairman), Cllr Lillian Burns (Cheshire), Cllr Peter Allison (Yorkshire), Cllr Colin Peacock (Lancashire) and Cllr David Chalmers (Devon).

Staff present: Jonathan Owen (chief executive), Justin Griggs (head of policy and communications), Chris Borg (policy manager) and Nick Howell (campaigns intern).

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Keith Stevens (NALC chair).

2. Election of committee chair and vice chair 2022-23

Resolved (1): That Cllr David Francis be re-elected as committee chair for 2022/23.

Resolved (2): That Cllr Lillian Burns be re-elected as committee vice chair for 2022/23.

3. Introductions

Returning and new committee members (re)-introduced themselves, including Cllr Chalmers. The campaigns intern Nick Howell also introduced himself. In the absence of the two new members at the start of the meeting, NALC would need to consider an additional opportunity for their introduction in the New Year.

Resolved: For NALC to be asked to review its process for new committee members introducing themselves in the new Year 2022.

4. Appointments to outside bodies

Cllr Lillian Burns indicated her intention to stand down as NALC's representative on the Rural Services Network. It was noted that a wider exercise was underway to develop a list of appointments to outside bodies and proposals would be brought forward in the New Year.

Resolved: That the Committee consider any necessary appointments to outside bodies at the next meeting.

5. Committee terms of reference

The chair invited comments of the committee's terms of reference:

- The preamble sentence was from a previous tidying up exercise and would be deleted;
- National Assembly would be undertaking a governance review which would provide an opportunity to consider issues raised such as councillors serving on multiple committees;
- Consideration should be given to speeding up the policy development process through consultations, giving earlier notice and more time to respond and increasing the number of responses; &
- It was suggested that the overall terms of reference document for all committees and the Assembly should include some reference to making co-options (which are permitted via the constitution).

Resolved: The terms of reference were noted and the first line would be deleted.

6. Filling vacant positions

The chair reported that all seats had been filled in the election and while there were no vacant positions, the committee could still make additional co-options. He proposed Cllr Sue Baxter, NALC vice president, in order to retain her local and national experience as well as involvement with the Local Government Association.

The head of policy and communications reported that the Society of Local Councils Clerks (SLCC) had identified external affairs among its priorities and was seeking greater involvement in NALC's lobbying. He asked the committee to consider co-opting the SLCC's external affairs officer to provide practitioner expertise, support to campaigns including mobilization and increase consultation responses.

Resolved (1): That Cllr Sue Baxter be co-opted to the committee for 2022/23.

Resolved (2): That a proposal to co-opt the SLCC's external affairs officer be considered at the next meeting and recommended to National Assembly as required.

7. Work programme 2022/23

The head of policy and communications outlined ideas for a draft work programme to take forward the committee's terms of reference. Several points were made during discussion:

- enabling members of the committee to message each other during meetings using Zoom chat;
- bringing in additional external expertise to provide evidence and information to inform the committee's work;
- there had previously been a range of views on how the allocated budget for planning support should be used and further work was needed to scope this out;
- potential reform of Local Enterprise Partnerships and developing proposals for alternative structures;
- devolution and working with other organisations to expand the sector in urban areas;
- the importance of close working and involvement of county officers, greater use of fortnightly meetings between county and national officers and proactivity by the County Officer Forum representative;
- ensuring there are effective practices in place to identify consultations and announcements and gather input from the committee in parallel with responses from councils; &
- agreeing the need to strengthen the involvement of the County Officers' Forum in NALC's policy work.

Resolved: That the Committee be invited to provide feedback on the ideas for the draft work programme 2022/23 and further proposals considered at the next meeting.

8. Overview of the work of the committee

Resolved (1): That the e-mail addresses of the committee be circulated.

Resolved (2): That the next meeting on 15 March 2022 be brought forward to 25 January 2022 and future meeting dates adjusted accordingly.

9. Date and time of next meeting

9.1. 25 January 2022 at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom. © NALC 2021