

YORKSHIRE LOCAL COUNCILS ASSOCIATIONS

Minutes of a meeting of the Joint Executive Board of the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations held at the Bridge Hotel, Walshford, Wetherby at 10.30am on Saturday, 14 January 2017.

PRESENT

Mr M Elsmore (President), Mr I Strong (Vice President), Cllr Dr J Dunford (Chairman) and (South Pennine Branch), Cllr D Wright (Vice-chairman) and (South Yorkshire Branch), Cllr S Fawcett (Vice-chairman) and (Harrogate Branch), Cllr P Baker and Cllr P Whitaker (Deputy) (Craven Branch), Cllr F Roberts (Hambleton Branch), Cllr R Lynn (Harrogate Branch), Cllr N Fawcett (Leeds Branch), Cllr W Delf and Cllr I Threlfall (Richmondshire Branch), Cllr G Stilwell and Cllr P Reeve (Ryedale Branch), Cllr J Preston (Scarborough Branch), Cllr J Strelczenie and Cllr A Thomas (Selby Branch), Cllr P Allison (South Pennine Branch), Cllr F Jackson, Cllr R A Jones, Cllr D Rowley, Cllr D Liddell and Cllr S Thornton (South Yorkshire Branch), Cllr S Harrison and Cllr P H F Powell (York Branch).

IN ATTENDANCE

S Spence (Chief Officer), C Pilkington (Deputy Chief Officer) and N Moorcroft (Local Councils Officer).

APOLOGIES

The following representatives had tendered their apologies in advance of the meeting: Cllr R Walker (Scarborough Branch), Cllr R M Greenwood (South Pennine Branch), Cllr K Hindle (South Yorkshire Branch), Cllr P Jordan and Cllr T Saunders (Wakefield Branch).

A period of silence was observed in remembrance of Councillor Alan Scholes who passed away recently. The Chief Officer confirmed that Councillor Duncan Wright, Chairman of the South Yorkshire Branch, represented YLCA at the funeral.

1/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2/17 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The President reported that he had attended meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Strategic Working Party, however he unfortunately was unable to attend the funeral of Councillor Alan Scholes.

3/17 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman reported that he had attended meetings of the Employment Panel, Finance and General Purposes Committee and Strategic Working Party, however he unfortunately was unable to attend the funeral of Councillor Alan Scholes.

4/17 WORK OF THE ASSOCIATIONS

The Deputy Chief Officer presented a comprehensive report:

Casework

Responding to written and telephone advice requests continues to be the principal area of work for the officer team. In October 98 written advice requests were dealt with, 91 in November, 56 in December and 12 in January (as of 6 January). In October details of 68 telephone calls were logged, 98 in November, 49 in December and 14 in January (as of 6 January).

Other specific assistance given to member councils and others

Five meetings have taken place with representatives of certain member councils to help resolve problems at those councils. The ballot process for the election of a new parish representative for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority has been concluded (the new representative is for the Richmondshire area of the national park). We have twice contacted the only council in Yorkshire (and one of only four in the country) to have opted out of the Sector Led Body for the purposes of appointing an external auditor for 2017/2018 and beyond and we are hopeful that that council may now opt back in. The Chief Officer has met with the City of York Council Standards Committee to promote the work of the Associations. The Chief Officer and Deputy

Chief Officer have undertaken job evaluations on behalf of several councils and have liaised with SLCC in undertaking one of those evaluations.

Internal Governance

Problems with the banking arrangements for the Associations has taken up much staff time and caused concern. Staff supported the meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Audit and Employment Panels held of 7 December along with meetings of the Hambleton (26 October), South Pennine (14 December) and Wakefield (10 November) branches of the Associations. A meeting of the Strategic Working Group has also been supported. The Chief Officer and Cllr Wright met with the Independent Examiner to discuss whether the Associations should register for VAT.

Training

A number of training sessions have been provided for the benefit of member councils. Namely website training (with Vision ICT) on 28 October, chairmanship training (31 October), VAT and procurement training delivered by Steve Parkinson (3 November), developing your skills as a councillor (7 November), allotments (15 November) and new clerks training (9 December). The Chief Officer, Deputy Chief Officer and Local Councils Officer attended the training session on 3 November. Whole council training had been delivered for one-member council experiencing difficulties. The Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer attended a meeting of the Regional Training Partnership on 1 December. As part of the work of the RTP the Chief Officer has delivered two training sessions for Cilca candidates. The Chief Officer, Deputy Chief Officer and the two Local Council Officers attended a legal training day in London on 17 November delivered by the NALC legal team. A staff team meeting took place on 10 January.

Publications

One edition of the White Rose Update newsletter has been produced and a number of e-mails on various topics have been circulated to member councils.

Consultations

The Associations responded to the Local Government Finance Settlement 2017/2018 Technical Consultation paper which proposed to apply referendum principles to local councils wishing to increase the precept beyond a certain amount and encouraged member councils to respond to it as well. Partly as a result of this the Government announced before Christmas that it would not be applying such principles to parishes for 2017/2018. The Associations have also responded to a NALC consultation on draft versions for training material for parish councillors and clerks.

Digital Transparency Fund

The office has assisted 26 local councils in the YLCA area to apply for grants from the Digital Transparency Fund. The Associations have submitted an application for £10,700 to support the promotion of the fund in the YLCA area and a meeting has taken place with ERNLLCA to discuss additional funding which can be drawn down from Government to support specific working with hard to reach councils who have not yet applied for grants from the fund. The Deputy Chief Officer participated by telephone in a meeting of the Transparency Fund Board on 15 December.

Local Council Award Scheme

The Chief Officer has held two meetings with LCAS panel chairmen to discuss various applications and met with the chairman and vice-chairman of one LCAS applicant council to discuss their application.

Support for new council campaign groups

Ongoing support has been provided to campaign groups in Garforth, Stainland and Thornton. The Stainland group have encountered further delay from Calderdale Council in completing the community governance review triggered by the group. Councillor Dunford advised that the matter is to be considered by an upcoming committee meeting.

External events/meetings

Along with elected members of the Associations the Chief Officer, Deputy Chief Officer and Local Councils Officer Nicola Moorcroft attended the NALC Conference and Annual General Meeting in Birmingham on 19 October – 20 October. As part of this they also attended a meeting of the County Officers Forum. The Deputy Chief Officer met with representatives of the Plunkett Foundation on 7 November to discuss potential opportunities for joint working whilst the Chief

Officer, Deputy Chief Officer and Local Councils Officer Nicola Moorcroft met with Rural Action Yorkshire on 8 November to explore possible areas of collaboration.

5/17 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2016 be confirmed and signed by the chairman as a correct record.

6/17 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(Min 43/16) A Leeds branch issue regarding the creation and abolition of a local council. The Deputy Chief Officer received confirmation from NALC that the Court of Appeal's decision to overturn the decision of the lower court provided no further clarification. The abolition or creation of a local council could therefore be dependent on the result of the referendum and was not dependant on a certain percentage turnout.

7/17 FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial report to 31 December 2016

The Chief Officer spoke to the financial report highlighting little change between November and December bank account position due to inactivity caused by closure of the HSBC account.

Written report regarding closure of the Associations HSBC bank accounts

RESOLVED

That the HSBC safeguarding requirement for Joint Executive Board members to provide details of their name, address, previous address date of birth and nationality be referred to NALC to comment.

8/17 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Amendment: Item 33/16 to read 'subscription income was ahead of budget, that Featherstone Town Council had come back into membership and that Kirbymoorside Town Council was a potential re-subscriber.'

RESOLVED

That (subject to the amendment above) the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 7 December 2016 be endorsed.

Matters recommended for endorsement from the Finance and General Purposes Committee:

RESOLVED

That the Annual Charging Policy be adopted with no changes.

RESOLVED

That the recommendation regarding the treatment of TOIL for officers be adopted.

RESOLVED

That the recommendation regarding the membership fee 2017/18 for parish meetings be approved.

RESOLVED

That the recommendation regarding The Whole Council Training policy be approved.

RESOLVED

That it be noted that no referendum principles will be applied to the parish sector in financial year 2017/18

9/17 EMPLOYMENT PANEL

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Employment Panel held on 7 December 2016 be endorsed.

Matters recommended for endorsement from the Finance and General Purposes Committee:

RESOLVED

That the recommendation that no changes are made to the adopted mileage and travel policy be approved.

RESOLVED

That the recommendation to adopt the amended Personal Safety Policy be approved

RESOLVED

That the recommendation to adopt the amended Capability Policy be approved

10/17 AUDIT PANEL

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Audit Panel held 7 December 2016 be endorsed.

Registration for VAT

Cllr Wright reported that a meeting had been held with Independent Examiner (Sunley and Co) regarding registration for VAT. Sunley's are to review the Associations VAT output and input at the end of the financial year and will assess the situation at that time.

Commercial income

Member of the Audit Panel highlighted the initiatives to increase commercial income for the YLCA, through both sponsorship and advertising.

11/17 STRATEGIC WORKING GROUP (SWG)

MINUTES

It was noted that Mr M. Elsmore was present at the meeting and the minutes were amended accordingly.

RESOLVED

That the amended minutes of the SWG held on 14 December 2016 be endorsed.

Matters recommended for endorsement by the SWG:

The Chairman highlighted that the recommendations by SWG were items for 'in-principle' agreement (with the exclusion of voting arrangements for the President and Vice President which is clarification of YLCA constitutional arrangements), which will be developed in consultation with Branch meetings and taken to the SWG in March for presentation to the Executive Board at its April meeting.

RESOLVED

To consult with Branches on the following recommendations:

- a. That the composition of the Joint Executive Board is changed to a total of 22 Branch representative members (from 32) consisting of ten representatives from North Yorkshire, five representatives from South Yorkshire and seven representatives from West Yorkshire.
- b. That amendments approved by the Joint Executive Board above will notified to Branches for consultation at the January/February 2017 round of meetings with a view to the new formula being approved by the Joint Annual Meeting to be held in July 2017.
- c. That the revised arrangements be implemented for a period of three years without change and that a review is carried out in the third year of implementation.
- d. That in order to secure a good skills and knowledge base on the Executive, persons wishing to stand will complete a nomination paper explaining their relevant qualities to serve YLCA well.

- e. That the Branch nomination form will be voluntary unless Branch standing orders require such.
- f. That the paper nomination process above will not preclude the consideration of a nomination at the Branch meeting without a nomination paper although representatives standing in this way will inform the Branch of the skills, knowledge and experience that they can bring to the Board.
- g. That every nominee standing for the Joint Executive Board will produce an assurance by the way of minutes that he/she is formally appointed to represent their council/parish meeting at YLCA.
- h. That a paper explaining the duties, role, responsibility and expectations of a Board member be circulated to all councils in advance of the annual meetings of the Branch.
- i. That members of the Joint Executive Board will make an undertaking to serve the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations to the best of their ability and that this be achieved by way of a declaration of acceptance of office.

Members noted that although a change in the composition of Branch representatives to the Board was being proposed, the President (in voting capacity) and Vice Presidents (in non-voting capacity) will continue as members of the Joint Executive Board.

RESOLVED

That no changes be recommended to the policy of deputy representatives and that they will be continue to be appointed from Branches.

12/17 INTERNAL AUDIT APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

The Deputy Chief Officers provided an update on appointments of Internal Auditors to the scheme developed by YLCA. The scheme, to be launched late January 2017, has only a small number of Internal Auditors and may have to come with a condition that all IAs listed may not have the capacity to undertake significantly more internal audits than they are currently carrying out.

13/17 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

To receive reports from any recent NALC meetings and particularly the Annual meeting of NALC Council

Councillor D Liddell presented a verbal report highlighting that Cllr Sue Baxter has been appointed as the Chairman of NALC with Cllrs Ken Browse and Derek Liddell as Vice Chairman.

Changes to NALC governance meant that committee chairman will now be appointed at first meetings of its committees.

Cllr Liddell also reported on the heavily promoted NALC campaign against the introduction of referendum principles in financial year 2017/18, promotion of the Transparency Fund, consideration of potential reorganisation of committees and the Village Halls forum being defunct and replaced by Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)

To receive information on the NALC affiliation fee and current survey of County Associations and decide a response to NALC

RESOLVED

That the YLCA relay to NALC its preference to retain the current linear model fee structure.

To receive information on a YLCA bid to DCLG (via NALC) for funds to help promote the Transparency Fund to member and non-members councils and to receive information on a joint regional bid with the East Riding and Northern Lincolnshire Local Councils Associations for additional work in this regard from April 2017

The Chief Officer provided information to the Joint Executive Board on the funds available, the current YLCA bids and meeting with a former county secretary who it was felt would be sufficiently skilled and knowledgeable to undertake the work required.

YLCA AGM resolution 2016

The meeting noted that the resolution supported by the 2016 Joint AGM regarding the development of HS2 has been supported by the Policy Committee of NALC

RESOLVED

That the report on Changes Places Conference held 20 November 2016 be received. Cllr Liddell was thanked for producing a comprehensive written report from this event.

14/17 BRANCH MINUTES

To consider matters raised by branches

RESOLVED

That the current policy of the Joint Executive Board to circulate only approved minutes to branch meetings be amended. Branch meetings will now receive minutes of the Joint Executive Board meetings in draft format to ensure that members have information in a timely manner.

To receive Branch minutes

RESOLVED

That all Branch minutes from the autumn round 2016 be received.

15/17 NORTHERN GROUP OF COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS OF LOCAL COUNCILS

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Northern Group of County Associations held on 5 December 2016 be received.

16/17 TRAINING UPDATE AND CONFERENCE UPDATE

YLCA Training Programme

The Chief Officer provided a report on the extensive training programme planned by YLCA for April 2017 onwards; highlighting the areas of training member councils had requested. The feasibility of a one-day conference/roadshow type event was being explored.

Yorkshire and Humber Regional Training Partnership (YH RTP)

The Deputy Chief Office provided a brief update on the work of the of the YH RTP. He highlighted the need for recruitment of additional CiLCA qualified clerks as mentors and that further meeting will be held in April.

17/17 LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME

The Chief Officer gave a brief report on recent awards, current applications and a number of councils which may require additional work to meet the foundation level criteria.

18/17 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

Yorkshire in Bloom (Cllr S Fawcett)

Cllr Fawcett reported that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 17 January 2017.

National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (Cllr N Fawcett)

A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Fawcett was thanked for this.

19/17 DTE OF THE NEXT MEETING

It was noted that in accordance with the agreed schedule, the next meeting of the Joint Executive Board be held at The Bridge Hotel, Walshford, near Wetherby on Saturday 22 April 2017

Chairman..... Date