

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

PARISH LIAISON WORKING GROUP

At a meeting of the **Parish Liaison Working Group** held at Committee Room 1, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF on Thursday, 9th January, 2014 at 11.00 am.

PRESENT

K Graham(Chair), TN Thorne(Vice-Chair), A Wallace

OFFICERS

JA Garrick	Spatial Policy & Delivery Manager
H Griffiths	Senior Locality Development Officer
L Little	Democratic Services Officer
C Macbeth	Executive Officer (Local Services)
B Rowland	Executive Director (Place)
A Rutherford	Head of Highways & Neighbourhood Services

ALSO PRESENT

P Cowey, Ponteland TC; S Hedley, West Bedlington PC; A Hinchliffe, East Tynedale Forum; M Hodgson, Corbridge PC; I Hunter, Berwick TC; D Parker, Morpeth TC; T Reid, Prudhoe TC; T Robson, Hexham TC; A Wallace – East Bedlington PC/NALC.

PART I

9. Apologies for Absence

Councillor J Reid, P Claridge; G Miller; and A Mitcheson

10. Action list from previous meeting.

- The approach to S106 Agreements would be discussed at the Regeneration Working Group on 14 January 2014. A report would be provided at the next meeting of this Working Group. - **Report to next PLWG**
- It was confirmed there would be no change to the Northumberland County Council's (NCCs) policy regarding not sharing the Council Tax support funding with Town/Parish Councils (T/PCs)
- Letters had been sent in December to all T/PCs regarding the relationship between NCC and T/PCs; this included the work of this Working Group, review of the Charter and Asset Transfer /"Equalisation" – individual T/PCs to contact Executive Director (Place) or the Locality Team if they had outstanding issues.
- Pre-budget out for consultation. Appendix 7 contained list of proposals

to be taken forward subject to the consultation. Any questions should be directed to the Locality Team or Executive Director's Office.

11. Implementation of Town and Parish Council's relationship management proposals - update

- A Letter had been sent to all T/PCs providing update on what PLWG was doing and requesting feedback from the T/PCs. Positive comments and appreciation on the development of relationships between NCC and T/PCs over the past few months was expressed by the PLWG members.
- The structure and approach to T/PCs meetings with NCC was outlined and information tabled regarding Lead Heads of Service and Locality Officers for the T/PC meetings. Work would continue regarding the development of Clusters of smaller PCs.
- Initial meetings to be held in February to ascertain key issues with a further meeting to follow in one month's time.
- Each T/PCs key Locality Officer contact would be confirmed over the next month. - **Locality Team to provide.**
- The Best Practice Conference was an opportunity for sharing information – responsibility could be given to Charter Task & Finish Group to take forward how the first conference could work, with all proposals circulated to T/PCs. This would be put on the next Agenda for discussion also at NALC. - **A Wallace (NALC)**
- A discussion took place regarding the continuing requirement for six-monthly Joint Area/T/PCs Committee in view of regular T/PC conferences and meetings with NCC being introduced. Agreed next one would take place as scheduled and the need be reviewed following the new meetings with T/PCs.

12. Update of the Local Council Charter for Northumberland

- A draft Charter was circulated which incorporated amendments made following the Charter Task and Finish Group on Tuesday 7 January.
- Comments should be fed back to Jo-Anne or Helen by Friday 17 January if possible; a decision would then be taken on the need for another meeting of the Task & Finish Group before the document was sent to all T/PCs for consultation. Two Workshops would then also be arranged to provide feedback to the Task & Finish Group. - **T/PCs, Jo-Anne Garrick, Helen Griffiths.**
- Comments from smaller PCs who did not meet regularly could be accepted until end of March.
- A finalised report would be brought back to the PLWG in April 2014 for consideration by the Policy Board in May 2014. - **Task & Finish Group**
- It was hoped the new Charter could be launched at the Conference.
- The lack of proper IT equipment and training in their use was highlighted as a possible problem within the smaller PCs.
- All T/PC Chairs to provide personal email addresses for direct correspondence - **T/PC Chairs**

13. Asset Transfer Update

- A discussion took place regarding the transfer of assets and Equalisation. The letter from the Executive Director (Place) in December was again highlighted with the need for T/PCs to contact his office to allow for one-one dialogue to take place. - **T/PCs and B Rowland**
- Ponteland TC confirmed that the issue of the transfer of the Cemetery would be removed from the Agenda for their forthcoming meeting in order to allow for a one-one discussion.
- One-one discussions could also take place with individual T/PCs in respect of the transfer of outstanding play areas where required. - **A Rutherford**
- Information was provided in respect of a play area in Berwick which A Rutherford would investigate. - **A Rutherford**
- East Bedlington PC confirmed that they had agreed the transfer of 2 play areas the previous week. This decision had only been taken following changes implemented recently and the improvement in the co-operation and continuing dialogue between NCC and T/PC, which was welcomed.

14. Urgent Business (if any)

- Maps showing boundaries of supervision and contact details for Officers in respect of Highways and Neighbourhood Services were provided for the T/PCs. Whilst this level of detailed information could not be put on the Council's website, it was hoped that a special website for T/PCs which could provide more detailed information could be developed.
- The East Tynedale Town and Parish Forum at their meeting had stated that very good progress had been made in developing the relationship between NCC and T/PCs however there was still a lack of response from certain sections within NCC. It was confirmed that any such instances should be raised with the Executive Directors at NCC and through the new meetings that were being established.

The meeting closed at 12.05 pm

CHAIR

DATE