

AVON LOCAL COUNCILS ASSOCIATION

NORTH SOMERSET AREA GROUP

MINUTES of the meeting of the North Somerset Area Group of ALCA

held on Tuesday, 30 January 2018 at 11:00am
Strawberry Line Café, Yatton Railway Station, BS49 4AJ

Present: Geoff Coombs (Chairman) Barrow Gurney PC
Dick Whittington Butcombe PC
Jeremy Blatchford Nailsea TC
Joanna van Tonder (Secretary) Barrow Gurney & Brockley PCs

1. Apologies for absence – none received

2. ALCA (County) / NALC issues:

- a) ALCA (County) meeting – 13 February 2018** – It was agreed to request that both the *Larger Councils Forum* and *GDPR Data Protection Officer provision* was on the agenda. All four members of the committee confirmed their intention to attend. **JvT**

DW advised that he was one of three sitting on the Resources Committee, newly set up to address matters pertaining to human and other County resources. Regrettably, the committee was yet to agree a date to meet.

- b) Larger Councils Forum** – JB confirmed that nobody had taken this further as yet. Members discussed where the natural cut-off point was that would define a “larger” council and it was considered the dividing line seemed to differentiate between those councils with the ability to manage devolved services and in all likelihood also was engaged in the employment of greater numbers of staff.
- c) Smaller Councils Committee** – There was nothing further to report on the NALC Smaller Councils Committee; Bob Symons to represent for ALCA.

3. Town and Parish Forums

- a) Spring GENERAL T&P Forum: 14 March 2018** – JvT advised that Malcolm Coe, Head of Finance, would be updating on the budget and NSC were also hoping to include a discussion on how to work together in the future.

In light of recent discussions between ALCA NS and David Carter (see 4(a) below), it was agreed that an interactive workshop-styled segment after the budget update would be suggested. The aim would be to break off into groups to discuss what services parishes would a) like to take on, b) feel capable of taking on and c) how best this could be facilitated.

JvT to suggest the above to NSC and that GC chair the meeting. **JvT**

- b) Autumn GENERAL T&P Forum** – It was agreed that the Health & Wellbeing agenda was best postponed to the Autumn forum to give all sufficient time to formulate some ideas on the structure and content of the forum.
- c) Clerks' support network** – The Clerks' coffee morning was to take place on the 2nd of March and JvT confirmed she had had a good response with a third of the 30 clerks invited expected to attend.

The possibility of ALCA putting some funding towards future events was discussed.

- d) Other** – It was felt that liaison between NSC and the parishes should not

only involve council officials but members of the political sphere as well. The current status of the Parish Liaison Officers was queried and it was agreed that a meeting should be scheduled with John Wilkinson to discuss the wider topic of parish liaison.

JvT

4. Other NSC issues:

- a) **Devolution of services** – GC reported that he and JvT had met with David Carter and his senior team. The two parties initially came to this exploratory meeting with slightly different agendas; NSC looking to transfer assets and associated services, ALCA NS hoping to discuss the impact and opportunities for smaller councils to take on devolved services such as verge cutting, etc.

DC had expressed his desire to address this issue with one representative body as opposed to each Town and Parish Council individually.

It was clearly communicated that, as NSC's financial resources are tightened further, Parish Councils would be faced with the choice to either take over certain discretionary services or accept the loss of these services.

GC confirmed that the meeting had concluded with an agreement from NSC to share the list of assets with ALCA NS who in turn agreed to canvass views from member councils.

Members discussed NSC's future role as facilitator rather than doer.

It was agreed to make use of the Spring T&P Forum to hold a workshop to discuss options and garner ideas, following Malcolm Coe's budget presentation (see 3(a) above).

JvT

- b) **Data Protection Officer service** – DW advised that Butcombe PC had received correspondence from both NSC and BaNES offering a DPO service at great cost. JvT confirmed both Barrow Gurney and Brockley PCs had also been approached. It was agreed that this was a service that could and indeed should be offered by ALCA.

After a brief discussion about the anticipated impact and repercussions of the GDPR on PCs, it was agreed to wait and see what advice is issued from NALC in the coming weeks.

- c) **Other** – no other NSC issues.

5. Other Town and Parish issues:

- a) **Broadband** – GC advised there had been no feedback as yet and none of the promised briefings had been held.

JvT agreed to make contact with the various parties (WERN's Chris Head, NSC's Simon Gregory and Gigaclear) to establish the current position.

JvT

Secretary's Note: The timetable for the roll-out has been published on the Gigaclear website: <https://www.gigaclear.com/connecting-devon-and-somerset-rollout-schedule/>

- b) **General Data Protection Regulations** – addressed under 4(b), above.

- c) **Internal Audit provisions for Parish Councils with turnover <£25k** – JvT confirmed that the invitation extended by ALCA to smaller PCs to join the Internal Audit Panel had been taken up by a few Clerks and Councils. DW repeated his desire to see a "job specification" for an appropriate Internal Auditor.

JvT

- d) **Reaching out to non-member Town & Parish Councils** – JvT advised that a vacancy for Clerk to St Georges PC had been advertised. It was agreed it may be an appropriate time to make contact with the Chair with a view to encouraging membership.

JvT

- e) **Other** – no other Town & Parish issues.

6. Any other business

- “Breaking the Mould” Frome conference – 12 April 2018
DW and JvT to attend.

7. Dates for future meetings – 10:00 on 17 April 2018 (Strawberry Line Café, Yatton)

Meeting concluded at 12:30pm.