

Avon Local Councils' Association
Larger Councils' Group 26th March 2018

The Jubilee Centre, Savages Wood Road, Bradley Stoke, South Glos [BS32 8HL](#)

1. Councillor BoB Symons, Chariman of ALCA welcomed everyone to the inaugural meeting of the Larger Councils Group.

A vote of thanks was given to Bradley Stoke Town Council for hosting the meeting.

Present:	
BoB Symons	ALCA Chairman
Deborah White	ALCA Chief Officer
Andy Ward	Bradley Stoke Town Council
Ben Randles	Bradley Stoke Town Council
Tony Griffiths	Bradley Stoke Town Council
Sharon Petela	Clerk to Bradley Stoke Town Council
Darryl Collins	Filton Town Council
Jeremy Blatchford	Nailsea Town Council
James Tonkin	Nailsea Town Council
Ron Hardie	Oldland Parish Council
Elaine Martin	Patchway Town Council
Merle Bathe-Taylor	Patchway Town Council
Roger Loveridge	Patchway Town Council
Jeff Humphries	Paulton Parish Council
Lesley Cotterell	Portishead Town Council
Brian Allinson	Stoke Gifford Parish Council
Clive Parkinson	Thornbury Town Council
Bob Griffin	Thornbury Town Council
Karl Tomasin	Yate Town Council
Mike Drew	Yate Town Council
Apologies	
Virginia McNab	Bitton Parish Council
Cheryl Scott	Clerk to Keynsham Town Council
Cate Davidson	Clerk to Emersons Green Town Council

2. The roles of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and its working relationship with the Avon Association of Local Councils.
(Appendix 1)
3. The NALC Larger Councils Committee
Cllr. Mike Drew, ALCA's representative on the NALC National Committee, gave an overview of NALC role in campaigning on behalf of Local Councils e.g. giving

Chief Officer – Deborah White

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LC's the right to appeal on planning decisions and receiving a share in business rates raised etc., The focus is also very much on the services provided to members.

The NALC larger council's committee's current eligibility is councils with a precept over £250,000 and an electorate over 6,000, which is soon to be raised. There is also a grouping of Super Councils, which would include Weston Super Mare Town Council if they were members and more recently now includes Yate Town Council.

Eligibility for the ALCA Larger Councils Group has been set slight lower to include some higher precepting councils and achieve a critical mass.

4. Election of interim Chairman

Councillor Darryl Collins proposed BoB Symons (ALCA Chairman) to Chair the meeting.

Seconded by Councillor Brian Allinson

AGREED

5. Items on the NALC LCC agenda:

ICO fines under the General Data Protection Regulations – it was recognised that Insurance Companies cannot provide cover for fines and the comment strongly made that it was just this sort of bureaucracy that is putting people off standing as councillors.

Some of the strategies being worked on within Local Councils were discussed, such as binning all existing databases and starting afresh with permissions sought.

There was a general consensus that LC's must be seen to be putting plans in place and taking heed of the NALC advice

Investment protection under the compensation scheme – this action was supported. Some councils had found ways to counteract the problem with reserves e.g. three separate accounts with different banks.

Peer Challenge – although the value of such a scheme was accepted, there was no appetite to be involved due to cost and time restraints. The unique nature of Local Councils and that the councillors are all volunteers were also considered to be barriers.

The continued lobbying on the deferral of referendum principles for Local Councils, was strongly supported

6. Local issues

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The pressure to take on services no longer provided by the principal authorities was discussed at length. LC's are closet to the community and therefore more accessible to complainants.

The SGC approach to cutting back on **grass cutting** was highlighted as it gave LC's no choice (the opposite to Localism!) but to comply.

Youth provision is the current issue that LC's are trying to negotiate, because it is at a Parish level that ensuing anti-social behaviour is most acutely felt.

Larger Councils that are willing to provide a service get little support from surrounding smaller parishes whose young people benefit from the service. In some instances where LC's have been willing take over a service from the principle authority the necessary physical resources have not been forthcoming. Some LCs have had to buy the Youth Centre building, or the Youth Centre has been knocked down – transfer of the asset is crucial, if LCs are going to be successful.

Strategies to deal with **travellers** was also discussed. Often Local Councils are left to fend for themselves with little principle authority support

There was strong support for building a relationship with the **West of England Combined Authority (WECA)** and that there should be a “seat at the table” for the lowest tier of Local Authority.

There is a feeling that currently a clear management strategy for the new Authority is lacking and no mechanism for requests for things to be done properly.

Explorations and enquire will be made as to how this can be achieved and in what form it might take.

7. It was agreed that the group would meet twice a year and that (non-voting) representation from non-ALCA member councils should be encouraged.
8. The **next meeting** will be September (pre ALCA AGM in October) in North Somerset.