

CUMBRIA ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes

In line with government guidance regarding the Covid-19 pandemic announced on 23rd March 2020, the scheduled meeting of the CALC Executive Meeting on 19th June 2021 was held remotely via the internet.

Minutes of a meeting of CALC's Executive Committee held on **Saturday 19th June 2021 at 10am.**

Present:

Sue Castle-Clarke
Jane Tea
Jonathan Davies
David Wilson
Mary Bradley
Bryan Craig
Mike Higginbotham
Andy Pratt
Mark Kidd
David Peters
Bev Pink
Peter Smillie
Doug Sim

In attendance: Samantha Bagshaw, Chief Officer

Statement from the Chair of CALC

Before the start of the meeting, the Chair asked for confirmation that all Executive Members present were content to continue to meet remotely rather than return to face to face meetings. Members agreed that this was the best way forward at the current time.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from David Graham and Cllr Leith Hallatsch

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None declared

3. MINUTES

Minutes of the meetings held on **Saturday 24th April 2021** were **agreed**

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

The committee gave consideration to the questions of how both CALC and the district associations might support town and parish councils through the process of reorganisation.

Cllr Davies requested that CALC considers how other authorities and local councils that have gone through reorganisation have approached it and the Chief Officer shares this information with the Committee at the next Exec meeting. He also reported that, as a member of Penrith TC, his council was preparing to show leadership to smaller councils through 'clustering'. He reported that Penrith TC are looking at ways to support other councils by delivering services to them. Other members expressed the view that 'clustering' does not work for all councils – it has to be a voluntary process.

Cllr Smillie reaffirmed that district associations will still be necessary to assist in the functioning of CALC even if the existing district/borough/city boundaries do not exist. The Chair agreed that there are likely to be some form of area boards and as part of the process, CALC will need to reorganise itself appropriately to reflect the new arrangements in the county.

A concern was raised about the continuing dependence on principal authorities for funding, specifically the gap between the funding for CALC raised by members' fees and the contribution from principal authorities. The Chair reminded members that the back office costs of CALC are significant and support-in-kind for office accommodation, IT, 'phones etc will need to be considered in any discussions about how the organization moves forward.

The Chair set out the timeline for reorganization:

- Decision from Westminster expected imminently
- Statutory Instrument put before parliament in the autumn 2021 (this sets out in detail how the reorganization will take place)
- Shadow authority elected in May 2022 – this runs alongside existing principal authorities for one year.
- Unitary authority/ies elected in May 2023

Funding of CALC will also be affected by the organisation's legal status.

The Chief Officer encouraged members to talk to their local member councils about assets and services that they may wish to secure or take on. With 233 local councils in Cumbria, support and leadership from the district associations will be important.

Agreed:

That district associations give consideration to how town and parish councils can be supported by CALC through the process of reorganization.

5. CALC LEGAL STATUS

The Committee was updated on the progress, or lack of it, so far. Sue Gilbertson, from Cumbria Social Enterprise Partnership (CSEP) has written to the Charity Commission for confirmation that CALC would be eligible to apply to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), which is one of the options Sue recommended. However, she has followed up her initial contact and so far has had no response.

The other option would be to look at a limited company structure

Agreed:

- a) That the Committee noted the update
- b) That the Chief Officer would contact CALC's accountants, Saint and Co, to ascertain what the tax implications would be of incorporating.

6. COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP REPORT

Cllr Doug Sim shared a Powerpoint presentation setting out the progress so far of the Communications Working Group on revising the CALC newsletter.

Their proposal was to use publisher (or similar) to ensure a more professional look to the newsletter and to make formatting easier. But the point was made that two issues are key:

- Finance
- Sustainability

There would potentially be greater costs involved if the content was formatted by an outside body eg a graphic designer and/or if there was greater officer time in chasing/collating/fact checking/editing content and working with an outside designer.

The challenge would then be ensuring that there are enough people willing to contribute to fill the newsletter year on year.

Members thanked Doug and the Comms team for their work on the subject and agreed that especially in light of Local Government Reorganisation, CALC needed a stronger presence, more influence and to raise its profile – an improved member-focused newsletter would help this.

Cllrs Mary Bradley and Bev Pink outlined how they had previously used graphic designers for newsletter work to good effect. Cllr Mary Bradley offered to provide the Chief Officer with contact details for some recommended local graphic designers. Raising additional income to finance some professional help on the newsletter was discussed ie generating income through advertising.

Agreed:

- a) That the Chief Officer would look at formatting costs.
- b) That further discussions with the Communications Group would be held to consider how we move forward with the project.

7. CALC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 16th OCTOBER 2021

At the last meeting, it was agreed that the topic of biodiversity/climate change would be the theme for the Annual General Meeting. The event will be held virtually again, and members had stated that they preferred speakers who bring a Cumbrian perspective and who have knowledge of parish councils so their presentations are relevant to the members.

Suggestions included:

- Terena Plowright and the 'Greening Campaign'
- Paul Evans, Cumbria Local Nature Partnership
- Speakers on Climate Change citizens juries (Kendal TC and Copeland BC)
- A speaker on how to create new allotments

Members raised additional topics such as discussing LGR if the government had, by then, announced a decision for Cumbria. The Chair suggested that it would be better to hold a separate session for that, as CALC had done in March 2021.

After a query about the AGM format, it was confirmed that the meeting would be 2 hours and there would be 'break out' rooms where members could choose which speaker they listen to.

Agreed:

That AGM speakers would be confirmed by the Chief Officer

8. CALC PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS TO MARCH 31ST 2021

The Committee noted the statement of payments and receipts for the period ended 31st March 2021, as previously presented in April 2021.

9. AMENDMENT TO THE MANDATE FOR THE CALC CUMBERLAND BUILDING SOCIETY SAVINGS ACCOUNT.

It was reported to the committee that former Executive Committee Member Cllr David Huxley is still a signatory on the CALC savings account at the Cumberland Building Society. As he is no longer a parish councillor or an Executive Committee member, his name will be removed and new signatories must be added to the account.

It was also suggested that the Chief Officer investigates having a corporate credit card for payments or moving CALC's finances to online.

It was **agreed** that the Cumberland Building Society mandate will be amended to remove Cllr David Huxley's name and instead include the following councillors as signatories on the account:

Cllr Sue Castle-Clarke
Cllr Jane Tea
Cllr Bryan Craig

10. UPDATED MONITORING BUDGET STATEMENT FOR 2021/22

The Committee noted the reformatted budget monitoring statement up to the end of April 2021.

11. BALANCED SCORECARD REPORT

The Committee was informed that an incomplete balanced scorecard had been circulated and the correct version would be provided with the minutes of this meeting.

Agreed:

That the correct version of the balanced scorecard would be recirculated with the minutes of this meeting. .

12. UPDATE FROM THE SURVEY WORKING GROUP

The Chief Officer reported that members of the group had met to discuss the ongoing Member Survey and drafting a new Member Satisfaction Survey.

The Chief Officer reported that there had been a disappointing response to the survey (total of 59 responses). Members of the group had discussed the possible reasons for

the lack of response. There was some discussion about the effectiveness of Survey Monkey as a delivery platform for engagement with members – would a survey that could be printed out and included in agendas be more effective? The lack of attendance at meetings and the large amount of information being shared with members at the moment (relaxation of lockdown arrangements and Local Government Reorganisation to name two) were both discussed as possible reasons for lack of replies.

The Chair commented that in marketing terms, a survey response rate of 26% was to be commended and requested that the 59 responses to this 'Council Compliance' survey be collated and assessed so that the outcomes can be presented to the Exec meeting in September 2021.

It was reported that the group discussed the timing of the Member Satisfaction survey and that rather than send it out over the holiday months, it would be best to send it out in September.

Agreed:

- a) That the Member Satisfaction Survey be sent out in September 2021 before the next meeting of the Executive.
- b) That the outcomes of the 'Council Compliance' survey be presented to the Exec meeting in September 2021

13. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT ASSOCIATIONS

The committee noted the reports from the district associations.

14. CHIEF OFFICER UPDATES

The committee noted the reports from the Chief Officer.

15. REPORTS FROM CALC REPRESENTATIVES

Cllr Jonathan Davies reported back from the Health and Wellbeing Board that member councils could be encouraged to be more actively supporting communities on health and wellbeing issues and that he has had initial talks with the Director of Public Health around increasing resilience of communities in this area.

The committee noted the reports from the CALC representatives.

16. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AT FUTURE MEETINGS

Items for consideration for the September meeting include:

- To discuss CALC's finances moving online to allow electronic payments
- The revised Code of Conduct
- NALC and ways to encourage members to improve with the policy committee and other aspects of NALC's work
- Engaging with the Cumbrian MPs about the work of CALC
- Increasing CALC subs to reflect increased demands of LGR

17. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the CALC Executive Committee will take place on Saturday 18th September 2021, via Zoom at 10am

Signed by the Chair
