

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 24th April 2021 was held remotely via the internet.

Minutes of a meeting of CALC's Executive Committee held **Saturday 24th April 2021 at 10am.**

Present:

Sue Castle-Clarke
Jane Tea
Jonathan Davies
David Graham
David Wilson
Mary Bradley
Bryan Craig
Mike Higginbotham
Andy Pratt
Mark Kidd
David Peters
Mike Cumming
Leith Hallatsch
Roger Hart

In attendance: Samantha Bagshaw, Chief Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Peter Smillie and Doug Sim.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None declared

3. MINUTES

Minutes of the meetings held on **Saturday 16th January 2021** were **agreed**

4. CALC GOVERNANCE POLICIES

The committee considered the CALC governance policies comprising of the Executive Committee Induction Pack and the Employee Policies.

Executive Committee Induction Pack

The Chair explained the production of these policies is linked to Item 5 on the agenda, the consideration of the legal status of CALC, with particular reference to the liabilities of Executive Members in the event of a serious issue (appendix 1).

Some concerns were raised about the requirement for CALC Exec Committee members to submit to a different standards regime than the one they already subscribe to in their capacity as parish councillors. It was clarified that CALC is a membership association that is separate to town and parish councils. This means the obligatory Declaration of Interests and Code of Conduct requirements for town and parish councillors on acceptance of office are not applicable at CALC. For transparency purposes, CALC needs to have its own specific regime in place for Exec Committee members. An enquiry was made as to whether this is standard for county associations across England. The Chief Officer replied that every county association adopts their own approach.

Executive Members also spoke in support of the Induction Pack, affirming that it was in line with many other charity, school and voluntary organisations they were members of.

Employee Policies

The Committee considered the Employee Policies and it was confirmed that the staff had both written and been party to the policies.

A question was raised regarding UK GDPR obligations, specifically whether CALC's use of Cumbria County Council's IT has any implications regarding compliance to GDPR.

Actions:

1. Chief Officer to include an additional line in the GDPR policy that covers the use of Cumbria County Council's IT
2. The Chair explained that, on the advice of an independent person advising CALC on legal structures, the organisation needs to comply with these governance arrangements.

Agreed:

- a) That the Executive Committee Induction Pack as presented be adopted
- b) The Employee Policies as presented be adopted

5. CALC LEGAL STATUS

The Committee was updated on the progress so far of the consideration of CALC's legal status as an organization. They were reminded that under the current arrangement, being an unincorporated membership organisation, the individual executive members have significant liabilities, as set out in Appendix 1.

The Chair reported that several possible structures have been identified, with help from Cumbria Social Enterprise Partnership, including a charitable organisation and a limited company structure. We are waiting for a response from the Charity Commission on their view of the charitable option. The Chair highlighted that if CALC chose to become a limited company, there is the consideration that CALC's reserves could be subject to taxation.

The Committee noted the report

6. COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP REPORT

The Committee received a presentation from the Communications Working Group on their progress and deliberations.

The Communications Working Group set out some key questions regarding communications from CALC including:

- What is its importance for CALC?
- Who is its intended audience?
- Do we expect a response to communications from CALC?

The group set out suggestions for improvements to the newsletter – primarily moving it away from being an officer driven communication to one generated by members.

The website was also discussed. It was recognised that this is an important tool but a significant change to it would take resources. A CALC Facebook page was also discussed, pros and cons.

Members discussed the various approaches. The Chief Officer highlighted the resources implications in using member generated content. The Chair thanked the group for their hard work on this subject.

Agreed:

That a meeting between Doug Sim and the Comms group and the Chair, Vice Chair and Chief Officer would be arranged to discuss the suggestions further.

7. STAFFING SUB COMMITTEE PROPOSED ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

The committee was asked to agree that the Staffing Sub Committee looks at the possible impact in terms of staffing and resources of the forth-coming Local Government Reorganisation. .

Agreed:

That the Staffing Sub Committee looks at the possible impact in terms of staffing and resources of the forth-coming Local Government Reorganisation. The sub-committee will bring back a report on their deliberations to the September 2021 Exec meeting.

8. VIRTUAL MEETINGS

It was reported to the Committee that virtual meetings had been embraced by members as platforms for meetings and for training. The importance of the Call for Evidence on virtual meetings, sent out by the MHCLG Minister, Luke Hall MP was acknowledged.

There was discussion about how to respond to the matters below most effectively.

- The CALC Executive should respond to the Call for Evidence?
- The district associations should respond to the Call for Evidence?

- CALC should continue to hold their Executive meetings via digital technology?

It was agreed that:

- a. The Chair and Vice Chair will respond to the Call for Evidence on behalf of the CALC Executive
- b. The district associations can make their own decisions as to whether they wish to send a response or not, depending on whether they have a meeting in the timeframe.
- c. The CALC Executive value the ability to meet virtually and will continue to do so but will return to face to face meetings where appropriate to do so.

9. CALC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE 16th OCTOBER 2021

The committee discussed the annual general meeting. Concern was raised about the reasonable length of a virtual event. The suggestion that biodiversity/climate change would be the theme of the keynote speech at the AGM was also discussed and had support. The only proviso being that the nature of the presentation was tailored specifically for parish councils so focused on practical steps not high-level policy.

Other matters were also raised that members felt were of importance to be discussed at the AGM including local government reorganisation and the ongoing deliberations around the siting of a Geological Disposal Facility in Cumbria. It was suggested that the Independent Chair of the Copeland Working Group would be willing to speak impartially on the issue if needed.

Agreed that:

- a) that the Annual General Meeting should be held remotely via digital technology.
- b) that the topic of biodiversity/climate change should be the theme for the meeting.

10. CALC PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS TO MARCH 31ST 2021

The Committee noted the statement of payments and receipts for the period ended 31st March 2021.

11. REFORMATTED MONITORING BUDGET STATEMENT FOR 2021/22

The Committee noted the reformatted budget monitoring statement for the new financial year 2021/22

12. BALANCED SCORECARD REPORT

The Committee considered the updated balanced scorecard report for the period to the end of March 2021.

Agreed:

That the balanced scorecard is noted

13. UPDATE FROM THE SURVEY WORKING GROUP

The Committee received an update from the Survey Working Group. It was confirmed that a Member Survey using the commercial version of Survey Monkey (the free version only allows 10 questions) had been sent out on 24th March 2021.

During the group discussions, it was recognised that there were technical difficulties in creating a survey in two parts one for clerks to respond to and one for councillors. A second survey would be required.

It was noted that the group had agreed that it would produce a Member Satisfaction Survey, not simply a Member Survey.

It was agreed that:

The survey working group would reconvene to draft and issue a survey of CALC's Members' Satisfaction with its service.

14. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT ASSOCIATIONS

The committee noted the reports from the district associations.

15. CHIEF OFFICER UPDATES

The committee received a brief update from the Chief Officer on the updates. Notably to thank Jean Airey for her years of service to CALC. Also that district associations be aware that a new Code of Conduct is currently being adopted by principal authorities and to note that all parish councils will need to adopt the new Code when it is issued by their principal authorities. It was also noted that in future, NALC will not be issuing a version of the Code of Conduct for use by local councils.

The committee noted the reports from the Chief Officer.

16. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Members of the committee considered the development and learning update. Members raised a question regarding the number of delegates who book on to courses and then do not turn up.

It was discussed that in future, all training invitations should be re-sent to delegates prior to the day of the training as a reminder to everyone who expresses an interest in attending. It was suggested that this reminder email can be sent automatically by amending the settings in Outlook.

Agreed that:

Officers send out reminders to delegates prior to the training session.

17. REPORTS FROM CALC REPRESENTATIVES

The committee noted the reports from the CALC representatives.

18. EXTRAORDINARY MEETING ON 19TH JUNE 2021

In light of the number of significant matters in hand, including local government reorganisation and coming out of lockdown, it was proposed to the Committee that an extra meeting in June be held

Agreed that:

An extraordinary meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on Saturday 19th June at 10am via Zoom.

19. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AT FUTURE MEETINGS

Items for consideration in the June meeting to be forwarded to the Chief Officer.

20. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the CALC Executive Committee will take place on Saturday 19th June 2021, via Zoom at 10am

Signed by the Chair
