

ANNUAL MEETING

11.30am: Monday 25 June 2007

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Stockton on Tees

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**
 2. **CHAIRS OPENING REMARKS.**
 3. **APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR** to serve until the next Annual Meeting of the Association in 2008.
 4. **APPOINTMENT OF THE VICE CHAIRS** to serve until the next Annual Meeting of the Association in 2008.
 5. **MINUTES** of the Plenary Meeting held on 18 January 2007 (*No.5 attached*).
 6. **ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATION** Director to present (*No.6 attached*).
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7. **BUSINESS LINK NORTH EAST** Attached as No.7 is a copy of a Memorandum of Understanding developed between the Association and Business Link North East (BLNE). The aim is to underscore the commitment to a strong and constructive relationship between BLNE and local government, for the benefit of businesses in the North East. Paul Callaghan, Chair, BLNE and Alastair MacColl, Chief Executive, will be in attendance at the meeting for the formal endorsement and signing of the document.
8. **'THE YEAR IN HIGHLIGHTS'** The Director to present the '*The Year in Highlights*', which tells a narrative in a diary format of the issues, activities and achievements which have shaped the past year (copies of the document will be available at the Annual Meeting).
9. **MANIFESTO ACTIONS**
 - (a) **EMPLOYABILITY**
 - **Employability Task & Finish Group: Final Report** The Deputy Director to present the final report of the Employability Task & Finish Group Howard Forrest, North East Employer Coalition, will be present at the meeting to give an employer's perspective on the report (copies of the document will be available at the Annual Meeting);

- **North East Water at Work** John Mowbray, Director of Corporate Affairs, Northumbrian Water will give details of the Water at Work initiative; and
 - **Work Wise Initiative** The Director to present No.9a attached.
- (b) **TRANSPORT** The Deputy Director to present No.9b attached and, in relation to concessionary travel element of the report, will introduce Shirley Atkinson, Director of Finance & Administration, NEXUS who will give an overview of the latest position for Members to consider.
- (c) **POLICY DEVELOPMENT** The Director to present No.9c attached.
10. **COUNCILLORS COMMISSION** Dame Jane Roberts, Chair of the Councillors Commission will be in attendance to discuss with Members the work of the Commission, enabling Members to input at this evidence gathering stage. A background paper is attached as No.10 for Members' information.
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11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** 11.30am on Friday 25 January 2008 at County Hall, Durham.

PLENARY MEETING

Thursday 18 January 2007
Civic Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Gateshead MBC	MF Henry	Northumberland CC	I Hayes
Alnwick DC	JJA Rutherford		P Hillman
Berwick upon Tweed BC	J Stephenson		AC Kerr
Castle Morpeth BC	P Jackson		J Smith
Chester le Street BC	L Ebbatson	Sedgefield BC	RS Fleming
Durham DC	J Holland	Stockton on Tees BC	J Beaumont
Durham CC	N Martin		MF Cherrett
Gateshead MBC	I Mearns	Sunderland CC	D Allan
Middlesbrough BC	RK Brady		D Forbes
	D Budd		R Symonds
Newcastle CC	D Faulkner	Wansbeck DC	P Watson
	D Huddart		D Nicholson
	J O'Shea		
North Tyneside MBC	D Slessenger		
	F Lott		
	L Goveas		
	MJ Huscroft		
	I Macaulay		

IN ATTENDANCE:

Directorate	MJ Laws
	H Knox
	R Mitchell
	L Etheridge
Northumberland CC	M Henderson
One NorthEast	A Clarke

APOLOGIES:

Darlington BC	DA Lyonette	Redcar & Cleveland BC	S Kay
Durham CC	A Nugent		V Moody
Easington DC	A Napier	Stockton on Tees BC	G Nightingale
Gateshead MBC	KM Dodds		DW Coleman
Newcastle CC	N Forbes	Sunderland CC	R Gibson
	J Shipley		B Charlton
North Tyneside MBC	JM Allan		E Gibson
	JLL Harrison	Teesdale DC	H Trueman
Northumberland CC	B Brooks	Wear Valley DC	R Betton
	E Carey	One NorthEast Board	N Stonehouse
			R Mallon

The Chair welcomed Members and extended his best wishes for 2007.

On behalf of Association Members, Vice Chair, Councillor Linda Ebbatson, congratulated the Chair on the award of a CBE in the New Years' Honours List. The Chair thanked Councillor Ebbatson for her kind words.

13. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 9 June 2006 be agreed as a correct record.

14. REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY

The Chair introduced Alan Clarke, Chief Executive, One NorthEast (ONE) who gave a presentation to Members on the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) Action Plan. (*Note: A copy of the presentation is available on request from the Directorate.*)

Mr Clarke highlighted the important role of local government in the delivery of the Action Plan, which turned the RES into a five year programme of actions and contained plans for how ONE would deploy its funding, identifying the contributions of its partners. It was acknowledged that it was an ambitious plan which needed to identify the appropriate delivery mechanisms.

The Plan introduced transformational interventions, such as:

- building a new enterprise surge;
- boosting productivity;
- promoting science, innovation and design in business;
- skills – enhancing the capability of the workforce;
- economic inclusion – increasing the size of the workforce; and
- investing in the economic hearts of the city regions.

In conclusion, Mr Clarke advised that the Action Plan was subject to consultation until the end of January. A revised Action Plan and Corporate Plan would be submitted to ONE's Board in March, with the launch of the Action Plan in May – after the local government elections.

Questions/Comments

- C. The Action Plan needed to say more about the environment, especially in relation to sustainability, climate change and renewable energy.
Mr Clarke advised that similar issues had been made in the responses received to date and would be addressed in the revised version of the Action Plan.
- C. The region was well-placed to supply renewable and other sources of energy, thus leading to economic growth in the region and this should be reflected in the Plan.
- C. The need for the region to attract and retain graduates was raised.
Mr Clarke agreed, adding that the Action Plan needed to have a radical approach that would in turn lead to increased diversity within the region. He also pointed out that the Agency planned to work with the LSC to address the region's skills shortage.
- Q. Had account been taken of the OECD Report?
A. *Yes, but Mr Clarke felt that the report had not offered a 'golden key' solution.*

- C. The issue and importance of affordability and social housing was highlighted, along with the need to ensure that a range of housing was available to attract and retain people in the region. Also, attention was drawn to PPG3 which highlighted the overcrowding problems in relation to housing in the South East and it was suggested that there needed to be a more flexible approach to housing strategies generally.

Mr Clarke agreed that the North East had very different housing problems and requirements from those in the South East. He pointed out however, that housing was not a core role of the Agency, it was an issue for the North East Assembly (NEA) to consider in relation to its Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) duty.

- C. The issue of integration between the RES and RSS was raised.
Mr Clarke highlighted the close working relationship between ONE and the NEA during the production both Strategies.

The Chair thanked Mr Clarke for his presentation.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the presentation be received; and
- b) the draft response to the Action Plan be endorsed for submission to One NorthEast by the end of January.

15. SHARED SERVICES

Councillor John O'Shea advised of the work a Member-led group, supported by North East Centre of Excellence looking at the potential for the provision of shared services within local government. He introduced Mark Henderson, Chair of the Regional Chief Executives Group, who had been involved in the work of the Group.

Mr Henderson gave a presentation on the issue of shared services, which he believed was an on-going issue faced by all local authorities, hence the need for a consistent approach in order to maximise the opportunities available to local authorities.

A programme was being developed which considered efficiency through collaboration in high demand and capital intensive areas such as payroll and benefits, services that could be easily standardised and the outcome of which could be a faster, more efficient/resilient service. A mapping exercise was being carried out to identify software used and when licences expired and the benefits of joint procurement for renewals.

Mr Henderson urged against a piecemeal approach by local authorities, pointing out that if authorities worked together, perhaps at the regional level, the savings could result in additional funds being available for investment in front line services. It was also pointed out that there was potential for collaborative initiatives to be extended beyond local government. There was also potential to extend beyond the North East.

The Chair thanked Councillor O'Shea and Mr Henderson for their presentation and advised that the Association looked forward to further discussions on this issue in due course.

RESOLVED that the current position in relation to shared services be noted.

16. TRANSPORT

Rail Infrastructure

The report updated Members on recent developments in relation to rail infrastructure including a feasibility study, to be completed by the end of March, into the re-opening of the Leamside Line to freight and passenger services. A feasibility study into the Ashington-Blyth-Tyne Line was also expected to report by the end of March. It was proposed that rail issues and other transport issues form the basis of a special event for Members, detailed in an event outline circulated for consideration.

Members were pleased to see the Ashington-Blyth-Tyne Line included in the Association's transport agenda, particularly in relation to the potential for improvements in rural connectivity in the region. It was suggested that rural transport, including rural bus services, be included in the programme for the proposed transport event.

The strategic importance of the A1 was raised, with local authorities and the Interim Regional Transport Board urged to continue to support its dualling on both economic and safety grounds.

Metro Re-invigoration

At a recent meeting, convened by Nexus, regional stakeholders had received an outline of Metro's vision and details of the re-invigoration programme for the system, which included enhancements and improvements to both services and investment, totalling £600m. Circulated for consideration was a draft letter from the Association to Nexus supporting Metro re-invigoration.

Tees Valley Metro

As Members were aware, the Association had already highlighted, as part of the transport advocacy paper prepared for the North East Transport Compact, the importance of the development of a modern public transport network in the Tees Valley. It was pointed out that the development of the Tees Valley Metro provided significant capacity benefits to the heavy rail network, including additional freight train paths to serve Teesport and allowed the development of passenger services through Darlington on the East Coast Main Line, on TransPennine services into Middlesbrough and on longer distance services along the Durham Coast.

Regional Funding Allocations

Circulated for consideration was correspondence received from Government Office for the North East (GONE) about the Regional Funding Allocations process and the implications for the existing Interim Regional Transport Board arrangements.

At their meeting on 11 January, the Regional Chief Executives Group had considered the correspondence and it was recommending that as there was much on-going activity and indeed uncertainty in terms of the way forward for transport at the moment, the existing arrangements for the Interim Regional Transport Board should remain in place. It was emphasised that the role of local government in relation to any future arrangements would be very important.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the ongoing development of the Tees Valley and Tyne and Wear Metro and the Association's involvement in future discussions with both Network Rail and the Department of Transport be supported;
- b) the draft letter to Nexus in support of Metro re-invigoration be approved;
- c) the draft outline programme for a special transport event for Members be noted; and
- d) the recommendations of the Regional Chief Executives Group form the basis of a response to the GONE in relation to the Interim Regional Transport Board.

17. LYONS

Circulated for consideration was the first draft of an Association response to the latest consultation by Sir Michael Lyons. The deadline for submission was 19 January.

RESOLVED that the draft Association response, subject to the inclusion of additional comments, be approved for submission by 19 January.

18. REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM

Members were advised that the Strategic Health Authority (SHA) were consulting on the future of the Regional Health Forum, with responses sought to twelve specific questions by 5 February. The report detailed the Association's proposed draft response to the consultation questions, the key elements of which were:

- the Forum's Terms of Reference needed to be more focussed;
- the Forum must add value; and
- the inclusion of elected Members in the Forum's membership.

Members drew attention to the European Cities Social Affairs Forum Health and Well-being document which highlighted the role and contribution of local authorities in relation to the health and well-being of people.

It was suggested that consideration be given to the inclusion of training organisations for social care and health in the Forum's proposed membership.

It was further suggested that, given the increasing role for local authorities in relation to the health agenda, the Forum should allocate four seats to the Association (one per sub region) and that the Association's representatives report back to Members on a regular basis on the progress of the Forum.

RESOLVED that the proposed response to the SHA's consultation on the future arrangements for the Regional Health Forum be approved, subject to the inclusion of comments made by Members.

19. CLIMATE CHANGE

The report highlighted the Association's priority in the 2006/07 Manifesto to protecting and promoting our environment through the provision of cleaner, greener, safer communities wanted by our citizens and communities. It was acknowledged that local government had an important role in encouraging citizens to think about how they could make a difference

at an individual level to tackle climate change, promote energy efficiency and renewable energy alternatives.

Also, local authorities had the potential to reflect climate change and how it could be addressed in their Sustainable Community Strategies, as well as through future Local Area Agreements.

Attention was drawn to the Nottingham Declaration, signed up to be over 70 local authorities, 17 of which were in the North East. Subject to Members agreement, the Directorate would pursue the potential to explore the extension of the number of signatories in the region.

It was also proposed that a Task & Finish Group be established, the aim of which was to key priorities for action, to share good practice and to consider other actions that can make a difference.

Following discussion with a number of partners involved in the climate change agenda, the Association was proposing to support a national climate change conference, programme circulated for information, in Middlesbrough on 6 March.

The Chair took the opportunity to stress that it was important for local authorities to identify short-term initiatives, deliverable this year, as well as developing medium/long initiatives.

Members were advised that there was work being carried out in parts of the region on warm zones (including cavity and loft insulation), where local authorities worked in partnership with energy companies and that perhaps this could be extended to include the whole region.

It was also suggested that local authorities should consider their own energy efficiencies, especially in relation to gas and electricity consumption.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the proposal for the Association to explore the extension of the number of signatories to the Nottingham declaration in the region be approved;
- b) the establishment of a Task and Finish Group be approved; and
- c) the Association's support for the Climate Change Conference on 6 March be endorsed.

20. BUDGET 2006/07 & 2007/08

It was reported that the budget setting exercise came at a time when there was some uncertainty, given the vacation of the NEA from the Guildhall, regarding running costs. Discussions were on-going regarding the possibility of other organisations, North East Employers Organisation and the North East Centre for Excellence, co-locating within the Guildhall. A further report would be prepared when further information was available.

It was anticipated that balances as at 31 March 2007 would be around £265k, this took account of contributions to studies of £15k for travel costs for 16-18 year old learners and £7.5k for New Local Government Network.

Members were advised that a zero based approach had been adopted for the 2007/08 budget, with general inflation for the ensuing financial year assumed to be around 2.5%, an estimated pay award of 3% and an increase of 10% for gas and electricity.

The report gave details regarding pension deficiency contributions and advised that in order to fully address the deficiency, the rate payable for the Association was for 2007/08 was £90,050. It was pointed out that should Members feel that the pension deficiency contribution be raised to a more realistic level of £90k, then the extra cost of £33k would have to be met from either:

- balances;
- increased member contributions;
- reduction in expenditure; or
- a combination of all three.

The Regional Chief Executives Group had considered the issue and had recommended to Members that the higher rate be paid and the difference in cost be met from balances for 2007/08.

It was pointed out that the current level of member subscriptions of around £800,000 had remained unchanged of the last two years. Applying the anticipated general rate of inflation of 2.5%, it was proposed that subscription income be increased to £820,000 and circulated for consideration was details of the proposed level of subscriptions authorities for 2007/08.

With regard to future budgetary arrangements, it was proposed that a three year medium financial plan be prepared from April 2008. This would allow uncertainties regarding the effects of the 2007 Pension Fund valuation and accommodation etc to be addressed and a tie-in with the end of the current Business Plan.

RESOLVED that:

- a) a three year medium-term financial plan be prepared to commence from April 2008;
- b) in principle, the proposed budget for 2007/08 and the use of balance be approved, on the understanding that a further report may be forthcoming after the issues identified in the report had been taken further forward; and
- c) the level of local authority subscription for 2007/08 (subject to discussion in relation to (b) above) be approved.

21. THE BEST COMMISSION

The report advised Members of the establishment by the LGA of an independent commission under the presidency of Lord Best to carry out a root and branch review of its relationships with member authorities, government, stakeholders and partners. The aim of the review was to establish what the LGA needed to do in terms of lobbying, campaigning, policy development and Member services.

The report detailed the Association's response to a number of questions posed by the Best Commission. Members were invited to forward any comments on the proposed response to the Directorate. The deadline for submission to the LGA was 2 February.

On a related issue, the Chair proposed that a Task & Finish Group be established to look at the role of elected Members, considering issues such as Members terms and conditions, recruitment and retention, etc.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the draft response to the questions raised by the Best Commission be submitted to the LGA by the deadline of 2 February, subject to further comments made by Members; and
- b) a Task & Finish Group be established looking at the role of elected Members.

22. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Regional Housing Board

The Director advised that Brian Spears, Chief Executive of Durham City Council and the Association's officer support to the Regional Housing Board, had expressed concern at the allocation from Government of funding for 2007/08 and the implications of this upon local authority spending. Councillor Bob Brady, the Association's representative on the Board, reiterated the concerns of Mr Spears, advising that the Government had announced funding without consultation.

RESOLVED that the Association supports representations on this issue.

23. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED as 11.30am on Thursday 22 March at County Hall, Durham.

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ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATION

Representation

1. Representatives appointed by individual authorities to the Association and its Executive Committee for 2007/08 to date (18 June) are shown in Annex A in bold. Where representation for 2007/08 has yet to be advised, authorities are indicated in italics along with their representatives for 2006/07 for information.

Party Political Definitions

2. At each Annual Meeting, the Association defines its Majority and Minority Parties for the forthcoming year. In 2006/07, the following was determined by the Association:

Majority Party	Labour; and
Minority Parties	Conservative, Independent and Liberal Democrat.

3. If the Association adopts these definitions, the county areas requiring co-options for 2007/08 will be determined on confirmation of appointments to the Association from all Member Authorities. The Association is requested to authorise the Chair and Vice Chairs to approve Minority Party co-options where required, in consultation with Member Authorities in the county areas concerned.

Recommendations

4. The Association is recommended to:
 - a) note the appointment of representatives to the Association and its Executive Committee for 2007/08;
 - b) agree the following definitions for the operation of the Association:

Majority Party	Labour;
Minority Parties	Conservative, Independent and Liberal Democrats; and
 - c) authorise the Chair and Vice Chairs to approve the appointment of Minority Party co-options where required, in consultation with Member Authorities in the county area concerned.

Contact : **Lynne Etheridge, Executive Officer**

Annex A

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES					
County Area	Representative	Party	County Area	Representative	Party
DURHAM			TYNE & WEAR		
Chester le Street DC	L Ebbatson	Lab	Gateshead MBC	KM Dodds	Lab
Derwentside DC	O Johnson	Lab		JW Hamilton	Lab
Durham CC	J Cahplow	Lab		MF Henry	Lab
	J Maddison	Lab		I Mearns	Lab
	N Martin	LD	Newcastle MBC	D Faulkner	LD
	A Nugent	Lab		N Forbes	Lab
	C Robson	Lab		D Huddart	LD
	C Vasey	Lab		G Kane	LD
	R Young	Lab		J McCarty	Lab
Durham DC	F Reynolds	LD		J Shipley	LD
Easington DC	A Napier	Lab	<i>North Tyneside MBC</i>	<i>JM Allan</i>	<i>Lab</i>
Sedgefield BC	AM Armstrong	Lab		<i>LJ Goveas</i>	<i>Con</i>
Teesdale DC	R Betton	Ind		<i>JLL Harrison</i>	<i>Lab</i>
Wear Valley DC	N Stonehouse	Lab		<i>I Macaulay</i>	<i>Con</i>
			South Tyneside MBC	T Hanson	Lab
NORTHUMBERLAND				I Malcolm	Lab
Alnwick DC	R Styring	LD		B Scorer	Lab
Berwick upon Tweed BC	EI Hunter	LD		P Waggott	Lab
Blyth Valley BC	J Newman	Lab	Sunderland MBC	D Allan	Lab
Castle Morpeth BC	P Jackson	Con		B Charlton	Lab
Northumberland CC	SE Bolam	Con		D Forbes	Lab
	E Carey	Lab		E Gibson	Lab
	P Hillman	Lab		R Symonds	Lab
	AW Reid	Lab		P Watson	Lab
	LJ Rickerby	LD	Tyne & Wear	J Eagle	Lab
	J Smith	Lab	balancing	(Gateshead)	
Tynedale DC	C Horncastle	Con	seats	MJ Huscroft	LD
Wansbeck DC	A Wallace	Lab		(N Tyneside)	
				D Slesenger	LD
TEES VALLEY				(Newcastle)	
Darlington UA	DA Lyonette	Lab		H Trueman	Lab
	J Williams	Lab		(Sunderland)	
Hartlepool UA	P Hargreaves	Lab			
	C Richardson	Lab	MINORITY PARTY CO-OPTIONS FOR		
Middlesbrough UA	D Budd	Lab	<i>2007/08 – to be determined when all</i>		
	R Kerr	Lab	<i>appointments are know</i>		
	P Thompson	Lab	<i>For 2006/07</i>	<i>JH Fergus</i>	<i>Con</i>
Redcar & Cleveland UA	S Clarke	Lab		<i>(Durham)</i>	
	G Dunning	Lab			
	P Scott	Lab			
Stockton on Tees UA	DW Coleman	Lab			
	S Fletcher	LD			
	R Gibson	Lab			
	K Lupton	Con			
Tees Valley balancing	I Haszeldine	Lab			
seats	(Darlington)				
	<i>Vacancy</i>				

Bold – representation confirmed by Authority

Italic – representation awaited from Authority

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES		
County Area	Representative	Party
DURHAM		
County Council	A Nugent	Lab
District Councils	A Napier (Easington)	Lab
NORTHUMBERLAND		
County Council	P Hillman	Lab
<i>District Councils</i>	<i>Vacancy</i>	
TEES VALLEY		
Darlington UA	DA Lyonette	Lab
Hartlepool UA	P Hargreaves	Lab
Middlesbrough UA	R Kerr	Lab
Redcar & Cleveland UA	G Dunning	Lab
Stockton on Tees UA	K Lupton	Con
TYNE & WEAR		
Gateshead MBC	MF Henry	Lab
Newcastle MBC	J Shipley	LD
<i>North Tyneside MBC</i>	<i>JLL Harrison</i>	<i>Lab</i>
South Tyneside MBC	P Waggott	Lab
Sunderland MBC	R Symonds	Lab
VICE CHAIR CO-OPTIONS		
<i>For 2006/07</i>	<i>L Ebbatson (Easington)</i>	<i>Lab</i>
	<i>N Martin (Durham County)</i>	<i>LD</i>
MINORITY PARTY CO-OPTIONS FOR 2007/08 – to be determined when all appointments are known		
<i>For 2006/07</i>	<i>P Jackson (Castle Morpeth)</i>	<i>Con</i>

Bold – representation confirmed by Authority

Italic – representation awaited from Authority

**Business Link
North East**

ASSOCIATION OF
NORTH EAST COUNCILS



Dated

2007

BUSINESS LINK NORTH EAST
and
ASSOCIATION OF NORTH EAST COUNCILS

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between Business Link North East (BLNE) and the Association of North East Councils (ANEC).

BACKGROUND

Business Link North East and the Association of North East Councils share a commitment to generating a more enterprising and entrepreneurial culture and to increasing business start ups, business survival and growth, so that the North East is able to compete with other regions and internationally. The organisations have a mutual commitment to advancing the overall competitiveness and economic prosperity of the region.

The establishment of Business Link North East as the new business support service for the North East of England represents a significant opportunity for developing innovative business support which assists in significantly increasing the wealth and productivity of the region by delivering practical and professional support to existing and potential businesses across the whole of the North East.

This is supported by ANEC, the representative body for local government in the North East, whose constituent member authorities have a key role in economic development, regeneration and in creating the conditions for business, people and place to flourish in the region.

BLNE will be regionally organised and locally delivered. BLNE and ANEC have identified an opportunity through agreeing this memorandum of understanding, to develop a framework for close working partnerships between BLNE and local authorities across the region. The aim is not to create a 'one size fits all' approach, but rather to identify and maximise what works well, and to ensure the delivery of the best possible service to business.

OUR ROLES

Business Link North East

In delivering a new offer, Business Link North East is committed to:

- a locally delivered service underpinned by the strength of regional resources;
- a more targeted service which will focus on generating a positive impact in the North East's economy;
- a much simpler process of accessing the best private and public sector solutions; and
- highly trained experienced business professionals who understand business needs and aspirations.

The aim is to focus on transforming the North East economy by bringing customers a consistently high quality, responsive and dynamic business link service.

BLNE welcomes the opportunity to work with ANEC to create new ways of working to strengthen business support activity in the North East region.

Association of North East Councils

Local government in the North East plays a pivotal role in stimulating, influencing and developing economic prosperity and well-being. It has a direct impact on economic regeneration and prosperity, employment and skills, business and investment decisions.

It is responsible for a range of areas which directly contribute to creating the conditions for economic, social and environmental well being and growth, including economic development and business support activity.

ANEC welcomes the establishment of BLNE and commits to work with it to maximise business support and development opportunities for the businesses and people of the region and beyond.

OUR COMMITMENT

We commit to explore ways in which service levels can be improved, efficiency can be enhanced and duplication avoided by integrating business support service provision through the development of partnerships between business links and local authorities which will:

- be designed to provide better and more immediate access to a wider range of business support services, targeted at supporting growth in each local authority area;
- build on what works; and
- increase awareness of those services, widening participation and impact and simplifying the processes that underpin business support.

We will seek to do this by:

- creating methods of sharing information and aligning business support policy and best practice between ANEC and BLNE;
- using and developing our shared resources (including co-location where practical and desirable to improve and integrate public access) in the most effective fashion; and
- on a practical level, an immediate expression of this more joined up and co-operative approach will be integrated planning and implementation of LEGI-related activity.

ACTIONS

- The creation by BLNE of a small project team to work with ANEC and local authorities on turning these commitments into specific plans, initially in the form of several pilot exercises.
- The establishment by ANEC of regular sharing of information and policy development sessions between BLNE and ANEC.

OUTCOMES

It is envisaged that this commitment to working together will result in:

- improved efficiency;
- avoidance of duplication;
- harnessing of resources;
- improved access to high quality services;
- enhanced productivity; and
- growth in business stock.

REVIEW

BLNE and ANEC will ensure that this Memorandum of Understanding is reviewed in twelve months from the date of signing.

In implementing this memorandum, both BLNE and ANEC recognise their respective roles and responsibilities.

Signed

Councillor Mick Henry
Chair
Association of North East Council

Paul Callaghan
Chair
Business Link North East

Melanie Laws
Director
Association of North East Councils

Alastair MacColl
Chief Executive
Business Link North East

WORK WISE NORTH EAST

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to seek Members approval for the Association to become a strategic partner with Work Wise North East.

Background

2. Work Wise UK is a not-for-profit initiative which aims to make the UK the most progressive economy in the world and encourage smarter working practices to the benefit of business, employees and the country as a whole. The Work Wise campaign provides a central information service for the UK workforce and champions the dissemination of key information and best practice throughout the programme. It brings together the public and private sectors, professional bodies and trade unions and support the broader use of smarter working as a modern day approach to working life.
3. Smarter working can take a number of forms: some very simple, with few cost implications, through to full organisation-wide workflow reviews. It can apply to any business or organisation, from large multinational companies and the public sector right down to small business and the self-employed.

Work Wise North East

4. The North East is the first region in the UK to stage a regional Work Wise initiative, Work Wise North East, which will tailor the national Work Wise UK objectives and programme specifically to the North East. It is supported by key organisations in the region including One NorthEast, Government Office for the North East, Confederation of British Industry, Trades Union Congress, North East Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Northern Business Forum, EEF Northern, Women into the Network, plus several individual businesses and voluntary organisations.
5. Work Wise North East was launched in February 2007 at an event attended by leaders of the business, public and voluntary sectors. Extensive press coverage has been attained, in particular through the Journal which strongly supports the campaign. There will be a series of events over the coming months organised by the campaign and its supporters. These are aimed both at generating demand from society for more flexible working, and providing employers with information and practical guidance.

Why Join Work Wise?

6. Benefits for the public sector range from supporting public policy objectives to contributions to efficiency targets. Work Wise can have a major impact on areas of

policy including the environment, transport, and engaging disadvantaged groups in economic activity. It is an independent campaign, supported by various public bodies including a number of individual councils, business, unions, charities and the local media, and can lend a powerful voice in support of various policy issues.

7. For public sector organisations, there are potential major direct financial and business improvement benefits. Most public sector organisations have good policies to accommodate flexible working on demand, but may not have adopted it systematically to reap organisational benefits which may include capital receipts from reduced property needs, productivity growth, a more collaborative culture, increased diversity and staff retention and satisfaction.
8. Most local authorities in the region have already adopted a range of policies and practices which fall within the terms of the Work Wise initiative, especially flexi-time schemes, home working and so on. The requirement for local authorities to retain skilled staff and the desire local authorities have to recruit skills from potential employees from harder-to-reach communities suggests that there is much to gain from taking a strategic approach to developing Work Wise principles in the region.

The Association as a Strategic Partner

9. As a strategic partner in Work Wise North East, the Association's contribution will comprise:
 - small financial contribution covering a two year period to March 2009 to be met from balances;
 - promotion of the campaign to member local authorities;
 - sponsorship of and participation in events in relevant sectors – to include in-kind support such as sharing of platforms provided by the Association's own events, use of venues etc; and
 - further in-kind support through Association publications and networks.
10. The benefits to the Association as a strategic partner will be:
 - membership of the campaign steering committee to help direct the campaign;
 - opportunity to provide speakers for campaign events in relevant areas of expertise;
 - opportunity to promote members as case studies;
 - identified as one of the Strategic Partners on the Work Wise North East web site and in all campaign literature;
 - links from Work Wise North East web site to our site;
 - proactive PR opportunities arising from the campaign; and
 - negotiation of other benefits sought by the partner as appropriate.

Recommendation

11. Members are asked to approve the Association becoming a strategic partner of Work Wise North East.

Contact : ***Rob Mitchell, Head of Local Government Policy & Strategy***

TRANSPORT

Background

- 1 In taking forward one its key Manifesto commitments, the Association of North East Councils convened a major transport conference in March '*Transport: The Way Forward*', attended by Tom Harris MP, Rail Minister and David Clelland (Tyne Bridge MP and Member of the Transport Select Committee).
- 2 Recognising that transport is crucial in driving future economic prosperity, local authorities, transport operators, business representatives and regional stakeholders contributed to an important debate about the region's transport aspirations. Highlights and key messages from the event are reported in the current issue of '*Dialogue*' (Issue 4).
- 3 The purpose of this report is to give Members a brief update on progress in relation to those main transport issues and theme.

High Speed Ground Transport

- 4 The '*Transport: The Way Forward*' conference provided a timely platform to consider the opportunities for a North–South high speed link, in advance of the Government's Rail White Paper (expected on 3 July), and beyond. Speaking about the Government's Rail White Paper, Tom Harris referred to the Government's manifesto commitment to examine the case for a North–South high speed line and confirmed that the DfT is considering the economic and environmental merits of the options that could facilitate a high speed link.
- 5 Alan James, Chief Executive of UK Ultraspeed, gave delegates a presentation on an ambitious, bold and visionary proposal for a Tyne–Tees high speed link, using maglev technology.
- 6 The Association agreed that North East councils would form a working group, drawing in other partners, to consider the merits of maglev technology, as a potential method of delivering a high speed link within the region. The group, which met for the first time on 4 June, is considering how best to strategically position the North East to take advantage of future policy and commercial opportunities for developing high speed ground transport. Its remit will include gathering and interrogating the evidence base to identify the rationale and opportunities for a high speed link, as well as to consider the economic, social and environmental benefits of maglev, drawing comparisons with other technologies.

- 7 The working group will also progress initial discussions with contacts north of the Border, where the debate on high speed and maglev has gathered momentum. In brief, Glasgow and Edinburgh Councils gave their backing to an Ultraspeed link between the two cities, with a less than 15 minute journey time.
- 8 Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority and the South East Scotland Transport Partnership are also supporting maglev for a high speed link, connecting Scotland with the rest of the country. Transport and the proposal for a Glasgow–Edinburgh high speed link has been discussed by the main political parties in Scotland, both in the lead up, and subsequent to, the Scottish Elections.
- 9 The relationships between the North East and partners in Scotland is clearly a key issue in relation to the debate on high speed ground transport, which is being taking forward by the Association and through the working group looking at high speed ground transport.

East Coast Main Line

- 10 Focusing on the existing infrastructure, rail connections linking the North East with Edinburgh in the North and London and the South East came under scrutiny at a Select Committee style hearing, convened by David Clelland MP last month.
- 11 The hearing providing an opportunity for the Association, represented on the panel, to hear proposals from the four shortlisted bidders for the InterCity East Coast Franchise, followed by a question and answer session.
- 12 Subsequently, the Association and regional partners have written to the Department for Transport to reinforce the importance of the East Coast Main Line, which is arguably greater for the North East than any other part of the country. The point has been made explicitly that the ECML is vital to the continuing economic development prospects of the region, and in helping to attract business, visitors and inward investment. Maintaining and enhancing standards of customer service, frequency of trains, timetable improvements and station upgrades are all essential, which the Association urges DfT to respond positively to in taking forward discussions on the new franchise to the next stage.
- 13 Influencing the East Coast Main Line Route Utilisation Strategy will also be important, when the consultation commences, which is now expected to be at the end of June. Roland Anderson, National RUS Consultation Manager and Phil Bustard, Public Affairs Manager, Network Rail attended and presented at the Association's '*Transport: The Way Forward*' conference in March and gave an undertaking to consult and engage with local authority Members to elicit and capture views, as part of the formal consultation process. It is proposed that the Association organises an opportunity for Members to input into the consultation process. Previous discussions with Members have highlighted the importance of smaller stations on the line serving rural areas and market towns, as well as the main stations on the line such as Newcastle, Durham and Darlington.

Rural Rail Revival

- 14 In the context of a vision for the role existing rail networks could play in providing the backbone for integrated transport in rural areas, Dr Paul Salveson, Northern Rail's Head of Community and Regional Strategies also gave a presentation at the Association's transport conference. The Association has subsequently met with

Paul Salveson and Steve Butcher, Area Director North, Northern Rail to discuss future opportunities.

- 15 In addition, the Association is involved in discussion relating to opportunities for the re-instatement of the Leamside Line and with regard to the Ashington-Blyth-Tyne line. The Rail White Paper, expected next month, will be helpful in providing a national strategic framework for the development of rail services.
- 16 With regard to light rail, following a presentation by Bernard Garner, Director General, Nexus at '*Transport: The Way Forward*' on proposals for Metro Re-energisation, the Association will be represented at an event scheduled for 28 June giving stakeholders a briefing and update on progress since the submission of the proposals to the Government in January.

Young People's Travel

- 17 The Association's Manifesto places young people at the heart of its agenda. Members and the Directorate are seeking new and innovative ways of better empowering and engaging children and young people in shaping their own futures and encouraging them to participate in decisions which affect them.
- 18 At an Executive Committee meeting earlier this year, Members gave their support to a campaign developed by the Regional Youth Work Unit and Bus Buddies calling for fair regional concessionary bus travel for young people aged 14–19 in full time education or accredited training across the North East. The young people involved in the campaign argue that decisions about educational and employment opportunities, their leisure options and participation in many social activities are affected by the affordability of public transport.
- 19 This message was reinforced at the '*Transport: The Way Forward*' conference and subsequently at a highly successful '*Citizens Now*' conference for young people and councils, organised by Investing in Children and the Association of North East Councils, held on 5 April (a special report on the young people's event is profiled in the current issue of '*Dialogue*').
- 20 The Association is taking forward this agenda, working with young people, MPs and partners. An LSC led study, which Members agreed to part fund and support, is currently exploring the possibilities and potential for a region-wide travel scheme for 16–18 year old learners. Such travel concessions could act as a significant incentive to participation in further education in the North East, which has the lowest rates of full-time post-compulsory education participation in the country. The LSC led study, which is being carried out by PWC, is due to report with an options paper in July/August. The Association has been actively involved in the steering group for the research project.
- 21 The Association is also exploring opportunities for further supporting the Bus Buddies Campaign, and will be discussing proposals for advocacy during July, prior to the Parliamentary Recess (26 July). The Association's Deputy Director is meeting David Clelland MP and young people from the Bus Buddies Campaign on 15 June and will give a verbal update for Members at the Annual Meeting.

Concessionary Travel Fares

- 22 In April 2006 free local off-peak concessionary bus travel was brought in across England for older and disabled people. In April 2008 this will become a 'go anywhere in England' scheme. The implementation of a further enhanced scheme next year (free off peak travel for eligible pass holders anywhere in England on local bus services) raises some issues of concern in relation to meeting the associated costs, which have implications for PTA/PTEs and local authorities.
- 23 Shirley Atkinson, Director of Finance, Nexus will be in attendance at the meeting to discuss with Members the current position and seek their views to inform future discussions with the Government, including representation to David Clelland MP, who has been appointed to sit on the Concessionary Transport Bill Committee. The Association is also influencing the LGA nationally on this issue through the preparation of papers which the LGA has supported and which are being fed through to the Local Government Finance Settlement Working Group.

Draft Local Transport Bill

- 24 Finally, the recently published Draft Local Transport Bill provides the context for further discussion with Members, local authority officers and transport operators later this year in order for the Association to formulate a response to the consultation in advance of 7 September deadline.

Recommendations

- 25 The Association is recommended to:
- a) endorse the process underway on High Speed Ground Transport;
 - b) agree that further strategic links with Scotland be explored;
 - c) agree that an event for Members be organised on the ECML Route Utilisation Strategy once it is published;
 - d) note the position on rural rail and light rail;
 - e) receive an update on the 'Bus Buddies' campaign;
 - f) consider and agree a way forward on concessionary travel; and
 - g) agree that a response be prepared on the draft Local Transport Bill and authorise the Chair and Vice Chairs to approve the response by 7 September.

Contact : **Hilary Knox, Deputy Director**

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

1. The following summarises a number of forthcoming events/consultations for Members' consideration.

2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games

2. Following on from a well received event in October 2006, which looked at potential benefits and spin offs from the 2012 Games, it was agreed that the Association, in partnership with Sport England and One NorthEast, should host a further event to explore the local authority contribution to the 2012 Games. The event is being held on 18 July at Gateshead Stadium, and is aimed at local authority Members, Chief Executives and Heads of Culture, Leisure and Tourism.
3. The event will be chaired by Councillor Henry, and will include two high profile and influential speakers:
 - Lord Coe, Chair of the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG), on local government's significant role and contribution to the Games; and
 - Sir Robin Wales, the local authority representative on the LOCOG Board and Mayor of Newham Council.
4. In terms of maximising the benefit of the Games for the people of the North East, with the agreement of the Chair and Vice Chairs, the Association is exploring the development of a concordat between the London Borough of Newham.
5. The event will also see the launch of the North East's Regional Plan, which articulates the region's vision and aspirations for 2012 and beyond and to which local authorities have contributed.

Recommendation

6. The Association is asked to endorse the arrangements for the event on 18 July and approve the development of a concordat with the London Borough of Newham.

POLICY CONSULTATIONS

LGA Prospectus

7. Following on from the Best Commission, amongst other things, the LGA has recently published a 'Prospectus' for local government. Comments are required by 31 July.

National Waste Strategy

8. The Government has published a National Waste Strategy with clear implications for local government, on which there is consultation running through to 16 August.

Planning White Paper

9. The Association will draft a response from a North East local government perspective.

Recommendation

10. The Association is asked to authorise the Chair and Vice Chairs to agree responses to the above consultations by the deadlines indicated.

Contact : ***Melanie Laws, Director***

COUNCILLORS COMMISSION

INTRODUCTION

1. It is a reality that the role of councillors has changed fundamentally over recent years and will continue to do so. Councillors are now expected to have a very different set of skills and attributes. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill which is expected to receive Royal Assent later this year will change the role still further.
2. The Association has already identified the need to examine the role of the councillor and set up a Task & Finish Group to this end in the Spring. This group is expected to conclude its work by the end of the calendar year and report to the Association Plenary in January 2008. Nationally, Ruth Kelly MP established the Councillors Commission following publication of the Local Government White Paper. It has a similar remit to that of the Task & Finish Group and is due to report to the Secretary of State by 30 November 2007. The Association regional group will be feeding in its findings to the national group, amongst other things.
3. This report sets out some of the key changes in Members' roles arising from the Bill, gives a flavour of the work being undertaken by the Task & Finish Group and provides some background to the presentation being given at the meeting by Dame Jane Roberts, chair of the Councillors Commission. A short paper presented to the Task & finish Group setting out implication for the role of councillors is attached as Annex A.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ROLE OF COUNCILLORS ARISING FROM THE BILL

Leadership: Local Strategic Partnerships, Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements

4. There will be a significant impact on councillors' **leadership roles**, not just with Cabinet/Executive Members, but for all Members. Leadership takes many forms. The Bill will place a stronger role on local authorities to ensure **Local Strategic Partnerships** (LSPs) operate effectively. In many cases, some Executive Members sit on LSPs, but there will be an increasing need for all councillors to be aware of the role of the LSP as it is through this form of governance that a great deal of the new place shaping agenda will be expected to be delivered. As well as being aware of structures and processes locally within the partnership setting, where the LSP is seen as the 'partnership of partnerships', steering the work of many themed partnerships locally, all councillors will need to know how the various partnership processes work and to be able to bring partners and communities together to find solutions to local problems (see also Community Call for Action). This is something that has already been raised by the LAA Roundtable Group and the Improvement

Partnership and work is already underway to see what further support and leadership development can be provided for Members.

5. Through the LSP structures, elected Members will be expected to ensure that refreshed community strategies genuinely reflect the vision and priorities of local communities. The new '**Sustainable Community Strategies**' will need to reflect local needs at various levels: strategic priorities for the locality as a whole as well as reflecting the specific needs of geographical or communities of interest in pockets which may get lost in a 'motherhood and apple pie' type community strategy. Many local authorities are in the process of refreshing their community strategies, through their LSP.
6. The Bill sets out the new approach to **Local Area Agreements** which will be changing significantly. They will offer considerably greater scope to meet local needs, with far fewer centrally driven targets, much less in the way of ring-fencing of funding streams and an overall allocation of funding to be channelled through LAAs rising from some £0.5 billion nationally at present to around £4.7 billion within three years. LAAs will become the main delivery plan behind sustainable community strategies, setting out what will be done locally, with which funding stream, by whom and so on. New guidance on LAAs is expected once the Bill receives Royal Assent and it will be imperative for Members to:
 - be aware of the scope and likely impact of the new LAAs;
 - know what processes and timescales locally will be deployed to produce new LAAs by the Spring of 2008; and
 - understand how these can be used to best effect in helping Members undertake their strategic and community leadership roles.

Community Call for Action (CCfA)

7. Members have always had a fundamental role in ensuring that local people's concerns are raised and responded to appropriately; CCfA will put this on a statutory footing.
8. Government is introducing CCfA via two routes. The Police & Justice Act 2006 will result in statutory guidance due out in the summer of 2007. This will enable residents to instigate a CCfA process relating to matters locally covered by the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill is expected to introduce CCfA for all local government matters. A key difference is that this CCfA process places a responsibility on elected Members to instigate the CCfA process. There remains some confusion over the practicalities of a 'dual' system which some argue will be confusing to Members, officers and, more crucially, local people. Both systems provide for community concerns to be raised through the scrutiny process if other processes fail to resolve them satisfactorily. CCfA, in either process, is not designed to replace Members' usual means of finding solutions to local issues; Members will still be encouraged to do this. What CCfA does is provide for Members to approach the Executive for a solution and then, as a form of last resort, to request the matter be discussed in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
9. Members on the Task & Finish Group have identified CCfA as something they will want to examine.

Scrutiny

10. The Bill is expected to lead to wider scrutiny powers for councils. Currently, local authorities have the power to hold health partners to account through scrutiny processes. The Bill is expected to extend this to include those agencies who will be under a duty to agree targets within the LAA. This reinforces the importance of Members developing a greater understanding of LAAs and the processes around them, including the sometimes complex partnership arrangements.
11. Although the Bill specifies scrutiny powers around LAAs, extending to agencies within the new duty, councils will still be encouraged to use scrutiny to look at issues outside the LAA (ie not to be constrained by it). This confirms scrutiny's role and principles as:
 - a critical friend to the executive/policy/decision-making process;
 - enabling the voice of the public to be heard;
 - an independently led process; and
 - a means of driving improvement.
12. Finally, this is reinforced by early thinking around the new Comprehensive Area Assessments (CAAs) where the Audit Commission is likely to assess the effectiveness of scrutiny as part of a council's policy development process.

Councillors as democratic champions

13. Again, this concept is one with which councillors will be familiar, but the Bill emphasises the importance of councillors' roles at the centre of local democratic processes in ensuring local services are responsive to local people's needs. There may be a need to define more clearly what the role of the councillor is as a democratic champion. Structures and processes at neighbourhood level may need to be examined to ensure councillors' roles at this level are properly supported. The support for councillors to more effectively deal with neighbourhood level business may need to be enhanced, including ICT, skills or secretarial support. Local authorities will be empowered to delegate budget to local councillors to enable them to address local needs more speedily than in the past, perhaps. This is likely to have an impact on Members' workload.

Task & Finish Group: The Role of Elected Members

14. The Executive Committee has already approved an outline work programme for the Group which began meeting in April. Its work reflects the changing role of Members as outlined in this report. In summary, the key issues to be addressed include:
 - recruitment of elected Members;
 - retention of elected Members;
 - support for elected Members, especially in the light of the changing role; and
 - terms and conditions of elected Members.

Councillors Commission

15. Dame Jane Roberts, chair of the Councillors Commission, has welcomed and accepted an invitation to attend the Annual Meeting to discuss with Members the work of the Commission. She was a Member for the London Borough of Camden for 16 years, including five years as Leader and is currently undertaking work for the

Improvement and Development Agency and the Local Government Leadership Centre. She is also an Associate Fellow at Warwick University working with the Leadership Development Research Programme at Warwick Business School. Dame Jane was awarded a DBE in 2004 for her services to local government.

16. The Annual Meeting provides an opportunity for Members to input at an early stage evidence to the Commission. Members will have an opportunity to raise issues which can be fed into the Commission's work. Members of the Task & Finish Group have been invited to attend today's meeting to participate.

Contact : ***Rob Mitchell, Head of Local Government Policy & Strategy***

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Local Government White Paper/Local Government And Public Involvement In Health Bill

Implications For The Role Of Councillors

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Potential Implications</u>
Giving local people more say in running local services (LGWP 2.9 – 2.21)	Will have implications for role of Councillor as facilitator, advocate and mediator, encouraging local people to articulate their views.
Listening to and acting on local concerns; Community Call for Action (LGWP 2.23 – 2.34; LGBill Part 5, particularly clause 121)	Councillor will have key role in ensuring that local people’s concerns are raised with the appropriate agencies (not just the Council) and responded to. In relation to CCfA, councillors will have a specific role in helping people and community groups to use this mechanism when appropriate – at the same time they will need to use their judgement to recognise when it is not appropriate and suggest a better alternative, for example less formal routes.
Empowering local people to manage neighbourhood and own community facilities. (LGWP 2.36 – 2.52; see also the Quirk Report ‘Making Assets Work’)	Councillors who are on OSCs will need to be familiar with the CCfA procedure, national guidance and any local protocols their council may have introduced regarding its use. Neighbourhood management – potential role for councillor in being a member of / becoming involved with existing groups at neighbourhood level, and in helping to set up such groups where they do not already exist.
Community and parish councils (LGWP 2.53 – 2.59; LGBill Part 4)	Community ownership of facilities – potential role for councillor in helping communities to take over assets, being a member of management boards. Power for councils to create new parishes following a community governance review – may be a further means of engaging local people. May also have implications for the local councillor’s role and relationships with any new parish councils created within his/her local area.

More diverse and representative councillors
(LGWP 3.6 – 3.9; Councillors Commission)

May (hopefully will) lead to removal of barriers to people standing for election and continuing to serve once elected. For example, it could lead to an improved position in relation to councillors obtaining time off work.

Councillors as democratic champions
(LGWP 3.10 – 3.12; LGB clause 235)

LGWP emphasises key role of local councillors as the bedrock of local democracy, ensuring local services are responsive to the needs of their constituents and enabling local people's voices to be heard.

Implications:

- authorities may seek to define more clearly the role of local councillors as community champions, eg through drawing up local protocols;
- may lead to creation in some authorities of new structures at neighbourhood level, in which ward councillors have a major role.
- need for capacity-building and support for councillors to take on this enhanced role. This support could take a number of forms, including training and development; ICT support; secretarial support; improved arrangements for dealing with councillor enquiries (eg tracking systems);
- potential for increased workload.

Clause 166 of LGBill empowers authorities to delegate functions/budgets to ward members – in authorities where this happens there will need to be appropriate training and support.

Enacting community rules and byelaws
(LGWP 3.13 – 3.14; LGBill Part 6)

Opportunity for councillors to champion local communities and improve the local environment by proposing appropriate byelaws (eg designating safe public spaces in which certain activities would not be permitted).

Stronger leadership
(LGWP 3.15 – 3.28; LGBill Part 3)

Implications for leaders/cabinet members, depending on which model of executive arrangements is chosen.

Stronger overview and Scrutiny
(LGWP 3.29 – 3.37; LGBill Part 5)

May also be implications for relationships within the authority eg between front-line councillors and the executive – again this depends to some extent on the degree of change.

Councillors on OSCs will need to understand their new powers and to use them to improve outcomes for people and communities. (The LGWP states clearly that the purpose of strengthening the role of OSCs is to enable councils to carry out their place-shaping role).

There will be implications in terms of training for members and support for OSCs.

Improving participation and electoral arrangements (LGWP 3.38 – 3.45; LGBill Part 2)

Raises options of (a) moving to whole-council elections (b) moving to single member wards. Clearly there will be implications for councillors in authorities which make these changes, especially the change to single-member wards.

Localise and simplify the conduct regime (LGWP 3.46 – 3.49; LGBill Part 10. See also new Model Code of Conduct approved by Parliament in May 2007).

Relaxes some of the restrictions on councillors representing their constituents, eg when speaking on planning or licensing issues, or when their interest arises from being a member of a public body such as a school governing body.

Councillors will also need training in the new arrangements.

Local Strategic Partnerships/Local Area Agreements
(LGWP chapter 5; LGBill Part 5)

Implications for all members in

- understanding purpose and roles of LSP, thematic partnerships and LAAs
- understanding the principles of joint commissioning

Implications for leaders and cabinet members in driving forward and leading the LSP and thematic partnerships.

New performance framework
(LGWP chapter 6; LGBill Part 8)

All members need to understand the principles of the new performance framework. OSC members will have a particular responsibility for monitoring performance.

Efficiency – transforming local services
(LGWP chapter 7; LGBill Part 7)

All members will need to understand the issues around transformational change, inter-authority collaboration, e-government, smart procurement etc. Some members may develop role as champions for procurement, e-government etc.

Leaders/cabinet members will need to drive these issues forward.

Community Cohesion
(LGWP chapter 8)

All members will need to be aware of cohesion issues, the challenges facing their own locality and best practice in addressing these issues.

Leaders/cabinet members have a particular role in addressing these issues, in making the promotion of cohesion 'core business' and in ensuring that the Council's partners work with the Council to develop solutions.