



National Association of Councillors Northern Ireland Region Members' Newsletter February 2022

Meetings Update

The NAC Executive Committee (EC) has set the dates for the 2022 NI regional meetings, and these were circulated to members and councils during December 2021.

NAC national meetings and conferences are arranged by Cllr Brian Nelson, the NAC National Secretary and details will be circulated as and when they become available.

During the pandemic, the NAC used Zoom to allow meetings to continue throughout the lockdowns and members' meetings are now conducted in hybrid format to meet members' requirements. There is an article on Page 2 of this newsletter with further details on NAC meetings, for your information.

Legitimate Presentation

At the NAC's first members' meeting of 2022, which took place at Ards Business Hub on 26 January, an informative presentation was provided by the founders of Legitimate, Caoimhe and Gerard. This was followed by a Q & A session which the members present and those connected by Zoom took part in.



Legitimate are a Belfast based company that have spent the last 18 months developing an on-line platform, with the aims of helping to combat disinformation, and reducing the ability for people to troll or publicly post negative comments on your articles or content. They have been funded by Invest NI technology grants to date and have tailored their resource for journalists and politicians who they feel seem to be a focal point for online abuse.

Consultations

Part of the EC's work involves discussing and replying to requests received from councils for support of motions and responding to Departmental Consultations that, in both cases, are relevant to the councillor role.

Over recent months the NAC has provided organisational responses to the following requests:

- *DfC - Call for Evidence on Local Government ability to hold Remote/Hybrid Meetings*
- *LCCC – Re: Remote Meetings Legislation*
- *DfC - Local Government Pension Scheme Consultation*
- *DfC - Views on the dissolution of the Local Government Staff Commission*
- *LCCC - Legal Assistance request (ongoing)*
- *MEA – Request for NAC meeting minutes*
- *LGTG – Feedback on iESE report*

Councillor Equality

Members of the EC have now attended four meetings with officials from the DfC to discuss councillor equality.

Progress is being made as Minister Hargey has agreed that it is timely for a review for councillors to take place. The next steps will be preparation of the Terms of Reference (TOR) to define what items will be included in the review; identification of the review panel members; and informing the political parties.

The timeframe for completion of the review will depend on whether legislation is required for implementation, but the DfC have advised that they are aiming for identification of the review panel members, and the TOR sign off by Ministers before May 2022.

There is a further meeting scheduled for later this month and we will continue to keep members updated.



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NAC MEETING INFORMATION

Bi-Monthly members' meetings take place on third Wednesday of every other month, council nominated delegates will receive invitations, but all members can attend. These meetings are currently being held in Hybrid Format as requested by the NAC members and details can be viewed on the [Meetings Page of the NAC NI Website](#).

Meeting dates sometimes have to be changed in line with public holidays or they may have to be postponed due to unforeseen circumstances.

Traditionally the location of these meetings was rotated around each council region, but due to Covid-19 this pattern was disturbed over the past two years. The NAC has now reverted to this sequence and has included the region details next to the meeting dates provided below.

The NAC understand that some councils are not currently hosting meetings for outside bodies and that future restrictions could also affect a council's ability to host meetings. Therefore, the NAC will check with each council in advance and if this is the case, meetings will be held at a hospitality venue within that council area as an alternative.

Meeting venues are to be confirmed and details, when available will be circulated to council nominated delegates and published on the NAC website.

NAC NI Region Members' Meetings 2022

DATE	VENUE	LOCATION
26 January	Ards Business Hub	Ards & North Down
16 March	TBC	Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon
25 May	TBC	Belfast City
20 July	TBC	Causeway Coast & Glens
21 September	TBC	Derry City & Strabane
16 November	TBC	Fermanagh & Omagh

~ The NAC NI 2022 AGM will take place on Friday 21 October 2022 details TBC ~

NAC National Meetings & Conferences 2022

These events are arranged by the NAC National Secretary, Cllr Brian Nelson, and details are circulated by NAC NI to all members and councils, as and when they become available.

For enquiries or booking information please contact Cllr Nelson directly on 07791 574879 or by emailing: generalsecretary@nationalassociationofcouncillors.org

DATE	TOPIC	LOCATION
25-27 Feb	Community Empowerment	Glasgow Best Western Hotel
24-26 June	TBC	TBC
25-27 Nov	Includes National AGM	TBC