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Northumberland Association of Local Councils



PLANNING REFORM WHATS ON THE HORIZON FOR NORTHUMBERLAND?

**An online presentation by Rob Murfin
Director of Housing and Planning at Northumberland County
Council**

Chief Planning Officer will give an online presentation on the future of planning in Northumberland - on **Monday 15th December 5:00pm - 700pm**

If you would like to join the call and/or submit questions for Rob to answer please request a meeting link by emailing:
info@northumberlandalc.uk
no later than noon on **Friday 12th December**



New Chairman for Northumberland ALC

At a meeting on the County Committee this week, David Hughes was voted in as the Chairman of the Northumberland Association of Local Councils.

David is a Parish Councillor at Milfield and has been the Glendale area representative to the County Committee for several years. David welcomed the opportunity to steer NALC for the next 4 years and thanked members for their support.

ONLINE TRAINING WITH THE PARKINSON PARTNERSHIP

FINANCE FOR COUNCILLORS - £35

Tuesday 10th February 10am - 11:30am*Details*

This session is for councillors only and is designed to give them a greater understanding of their duties with regard to the council's finances.

Topics include:

- Roles and responsibilities
- setting a budget and precept
- Financial control
- The Annual Governance & Accountability Return
- Internal and external audit
- How VAT applies to local councils

By the end of the session you will:

- Understand the council's duties regarding financial management
- Be aware of relevant legislation and sources of guidance
- Be aware of how the council's accounts are prepared and audited
- Recognise the importance of internal controls
- Understand how VAT law applies to your council

PROCUREMENT - £35**Thursday 29th January 10am - 11:30am****Tuesday 24th February 10am - 11:30am***Details*

For anyone involved in procuring goods and services, preparing tenders, or entering into contracts on behalf of local councils.

This session introduces the new rules of the Procurement Act 2023, which came into force on 24 February 2025 and replace the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The session covers the basics of procurement for local councils – inviting quotes, producing specifications and tender documentation, achieving competition and value for money.

Topics include:

- Overview and purpose of the Procurement Act 2023
- Procurement principles and objectives

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- Roles and responsibilities
- Thresholds
- Below threshold contracts
- Excluded contracts
- Direct Awards
- Estimating the contract value
- Scope/Specification
- Frameworks
- Procurement procedures
- Timescales
- Publication of your procurement
- Assessment summaries
- Contract Award Notice & Standstill
- Contracting authorities' requirements (mandatory or voluntary).

INTERNAL CONTROLS - £35

Wednesday 28th January 10am - 11:30am

Details

This session gives councillors and officers an understanding of the need for internal controls and how they work, with practical examples and case studies.

Topics include:

- Roles and responsibilities
- Financial risks
- Purpose of internal controls
- Case studies
- Examples of controls
- Review of internal controls

By the end of this session you will:

- Understand the council's and RFO's duties regarding internal control
- Be aware of the purpose of internal controls
- Be able to identify examples of internal controls
- Know when to review internal controls

VAT PARTIAL EXEMPTION - £35

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For clerks, finance staff and councillors of councils that lease or hire out land and buildings (such as village halls, community centres, meeting rooms or markets), who need to understand when their council is at risk of not being able to reclaim VAT. Essential for any council contemplating major building projects, or incurring significant expenditure on running these facilities.

This session is for those who already understand the rules of VAT (possibly from having attended one of our VAT sessions) and need to work out whether their council can reclaim VAT in relation to its use of land.

This session is unlikely to be of benefit for councils spending less than £50,000 a year, or for anyone that doesn't already understand the difference between business and non-business activities or between taxable and exempt supplies.

This session explains when VAT cannot be reclaimed in relation to exempt activities and what options may be available if you are in that situation.

Topics include:

- law and guidance
- non-business, taxable and exempt uses of land
- Apportionment of costs
- Partial exemption calculations
- Occasional breaches
- Option to tax
- Capital Goods Scheme adjustments

**To book onto a course please email Graeme -
info@northumberlandalc.uk**



News for NCC - New technology will enable faster flood planning decisions

Cutting-edge technology is being trialled to enable better and faster planning decisions in relation to flood risk in the county.

A project is underway within the County Council after it was awarded over £725,000 in Government funding to carry out pioneering research into how AI can support faster and better planning decisions relating to flood risk on a national scale.

The money came from the UK Government's Regulatory Innovation Office (RIO) which funds regulators and local authorities to trial new and innovative regulatory approaches enabling businesses to bring innovative products to the market quicker. Read more [HERE](#)

NEWS FROM NATIONAL NALC.

NALC unveils new Assertion 10 resource hub to support parish and town councils with compliance

We have launched a brand-new Assertion 10 Hub, providing parish and town councils with a comprehensive collection of tools, guidance and policies to help strengthen governance and compliance with the new Assertion 10 of the Annual Governance Statement.

The hub brings together several newly developed resources, including a refreshed IT Policy that sets clear expectations and standards for managing technology, cybersecurity, and digital communications, a

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...councils understand their responsibilities, plan improvements, and meet data protection obligations with confidence, and the upcoming The Good Councillors Guide to Website Accessibility that help councillors understand accessibility requirements, improve public-facing digital content and ensure local websites meet legal and inclusive design standards.

All the resources are freely available to parish and town councils in membership, providing them with easy access to up-to-date information and expert guidance designed to improve transparency and strengthen local governance.
more information [HERE](#)

NALC launches groundbreaking data protection roadmap for Parish and Town Councils

We have launched a major new resource to help parish and town councils build confidence in data protection and prepare for the introduction of Assertion 10 in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) from 2025/26. Designed to cut through complexity and empower parish and town councils of all sizes, the new Data Protection Roadmap marks a significant step in supporting the sector's governance, professionalism, and commitment to public trust.

Data protection can feel daunting for parish and town councils juggling multiple responsibilities, especially when the language is technical and the requirements are wide-ranging. Yet it remains a fundamental part of good governance and a vital safeguard for residents' rights. Our new roadmap tackles this challenge head-on by offering a clear, plain English guide that breaks data protection into manageable steps, helping councillors, clerks, and council staff understand what they need to do and why.

With the AGAR set to include a new requirement for smaller authorities to confirm they have appropriate data protection measures in place, parish and town councils are being encouraged to take a proactive approach. While the new Assertion 10 does not introduce additional legal duties, it highlights the importance of embedding strong, well-documented data protection practices. The roadmap supports councils in doing just that, providing a structured journey that takes them from mapping the data they hold to identifying lawful bases, assessing risks, and building everyday compliance into their operations.

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relevant questions, and real-world examples that help councils apply each stage to their own context. Every council is different, and this resource avoids a one-size-fits-all approach by giving councils the flexibility to make decisions that reflect their size, functions, and capacity. Where parish and town councils want to explore issues in more detail, the roadmap signposts authoritative guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office, helping them navigate more complex areas with confidence.

More information [HERE](#)

Northumberland County Office is only an email away.

Best regards

Graeme Popay
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info@northumberlandalc.uk

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Our mailing address is:
info@northumberlandalc.uk

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