

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
22 July 2022**

- **DORSET UNITARY COUNCIL UPDATE**

Dorset Council Working Together Charter. We had a productive meeting with SLT and political leaders of Dorset Council and have an in principle decision to dust off the work undertaken some while ago to establish a 'charter'. It may need to be called something different, but there was a commitment to progress the work.

A draft discussion document was shared at our last Strategic Working Group and an encouraging debate was held leading to the topic being factored in to our AGM timeline going forward. We will continue these discussions in the meeting on 22 July 2022 and have included the same document for all of you to read. The front page is heavily caveated and the body of the charter is a discussion document to give the reader a sense of what a charter may look like.

The main component sections need to be finalised and then both Dorset Council and parishes and towns would effectively need to 'sign off' their content and subsequently adopt it. Before you read it, I'd very much like you to understand that a charter should be a joint document and therefore, there are some commitments to be made by our members not just Dorset Council.

- **TRAINING**

[Certificate in Local Council Administration](#) (CILCA). I am pleased to say that from November this year we will be undertaking CILCA mentoring in Dorset having had a few years outsourcing this to Somerset. A recent report nationally highlighted that we were one of only a small number out of 43 county associations not supporting the qualification in county. We also have received mixed feedback from delegates about our offer.

This week we have sourced a trainer on a nil hours contract to deliver this for DAPTC. A separate item in the meeting on 22 July will set out plans and costs as well as a pilot initiative to specifically support smaller parish councils.

[Events & Engagement](#)

I am pleased to confirm that we have booked our first face to face event for **14th September 2022**. This is a Clerks' Conference and we have a draft structure for the day and guest list already in place. This event is for Dorset Council area clerks as the content is heavily geared towards content for that unitary. We have also set up a tiered pricing structure to reflect our smaller parishes membership to make it more affordable, simply with the aim of getting as many attending as possible.

- **DORSET NHS CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP (CCG)**

A new agreement is in place and agreed for the current financial year without the need for any lengthy discussions. We now have 4 review meetings in place now the new Integrated Care System (ICS) structure is in place.

- **NALC/SLCC 'CIVILITY & RESPECT PROJECT'**

The work of this project between NALC and SLCC continues with more lobbying of central government around sanctions. A newsletter with an update will be issued shortly covering progress made to date. Our association continues to play a significant role in providing training material for national use and helping to shape interventions for the most difficult to resolve councils in turmoil.

Separately, I was asked to attend Dorset Council's Audit and Governance Committee where I was able to make a statement in relation to a report shared with the committee. I welcomed the greater transparency of the complaint numbers and also urged Dorset Council to try and financially quantify the impact on the public purse. Furthermore I iterated that the complaint numbers are in reality only a proportion of the time and financial cost to councils caught up with poor conduct issues. Many poor conduct situations never end up in a complaint being lodged and are either left unresolved and simmering or resolved, after some form of intervention. Most disappointing in the report is a) the number of complaints and b) those resulting in any complaint being upheld.

The report can be found here and sets out the number of complaints by councils that have been lodged with the Monitoring Officer. [Audit & Governance Committee Report June 2022](#)

We have committed to help the Monitoring Officer with any further work on training and support for councils in distress, as a result of potential conduct issues.

- **2022/23 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY**

We have now had a significant number of replies to the enlarged membership survey sent out with subscription renewals. I thought I'd share with you some of the highlights:

- 92% of respondents hold the roles of Clerk & RFO
- 67% of respondents appoint a DAPTC Rep, but only 37% attend meetings, 38% don't attend and 25% occasionally attend
- 48% of respondents have no casual vacancies, but we have 32 councils with 2 or more casual vacancies at the time of survey. 4 councils have 5 or 5+ vacancies.
- 72% of respondents have one employee and 43% of Clerks responding are qualified
- 60% of respondents have contracts of employment and get an annual appraisal, anecdotal feedback suggest a number of Clerks are happy with ad-hoc feedback and no formal documented appraisal
- 74% of respondents use the sector pay settlement to inform their cost of living increase annually
- 42% of respondents have adopted the General Power of Competence
- 44% of respondents so far have no plans to develop a Neighbourhood Plan, 19% have a Neighbourhood Plan made and 12% are currently working towards a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 57% of respondents are not interested in being accredited under NALC's Local Council Award Scheme – 40% are currently or are progressing this now
- 24% of respondents have declared a climate emergency and a further 26% are working through plans related to climate and the environment
- 78% of respondents have adopted the new LGA Model Code of Conduct

The response rate from the membership is currently 72% and we will chase up the remaining submissions. This is already starting to help us understand future training content.

- **DAPTC WEBSITE / CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT**

We are continually looking at ways of improving our team efficiency and how we provide information to our members. We have as a result been exploring options with our South West colleagues. On the agenda for the Executive Meeting is a request to look in principle at the provision of a new website and customer relationship system.

Neil Wedge, Chief Executive DAPTC – 15 July 2022

END of REPORT