

**Industrial Communities Alliance
Minutes of National General Meeting
Friday 30 April 2010
Forest of Dean DC**

Agenda item 9

A civic welcome was given by Cllr Patrick Molyneux of Forest of Dean Council.

In the absence of the Chair, Cllr Watts, Cllr O'Neill took the chair.

1. Attendance and apologies

Attendance

Cllr T. O'Neill	Senior Vice Chair
S. Fothergill	Secretariat
P. O'Mara	Secretariat
J. Dixon	Secretariat
D. Parry	Secretariat
Cllr S. Manion	Dover and Kent CC
B. Hill	Dover
Cllr R. Horsfield	Forest of Dean
Cllr L. McGuire	St Helens
Cllr R. Wellington	Torfaen
Cllr J. Marshall	Torfaen
Cllr G. Gwillim	Powys
P. Slater	Director, Alliance Wales
Cllr M. Coborn	Mayor of Cinderford
Cllr G. Morgan	Forest of Dean
Cllr D. Martin	Forest of Dean
S. Kendall	Forest of Dean
T. O'Connell	Rotherham
S. Price-Jones	North Lincolnshire
Cllr M. Grant	North Lincolnshire
Cllr A. Napier	Durham CC
Cllr A. Laing	Durham CC
M. Kipling	Durham CC
Cllr C. Moesby	Derbyshire CC
Cllr S. Spencer	Derbyshire CC
Cllr V. Tyler	Northumberland CC
J. Devon	Hon. President
Cllr D. Ledger	Northumberland CC
R. Morgan	Forest of Dean
V. Phillips	Caerphilly
Cllr W. Ayre	Redcar & Cleveland
Cllr P. Molyneux	Forest of Dean
Cllr D. Thompson	Forest of Dean
J. Woodcock	Forest of Dean

Apologies

Cllr E. Watts	Chair
Cllr A. Tomlinson	Bolsover
Cllr S. Allsopp	Derbyshire CC
Cllr J. Greer	Knowsley
H. Knowles	Furness Enterprise
Cllr D. Grant	East Lothian
Cllr S. Bainbridge	North Lincolnshire
Cllr W. Eckhardt	North Lincolnshire
A. Haile	Cumbria
Cllr R. Hignett	Halton
Cllr G. Dunning	Redcar & Cleveland
C. Hunton	Stoke-on-Trent
Cllr L. Wanger	Stoke-on-Trent
Cllr A. Pritchard	Caerphilly
Cllr P. Bevan	Caerphilly
Cllr T. Wykes	Nth Warwickshire
Cllr J. Kelly	East Ayrshire
D. Hewet	East Ayrshire
Cllr C. Hibberd	Kent CC
D. Hughes	Kent CC
Cllr S. Wright	Rotherham
R. Brewis	Durham CC

2. Minutes of the National General Meeting of 12 March 2010

2.1. These were agreed as a correct record and there were no matters arising.

3. General Election

3.1. It was proposed that a paper be prepared for the Annual General Meeting that took stock of government and ministerial changes, new MPs and possible ways forward. After a discussion that covered relationships with civil servants in Westminster and Brussels and the expected funding crisis in 2011, this proposal was agreed.

4. Future of EU funding

4.1. A position paper developed by the Policy Advisory Group accompanied this item. The paper rejected the current re-nationalisation agenda as proposed by the UK government and, amongst other suggestions, called for a restoration of geographically targeted EU regional aid outside the Convergence strands.

4.2. In discussion, reference was made to the importance of EU cross border initiatives and the a review of the Common Agricultural policy.

4.3. The paper was adopted and it was agreed to disseminate it widely.

5. Coalfield Regeneration Review

5.1. The Alliance had been successful in persuading the government to implement a Coalfields Regeneration Review. The Review Board is Chaired by the retiring MP Michael Clapham with representation from DCLG, HCA, Coalfield Regeneration Trust, Coalfield Enterprise Fund and the Alliance. The Alliance Secretariat will work with DCLG to provide support for the Board. There will be an opportunity for all English Alliance local authorities to have an input.

5.2. It was agreed that the National Chair, Cllr Watts, should be the representative on the Board and that a note be circulated to all Alliance local authorities providing guidance for consultation responses. It was also agreed that the Secretariat should look at the option of convening a Policy Advisory Group to discuss Alliance input.

6. National Worklessness Forum

6.1. The programme of the National Worklessness Forum and the Worklessness Advisory Panel were reported on. The Improvement and Development Agency of the Local Government Association (IDeA) team who support the Forum had agreed to hold a joint event with the Alliance in July.

6.2. It was agreed to welcome this outcome and to continue to seek to influence the work of the Worklessness Forum.

7. Future Jobs Fund

7.1. Progress on implementing the Future Jobs Fund was reported to the meeting. There were now 200,000 places available from the Fund and the definition of hotspots had been widened. Further guidance on the Fund for Alliance members recently circulated was attached to this agenda item. Alliance authorities were encouraged to continue to bid.

7.2. In discussion reference was made to the narrow criteria and the limited value of six months funding

7.3. Alliance representatives were asked to report on any difficulties and the widening of the 'hotspots' definition was welcomed. It was decided to continue to monitor the implementation of the Fund with a view to securing maximum benefit for member authorities.

8. Steel industry

8.1. This report covered the latest situation at Redcar steelworks, the government response to North East Select Committee inquiry into the Redcar

mothballing and the wider steel market. The Alliance Chair had written to the Prime Minister on the Redcar situation and received a reply from Pat McFadden MP, a Minister of State. The reply accompanied the agenda item.

8.2. In discussion it was noted that there were perhaps 600 redundancies so far from the Redcar steelworks. On behalf of Redcar and Cleveland Council Cllr Ayre thanked the Alliance for its support.

9. Health reports

9.1. Alliance activities on health inequalities had little priority in recent months. Two reports (the Marmot Review and an IDeA report on health inequalities in coalfield and older industrial areas) could provide ammunition to revive campaigning.

9.2. It was decided to use the reports to pursue the Alliance's health campaigning agenda and to develop a health inequalities agenda within the Coalfield Regeneration Review.

10. HCA/Alliance Members Forum: report back

10.1. A joint Alliance Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Forum had taken place on 19 March in Doncaster. It was well attended and attracted many new Alliance delegates. HCA officials plan to make site visits to coalfield areas in coming months.

10.2. Alliance representatives were invited to comment on the Forum.

11. Scottish Parliament

11.1 A report back was given of a series of meetings at the Scottish Parliament. These include a meeting with a minister, a debate in the Parliament and a meeting of the Cross Party Industrial Communities Group. The excellent progress was noted.

12. Minewater pollution

12.1. The Coal Authority asked for a meeting with the Alliance Secretariat to discuss the future of the minewater remediation programme and other issues. It was reported that the Coal Authority were mindful of the tightening of public spending and the possible impact on future remediation work.

12.2. Other issues covered were non-coal minewater pollution and the Coal Authority's involvement with renewables such as minewater as a source of heat energy.

12.3. It was agreed to promote the continuation of the minewater schemes within the context of the Coalfield Review and to support the possible extension of the Authority's activities to non-coal areas.

13. PROSPECTS project

13.1. Wigan is the lead partner for the Alliance in this exchange of experiences project part-funded by the EU (INTERREG). A launch event had taken place in Leigh in March. It was agreed to thank Wigan council for the organisation of a first class event.

13.2. Alliance member authorities were asked to consider participating in the events planned up until September 2012.

14. EUR-ACOM Executive: report back

14.1. A number of meetings of EUR-ACOM representatives had taken place in Brussels on 14 and 15 April. UK representatives attended the meetings on 14 but, due to flight disruptions they did not attend the EUR-ACOM Executive on 15 April. A report will be made to a future national meeting.

15. Regional reports

15.1. Wales reported on continuing problems the upgrade of the Heads of the Valleys road.

15.2 Yorkshire and Humber Region reported on a presentation on Manufacturing Strategy from the Yorkshire & Humber Manufacturing Steering Group.

15.3. Other Regions indicate that all relevant matters had been covered in the main agenda.

16. Any other business

16.1. There was no further business and the Chair closed the meeting.