



CONSTITUTION

1. **NAME**

The Association shall be known as the Association of North East Councils (referred to as 'the Association').

2. **THE AREA**

The area of the Association shall comprise the areas of Durham, Northumberland, Tees Valley and Tyne and Wear.

3. **MEMBERS**

Membership shall be open to any principal council (within the meaning of section 270 of the Local Government Act 1972) in the area (the 'Constituent Authorities').

4. **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Association shall be to:

- act as a strong and coherent voice for local government in the area;
- provide a forum for discussion by Representatives of the Constituent Authorities of any matters affecting the area or local government in the area;
- protect, promote and support the common interests of local government in the area;
- promote a high standard of public administration throughout the area;
- pursue issues of benefit to local government in the area;
- act collectively to represent the views of local government in the area at the regional, national and international levels including the Local Government Association, Government departments etc;
- facilitate the appointment of local authority Representatives to regional, national and international bodies; and
- secure, in pursuit of the above objectives, the maximum co-operation and co-ordination between Constituent Authorities.

5. **REPRESENTATION**

Each Constituent Authority shall be entitled to nominate as voting Representatives, its Leader or Elected Mayor plus one elected member per 50,000 or part thereof of its population. Constituent Authorities shall notify the Chief Executive annually of their nominations and of any changes in-year.

Provided always that there shall be at least one voting Representative of the Association's Majority Party (as determined under clause 9) and at least one voting Representative of the Association's Minority Parties (as determined under clause 9) from each area (as defined in clause 2), if necessary by co-option.

Such co-opted Representatives shall be nominated by Constituent Authorities in the area(s) concerned and appointed by the Association.

In making their nominations, Constituent Authorities are asked to consider (a) political proportionality, and (b) diversity issues.

Representation shall be revised after the local elections each year using the latest official population estimates.

In the event of any nominated Representative(s) being unable to attend any meeting of the Association, a substitute(s) may be nominated, provided that the substitution is formally notified to the Chief Executive before the meeting.

6. **OFFICERS**

A permanent Chief Executive and Directorate shall be appointed and appropriate accommodation and resources shall be provided.

7. **ADVISERS**

Leaders and Elected Mayors shall determine the extent and number of appropriate officer advisers from Constituent Authorities.

8. **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

The subscriptions of Constituent Authorities shall be due on 1 April each year and shall be based on the type and population of Constituent Authorities. The Association shall determine from time to time a basic rate of subscription.

9. **MEETINGS OF THE ASSOCIATION**

There shall be at least two meetings a year to which all voting Representatives of the Association will be invited, one of which will be the Annual Meeting of the Association to be held as soon as practicable after May in each year.

The Chair shall have the power to summon an extraordinary meeting at any time when the business so warrants.

The Chair shall also be required to call an Extraordinary Meeting if 4 or more Constituent Authorities request him/her to do so in writing.

The business of meetings of the Association shall be:

- to provide a forum for discussion by representatives of the Constituent Authorities of any matters affecting the area or local government in the area, or otherwise relating to the objectives of the Association;
- to consider issues referred to it by the Leaders and Elected Mayors Group;
- to approve the budget and Corporate Plan on the recommendation of the Leaders and Elected Mayors Group; and
- to approve any proposals for alteration of the Association's Constitution pursuant to clause 17.

The business of the Annual Meeting of the Association shall be:

- to define annually the Association's recognised Majority Party and Minority Parties; and
- to review numbers of representatives and appointment of any co-opted members pursuant to clause 5.

Conduct of meetings

In the event that it is necessary to put any matter to a vote, each member (including any substitutes) shall be entitled to one vote.

If votes are equal, the Chair should have a second or casting vote.

Decisions will be made at Association meetings by a simple majority of those present.

The quorum for Association meetings will be either 25% of voting representatives (with substitutes being taken into account for this purpose) or seven of the 12 member authorities being represented at the meeting by at least one voting representative.

10. **LEADERS AND ELECTED MAYORS GROUP**

The Leaders and Elected Mayors Group, consisting of the Leader or Elected Mayor of each Constituent Authority (or his/her nominated representative being a member of that authority), will be responsible, on behalf of the Constituent Authorities, for delivering the Association's objectives as set out in paragraph 4 above and for the management and direction of the Association.

Each Constituent Authority shall notify the Chief Executive annually of its representation on the Group and of any subsequent changes. If any member of the Group is unable to attend a meeting, a named alternate may attend, provided that he/she is an elected member of the council concerned.

The Group will determine from time to time the arrangements for the conduct of its business, subject to the following:

- in the event that it is necessary to put any matter to a vote, each member (including any named alternates) shall be entitled to one vote;
- if the votes are equal, the Chair of the meeting will have a second or casting vote; and
- the quorum for meetings will be four, with named alternates being taken into account in determining whether a quorum is present.

In exercising its function of managing and directing the Association, the Group may:

- subject to the approval of the members of the Association, arrange for the establishment of a Company or other legal vehicle to take on such liabilities and obligations of the Association as seem appropriate; and
- delegate such powers and duties to the Chief Executive, and other officers of the Association, as it sees fit.

11. **CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIRS**

The Leaders and Elected Mayors Group shall appoint annually from its membership:

- a Chair (who will be a representative of the Majority Party as designated by the Association); and
- at least two Vice Chairs, one of whom will be a representative of the Majority Party as designated by the Association and one of whom will be a representative of the Minority Parties as designated by the Association.

In addition, if the Group considers that, in pursuit of the Association's objectives in representing local government in the area, it would be beneficial to appoint one or more additional Vice Chairs from parties that otherwise would not hold a Vice Chair position, it shall appoint such additional Vice Chair(s) as it sees fit. In considering this matter it will take account of any advice from the Constitution Sub-Committee (see clause 12 below).

The Chair and Vice Chairs of the Leaders and Elected Mayors Group for the time being shall serve as the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Association.

12. **CONSTITUTION SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Leaders and Elected Mayors Group shall establish a Constitution Sub-Committee of not more than ten members of the Association. The membership of the Sub-Committee shall include:

- the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Association;
- at least one voting representative from each of the Parties as defined by the Association; and
- at least one member from each of the four areas defined in clause 2 above.

The role of the Sub-Committee shall be to keep under review the effectiveness of the Association's constitution and working arrangements in supporting the Association's objectives and to make recommendations for any change that may appear to be necessary or desirable. The Sub-Committee shall meet as soon as practicable after the local elections in each year and at any other time that the Chair considers appropriate.

13. **PARTICIPATION OF ELECTED MEMBERS OF CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES**

All practicable steps will be taken to maximise the opportunities for elected members of the Constituent Authorities to participate in the work of the Association, including, but not restricted to, the following.

Mechanisms will be established for communicating with all elected members of the Constituent Authorities. In addition, there shall be at least one meeting per year to which all elected members of the Constituent Authorities will be invited.

The Leaders and Elected Mayors Group may establish any Working Group, Task and Finish Group, Panel or other body as it deems appropriate for the conduct of its business and may vary these arrangements from time to time. Any elected member of a Constituent Authority may be appointed to sit on any such body provided that due regard is given to ensuring as far as possible that the membership reflects the necessary skills and expertise required for that particular role. Any other person with specialist skills relevant to the purpose of the body concerned may be co-opted to any such body, but such person shall not exercise a vote.

14. **PLACE OF MEETINGS**

Meetings of the Association shall be held in each area (as defined in clause 2) on a schedule agreed by the Association.

15. **AGENDA**

The copies of the Agenda for any meeting of the Association shall be circulated to voting representatives normally at least seven days before the meeting, together with any reports and documents in connection therewith. Matters for inclusion on the Agenda and any other reports or documents in relation thereto shall be sent to the Chief Executive at least ten days before such meeting. If, at any time, the Chair decides that it is necessary to summon an Extraordinary Meeting of the Association Constituent Authorities shall be notified immediately and copies of the Agenda shall be circulated as soon as possible.

16. **RESIGNATION**

Any Constituent Authority wishing to resign its membership of the Association shall give in writing to the Chief Executive at least six months notice terminating on 31 March in any year.

17. **ALTERATION TO THE CONSTITUTION**

Alteration of the Constitution of the Association shall only be made by the Association by a simple majority of voting representatives or their substitutes present and voting at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Association called specifically for the purpose and previous notice shall have been given of proposed alterations.