

11 MAY 2021

IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD | DRAFT MINUTES

Present:

Jonathan Owen, NALC chief executive; Cllr Sue Baxter, NALC national chairman; Helen Quick, SLCC head of conferences, training & education; Elisabeth Skinner MBE, SLCC academic leader; Linda Carter, SLCC branch rep; Alison Robinson, Gloucestershire county officer; Sally Longmate, Suffolk county officer; Helen Jenkins, LGA principal adviser – leadership; Cllr Richard Parry, Kent Association of Local Councils

Also present:

Philip Clifford, LGA senior advisor; Tony Blake, Shared Intelligence programme director; Anders Hanson, NALC projects manager; Justin Griggs, NALC head of policy and communications; Linda Hammond, NALC project officer

1. Apologies for absence and introductions

Apologies were received from Rob Smith, SLCC chief executive.

The board also took the opportunity to acknowledge Jonathan Flowers in his absence and wish him well in recovery. Jonathan Owen informed the board that he will be chairing the board in the interim.

Board members were also provided the opportunity to introduce themselves.

The board welcomed Cllr Richard Parry as a new member and Helen Jenkins returning from maternity leave.

2. Minutes from previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2021 were approved.

3. Devolution

3.1 Philip Clifford provided background on the devolution work that the LGA has engaged in, with respect to the Devolution White Paper.

Tony Blake gave a verbal presentation on the work Shared Intelligence had undertaken, as part of the joint working with the LGA. This included:

research, interviews and workshops. Engagement for the project mainly involved working with principal authorities, however some local (parish and town) councils were involved as well.

It was noted that the framework was mainly aimed for principal authorities. Furthermore, the contents of the toolkit were mentioned.

Tony Blake mentioned key themes that had emerged with regards to devolution and delegation. This included frustrations encountered by both principal authorities and local councils. The importance of creative discussions as a solution was also highlighted. He also went on to mention that where relationships have gone well, these places have gone beyond what had been agreed in membership charters.

The verbal presentation concluded on raising four points: fruitful action comes from fruitful dialogue, investment is needed from principal authorities, flexibility is needed and patience is important.

The board were also informed that this is expected to be published soon.

Jonathan Owen thanked Philip and Tony for the presentation and mentioned whether it would be possible to view the draft version. Philip Clifford also mentioned the opportunity to have joint communications for the launch. Tony Blake added that there is a possibility for further case studies to be added to the document.

Justin Griggs raised the point regarding next steps and seeing how principal councils and local councils can work together on recovery.

Resolved: Following the launch of the report, there should be another session to discuss next steps.

Sally Longmate shared experience of clustering taking place in the east and highlighted the importance of training and development for councils.

4. IDB forward work programme

- 4.1 The board noted the items already submitted for the forward work programme.

Board members discussed apprenticeships, to attract new breed of professionals into the sector. The discussion also considered the possibility of degree apprenticeships.

Alison Robinson reported that she had been looking into the recruitment of apprentices in Gloucestershire.

Sally Longmate mentioned principal authority graduate schemes and suggested that some of the placements for those schemes should include opportunities to work within the local council sector.

Helen Jenkins provided insight on possible plans for the LGA graduate programme to expand to include further parts of local government.

Elisabeth Skinner mentioned SLCC's engagement with De Montfort University politics students and Alison Robinson shared experiences from her locality.

Resolved: professional development opportunities should be included on the work programme.

Cllr Richard Parry shared his principal authority experience and potential difficulties. Helen Jenkins mentioned that LGA and NALC could work together to identify councils where there is a good relationship and potentially pilot a placement.

Resolved: NALC will take forward the suggestions for the work programme. The civility project should be prioritised on the list and NALC/LGA peer challenges should also be included.

5. Councils: raising the standard

The board received a verbal update on the Local Council Award Scheme statistics from Anders Hanson and Linda Hammond.

Cllr Sue Baxter expressed interest in the numbers for reaccreditation, which would be looked into further and followed up by NALC.

6. Officers: professional development

The board received a verbal update from Elisabeth Skinner MBE on CiLCA statistics.

Cllr Richard Parry queried the take up of the CiLCA qualification. Elisabeth Skinner MBE mentioned that the qualification is celebrating its 20th year and also some of the barriers for students completing CiLCA.

Cllr Sue Baxter suggested that having pass rates statistics for the qualification would be helpful.

Alison Robinson shared that there is a good uptake in her locality and how she often encourages smaller councils to start with the ILCA qualification. Sally Longmate also highlighted the importance of trainers and preparing for CiLCA.

Elisabeth Skinner MBE informed the board that there will be a survey circulated in the autumn to evaluate CiLCA 2021 and this will be reported back to the board in a future meeting. Cllr Sue Baxter suggested that councils be included in the survey. Elisabeth Skinner MBE advised that this would be followed up by the CiLCA OPS group.

7. Updates on improvement and development initiatives

Helen Jenkins shared on the LGA's digital focus and agreed to follow up with NALC on improvement and development initiatives.

Elisabeth Skinner MBE provided an update on the developments of FiLCA (The Financial Introduction to Local Council Administration), which is expected to be launched later in the autumn.

To be discussed at the next improvement and development board meeting.

8. Dates of future meetings

The meeting dates provided on the agenda was noted. The next meeting in July may not be face to face but final arrangements will be confirmed.



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