

IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD | AGENDA

22 June 2022, 11:00 – 13:00.

The meeting will be open from 10:50 for pre-meeting conversations and to resolve any technological issues. If the meeting extends beyond 12.00 there will be a short comfort break and the meeting will then continue if necessary.

Via Zoom.

1. Apologies for absence

2. Minutes from previous meeting and matters arising

- 2.1. Recommended action: to approve the minutes of the last meeting of the Improvement and Development Board held on 17 March 2022.

Appendix 2.1

3. Discussion item: Chair Recruitment

- 3.1. Board to discuss specifics and role of Chair and to agree commencement of recruitment process. (IDB Terms of Reference also attached for information).

Appendix 3.1

4. Councils: raising the standard

IDB National Intervention Panel

- 4.1. Peer Challenge – Update on peer reviews and support; including recruitment and identifying peer councils.

Verbal report

- 4.2. Peer Support, Bingham.

Verbal report

Link to Bingham Town Council Improvement Board report:
https://www.bingham-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/9.-Appendix-C-Bingham_Improvement_Board_Rep_31_5_22.pdf

- 4.3. NALC update on improvement matters including: an update on Local Council Award Scheme, promotion/marketing of LCAS/CiLCA and the E-Learning Project.

Appendix 4.3

4.4. Data Collection/GPC

Verbal report

5. Officers: professional development

5.1. Board to receive an update on Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) and Financial Introduction to Local Council Administration (FiLCA)

Verbal report

5.2. SLCC update on improvement matters

Verbal report

6. County Officers: professional development

6.1. Board to receive an update (CALC summary attached).

Appendix 6.1

7. Updates on improvement and development initiatives

7.1. Local Government Association (LGA) update

Board to receive an update

Verbal report

7.2. Department for Levelling up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) update

Board to receive an update

Verbal report

8. IDB Forward Work Programme:

8.1 2022/23 work programme attached for discussion.

Appendix 8.1

9. Dates of future meetings

The next meeting of the Improvement and Development board will be on 14 September 2022.



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APPENDIX 2.1 IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD | DRAFT MINUTES

17 March 2022

Present:

Jonathan Owen, NALC chief executive; Cllr Keith Stevens, NALC national Chair; Helen Quick, SLCC head of conferences, training & education; Wendy Amis, Derbyshire county officer; Cllr Richard Parry, Kent Association of Local Councils; Rob Smith, SLCC chief executive; Sally Longmate, Suffolk county officer; Lusi Manukyan, LGA Senior Advisor - Improvement & Policy and Albert Joyce, DLUHC.

Also present:

Jane Moore, NALC senior solicitor and head of member services; Justin Griggs, NALC head of policy and communications; Anders Hanson, NALC project manager and Lisa Etchell, NALC project officer.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Elisabeth Skinner MBE, SLCC academic leader; Pauline Whitehead, SLCC; Sue Hobbs, SLCC; Adam Keppel-Green, SLCC branch rep and Alison Robinson, Gloucestershire county officer (Wendy standing in for Alison)

2. Minutes from previous meeting and matters arising

Correction to minutes: Wendy Amis stood in for Sally Longmate (not Alison Robinson)

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

No matters arising.

3. Discussion Item: Implications of Levelling Up White Paper (formally known as Devolution)

- 3.1 Board was invited to discuss and give views on the implications for the sector's improvement strategy following the publication of the Government's Levelling Up White Paper (NALC's summary circulated with the agenda).

Justin Griggs reported that overall, there had been a positive reaction to the white paper. He highlighted the review of neighbourhood governance and the role/function of councils within this; including opportunities to extend the current model and be provided with beyond sector support.

He reported there was an appetite amongst government and ministers for sector improvement and support, with detail on various strands of work currently being worked up in association with NALC. There was also scope to recast the National Improvement Strategy with a link to government support and a focus on process/structure change, networking and funding simplification. Concerning community empowerment, he suggested it was important to ready the sector in anticipation of playing a bigger role; so there needed to be thinking around the devolution strand, such as framework and county deals.

Albert Joyce added that there was currently government work around timetables, community spaces/empowerment, business planning, internal resources and the process of engagement. He reported that the process of finalising the bidding in Round 2 of the Community Ownership fund was ongoing. The situation in Ukraine had also meant a shift in focus for the government.

Sally Longmate raised the issue of tight timescales around developing and finalising county deals – in Suffolk, the deal was expected to be finalized by the autumn. She highlighted the need for additional support for county associations to be able to work efficiently with principal councils to ensure parish interests were addressed. Councils also needed time and resource to address asset management issues and do due diligence where services were transferred. There might also be the need for some additional support from NALC.

Wendy Amiss supported the importance of helping county associations to engage with the process at a local level.

Cllr Keith Stevens suggested setting up a shared experience network for CALC's involved in county deals.

Cllr Richard Parry flagged up the potential of the 72 largest councils to support this work.

Lusi Manukyan added that the LGA was looking to support and collaborate with councils at the start of the journey, especially concerning capacity/capability issues and that they would be working with NALC to address this for next year. She stressed there was no political barrier to support and it would be provided to LGA members/non-members alike. She noted that £19.2 million had been pledged to support the sector as a whole and an element would be available to support levelling up.

Jonathan Owen highlighted the need for DLUHC to consider how to support capacity limitations and financial resourcing. Albert advised current conversations concerning this were ongoing with the LGA team and he would report back to the Board once concluded. In the final analysis, the distribution of funding was a matter for Ministers to decide.

Resolved: The Board noted the government's Levelling Up white paper, NALC's summary response and the implications for the sector's improvement strategy. The resourcing point would be picked up in the submission to government and LGA for sector support.

4. IDB Forward work programme

4.1 The board agreed the work programme for 2022/23.

Jonathan Owen stressed the importance of restraint, as the Board still did not have an independent chair and SLCC/NALC were prioritising work on the Civility and Respect project.

Wendy Amis requested that the '3 pronged' approach previously discussed by the Board in relation to the promotion of professionalism/qualifications for clerks/councils/councillors be added to the work programme. As well as the new model contract and a refresh of the job evaluation scheme.

Rob Smith also suggested the Board have discussions around apprenticeships.

ACTION: That the '3 pronged' approach to professionalism in the sector and new model contract/refresh of the job evaluation scheme be added to the work programme.

Resolved: That these items be added to the work programme which would be the focus for the Board's agenda.

5. Councils: raising the standard

Peer Challenge

- 5.1 The Board received an update on the Peer Review/Challenge from Anders Hanson. He reported that discussions had taken place with the LGA regarding undertaking 2 peer challenges later in the year. NALC were currently trying to identify councils to work with and he highlighted the importance of having a geographical spread, as only those in the Southwest had come forward. He welcomed interest from larger councils, in particular LCAS Quality Gold holders. Full funding would be provided by the LGA and he thanked them for working collaboratively with NALC. Further information highlighting the benefits of taking part was being put together.

Lusi Manukyan added that the LGA were happy to help as the peer challenge was an effective tool and she encouraged Board members to help identify interested councils. She noted it was helpful to look at lessons learnt from the pilots and how to better tailor to meet each council's needs. A specific peer challenge manager would be allocated to take each council through the process, once on board. Internal LGA next steps were also being identified and included scoping discussions with NALC and councils.

Cllr Keith Stevens suggested it may be helpful to involve District Associations.

- 5.2 The board received a report from Anders Hanson on various project areas and improvement matters as outlined in the report. Key points included:
- Local Council Award Scheme: 11 applications in current round (x 5 Quality Gold, x 2 Quality and x 4 Foundation). Panel assessments commencing early April.
 - Improvements to streamline internal admin process: Centralising information and development of scheme criteria grid.
 - Promotional events: Most recent took place in Northamptonshire on 2 March.

He also reported that an advert/leaflet marketing LCAS and CiLCA had now been produced. This aimed to promote both professional clerks and professional councils. In due course, a professional councillors strand would

be added once the best route to achieving this had been identified. The advert would be circulated with the minutes of the meeting.

A further report concluding the On-line learning pilot scheme, with recommendations for the future was being worked on. The aim was to allow all county associations to be able to sign up learners for courses by the end of March.

ACTION: LCAS/CiLCA advertising leaflet to be circulated with minutes of the meeting.

The Board welcomed the improvements to streamline the Local Council Award Scheme administration, progression of marketing for LCAS/CiLCA and looked forward to receiving the On-line learning report.

6. Officers: professional development

- 6.1 The board received a verbal update from Helen Quick on CiLCA and FiLCA statistics and improvements. She reported that:

CiLCA Opps – Sue Hobbs and Pauline Whitehead had now taken over the role previously held by Elisabeth Skinner MBE. In relation to the issue of the student who had registered for CiLCA three times, as previously reported to the Board; SLCC had written to the student to advise that a fourth registration would not be accepted. The Board supported Helen's request to allow the CiLCA opps team to make the final decision over any future registrations regarding this student.

CiLCA Stats - 2015 stats reporting was expected to conclude by the end of this year. To date, CiLCA passes were as follows: Pre-2015 - 2378 passes; 2015 onwards – 819 passes (71% pass rate); CiLCA 2021 – 381 registrations and 35 passes (73% pass rate). A total of 3232 certificates had been awarded. SLCC were also undertaking work with its CRM provider to ascertain how many of these were still live.

A new process for reporting had been agreed with the CiLCA ops group

Wendy Amis suggested SLCC could work with county associations to determine the percentage of CiLCA clerks still actively working in each county.

FILCA Stats – Now extended to Wales and so far, feedback had been good with increased uptake.

Community Governance – The first solo celebration day had recently taken place in Wiltshire. The event was well received and would be replicated annually. The 2022 intake so far had 68 students.

Jonathan Owen added that stats on councils who hold the General Power of Competence would be helpful. Justin reported this information was being sought from county associations.

7. County Officers: professional development

- 7.1 A CALC update and county association workstream from Sally Longmate was circulated with the agenda. She outlined the key themes as follows:

Support for new county officers (Buddy Scheme): The process for promotion/alignment was underway, with some new officers already offered buddies. She thanked NALC for funding the mentoring training.

Support for experienced county officers: Clerk biographies had been collected with specialisms embedded into resources/support. A bid for funding would be further developed for 2022/23.

Communication Strategy: County officers were being updated regularly, and action plan circulated.

Smarter Working: The legal network group were looking at processes, in addition to a Task & Finish Group, set up to look at themes such as duplication and impact.

8. Updates on improvement and development initiatives

8.1 LGA

The Board received a verbal update from Lusi Manukyan on LGA matters. She outlined the various support packages that the LGA offered to local councils including support for: Peer Challenges; Climate Change, including case studies/resources available on the website and the LGA Disability Strategy, including on-line learning tools/resources. The Innovation Zone 2022 programme was being agreed, but currently no local council

applications had been received. She highlighted the opportunity for councils to showcase their ideas and encouraged uptake.

She also advised that the LGA were working with the DLUHC in relation to the current war in Ukraine. Information and support packages were available on the website and included amongst other things, guidance around cyber security/targeted attacks and procurement.

8.2 **DLUHC**

The Board received a verbal update from Albert Joyce on DLUHC matters. Levelling Up and priorities were discussed in Item 3 above. In addition to this, he reported that the continuation of remote meetings was currently under consideration by ministers and that he would provide a further update to the Board in due course. He was happy to take away all comments raised by members at the meeting.

8.3 **AOB**

Jonathan Owen agreed to circulate this year's AGAR forms, (currently with external auditors).

9. **Dates of future meetings**

The next meeting of the Improvement and Development Board will be on 22 June 2022.



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APPENDIX 3.1 CHAIR RECRUITMENT | IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Recruiting a new independent chair for the Improvement and Development Board

The terms of reference for the Improvement and Development Board state that ‘the Chair of the IDB should be independent of the stakeholder organisations’. This paper aims to help start the process of seeking and recruiting a new independent chair for IDB.

The great opportunity of having an independent chair is having a fresh perspective and constructive challenge to the board, with that in mind we suggest an open recruitment process to this role. It will be interesting to see the range of people interested in the role and an opportunity to raise the profile of the IDB. To ensure we reach a wide mix of people we can augment this open search with targeted invitations to individuals to apply.

To make the role as appealing and accessible as possible to a wide range of people NALC will offer remuneration of £250/day for up to 10 days per year. We will also consider a budget for advertising the role.

To make the most of an open recruitment process we would need a clear person specification for the role – something we have not had before. We had previously used the terms of reference to help describe the work of the board – this document also would benefit from updating. These documents can be produced by NALC and shared with board members for approval by email.

For discussion:

- What skills and experiences would be most valuable to prioritise in a person specification? Suggestions include: Experience of chairing a multi-stakeholder board, Understanding of sector led improvement, Experience and/or understanding of local government, Knowledge of the civility and respect agenda in local government
- Suggestions for individuals to approach directly
- Proposed time scales for recruitment (stick to the timings in the IDB work programme?)
- Proposed selection process

Charlotte Eisenhart, Head of Member Services, NALC

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Appendix 3.1

Improvement & Development Board

Terms of reference

1. Scope and aims

- 1.1. The Improvement & Development Board (IDB) is established by agreement between the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks to develop the strategy for, and oversee the operation of, improvement and development initiatives in the local (Community, Neighbourhood, Parish, Town and Village) council sector in England, including the Quality Council Scheme (QCS) and National Training Strategy (NTS).
- 1.2. The IDB will replace the National Stakeholder Groups for both the QCS and NTS. The core aims of the IDB will be to:
 - Support County Associations of Local Councils (CALCs), SLCC branches and County Training Partnerships (CTPs) by providing strategic direction and a forum for discussion, consultation and collaboration for improvement and development initiatives.
 - Engage with external stakeholders, including central government departments and the local government association, on improvement and development issues affecting local councils.
 - Promote and maintain quality and consistency and develop a sustainable funding model for sector improvement and development initiatives.
- 1.3. The secretariat and the lead officer to the IDB will be provided by NALC through the Policy and Development Team.

2. Membership

- 2.1. The IDB is envisaged as a practitioner body whose leadership and members will have professional experience of improvement and development initiatives and/or be responsible for their delivery and/or monitoring within their organisations. The proposed membership is as follows:
 - Chair: Independent and appointed by the Board
 - NALC: 3 representatives, of whom 1 should be the lead officer for I&D
 - SLCC: 3 representatives, of whom 1 should be the lead officer for I&D
 - County Officers: 1 representative, elected by annual ballot of all County Officers
 - SLCC branches: 1 representative
 - Other stakeholders: 1 representative from each organisation to be invited as appropriate, currently as follows:
 - Department for Communities & Local Government
 - Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
 - Local Government Association
 - United Kingdom Commission for Employment & Skills (tbc)
- 2.2. The Chair of the IDB should be independent of the stakeholder organisations. The IDB Chair should also take on the role of Chair of the Monitoring & Verification Board.

3. Meetings

- 3.1. The IDB will meet at least 2 times a year, one of which will be a physical meeting (the other(s) may be by teleconference). Discussion and general business may also be conducted by email throughout the year and decisions may be taken by email at the discretion of the Chair.
- 3.2. The IDB will have the power to form working groups of IDB members and non-members both to conduct on-going business and to complete agreed actions or manage agreed projects.
- 3.3. Any working groups so constituted shall report to the IDB on at least an annual basis.
- 3.4. The agenda and papers should be sent out at least 5 working days in advance of a meeting date, although late papers may be accepted at the discretion of the Chair.

4. Democratic accountability and relationship to other bodies

- 4.1. The IDB will derive its authority from both the professional expertise of the improvement and development practitioners who sit as board members and also from regular democratic oversight and sector consultation. The following formal consultation and oversight measures will provide democratic accountability and promote transparency and open communication.
- 4.2. The following groups will receive agendas, minutes and papers from IDB meetings. Members of these groups will be able to submit agenda items and written comments on proposals before the board to the Chair and/or secretary either as a group or as individuals, so long as they are clear in which capacity they are operating. The Chair will have the final discretion as what is considered by the Board but will give due regard to the need for transparency:
 - SLCC National Executive Council
 - NALC Executive Committee
 - CALCs (through the County Officer and/or Chairman)
 - SLCC branches (through the Chairman)
 - CTPs (through the agreed contact)
 - Monitoring & Verification Board (MVB) members
- 4.3. The SLCC National Executive Council agenda, the NALC Executive Committee agenda and the MVB agenda will all make provision to receive a verbal or written report from the IDB if required.

5. Funding and expenses

- 5.1 Meetings and working groups of the IDB will be funded jointly by NALC and SLCC as follows:
 - a. In kind support through officer time in attending meetings and progressing actions.
 - b. In kind support through providing meeting space and refreshments at meetings.
- 5.2 IDB member organisations are expected to pay expenses incurred by their representatives in attending meetings, with the exception of the Chair, County Officer representative and SLCC branch representative, whose travel and incidental expenses should be paid from the IDB fund.
- 5.3 The IDB fund is administered by NALC for the purpose of supporting the work of the IDB and

sector improvement and development initiatives. IDB fund monies can only be spent following formal agreement by the IDB.

- 5.4 The IDB fund is maintained by any profits derived from improvement and development initiatives led by the IDB (other than the Quality Council Scheme and CiLCA) after organisational expenses have been covered.

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APPENDIX 4.3 MEMBER SERVICES REPORT | IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

This is a summary of some of the current work being undertaken by the member services team.

Local Council Award Scheme

The second round of the award scheme for 2022 is currently underway. The triage stage has now been completed and applications will be taken to panels for final assessment in early July.

There are a total of 11 applicants in this round (3 Quality Gold, 2 Quality and 6 Foundation) These comprise of 7 town councils and 4 parish councils, with the majority being large and medium sized. A full list of accredited and pending accreditation councils can be found here: [LCAS accredited](#) and [LCAS pending](#)

The recently introduced changes on the internal admin side have helped make the scheme run more efficiently and further improvements continue to be made. This includes a better understanding of criteria needed and the assessment process for applicants, County Associations and panel members.

We continue to attend meetings with County Associations to explain how the scheme works and to encourage participation in our on-line events to help with application preparation. The next on-line event is scheduled to take place on 23 June 2022.

Marketing of CiLCA and LCAS

The advertising leaflet promoting 'professional clerks' i.e. CiLCA and 'professional councils' i.e. LCAS, was circulated to Board members with the minutes of the last meeting.

Peer challenge

We have agreed with the LGA to undertake two peer challenges in 2022. These will be fully funded by the LGA. We have one interested council where we are finalising the details before being able to confirm. We are still seeking a second council and although a couple of councils have previously expressed an interest none have committed yet and so we would welcome interest from other larger

councils, especially those who have achieved Quality Gold in the Local Council Award Scheme.

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ACTION PLAN – county officer support and development

Last update 08.06.2022

THEME - support for new county officers		STATUS – in progress			
Desired outcome: A buddy scheme that offers one to one support, enhances local and national induction activities, regional support (if any) that helps to inform the early stages of personal development plans.	Actions to do:	Who is responsible	Start date	End date	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Update and promote to county officers, consider review mechanism to keep up to dateEstablish publishing a programme of tasks linked to running county association (SL)	Chris Wayman	Jan 2022	April 2022	CVs now added to County Officer MS Teams page and alignment of buddies active. Alignments of buddies to new officers now active – rewarding for all concerned and excellent initiative providing one to one focussed support.
THEME - support for experienced county officers		STATUS – in progress			
Desired outcome: A ‘next stage’ pathway/offer that assists more experienced county officers develop strategic leadership / thinking skills, business development options, marketing, communications and managing demanding workloads, explore partnership and	Actions	Who is responsible	Start date	End date	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">IDB accepted paper, NALC to progress/seek fundingLINK to IDB Minutes 2021.09.06NALC advised more work to develop proposal and no clarity yet on what will be supportedALCs to own and develop proposals for 2022/23 bid to	Sally Longmate Suffolk ALC	19.8.21	2022/23	Survey drafted to be circulated to identify interest, areas of expertise, capacity, proof of concept. LINK TO FIRST DRAFT SL to discuss with SLCC their interest in this initiative.

Task and finish group – county officer support and development

collaborative options. One to one mentoring/coaching.	<p>include desire for Link CMI learning and development programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALCs to explore development pathways using existing knowledge and expertise • Explore the detail of SLCC's interest in providing support 				
THEME – communication strategy		STATUS – in progress			Notes
<p>Desired outcome:</p> <p>Awareness of the work of the task and finish group across all stakeholders including the opportunity to influence and benefit from the outcomes.</p> <p>Extend use of MS Teams site for county officers to improve communication, networking and avoid duplication. To include a training session on using MS Teams</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffolk ALC to keep county officers up to date via county officer forum and as necessary through fortnightly NALC sessions • Suffolk ALC to review MS Teams site and explore ways to improve navigation inc. re-design, switch to SharePoint and/or training • Commission Cloudy IT to proceed • Provide refreshed action plan to IDB 	<p>Sally Longmate Suffolk ALC Cara Soddard Devon ALC</p>	29.10.21	Started	<p>Mock SharePoint/extranet site set up – reviewed with Cloudy IT options and costing agreed.</p> <p>Approach to NALC to fund extranet/hub site development – FUNDING AGREED.</p> <p>Action plan shared with IDB.</p>
THEME – smarter working		STATUS – in progress			Notes

<p>Desired outcome:</p> <p>Identification of processes and opportunities for standardisation, potential centralisation of through OneDrive of resources to benefit network. Potential template development and early stages of workflow mapping</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JAMS (Junari Association Management System) – network of users to work smarter together. • Establish opportunities for non-JAMS users to benefit from emerging industry framework using links to Office 365/OneDrive to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advice ○ Knowledge ○ Events ○ Data 	Suffolk ALC	01.09.21	Started	<p>JAMS user group set up – sharing knowledge, approach, set up for max. efficiencies.</p> <p>Latest JAMS demo recorded, shared across the network, sparking more interest – being followed up. LINK TO PRODUCT DETAILS & FILMS.</p> <p>Legal User group exploring merits / cost / options for a national legal framework agreement with a view to providing ALCs the option of Lexcel accredited services at a consortium price to include legal support for current and future demand in the sector including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property • Commercial • Governance • Planning <p>Linked to levelling up agenda and changing first tier roles and responsibilities.</p>
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22 June 2022

APPENDIX 8.1 IDB 2022/23 WORK PROGRAMME | IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Q1: April-June | Q2: July-Sept | Q3: Oct-Dec | Q4: Jan-March

Recruit chair	
Q1	Specify role etc and agree at IDB
Q2	Advertise role and interviews
Q3	Appointment of chair
Q4	

Devolution/ levelling up	
Q1	
Q2	Assess and agree I@D requirements emerging from white-paper
Q3	DLUHC funding bid
Q4	Initiate improvement strategy refresh with new chair

Peer review and support	
Q1	Recruit peers and identify peer councils
Q2	Feedback from Bingham pilot Train peers, prep for
Q3	Peer review 1
Q4	Peer review 2

Workforce strategy	
Q1	
Q2	Strategy workshop
Q3	Commission strategy development
Q4	Consult on strategy

Promoting CiLCA, LCAS and GPC	
Q1	Establish base-lines and develop marketing strategy which should include the 'three-pronged approach' developing clerks, councils and councillors
Q2	Marketing/ publicising phase
Q3	
Q4	Evaluate and measure take-up

Review and update of IDB "training material" (LCE, Good councillor guides, CiLCA training guides etc)	
Q1	

Q2	Mapping: Identify and prioritise review schedules/ identify gaps etc
Q3	Commission priority reviews
Q4	Publish updated material

Other items

- New national contract/refresh of job evaluation scheme

Future agenda item suggestions	Author /Originator	Target date	Board meeting dates 2022
Communications – How we can better work together	?		<div>- 17 March</div> <div>- 22 June</div> <div>- 14 Sept</div> <div>- 17 Nov</div>
Knowledge bank	?		
Civility and Respect project	NALC/SLCC	Last update: 6/9/21 Further updates and clarification of relationships required Next update 22 June	
Apprenticeships	?		
County association development	CALCS	Will feature in other projects above including funding bid Standing item	
Board members are invited to identify other matters			



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