

DRAFT MINUTES | MANAGEMENT BOARD

6 April 2021

Welcome and apologies

Present:

Management Board	
Cllr Sue Baxter (chair)	Cllr Richard Parry
Cllr Bob Blezzard	Cllr Mike Scott
Cllr Ken Browse	Cllr Keith Stevens
Cllr Peter Davey	Cllr David Francis
Cllr Mike Drew	Cllr Paul Harvey
Cllr Derek Liddell	

Also present:

Jonathan Owen, chief executive
Justin Griggs, head of policy and communications
Jane Moore, head of member services and solicitor
Steve Walker, head of finance and administration

Minutes 26 January 2021

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record and there were no matters arising. The notes of the informal meeting held on 16 March were also received.

1. Internal Management and Finance Issues

A. Finance report

Cllr Stevens and Cllr Davey gave an update on the latest financial position which was generally good and consistent with previous projections. The board noted cash balances at the end of March totalling £360,000 as against £343,000 last year.

B. Future of 109 Great Russell Street

The board considered a confidential paper setting out background and supporting information relating to the potential future use of 109 Great Russell Street as NALC's HQ. The previously preferred option was to sell at an opportune moment and it was noted that the organisation had worked effectively remotely during the pandemic. A covid secure risk assessment and engagement with staff would be

conducted to enable a potential and partial short-term return once government guidance allowed.

A number of issues were identified which would need to be considered as part of the ongoing appraisal of options by the chair of finance and scrutiny, vice-chair (finance) and chief executive. These included

- The need to exercise fiduciary responsibilities to ensure a good outcome for the Association. This included discussion of the potential timing of any possible sale to maximise market opportunities (with advice from professional agents) and the need to balance costs of refurbishment and staff disruption, moving office from an empty or not fully utilised premises might be more difficult than refocussing from home-working.
- Further analysis of the terms of engagement with the preferred agent would be required
- Reservations were expressed by BB about the possible sharing of accommodation with other national bodies rather than maintaining the Association's independence.
- Further consideration of the financial and accounting implications and in particular how the costs of any rental accommodation would be met.
- Further consideration of the merits of renting or purchasing appropriate office space and the best use of any capital receipt.

In conclusion it was noted that any decision should be taken in line with the overall business and strategic needs of the Association, although the general consensus was in favour of sale. The vice-chair (finance), chair finance and scrutiny and CEO were authorised to proceed with further analysis and options appraisal and report to the next meeting of the board.

C. BHIB partnership

Management agreed that the partnership with BHIB was working well and authorised the chairman, vice-chairman (finance) and chief executive to seek to negotiate a further extension.

D. HRSP partnership

It was reported that HRSP, NALC's HR partner is now part of a larger group of companies specialising in providing HR and employment law advice and associated services – Marlowe PLC. It was anticipated that the partnership would continue and be enhanced.

E. HR matters

It was noted that staff appraisals were nearing completion and the new interim staffing structure following recent maternity leave departures was noted.

F. Governance matters

The board received a note on possible electronic voting platforms to be used for the elections later in the year, given the board's previous decision to only hold face meetings this calendar year. It was suggested that it may be possible to stage the elections over a period of time to make the process simpler and easier to administer.

G. Constitutional issues

Any changes to the Constitution would be required to be considered by the assembly in the summer and the board were invited to consider whether there were any areas for attention. Three had been identified:

- To make it clear in the Constitution that "meetings" included remote and hybrid meetings. The board supported this proposal
- To change the timing of County Association's remitting affiliation fees to the end of May to assist with cash flow challenges for the Association. This had been strongly supported by the finance and scrutiny committee and the board agreed to refer the matter to the meeting of assembly without a recommendation.
- The board's attention was drawn to a potential ambiguity in the Constitution relating to the tenure of office of chairs and vice chairs and committee members. The board agreed that custom and practice was that the 4 year limitation applied only to the offices of chairman and vice chairman of the Association and chairs and vice chairs of committees. And not to ordinary members of committees. There was no need to amend the constitution at this point.

H. Parliamentary president and vice president roles

The board received a paper setting out the proposed roles of Parliamentary president and vice president of the Association which were agreed. Attached. The chair and vice-chairs of the Association were invited to explore suitable candidates with the assistance of the head of policy and communications and make recommendations for Assembly to propose to the AGM.

I. Improvement and Development Board

Cllr Parry was appointed to the vacancy of the Board and the minutes of its previous meeting were noted.

2. Monitoring and managing performance and service delivery

Jane Moore, head of member services reported on NALC's support for the legal case to extend the provision for the sector to continue to meet remotely after May 7th. She was congratulated on her work on the witness statement.

It was noted that a number of approaches were being taken by member councils should the court case fail.

3. External affairs

A. SAAA

The notes of their last meeting on 10 February were received and DF queried whether there were any issues relating to future procurement of external audit services that should be drawn to the board's attention. The Chief Executive reported that the procurement process was at an early stage and he knew of no particular problems at present but would keep the board informed.

B. Civility project with SLCC and One Voice Wales.

It was noted that Sue Baxter and Mike Drew would be the Association's representatives on this project board and a third councillor representative ideally from a smaller council was being sought from county officers. Ideally for geographical representation this would be from the northern region but it was also important to have the right candidate. Three county officers were also being identified by the county officers' forum.

C. JPAG

The notes of the March meeting were received. Cllr Francis noted that the timetable for meetings next year left little time for consultation on the practitioners' guide which needed to be considered.