

MANAGEMENT BOARD | DRAFT MINUTES

Date: 20 September 2022

Time: 10.00 – 12.00

Venue: Zoom

Present:

Cllr Pat Ansell, Cllr Bob Blezzard, Cllr Peter Davey (vice-chair finance), Cllr Mike Drew (vice-chair member services), Cllr David Francis, Cllr Graham Ford, Cllr Paul Harvey, Cllr Richard Parry, Cllr Loraine Rappe, Cllr Keith Stevens (chair),

Jonathan Owen the chief executive, Justin Griggs head of policy and communications, Charlotte Eisenhart head of member services, and Steven Walker head of finance and administration.

Apologies:

1. Minutes 5 July 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 July were approved with the following corrections.

NB Loraine spelling. Correct reference to year 23/4 end minute four. Cllr Blezzard corrected reference to vacancy on Management Board as having been incorrectly reported by the chief executive as filled rather than vacant.

2. Vacant committee positions

The board agreed to recommend to National Assembly that Cllr Richard Page be appointed to Policy Committee, Cllr Ian Cowling to Finance and Scrutiny Committee and Cllr Sue Baxter to Management Board.

3. Future of 109

The chief executive reported agents had indicated market had improved and auditors agreed valuation would be increased for accounting purposes. Agents suggested now good time to market.

Cllr Davey proposed, seconded by Cllr Parry that the chief executive proceed to market premises through agent. This was agreed unanimously.

4. Governance Update

Task and finish group (governance) - Cllr Francis inquired about timescales on TFG (governance). CEO reported intention to highlight key constitutional decisions to next assembly and then to AGM if appropriate. Some conclusions e.g., around Smaller and Larger Councils Committees would need further development/consultation. Other changes to standing orders etc could be picked up subsequently. Cllr Blezzard expressed disappointment at quality of work and no detailed constitutional amendments for Single Transferable Vote.

AGM agenda - The board noted the AGM agenda. Motions on Single Transferable Vote and workforce development. Cllr Blezzard questioned whether additional consultancy was necessary for latter motion from Northamptonshire. The board hoped that the AGM would allow scope to progress flexibly, possibly with assistance of LGA.

Smaller Councils Committee survey report - Cllr Drew reported he would be meeting head of member services to discuss further.

5. Monitoring and managing performance and service delivery.

The board noted the latest quarterly activity report from officers.

Member services update

The board noted proposal to develop HR and Finance service and advice which were supported. Some concerns about whether these duplicated county association services but recognised these not uniform and national safety net required. Also stressed importance for services to understand needs of smaller councils.

Finance update

Cllr Davey reported on the end of year accounts which he had signed off and showed the surplus of around £54,000 for 2021/2. Head of finance and administration reported that there had been some changes to the draft budget considering inflationary and other pressures and the board noted the revised draft budget summary which would be reported to National Assembly and the AGM. Cllr Ford reported that there had been a rigorous review of all the budget heads and pressures at the special meeting of the finance and scrutiny committee

In the light of these updates the board agreed to recommend to the National Assembly that an increase in affiliation fees of 3% be proposed to the AGM.

The board considered a report on the activity of policy and communications team noting that participation at the party-political conferences was in train, although the Lib Dem conference had been cancelled due to the death of the Queen. Cllr Parry stressed the importance of influencing grade 6 and above civil servants too.

6. External affairs

The board noted progress on the Civility and Respect Project with the pledge now available for councils to sign online. Cllr Blezzard questioned the value of this project. The chief executive reported on the work of SAAA. Recruitment to the board was being initiated. Cllr Parry queried whether some additional sector representatives could be included which the chief executive said he would raise as part of the SAAA's strategic review. The board received the confidential notes of the last SAAA board meeting. Cllr Blezzard queried why they were confidential to the Management Board's eyes only and the chief executive indicated this had been the decision of the SAAA as they often considered commercially sensitive information. Head of member services reported on the recent meeting of JPAG which would be reviewing the practitioners guide in the autumn.

7. Other business

In any other business Cllr Parry emphasised the pressures on parish and town councils as a result of the cost-of-living crisis, rising inflation and energy prices. Cllr Stevens reported he had raised with ministers, and this would feature in lobbying at the party conferences. NALC was pressing for the sector to be included in any measures to reduce costs for businesses or other tiers of government.

Date and time of next meeting

Future meetings of the board were noted:

22 November 10.00 via Zoom

Future informal Management Board meetings would be held on:

10 October at 11.00 via Zoom

12 December at 11.00 via Zoom

Following feedback at the last of these meetings these will now be extended to 45 minutes.

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