

MANAGEMENT BOARD | AGENDA

Date: 22 November 2022

Time: 10.00 – 12.00

Location: Zoom

Any member wishing to submit an apology for this meeting please contact NALC at committees@nalc.gov.uk or call on 020 7637 1865.

1. Apologies (10.00 – 10.05)

2. Minutes of previous meeting – 20 September 2022 (10.05 – 10.10)

- 2.1. To approve the minutes of the meeting of Management Board held on 20 September 2022 and to note any matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Appendix 2.1

3. National Assembly Agenda (10.05 – 10.10)

To note the agenda for the meeting of National Assembly on 6 December.

4. Monitoring and managing performance and service delivery. any verbal updates will be made here. (10.10 – 11.00)

- 4.1. Member services: To consider a commentary report on the Smaller Councils Committee proposals.

Appendix 4.1

4.2. Policy and communications:

- A. Local Government Association (LGA) – to receive an update on recent meetings with the LGA and NALC’s presence at the LGA annual conference 2023.
- B. White Ribbon campaign – to consider a proposal for NALC to become a White Ribbon accredited organisation.
- C. 2023 events – to discuss NALC events in 2023 including parliamentary reception, Star Councils Awards, and lobby day.

Appendix 4.2
(B)

- 4.3 Finance and administration: To receive a verbal update on 109.

Break: 11.00 – 11.10

5. Management Board away day in January (11.10 – 11.30)

- To consider holding a Management Board away day on 10 January with the aims of discussing strategic direction, setting priorities for the 2023, and team building.

6. External Affairs (11.30 – 12.00)

- 6.1. Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments – to note the minutes of meeting held on 19 October 2022
- 6.2. Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) – to note the minutes of the recent meeting held on 21 October, minutes can be found by clicking on the link [here](#). Please also click [here](#) to read the partnership statement
- 6.3. To receive a verbal update on SLCC national conference on 2/3 November.

7. Date and time of next meetings

Please note the Management Board meetings for 2023/24:

- 10 January 2023 away day (subject to agreement and details to follow)
- 21 March 2023 at 10.00 via Zoom
- 4 July 2023 at 11.00 face to face (subject to agreement)
- 19 September 2023 at 10.00 via Zoom
- 21 November 2023 at 10.00 via Zoom
- 8 January 2024 at 10.00 via Zoom

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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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY | AGENDA

Date: 6 December 2022

Time: 10.00 – 13.00.

Location: Zoom

1. Welcome by the chair (10.00)

2. Apologies for absence and note changes in representation (10.00 – 10.05)

2.1. That apologies are noted.

2.2. That new representatives introduce themselves to National Assembly.

- Cllr Chris Howard, Surrey Association of Local Councils

3. Minutes of previous meeting (10.05 – 10.15)

3.1. To approve the minutes of the meeting of National Assembly held on 4 October 2022, if you have any comments on the meeting, please get in touch before the meeting. and to consider any matters arising.

3.2. To note Annual General Meeting 2022 minutes.

4. NALC committee meetings for 2023/2024 and work programme (10.15 – 11.00)

4.1. To note the calender of meetings for 2023/2024, if you have any comments, please submit them before the meeting.

4.2. To consider National Assembly work programme for 2023.

Break at 11.00 – 11.30 Networking in Breakout rooms

5. Committee issues (11.30 – 12.15)

5.1. To receive updates from the chairs of NALC committees on their work. Chairs to identify any issues they would like to discuss with National Assembly.

6. Discussion items (12.15 - 13.00)

Housing and planning campaign (JG)

7. Next meeting

That the next meeting of National Assembly will take place 06 March 2023, via Zoom. Please also note meetings scheduled for 2023:

- 04 April at 10.00 via Zoom
- 11 July at 10.00 (location to be confirmed)
- 03 October at 10.00 via Zoom
- 05 December at 10.00 via Zoom.

There will also be an informal National Assembly meeting in January on the coronation:

- 17 January at 18.00 - 19.00 via Zoom.

MANAGEMENT BOARD | APPENDIX 4.1.

Discussion topics and recommendations from the Smaller Councils Committee survey and report related to the Member Services Team.

We welcomed the report from Smaller Councils Committee that offered feedback and suggestions for how NALC's work could better support smaller councils. It is important that the voices of smaller councils are heard at a national level, and they are given support and guidance for working with their local communities. On top of the wide range of support from county associations all smaller councils have access to NALC legal, finance and HR advisory services, as well as our library of templates, documents, and best practice guidance. We welcome views on how those services and products can keep improving.

Italics are quotes from the report with comments underneath.

- *Without any prompting whatsoever from NALC's Smaller Councils Committee, some 15.2% of the respondents to the survey called for simplified guidance and policies to be issued by NALC (that is, including the former SCC chair, Councillor David Francis). And, if the other calls for simple versions of contract templates, burial requirements and facts sheets are all added together, the appeal for more – and more simplistic – information would could be regarded as the most popular issue raised at 27.8% - or more – depending on which issues are included. This is very much a smaller councils issue. Footnote commentary: Many small councils have neither the knowledge nor the capacity to draw up bespoke rafts of policies and keep abreast of the latest legislation governing what they do. What they are clearly crying out for are templates of documentation that they can sign up to and concise facts sheets and guidance. Similarly, simple templates for job descriptors and guidance on a range of issues should be produced. See Appendix 6 which contains updated versions of papers originally produced by Councillor David Francis, now tabled by him and Councillor Lillian Burns jointly.*

Yes – we absolutely aspire to do this. Smaller councils however you define them are most of our membership and at the heart of what we do

Other than LTNs, NALC guidance is produced through commissioning experts with input from NALC and consultation with members. There are limits to our resources and capacity around the volume of information we can produce. We also do limited signposting to other organisations guidance – in no small part due to lack of expertise and time to check or 'parish proof' other organisations materials. But we could consider doing more of this.

Our 'being a good employer' guide and HR templates and how to guides include advice to councils on range of employment matters already and we are working with WorkNest to expand that range of resources. WorkNest joined a recent Smaller Councils Committee meeting to seek input into an update to Being a Good Employer and we will continue to ensure they seek the views of smaller councils and the committee in our work with them

It's also important to note that there are limits to what is possible eg certain contracts are costly for a council to draw up precisely because they are complex and need tailoring to the specific situation. And we can only maintain a certain number of documents to ensure we have the resource to regularly review and update them. In fact, to the extent a document is legal (e.g., a lease), it will need to be drafted on specific facts so templates would not help and could be potentially dangerous or prejudicial to a council's interests.

- *NALC must listen to the very loud and heartfelt call by small local councils for there to be a series of simplified guidance and policy templates produced (possibly all offered in one 'Parish Council Blue Book' which could be adopted in toto if desired). Offered as a starting point is a list from 'The Clerk' of January 2015, supplied by Stephen Rickitt. (See Appendix 4). His suggestion for a possible resolution by Anytown Parish Council is Appendix 5.*

In part - While we have discussed a 'blue book' type document and not found it to be a feasible project many documents are likely to be existing documents (e.g. the HR policies) or ones in development (e.g. under the Civility & Respect project).

The Local Council Award Scheme also gives us a list of the key documentation and other criteria a council needs, and we are working on a document that would point councils to where they could get support/guidance on each item.

- *Training is a variable issue around the country. Some County Associations organise a series of training sessions and other organise none. Now that many of the training sessions have gone 'on-line' it is not clear why they could not be made more widely available. Could NALC not collate a record of those that are on offer and display a regularly up-dated list on their website? And where subjects are not already covered through virtual sessions by any County Associations (there is an interesting potential list on page 21 of this report), perhaps NALC itself could offer training on them?*

No - county associations would not accept this as it would be to the detriment of their financial sustainability and ability to tailor their services to their members

- *The issue raised around fraud risk and cyber security (on pages 25 & 26) are interesting and should be investigated. Also, might it be possible for NALC to*

arrange that any Parish Council (or County Association) which wishes to take up the .gov.uk email address can do so easily?

Yes - we have a guide to cyber security that was taken to Smaller Councils Committee for comment before it was published. And we are about to start work with CDDO (part of cabinet office) on gov.uk domains with the express goal of making it easier for councils to use

- *Councillor Francis made an important point in his submission - that all material which comes forward via NALC should be subject to 'proofing' to ensure that it is relevant to very small councils as well as larger ones. He proposed that emerging documents should be tabled before both the Smaller Councils Committee and the Larger Councils Committee before being published. This recommendation should be taken up.*

Yes. Where the information is related to best practice it should always go through SCC and LCC for input at the design stage and for feedback to inform future updates. This may not always be possible or there may be omissions due to timeframes (e.g. COVID guidance was produced at speed and there was not time to consult based on committee schedules), plus sometimes documents are matters of fact or law and so not suited for extensive consultation.

- *NALC was invited to recommend minimum salaries for clerks and asked to improve the timing of its announcements regarding clerks' salary increases. It was also asked to set up a parliamentary standing committee responsible for the sector whose remit would cover employment rights. For the local council awards, NALC was asked to drop the criteria requiring two thirds of a council to be elected.*

On the Local Council Award Scheme criteria - the Quality award level includes certain criteria enshrined in legislation that related to the General Power of Competence as a measure of effective operation of the council. The elected representative's criteria is one of those.

14 NOVEMBER 2022

WHITE RIBBON ACCREDITATION | PROPOSAL

Introduction and background

The Policy Committee on 19 October 2022 endorsed a proposal from the NALC National Network: Women Councillors for NALC to support the White Ribbon campaign and encourage local (parish and town) councils to support it, and to recommend to the Management Board that NALC becomes a White Ribbon accredited organisation.

What is White Ribbon Day?

White Ribbon Day is the International Day for the eradication of violence against women, held annually on 25 November. The charity White Ribbon UK seeks to engage men and boys in violence prevention as part of the global White Ribbon movement.

Why become accredited?

To change long-established and harmful attitudes, systems and behaviours around masculinity that perpetuate gender inequality and men's violence against women. The work of White Ribbon is preventative; to end violence before it happens. For this reason, male and boys' behaviour, attitudes and systems are targeted since most violence is committed by men, even when men are the victims. The work is not isolated to a single day, but instead, the day raises awareness of the campaign.

Benefits

- Increase NALC's reputation
- To make a significant difference by how it relates to its customers and stakeholders
- Public sector bodies achieving White Ribbon Accreditation can demonstrate they are meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.
- Help make a difference in communities to end violence against women
- Improve organisational culture, safety and morale
- Increase the knowledge and skills of staff to address violence against women
- Encourage local councils to become accredited or supporter organisations

- NALC shows its commitment to ending men's violence against women (and others)

Requirements

The steps to becoming accredited and recommendations are as follows:

- A strategic decision to become White Ribbon Accredited: recommended this is by the Management Board
- Identify a named officer lead contact at NALC: recommended this is Justin Griggs, who will be supported by the policy and communications team
- Identify one named senior lead to become a White Ribbon Ambassador (men) or Champion (women) – recommended this is Cllr Keith Stevens as NALC's chair
- Create a White Ribbon steering group* to oversee the three-year action plan – recommend this is Justin Griggs and Cllr Keith Stevens (NALC), one county association representative, one councillor representative and one clerk representative
- Develop and implement a three-year action plan

*It is crucial that men get involved in helping to end violence against women and girls because most of the violence is committed by men, so men must be a part of the solution. For this reason, the steering group should be majority male.

Costs

A £300 fee is required for accreditation which lasts for three years.

Example

The action plan includes items such as:

- Develop a new section on the health and wellbeing page with relevant resources
- Blog posts
- Engage in White Ribbon Day on social media
- Produce a video message from the NALC chair
- Produce a video of men from the sector supporting White Ribbon Day
- NALC staff training
- News stories throughout the year on the White Ribbon UK initiative
- Press release to national media and trade magazines
- Hold at least one awareness event or activity a year