

MANAGEMENT BOARD | DRAFT MINUTES

Date: 21 March 2023

Venue: Zoom

Present:

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

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

1. Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes of the meeting of Management Board held on 22 November 2022 were agreed.

The note of the awayday on 10 January was approved. On the awayday notes the chief executive agreed to circulate presentation slides for calc events and to circulate details of possible dates for attendance by Management Board members. This might include executive committee or similar meetings as well as AGMs.

Cllr Stevens reported that he was discussing possible board portfolios with colleagues.

The board also confirmed its e mail agreement of 23 February “That Management Board, in line with the delegation confirmed by the special assembly meeting held on 2/2/23, authorise the chair and chief executive to proceed, subject to legal and due diligence, with the sale of 109 Great Russell Street as set out in Lambert Smith Hampton’s confidential sale recommendation report. And that Management Board receive regular updates from the chair and chief executive on the progress with the disposal and arrangements for securing alternative office accommodation if the sale is confirmed.”

2. 109 Great Russell Street

The chief executive reported that the sale of 109 Great Russell Street and work to secure alternative accommodation whilst we review our future needs were proceeding well. Contracts were being drawn up with the prospective purchaser

with the aim of exchanging by the end of March and completing in early April. The offices at 109 were being cleared and appropriate storage procured including the facility to archive some of our historic materials with the de Montford University in Leicester. New rented office accommodation had been identified and contracts being drawn up from 1 May 2023. An update report would be provided to the next assembly meeting.

In discussion the board noted that there were several exceptional one-off costs including legal and agents' fees, clearance costs etc, which would be netted from the sale of the building in due course, but which may exacerbate cash flow issues in the short term. Cllr Davey reported that these had been flagged up to the finance and scrutiny committee at its recent meeting which was keeping a close eye on cash flow matters. He urged county associations to remit their share of affiliation fees promptly to ease this situation. He also reported that the finance and scrutiny committee had agreed to conduct a thorough review of the future budgetary position in the light of these changes.

Cllr Davey also reported that the Finance and Scrutiny Committee had thanked Graham Ford for his outstanding work as he had stood down from the chair as he was no longer the representative from the Cornwall Association. The committee had resolved to appoint Cllr Davey as chair and not to fill the current vacancy at the present time. Management Board added their thanks to Graham and given the forthcoming local elections in May agreed to consider appointments to vacancies on NALC's committees following the results of those.

3. Task and finish group (governance)

Cllr Blezzard had asked for this item to be put on the agenda to clarify next steps as there were several outstanding actions deferred from the AGM.

The board agreed to have a special meeting at the end of May to consider where the group had got to and to agree what actions could be recommended to the July assembly and then AGM; or whether the task and finish group needed to be reconvened. The chief executive agreed to circulate an information pack in advance and convene a special face to face meeting in May, possibly with overnight accommodation.

4. Member services update

a) NALC financial advice service

Charlotte Eisenhart, head of member services reported on the conclusions of the review of the association's financial advice and guidance service. Expressions of

interest had been sought from individuals and companies to provide this service and Charlotte provided feedback on the result of that process.

The board supported the proposals in the report noting Cllr Francis' emphasis on strengthening JPAG and the influence of sector representatives on its work and that of SAAA.

The board agreed to continue to work with DCK Accounting Solutions for queries from member councils and support to JPAG, bring in further county officer input and support to JPAG.

The board agreed to enter an additional partnership with The Parkinson Partnership for the review and refresh of existing documents and guidance and to explore additional content.

The board invited officers to consider how NALC can support the growth of a more vibrant or sustainable market for expert financial advice for local councils which should be explored with our partners and county associations.

b) Staveley Town Council

Charlotte Eisenhart, head of member services provided a verbal update on discussions with this council facing financial difficulties, Chesterfield borough council, the LGA and the Derbyshire Association.

The board noted the position with concern and authorised Charlotte to continue working to support the council including through the possible establishment of an improvement board following the model provided for Bingham.

c) Template employment contract

Charlotte Eisenhart, head of member services reported that the latest version of the contract following consultation had been produced by worknest and circulated to the SLCC for comment. She stressed that a decision would need to be taken on implementation shortly. The board agreed to await feedback from the SLCC before taking any decision.

d) Website review

The board received a paper updating on progress with this project noting that feedback and user testing of the old site had been completed, key objectives for the new site identified including an enhanced log-in experience and a new CRM system built into the proposal. The company Pixl8 had been commissioned to support this work. The project had been impacted by other priorities and the need

to clarify objectives, but a new web site would be developed over the next few months.

The board noted the report and stressed the importance of progressing and testing a new site.

e) Parish.UK

The board noted that councils and county associations were concerned at the activities of this company. NALC staff had been in discussion with LGA, national government and county associations and had issued advice clarifying that councils did not need to give them any information or support their work.

5. Policy and communications update

The head of policy and communications, Justin Griggs, reported on several matters.

- a) Arrangements for NALC's attendance at the LGA conference in Bournemouth were well advanced including a stand and fringe event.
- b) The LGA had agreed to provide some financial support for the Staveley project and our make a change campaign.
- c) There had been a focus on parliamentary work on the levelling up and regeneration bill with NALC's president tabling several important amendments supported by Lord Lytton and others.
- d) The latest council tax statistics were due to be reported shortly including the latest position on local council precepts.

6. Finance and administration update

It was noted that the bulk of this team's work had been on the sale of 109 and identifying new office space. Cllr Davey reported back on the association's financial position as reported to the finance and scrutiny committee. Concerns about cash flow had been exacerbated by a few exceptional one-off costs relating to the sale of 109 and progressing the website and civility and respect projects. Cllr Davey reported that the finance and scrutiny committee was keeping a close eye on cash flow matters with weekly updates on the position against budget. He continued to urge county associations to remit their share of affiliation fees promptly to ease this situation. He also reported that the Finance and Scrutiny Committee had agreed to conduct a thorough review of the future budgetary position in the light of any sale of 109. Cllr Davey also reported that the finance and scrutiny committee had thanked Graham Ford for his outstanding work as he had stood down from the chair as he was no longer the representative from the Cornwall Association of Local

Councils. The committee had resolved to appoint Cllr Davey as chair and not to fill the current vacancy at the present time.

The chief executive reported on NALC's pensions policy as requested in discussion at assembly. There were essentially two schemes – Pensions Trust and LGPS. At the inception of auto-enrolment, the decision was taken to enrol new staff into the pensions trust scheme after advice. Cllr Davey reported that further information was set out in the report "Pensions Explained."

Cllr Blezzard noted his concerns that the LGPS scheme was not available.

7. Management Board role in internal HR

The board noted its role in internal HR matters as set out in its terms of reference. Members with an interest in supporting a grievance panel were invited to contact the chair.

8. External affairs

The chief executive reported that the recruitment to the SAAA board had been completed as set out in the confidential minutes reported to the Management Board. A formal announcement would be made shortly.

9. Dates of future meetings

- Special face-to-face meeting re governance etc May t.b.c
- 4 July face-to-face
- 19 September zoom
- 21 November
- 8 January 2024.