

## **MANAGEMENT BOARD | DRAFT MINUTES**

Date: 26 March 2024

Venue: Zoom

**Present:** Cllr Sue Baxter (for part), Cllr Bob Blezzard, Cllr Mike Drew, Cllr Peter Davey (vice-chair finance), Cllr David Francis (vice-chair member services), Cllr Paul Harvey, Cllr Loraine Rappé, Cllr Keith Stevens (chair), Cllr Luke Trevaskis, Cllr Peter Allison.

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

### **Decision Items**

#### **1. Minutes of previous meetings**

The minutes of the meeting of the Management Board held on 9 January were agreed and e-mail note of the informal meeting on 12 February received.

There was a correction to the minutes confirming that Bob Blezzard had sent his apologies and not been in attendance.

#### **2. County officer forum**

It was reported that the chair and chief executive had met with county officer colleagues to discuss their proposed summit. The board supported the proposed direction aiming for a summit in early 2025 focussing on “future proofing the sector” organised with and through national association representatives. The board were keen to see some evidence gathering or survey work in advance of the session.

#### **3. Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments (SAAA)**

It was reported that the chair and chief executive together with representatives from the Society of Local Council Clerks and Association of Drainage Authorities had met with the chair and chief executive of SAAA on 8 February to discuss their proposals on the use of their reserves. The three member organisations had generally supported investment in supporting better financial governance and improved data from the reserves. SAAA were seeking advice on this. The board

generally supported further consideration of this in the first instance before looking at other potential uses of the reserves.

The board approved the appointment of Charlotte Eisenhart as NALC's member director on the SAAA board from 1 April 2024, replacing Jonathan Owen.

#### **4. Parliamentary reception/Star Councils Awards 2024/25**

Given the likely timing of a General Election the board agreed to move these events from November 2024 to February 2025. It also agreed to drop the requirement for a public vote to select the council of the year winner. A new category on climate change/net zero was supported.

#### **Discussion items**

#### **5. Local Government Finance**

Jonathan Carr-West, the chief executive of the Local Government Information Unit, briefed the board on their recent report, [The State of Local Government Finance 2024](#). Worryingly, 14 upper-tier councils warn of possible bankruptcy next year and 74 within five years. During the briefing, the town clerk of Shrewsbury Town Council highlighted the impact of reduced finance for discretionary services on local (parish and town) councils and community resilience. While our sector has taken on numerous discretionary services in recent years, not all councils are in positions to assume these responsibilities without help, and the associated increase in precept levels is often difficult to sell to the public. The Board stressed that we are all part of the same local government ecosystem, and local government at all tiers and its national bodies must work together to address this rapidly developing problem.

A copy of the introductory presentations is available here .....

#### **6. Forward work programme for National Assembly and Committees.**

The board discussed a report feeding back on proposals from committees to develop work programmes to deliver the priorities set by national assembly in November 2023. It also noted that there had been a development session for committee chairs and vice-chairs and NALC staff to discuss their roles and how they could work together to deliver these ambitious work programmes.

It was noted that in order to deliver some of these aspirations fully (notably influencing the new government, improving communications and engagement with county associations and councils, membership survey and sector data) funding would need to be secured through affiliation fee increases, use of reserves or

accessing government or other public sector funding streams. Officers were authorised to develop proposals for further consideration.

#### 7. **Future of NALC 1994 Ltd.**

Following the sale of 109 Great Russell Street the board discussed the need for the continuation of this company. It agreed to continue with the company and Steve Walker was asked to prepare a paper on formal governance options for NALC generally.

#### **Items for noting**

8. **NALC HR handbook** – for use internally, regularly updated. BB requested a paper copy.
9. **Website** – CE updated colleagues on a rescheduled launch date following supplier issues which had been resolved.
10. **Key performance indicators** – NALC schedule. CE would consider further what the legal indicators covered.
11. **Management board special responsibilities** – following earlier discussion these would be reported to national assembly.
12. NALC's cashflow position. PD stressed the importance of prompt or early payment by county associations of council affiliation fees.
13. Sanctions – LR invited consideration of how best to further communicate NALC's lobbying on sanctions.
14. **Date of next meeting** – 18 June at CCLA