

MANAGEMENT BOARD | DRAFT MINUTES

Date: 18 June 2024

Venue: CCLA

Present: Cllr Peter Allison, 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.

Apologies were received from Cllr Sue Baxter.

Jonathan Owen chief executive, Justin Griggs head of policy and communications, Charlotte Eisenhart, head of member services, Steve Walker, head of finance and administration. Jane Moore senior solicitor. Rajiv Dudakia, Daisy Petrow and Jessica Lancod-Frost from policy and communications were present for item 6.

The meeting was kindly hosted by NALC partners [CCLA](#). Kelly Watson and Lee Jagger updated us on their Better World initiatives and support for care leavers. They also briefed us on market developments and the products they have available for local councils.

Decision Items

1. Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes of the meeting of the Management Board held on 26 March 2024 were agreed and e-mail note of the informal meeting on 13 May 2024 received. It was confirmed that the rescheduled parliamentary reception on 25 February 2025 would go ahead on that date despite the earlier than expected general election.

2. Funding proposals

Management board received a report from the chief executive setting out priority areas where extra resources were desirable to enable the Association to deliver these additional activities whilst maintaining current service workloads. The areas, in order of priority were lobbying new MPs government and Ministers; service improvements especially HR support; improving communications and engagement with county associations and councils; membership survey and sector data, (including benchmarking survey); Artificial Intelligence and dedicated support to councillors.

The board supported these priorities and flagged up lobbying, service improvement and sector data as areas requiring prompt attention. The items on

improving communications with county associations and councils and support to councillors could be picked up as part of the “thriving together” work with the county officers’ forum. AI would be kept under further review as NALC’s new website progressed.

The board agreed to allocate £100,000 from the invest to save/service improvement reserve to support work in these areas in 2024/5 and 2025/6 with the detail and progress reported regularly to the Board. Other potential revenue streams would also be explored rather than increasing affiliation fees beyond that necessary to meet current needs for these additional items.

The Board also noted that Finance and Scrutiny Committee on 11 June had received a draft budget for 2025/6 which modelled an increase in affiliation fees from 7.94p per elector to 8.34 pence per elector capped at £2,139 for the largest councils. This would be a standstill budget to cover salary and other expenditure increases after several years of below inflation fee increases. The Board agreed to recommend that Assembly and AGM consider support for this increase.

The Board also agreed that it was timely to review the basis of the Association’s affiliation fee model including move to using a different basis for calculating fees and a minimum as well as a maximum fee.

3. Member Services

The Board considered a motion submitted by the Isle of Wight Association: “The Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils is of the view that NALC is overly bureaucratic in the way it responds to requests for advice from county associations and councils with direct access to NALC services. It therefore calls on NALC to simplify its procedures and to respond in a timely manner to requests for advice. In doing so NALC should abandon the requirement for councils to provide evidence that a request for advice has been formally agreed at a council meeting. Requests for advice should be open to council chairs, vice-chairs, senior officers and CALC committee representatives along with county officers/deputies and national assembly members.”

The Board also received a commentary on the motion prepared by the Head of Member services.

After discussion, the consensus was that to offer a national service where councillors (even if limited to chairs and vice-chairs) across England could have direct access to advice on matters related to local councils would be beyond both NALC’s remit and resources.

It was resolved (with one member against and one abstaining) to acknowledge IWALCs motion and concerns with access to advice from NALC but at this time NALC's advisory services continues with the same processes to ensure that NALC's advice is for member councils only.

IWALC was also reminded that they could make a complaint about the way an individual query was dealt with or an alternative discussion with appropriate Board members.

4. Committee vacancies and co-options

The Board agreed a paper to National Assembly proposing that assembly members from smaller councils be encouraged to sit on the smaller councils committee and female councillors on the finance and scrutiny committee. Appropriate briefings and induction should be offered to interested parties. Committees would also be invited to co-opt members from National Networks.

5. Publication of NALC's parental leave policies

The Board supported a proposal from the Policy Committee that NALC support the mumsnet campaign for employers to publish their parental leave policies. NALC's own policy and wider HR policies would be published on the website shortly.

Discussion items

6. Deep dive into NALC's communications activity

The Board discussed the attached presentation setting out key elements of NALC's communications activity and the challenges it faces promoting awareness to all councils and councillors. It was also noted that the new website would go live in early October. The board also noted that a new policy was being developed to address copyright infringement by non-member councils, clerks, and others.

7. Update from management board champions.

MD had been actively involved in website discussions. LR had had some initial discussions with the communications team which would continue. BB had met with ALCC and was involved in the IDB workforce workstream. PH had attended an AI conference and held discussions with a county officer. LT was active in the younger councillors' network. SB had submitted proposals to increase diversity within NALC's committees etc.

Information/noting items.

8. Board work programme.

Noted progress and outstanding items.

9. Meeting with SLCC

The notes of the meeting held on 25 April 2024.

10. SAAA notes

The confidential notes from 17 April 2024 were received. The digitisation project might provide scope to collect better data on the sector.

11. Status of NALC

The board received papers presented to finance and scrutiny committee in 2019 identifying options for incorporation of NALC and agreed not to progress any changes at this time. Additional advice for county associations on incorporation should be explored.

12. Draft National Assembly agenda - agreed for circulation.

13. Briefing for attendance at county association events - received.

14. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 17 September 2024 via zoom with an informal meeting on 12 August 2024