

Governance
Role profiles

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FOREWORD

NALC needs you!

Please find attached some background information on why we want as many people as possible to get involved in the work of their county and national associations. NALC stand at a crossroads, with local councils well placed as the first tier of local government to be key community champions helping bring communities together.

To achieve this, we need to encourage as many people as possible from different backgrounds to get involved in the work of their county and national associations. The attached document outlines how to get involved and role profiles for some senior leadership roles.

HELP MAKE LOCAL COUNCILS AN EFFECTIVE FIRST TIER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

NALC is looking for passionate, committed, enthusiastic local councillors with the right skills and competencies to support the work of county associations and serve on its National Assembly and governing Committees.

- Passionate - about the role of local councils as the first tier of local government and their contribution to improving England's quality of life, health, and well-being.
- Committed - to supporting councils to reach their potential, well run, transparent, and ambitious for their communities.
- Enthusiastic - willing to share good practice with others, highlight the work of councils in their county areas and eager to roll up their sleeves and participate actively in committees and national and local lobbying.

Nationally, NALC is looking for people to help give the sector a strong national voice, provide services that councils and county associations need to improve the capacity of councils and ensure that NALC is well run and is meeting the sector's needs.

NALC is committed to promoting diversity and is keen to see people from all backgrounds get involved. There are several ways in which you can get involved. Firstly, get involved in the work of your county association. These are the vital building blocks of the sector, providing day-to-day support to councils and councillors and engaging with key local stakeholders, including MPs, principal councils, police and crime commissioners and the NHS. Please get in touch with your local association for more details.

Get involved in the work of your county or NALC by attending their conferences and training, accessing their publications and websites and becoming active on one of your county association's committees.

If you want to become further involved in developing the sector at a national level, consider becoming your county's representative on the national assembly, which will open up several opportunities set out below.

BECOME PART OF THE NATIONAL VOICE FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

As a member of the National Assembly, which brings together representatives from the 43 county associations across England, it set NALC's policy agenda, overseeing its sound governance, including electing its senior leadership team and committees.

Members will share good practices with other county representatives, the government and the media. You will discuss developments with civil servants, ministers and other national opinion formers; and, with your county officer, co-ordinating your county's input into NALC's annual parliamentary lobby day.

This is an important national role, promoting the reputation and good standing of the sector. It also requires the post holder to liaise with county association colleagues and encourage their and NALC's work with local councils on their patch. With reading papers and keeping up to date with sector developments, the time commitment is at least ten days a year, including overnight attendance at the annual conference that sets NALC's overall strategic direction. (When we return to face-to-face events.)

You need to be well-informed about the sector, well-connected to your county association, passionate about strengthening the sector as a whole and able to look beyond the interests of your county or council. It would be best if you were a good communicator, confident about speaking to your 40 colleagues and able to cascade information from NALC to your local networks. NALC is increasingly "working smarter", so ideally, you will be comfortable accessing information from websites and conducting business by email, telephone and Zoom.

As a National Assembly member, you can get even further involved in NALC's work in several ways, depending on your skills, ambitions and desires!

Join one of NALC's governing committees; Management Board, Finance and Scrutiny, Policy Committee, Larger Councils Committee or the Smaller Councils Committee.

As a committee member, you will be expected to contribute to developing that committee's work programme and remit rather than represent the interests of your county association or council.

You should have knowledge and interest in the committee's work set out in the terms of reference. You should be prepared to discuss the committee's work openly, supportively and frankly and take collective ownership of the decisions it arrives at democratically. All committee members are elected for a two-year term and receive no remuneration. The expected contribution and involvement in the

assembly are at least twenty days per year, more if you are a chair or vice-chair of the committee.

REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF LOCAL COUNCILS WITHIN THE SECTOR AND NALC

Our sector includes large towns, small rural communities, and coastal communities.

To ensure that this diversity is represented within the work of NALC, several dedicated committees and special interest groups are wor either formally or informally to share good practices, provide appropriate advice and support and make NALC more representative of these communities.

Management Board (11 councillors)

Six members elected by the assembly (together with the chair and vice-chair and chair of the Policy Committee and Finance and Scrutiny Committee) focus on the day-to-day internal strategic management of NALC, allocating resources to priorities determined by the National Assembly and AGM, ensuring the development and delivery of the strategic plan and overseeing NALC's internal HR processes and relationships with the sector's Trades Unions and the SLCC.

Management Board will also elect from their number two champions to represent the interests of NALC's largest and smallest member councils. They will be co-opted members of relevant committees and forums and help Management Board develop appropriate services for these categories and ensure that it represents their interests in the work of government and other national bodies. The overall commitment, including National Assembly duties, will be at least 20 days per year.

Finance and Scrutiny Committee (six councillors)

Five members (together with the vice-chair – finance) elected by National Assembly and reporting directly to it ensure NALC has sound financial control and a robust corporate governance framework. It scrutinises financial processes, including meeting financial and income targets and oversees the corporate governance framework, including risk, contract procedures and general “health checking”. Investigatory skills and inquiring minds are required, as well as an interest/aptitude in financial matters.

The overall total commitment will be a minimum of 20 days a year.

Policy committee (eight councillors)

Join the Policy Committee and develop the sector's national policy objectives share responses to government consultations, and oversee NALC annual lobby day and political campaigns.

The Policy Committee works on behalf of the National Assembly and AGM to translate their policy objectives into detailed proposals for legislative change,

coordinate responses to government consultations, and oversee NALC's annual Westminster lobby day and its public affairs work.

The association chair sits on the committee with seven other councillors and a county officers' forum representative.

It would be helpful if you know or are interested in how local and national politics and government work. You should be interested in shaping written submissions and responses and be willing to promote the policy objectives of the sector as a whole and not your own council or county association. Access to websites, e-mails and commenting electronically on Word documents would be advantageous.

As well as attending meetings, there is an expectation that you will contribute pro-actively to the public affairs work of the association via e-mail, telephone and Zoom communications. The overall commitment will be a minimum of 20 days per year.

The Policy Committee also acts as the government-sponsored Sustainable Communities Act Board, which can recommend government considers changes in legislation or processes identified by councils.

Larger Councils Committee and Smaller Councils Committee

NALC has two committees representing the interests of the smallest and largest councils. These committees include representatives elected by the National Assembly and clerks and councillors directly elected by the sector. The committees seek to share good practices, identify issues pertinent to those size councils that need to address by NALC and prepare advice notes and guidance for smaller and larger councils. There are five seats on each committee to be elected by National Assembly and other directly elected seats. With involvement in the national association, the total time commitment would be at least 16 days per annum.

Some special interest groups meet informally or share information and views through our E-hubs. These have included the Super Councils Network, Coastal Communities Network and Coalfield Communities Network.

Other opportunities to get involved

There are also opportunities for councillors, clerks, and county officers to get involved in other ways, including the improvement and development board which brings together the government, Local Government Association, National Association of Local Councils and Society of Local Council Clerks to build the capacity of the sector through its national development strategy; through direct elections to the smaller and larger councils committee and involvement in task and finish groups. County officers can be co-opted onto committees and get involved in the county officers forum, which advises NALC on its overall direction and services. They can act as expert advisers on many issues and often support

councillors/NALC staff in meetings with ministers, civil servants and other national bodies.

NALC also participates in and appoints representatives from the national assembly, councils and county associations to several other national bodies, including the Rural Services Network, Rural Coalition and SAAA. There are occasional opportunities for county officers and clerks to be seconded to NALC to help with specific projects.

Senior leadership team

National Assembly elects NALC's senior leadership team of three local councillors - its chair and two vice-chairs. These posts are elected for a two-year period and are limited to two consecutive terms. The team works outside the formal meeting schedule to shape NALC's future direction and respond quickly to any issues that might arise. The leadership team has a monthly telephone or Zoom conference with NALC's senior staff, reviewing their activities, priorities and team workloads.

NALC chair

The chair is the national spokesperson for the sector in dealings with the media. The chair also secures NALC's strategic objectives by meeting ministers, senior representatives from the LGA and other national organisations and lobbying the main political parties. They sit on relevant national committees, bodies and working parties. The chair chairs the Management Board and the National Assembly to secure broad-based support for and engagement with NALC's activities. They also sit on NALC's Policy Committee. The chair liaises with major sponsors and will regularly speak/attend national and county association events. The chair is responsible for the day-to-day oversight of the chief executive.

This high-profile, high-pressure post requires a significant time commitment (a minimum of 40 days per year), including weekends and evenings, and receives a remuneration of £3,000.

NALC vice-chairs (two positions)

Vice-chair (member services) provides the lead support related to NALC's member services to the chair and Management Board. They help ensure that NALC is focused on delivering effective, impactful and value-for-money services to its members. They will work closely with the head of member services to review current service delivery, seek county association views on services and identify new service options for consideration by Management Board. This is vital in interacting with NALC staff and county associations, with a time commitment of around 35 days per year. It receives remuneration of around £750 per annum.

Vice-chair (finance) provides the lead financial support to the chair and management board, overseeing planning and budgeting processes and ensuring all strategic plans are financially appraised, and budgets are aligned to both short-term and long-term objectives each year. The chair liaises with external auditors, NALC's chief executive/finance officer and reports on the association's overall

financial position transparently to the Management Board, National Assembly and AGM. The chair also sits on the Finance and Scrutiny Committee.

This is a vital post for the corporate health of NALC and requires someone with significant financial experience/aptitude. The workload is around 35 days per year. It receives remuneration of around £750 per annum.

Both roles also included deputizing at events and meetings for the chair

SUPPORT FROM NALC

We are committed to ensuring that the voice of town and parish councils is heard at all levels of government and that local councils have the support to deliver the very best for their communities. We are committed to supporting the National Assembly to deliver its objectives and supporting individual members to contribute to the association's work, making the most of their skills in the role and enjoying the role. Regular induction sessions for new members, a full background pack of papers, other resources, and training are available (subject to resource constraints).

JOB PROFILE AND DESCRIPTION FOR ROLES

National Assembly members

Councillors will be familiar with the critical elements of the National Assembly member role, as these, in many ways, reflect the role of local councillors. However, it is helpful to remember that while there are many similarities, NALC is not a local council. NALC is the national membership body for local (parish and town) councils, and there will be times when National Assembly members may need to discuss issues or take actions unique to the role.

Some of the critical elements of the role are:

Representation

Members represent their county associations and member councils at National Assembly. Additionally, members support NALC and disseminate decisions of the National Assembly to their county associations and member councils.

Council members are also national ambassadors for the sector. They can be asked to contribute to media releases and meetings with stakeholders, including government departments or ministers. Even when not officially acting on a national stage, as members of the National Assembly, they set an example to others regarding standards of behaviour and work ethic wherever they are.

Leadership

National Assembly members make decisions regarding the work of NALC. This is taken with a strategic view and to provide oversight and direction. They do not micromanage the work of the organisation or staff. Through this, they ensure that NALC continues providing members with the best possible offer. Through the

work of the National Assembly, members also provide leadership to the whole sector. They balance representing their local member's views with making decisions in the national interest of all local councils.

Members know their decisions can directly impact member councils and the sector's overall reputation. And so they actively debate and vote at meetings of the National Assembly.

Information

Members receive a wide range of information on topics relevant to the council's work. They also provide information to National Assembly from their networks, knowledge and experiences. They use this information to actively make connections between the work programme of county associations and NALC. Members also work with and share information across various national and local partners.

Responsibility

National Assembly members take responsibility for decisions at National Assembly. They support the decisions of the National Assembly and the work of NALC. Members also encourage new members of the National Assembly to come forward.

Skills

NALC recognises the considerable value to National Assembly of having a broad range of expertise, points of view and personal experiences. There is no formal range of skills or expertise required for the role, everyone is equal, no matter their background or length of service. The list below summarises some critical attributes that council members might bring to the role.

Judgement

This document is an attempt to summarise the key elements of the role and attributes of a council member, but the role will vary and will always have ambiguities. Member's experiences as a local councillor will have equipped them to exercise their judgement, which is just as crucial at National Assembly. Members must balance a range of (possibly competing) views from member councils, their county association, NALC officers and their personal views. Ultimately any decision is theirs to make, and they are responsible for using their own better judgement for how to act, seeking support where they need it.

Values

National Assembly plays a vital role in shaping the values and vision of NALC, and members will uphold these values. NALC's vision statement can be found in the strategic plan. If you would like a copy of this, it can be downloaded from NALC's website. The strategy states:

- Local councils across the country will be the centre of community effort, the natural focus of a range of public activity and service delivery, giving a democratic voice to those communities in the deliberations of other agencies.
- Vibrant, dynamic and effective local councils will help communities to help themselves build strength and resilience and improve residents' quality of life.

Communication

In their local role, council members already need to be good communicators. In National Assembly, all members contribute to discussions and support others to contribute. Not only can they speak confidently and concisely at meetings, but they also are willing to contribute to written documents and reports. Council members and NALC officers support each other in developing these skills, and National Assembly is a supportive environment in which these skills can be practised and developed.

Approach

National Assembly members balance a range of approaches, such as being challenging but constructive, honest but supportive, dedicated and loyal but open and willing to change. They also keep up to date – through training & development, following national news and keeping abreast of changes in the sector.

Personality

All members bring lots of this! It is vital to the vibrancy of the National Assembly.

If you get involved in other areas of NALC's work or of its committees, other skills/ aptitudes are required.

For the NALC chair

- Leadership
- Communications and presentation skills
- Team building and team working
- Networking and advocacy
- Credibility

For the NALC vice-chair (member services)

This post is essential in shaping the services offered to councils and county associations provided or commissioned by NALC. A good understanding of the needs of councils and county associations is a must, as is the ability to work positively with NALC staff and other providers.

Other skills include:

- Leadership

- Communications and presentation skills
- Team building and team working
- Credibility

For the NALC vice-chair (finance)

This post is vital in monitoring the Association's financial standing and the overarching strategic management of the organisation's financial resources. The vice-chair ensures that the organisation's finances are responsibly managed/invested for the betterment of The National Association and the wider sector.

The post holder should have strong financial skills/ aptitude/experience, including:

Budgeting and strategic financial planning

- Ensure all strategic plans are financially appraised, and budgets are aligned to both short-term and long-term objectives each year
- Oversee planning/budgeting processes in participation with the board and finance and scrutiny committee
- Create greater transparency and accountability

Financial reporting

- Guide and advise fellow National Assembly members to approve the annual report and audited accounts formally
- Explain technicalities of accounts in plain language, which is fully understood by councillors
- Liaison with external auditors on specific issues in the auditing process.
- Ensure a high standard of management accounting is maintained to safeguard assets
- Liaise with the finance director and chief executive

For members of the Management Board

- Strategic thinking and problem-solving
- Risk management/identification
- Corporate governance
- Understanding of the sector, membership organisations and national and local government
- Creative and commercially minded
- Developing appropriate relationships with officers and understanding broader HR responsibilities
- Team player
- Financial awareness

For the Finance and Scrutiny Committee

- Financial awareness, including the ability to read and understand accounts and financial reports

- Understanding of sound corporate governance
- Questioning/scrutinizing – constructively
- Independent

For members of other committees

- Ability to think strategically and in the interests of the sector rather than individual counties or councils
- Understanding of Committee Remit
- Understanding of the sector and commitment to improving it
- Communications
- Team player

For chairs of committees

- Leadership
- Ability to work positively with officers to set agenda/priorities
- Team building
- Communications
- Chairing
- Credibility