

Information  
**Committees**  
induction pack

Published by  
National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

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## **CONTENTS**

Foreword	4
National Assembly and NALC committees role profile	5
Role of the National Assembly and NALC committees	5
The seven principles of public life	7
Support to members	8
Key committee members	9
Key deadlines	9
Gettings items on the agenda	10
How papers are issued	11
Election deadlines	12
Meeting dates	12
Consent to use images	12
Meeting locations	12
Health and safety	13
Contact	13
NALC Open Day	13
Access to the NALC website	13
Essential documents	13
NALC events calendar	13

## **FOREWORD**

Welcome and congratulations on your new role on NALC's National Assembly.

Created in 1947, NALC is the only national body representing the interests of local (parish and town) councils and county associations to articulate your views to the government, the media and other national organisations.

NALC serves approximately 95% of all local councils in England, which are in membership and made up of 9,000 local councils and 80,000 councillors.

NALC members range from small rural communities to major cities, who are all independently elected. Together, they can be identified as the nation's single most influential grouping of grassroots opinion-formers. NALC provides support and advice to members directly through a network of county associations.

NALC is committed to developing the role of local councils, so that they can represent their communities effectively and be at the forefront of community leadership.

Our strength is our size. NALC campaigns and lobbies for changes to legislation identified by you, which helps you better serve your communities. NALC is democratically run with each county area represented by a councillor to sit on the National Assembly, which decides NALC's annual business plan.

It's your role on the National Assembly and on other committees to ensure a strong voice for this sector and that NALC represents the interests of local councils and county associations, and that we work together to improve the sector's capacity and reputation.

## **NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND NALC COMMITTEES ROLE PROFILE**

At NALC we know that members of the National Assembly and other committees, especially the Larger Councils Committee and Smaller Councils Committee are dedicated to ensuring that the voice of local councils is heard at all levels of government, and that local councils have the support in place to deliver the very best for their communities. NALC is committed to supporting the assembly to deliver its objectives, and supporting individual members to contribute, making the most of their skills, and to enjoy the role.

This publication was written with input from assembly members with the aim of:

- Providing clarity on the role of a National Assembly member
- Having a basis on which NALC can design a support offer to National Assembly members
- Encouraging more local councillors from a range of backgrounds to become members of the National Assembly

The National Assembly oversees the work of NALC and its committees. The assembly is made up of elected representatives from each county association. As the forum for debate and decision-making for the national membership body for local councils, it is important that members understand the role and feel confident and supported to contribute.

If you would like to know more about becoming part of the National Assembly or being elected to a NALC committee, contact NALC at [nalccommittees@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:nalccommittees@nalc.gov.uk) or your county association.

## **ROLE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND NALC COMMITTEES**

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

Some of the key elements of the role are:

### **Representation**

- Members represent their county associations and local councils at National Assembly.
- Members represent and support NALC and decisions of National Assembly to their county associations and local councils.
- National Assembly members are also national ambassadors for the sector. They can be asked to contribute to media releases, 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 the example to others for 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 with the aim of providing oversight and direction. They do not micromanage the work of the organisation or staff.
- Through this they ensure that NALC continues to provide the best possible offer to members.
- Through the work of the National Assembly, members also provide leadership to the whole sector. They balance representing their local members views with making decisions in the national interest of all local councils.
- Members are aware that their decisions can directly impact on local councils and the reputation of the sector as a whole. They actively engage in debate and vote at National Assembly meetings.

## **Information**

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

## **Responsibility**

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

## **Skills**

NALC recognises the huge value of National Assembly with its 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 is a summary of some of the key attributes that members might bring to the role.

### Judgement

This publication is an attempt to summarise the key elements of the role and attributes of a assembly and committee member, but the role will vary and will always have ambiguities. Member's experiences as a local councillor will have equipped them well to exercise their own judgement and this is just as important on the National Assembly. Members will need to balance a range of (possibly competing) views from local councils, county associations, NALC officers and their own 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 (available on the NALC website). The 2014/2015 strategy states:

Our vision for the sector is to improve the quality of life for local communities through having vibrant, dynamic and effective local councils. NALC will be a modern, in-touch organisation that delivers high quality services and works in partnership with county associations and member councils to support and promote local councils, their staff and their councillors. We will have healthy and strong county associations working individually and sometimes together, supporting and being supported by NALC. There will be local councils wherever communities want them and they will be representative, in-touch with their electors; and effective, working to quality council status.

### Communication

In their local role, council members already need to be good communicators. On the 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. National Assembly members and NALC officers support each other to develop these skills, and the 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 and development, following national news and keep abreast of changes in the sector.

### Personality

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

## **THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF LIFE**

Whilst membership of National Assembly is not a public office, all members are councillors in their own local council. This means that as elected representatives they have a duty to uphold high standards of behaviour in public life. National Assembly members also uphold these principles when acting in their NALC role. They act and support others to act in accordance with the Nolan's *The seven principles of public life*.

### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

### **Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for

themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

### **Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

### **Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

### **Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs

## **SUPPORT TO MEMBERS**

NALC will support National Assembly members to make the most of the role and especially to help new members quickly feel confident in the role by:

### **Information**

Information for National Assembly meetings will be provided in good time. It will include helping new members find their feet, such as, maps to locations and named contacts in case they would like to follow up with anything. You will need to give information about yourself if you stand for committees or at office holders elections – this may include name/photo/profile/why standing, etc. You will also be invited to complete a skills audit so that NALC can make best use of your talents.

### **Induction**

An induction pack will be provided for new members.

### **Buddy scheme**

New members will also be allocated a buddy from existing National Assembly members, NALC is always available to provide help and support by email or phone.

### **Skills audit**

NALC will hold a skills audit of assembly members (including new members when they start). This will help NALC know what skills and interests members have, and how best to use these.

## **Support and development**

NALC will offer refresher courses, training and/or develop in specific skills, as resources allow, where members indicate they would welcome this. This could be from a range of topics such as public speaking, working with press to confidence building. NALC will always encourage and welcome requests for training or support activities. NALC want to encourage members to always be on the lookout for opportunities to grow their skills and will do all we can to support that. Members and NALC officers will always encourage and support debate and aim to find ways to allow all to contribute.

## **KEY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

For the year 2019, as follows:

President – currently vacant

Vice-president – The Earl of Lytton, Cllr Brian Kerr OBE and Cllr Michael Chater OBE

Chairman of NALC, National Assembly and the Management Board – Cllr Sue Baxter

Vice-chairmen of NALC, National Assembly and the Management Board – Cllr Mike Drew and Cllr Keith Stevens

### **Other Committees**

Other committee chairs and vice-chairs are appointed at the first meeting of the committee each year.

## **KEY DEADLINES**

All committee dates are published in *NALC Events calender* which is ratified at the final meeting of the National Assembly each year. The following are the key deadlines for committees.

### **Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

- Chief executive must advise county associations of date and order of business 56 days in advance of AGM
- Motions deadline is 42 days in advance of the AGM
- Agenda issued three weeks prior to AGM

The business of the AGM shall be:

- To elect the president and vice-presidents.
- To receive the annual report.
- To receive the audited accounts for the preceding year.
- To appoint the auditors.
- To determine, the subscription of each county association, and to be effective from 1 April, the following year.
- To receive such presentations relating to NALC.

## **All committees (excluding AGM)**

- Agendas are issued two weeks prior to meeting and only in exceptional circumstances are additional to follow papers to be issued past this deadline.
- Summary note to be sent within two to three days
- Draft minutes to be drafted within a week.

## **GETTING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

County associations are able to inform and shape national policy by submitting motions and/or questions to NALC via the AGM, National Assembly, Policy Committee, Larger Councils Committee and the Smaller Councils Committee.

### **AGM**

County associations may submit motions for debate at the AGM, provided that notice of motions are given in writing no later than 42 clear days before the date of the AGM. Amendments to such motions should normally be submitted in writing at least 7 days prior to the AGM. Only motions proposing constitution amendments or related to the strategic plan or non-constitutional issues that are of national relevance will be admitted to the agenda.

### **National Assembly**

There are two methods to add an items to the National Assembly agenda. These must come from the National Assembly representative or via the county association.

#### Questions

Any member of the National Assembly or a county association may ask a question of the chairman, or if deemed appropriate by the chairman, the chairman of the relevant committee, sub-committee or working group, or NALC officer.

This must be submitted in writing no later than two weeks in advance of council. This will enable sufficient time for the question to be answered by the relevant officers and will allow it to be circulated to all in advance of council. Supplementary questions may be raised and questions on emergency matters may be raised with the agreement of the chairman.

All such supplementary questions may be answered either verbally or in writing, but in each case the question and the reply to the question are to be set out in the minutes of the meeting.

#### Motions

The types of motions that are commonly considered by National Assembly are related to the delivery of NALC's strategic plan, engagement with government and other stakeholders.

NB: Motions relating to the policy stance of NALC should be submitted to the Policy Committee in the first instance.

#### Submission deadlines

Items for inclusion on the agenda of council should be submitted 3 weeks prior to council.

#### How to submit

Questions and/or motions can be submitted to NALC at [nalcccommittees@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:nalcccommittees@nalc.gov.uk).

#### **Policy Committee**

The Policy Committee is the most used route for a county association to submit a policy motion to NALC. The committee meets quarterly and motions can be submitted for consideration no later than three weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

NB: Where possible, specific legal clause references to amendments sought should be included.

Only county associations are able to submit policy motions to the Policy Committee. Therefore if a local council has a motion that they would like to be considered by NALC, it must submit it to their county association. In turn, it will be considered by the county Association for consideration. If the county association supports the motion, it will be submitted to NALC. This ensures that only those motions that have the approval and support of county associations, are submitted.

All policy motions for consideration by NALC must set out:

- The reasons why the county association is submitting the motion.
- How the issue is affecting local councils in their area (with case study evidence).
- What specifically the county association would like to change (e.g. a law).
- The action the given county association wants taken on the issue.

Following consideration of any motion by the Policy Committee, NALC will write to the relevant county association informing them of the decision, as soon as is possible after the meeting where the motion decision was taken.

#### Submission deadlines

Three weeks prior to the Policy Committee or earlier if possible.

#### Contact

Contact NALC at [chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk) or on 020 7290 0741. Policy Motions must be submitted using the online form at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/HW9Q68J>.

#### **HOW PAPERS ARE ISSUED**

Papers are emailed to members of that committee and links to papers will also be made available on the NALC website. Paper copies will only be provided in exceptional cases (please bear in mind the significant implications on the environment and cost of printing and posting). If you require a paper copy, contact NALC at [nalcccommittees@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:nalcccommittees@nalc.gov.uk).

## **ELECTION DEADLINES**

### **National Assembly**

- Bi-annual elections for committees for the upcoming terms will be held at the annual meeting of the National Assembly.
- Elections will take place in December 2021.
- Nomination papers are issued at the start of September 2021.

### **Larger Councils Committee**

There are three elections for the Larger Councils Committee as follows:

- Election of directly elected councillors – start of September.
- Election of directly elected clerks – start of September.
- Election of Super Councils' Network councillors – start of September

### **Smaller Councils Committee**

- There is a bi-annual election for directly elected councillors.
- Election of directly elected councillors – start of September.
- Election of directly elected clerks – start of September.

## **MEETING DATES**

Meeting dates can be found in the member's area under *committees* section of the NALC website.

## **CONSENT TO USE IMAGES**

NALC meetings may be photographed or recorded (video and/or audio), which may be used in NALC publications and/or on NALC's online channels including social media and website. Each National Assembly member will be asked to complete a consent to use images form.

## **MEETING LOCATIONS**

The majority of meetings are held in London. The agenda will give clear guidance on the meeting location and maps will be made available.

### **NALC Office**

The NALC Office is located at 109 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LD. The nearest tube is Tottenham Court Road, on the Central Line and Northern Line (Charing Cross branch). Find out at [www.nalc.gov.uk/contact-us](http://www.nalc.gov.uk/contact-us).

### **CCLA**

The CCLA offices is located at Senator House, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4ET. The easiest tube station to travel to is St Pauls on the Central Line or Bank on the Central Line and Northern Line (Bank Branch) and the DLR.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

At the start of each committee meeting the chairman or a NALC officer will advise attendees on the following:

- Fire exits
- If there is a fire test scheduled
- Location of toilets
- Location of refreshments

## CONTACT

For any enquiries, contact NALC at [nalccommittees@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:nalccommittees@nalc.gov.uk) or on 020 7637 1865.

## NALC OPEN DAYS

NALC Open Days are held at regular intervals at the NALC office. These are aimed at new National Assembly members and county association officers. The next NALC Open Day is on 22 July 2020. To book a place, contact NALC at [nalccommittees@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:nalccommittees@nalc.gov.uk).

## ACCESS TO THE NALC WEBSITE

You will be issued with a username and password to access the member's area of the NALC website. This will allow you to access to committee agenda papers and minutes, as well as range of resources including briefings, legal topic notes, policy consultations and responses, toolkits, and much more. If you require login details to the NALC website, contact NALC at [nalccommittees@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:nalccommittees@nalc.gov.uk).

## ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS

The following publications provide detailed information on NALC committees and other information that is essential to help you; *Standing orders*, *Financial regulations*, *Terms of reference*, *NALC constitution*, *Expense policy* and *Code of policy*. These publications are located in the member's area of the NALC website.

## EVENTS CALENDER

Date	Events	Location
12 May 2020	Improvement and Development Board	Zoom
20 May 2020	Management Board	Zoom
2 June 2020	Finance and Scrutiny Committee	Zoom
16 June 2020	Management Board	Zoom
23 June 2020	Smaller Councils Committee	Zoom
30 June 2020	Policy Committee	Zoom
13 July 2020	Chairman and vice chairman's meeting	Zoom

22 July 2020	NALC Open Day	NALC
8 September 2020	Finance and Scrutiny Committee	NALC
15 September 2020	Management Board	NALC
22 September 2020	Larger Councils Committee	CCLA (TBC)
29 September 2020	Smaller Councils Committee	NALC
6 October 2020	Policy Committee	NALC
13 October 2020	NALC Open Day	NALC
26 October 2020	NALC Annual Conference Annual General Meeting	TBC
27 October 2020	NALC Annual Conference	TBC
17 November 2020	Management Board	NALC
18 November 2020	Improvement and Development Board	NALC
24 November 2020	Smaller Councils Committee	NALC
1 December 2020	Finance and Scrutiny Committee	NALC
8 December 2020	National Assembly	TBC