

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY | AGENDA

Date and time: 13 July 2021, 11:00 – 13:00. Open for morning coffee 10.30, break 12.00– 12.10

Introductions and welcome – 10:45 – 11:00

Via zoom.

1. Welcome by the Chairman

2. Apologies for absence and note changes in representation

2.1. That apologies are noted.

2.2. That new representatives introduce themselves to National Assembly.

- Cllr Sue Marler Norfolk Association of Local Councils

3. Minutes of previous meeting

3.1. To approve the minutes of the National Assembly held on 9 March 2021 and to consider any matters arising. Appendix 3.1

3.2. To receive the notes of the open councilor session on 13 April Appendix 3.2

4. Civility and respect in public life:

4.1. Discussion item. To receive an update on the work of NALC and partners including the Society of Local Council Clerks and the Local Government Association to promote and support civility and respect in public life

5. NALC's big themes

5.1. Discussion item. To receive a presentation followed by a discussion on NALC's big themes of health and wellbeing and young people.

6. NALC strategic direction

- 6.1. To receive an initial presentation/ report from the CEO following discussion at management board Appendix 6.1

7. Electoral arrangements

- 7.1. Management board agreed to recommend to National Assembly an on-line voting platform for this year's elections and to organise swift remote meetings of committees to elect chairs once those results were known.
- 7.2. To agree the process outlined and assembly members to consider standing, encouraging others to stand for election Appendix 7.2

8. Quarterly report (12:45 – 13:00)

- 8.1. To note the latest corporate performance statistics and NALC activity report. Appendix 8.1.

9. Committee Issues (11:15 – 11:30)

- 9.1. To receive summary highlight reports from committee chairs. Appendix 9.1

10. Next meeting

That the next meeting of National Assembly be held on 16 September 2021 via zoom.

APPENDIX 3.2 | NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OPEN COUNCILLOR | DRAFT MINUTES

13 April 2021

Via zoom

Around fifty assembly members, county association councillors and chief officers met on 13th of April in NALC's latest "open house" session designed to informally consider topical issues.

HRH Prince Philip

The chairman of the Association Sue Baxter welcomed members to the informal meeting and reported that she had submitted condolences on behalf of the sector on the death of HRH Prince Philip and that she had subsequently written Princess Anne, who had attended our 2019 conference, expressing sympathy on the death of her father.

Breakout/Workshop sessions

The meeting then split into four breakout rooms to hold workshop sessions to discuss aspirations for the sector and what needed to be done to address and deliver on those aspirations.

The notes of those sessions are attached at appendix 1. If attendees have anything to add please let us know.

A vote was subsequently held to identify the mood of the meeting in relationship to those discussions.

The top three aspirations were

1. To achieve the parishing of the whole of England
2. For the sector to be taken seriously and its potential recognised by other tiers of government and the public sector
3. To secure access to relevant government funding

The top four steps to address them were

1. Improve councillor quality and representation through training and new standards regime
2. Give greater powers to councils

3. Review the general power of competence to enable more councils to benefit from it.
4. No capping or referendum principles

The results of the votes are attached at appendix two.

These will be considered by policy committee as part of their refresh of NALC prospectus.

Unitary debate

Cllr Francis on behalf of Policy Committee introduced a discussion on the current MHCLG consultation on establishing unitary government in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset. A draft response – NALC Statement on Unitary Government - had been prepared by the committee and the views of the meeting were sought.

A number of issues and themes were identified including:

- Importance of seed funding county associations to help support the process of setting up new councils.
- It was important that the sector was involved in the discussions on the ground from an early stage and that the sector's views be reflected in the final decision.
- The process should be grassroots lead.
- It would be helpful to have reference in the submission to devolving assets and services; and associated funding
- There was general support for a single unitary structure across a clear geographical area, probably the county. The experience of multi-unitary government in some county areas had led to confusion..
- It was considered that the response could be sharpened up and David Francis agreed to review the response in light of comments received and invited and members to send him or Chris Borg any comments.

Assembly members then voted on the principles in the paper and agreed its submission to the Government with appropriate amendments.

Date of next meeting

It would be helpful to hear from members whether they felt this kind of meeting continued to be useful and if so what topics would you like considered.

Appendix 1

Notes from workshop / breakout group discussions

Task 1 : What are your top three aspirations for the sector?

Task 2 : What are the three most important issues that need to be addressed to achieve these?

Ray Wickson's group

Aspirations...

1. Parishing all of England
2. access to government funding
3. more clout and influence in planning system (right of appeal, protection for NPs, seat at table)

Addressed by...

1. No council tax referendums
2. training and development
3. GPC for all

Keith Stevens' Group

Aspirations:

1. Parishing the whole of the country with quality parishes
2. greater authority to local councils with direct access to funding
3. consulted more with respect given to our opinions by District and County councils

Addressed by:

1. Respect has to be earned ... we need more people to stand for elections we need more quality parishes
2. we need to define what is a quality parish....do we need parish meetings or should they merge with neighbouring parishes
3. CALCs need to be equal in quality and have funding provided

Jonathan Davies' group

Aspirations:

1. Better recognition of sector inc in resilience planning
2. Parish councils everywhere
3. Sector taken seriously by other tiers & access to funding streams
4. Greater collaboration between tiers
5. Planning influence

Addressed by:

1. Encourage elections (costs shouldn't be an impediment)
2. Better sharing of good practice
3. GPC/training development and standards
4. Extend coverage of ombudsman

Summarised as:

1. recognition & collaboration
2. look at GPC
3. extend coverage of ombudsman

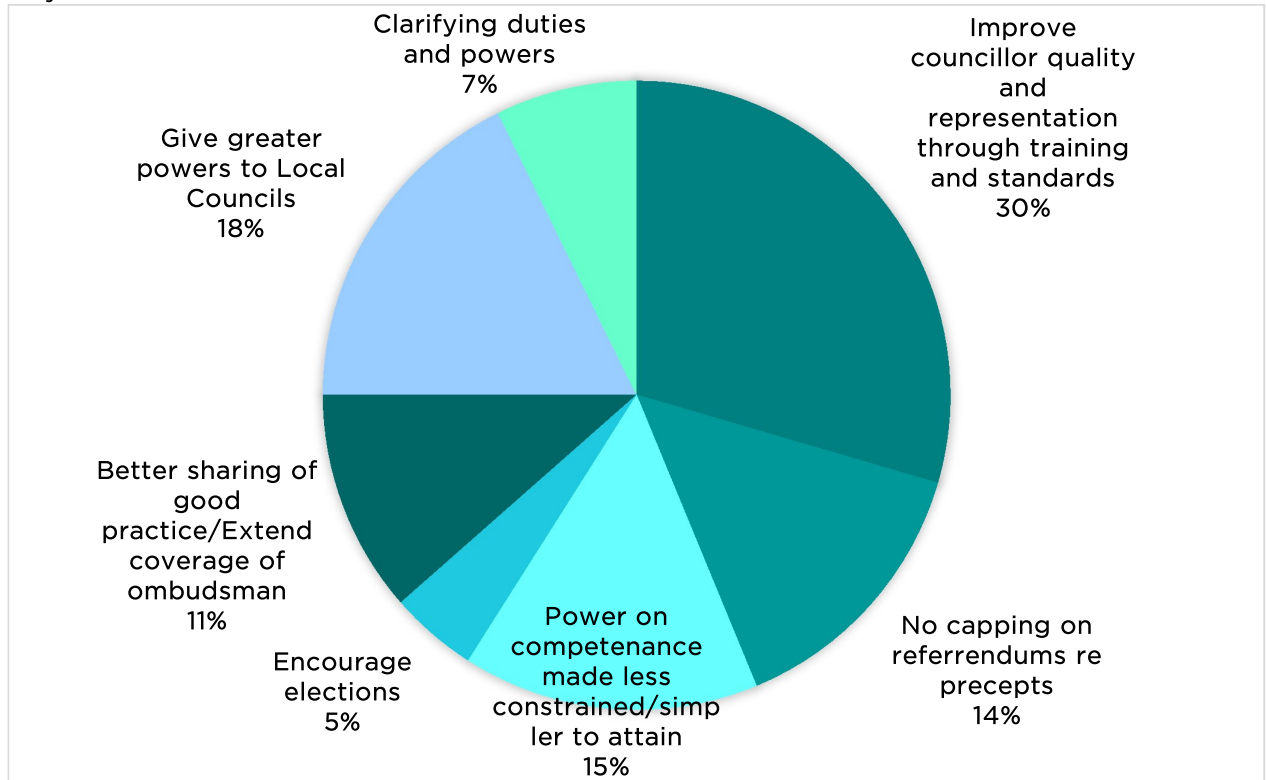
Mike Drew's Group

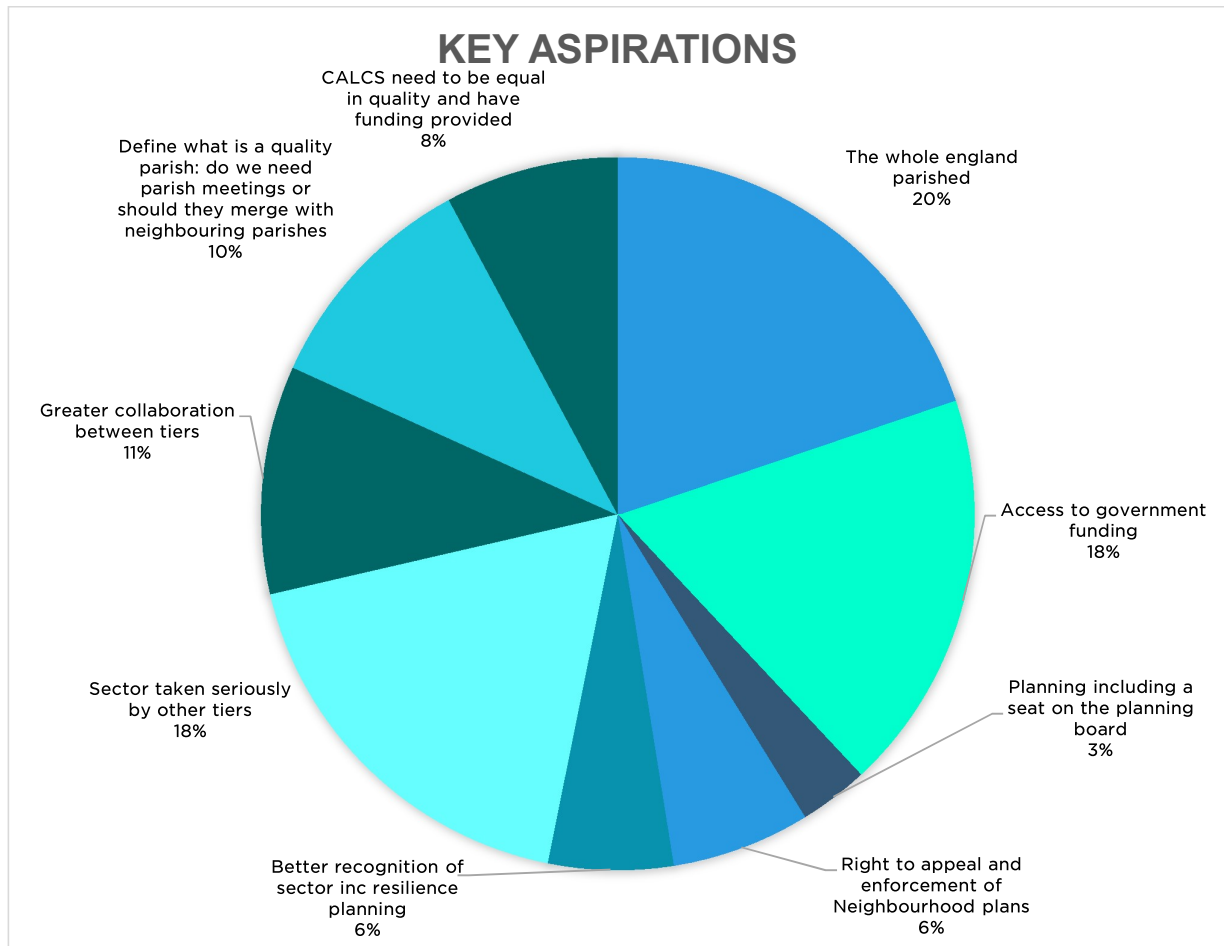
Summarised as

1. Improve Councillor quality and representation through training and standards
2. Improve finances via access to variety of funding e.g. business rates but would need an equalisation as distribution of business are not evenly spread.
3. give greater powers to Local Councils - clarifying duties and powers

Appendix two - Vote results

Key Issues:





APPENDIX 3.1| NATIONAL ASSEMBLY | DRAFT MINUTES

9 March 2021

Via zoom

| National Assembly | |
|----------------------|--|
| Cllr Mike Drew | Avon Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Elizabeth Luder | Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils |
| Cllr Mike Tew | Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Lillian Burns | Cheshire Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Graham Ford | Cornwall Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Jonathan Davies | Cumbria Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr John Plant | Derbyshire Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Ken Browse | Devon Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Janet Wallace | Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils |
| Cllr Keith Stevens | East Sussex Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Brian Brooks | East Riding North Lincolnshire of Local Councils |
| Cllr Peter Davey | Essex Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Rob McCarthy | Hertfordshire Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Bob Blezzard | Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Richard Parry | Kent Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Colin Peacock | Lancashire Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Tony Howard | Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Tony Hirons | Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Cllr Phil Harris | Norfolk Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Mick Baker | Nottinghamshire Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Mike Scott | Northamptonshire Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr David Francis | Northumberland Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Avis Thomas | North Yorkshire Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Malcolm Leeding MBE | Oxfordshire Association Local Councils |
| Cllr David Beechey | Shropshire Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Steve Cosser | Surrey Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Jenny Lawrence | Somerset Association Local Councils |
| Cllr Derek Liddell | South Yorkshire Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Mark Valladares | Suffolk Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Rosie Weaver, BEM (for part) | Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Peter Allison | West Yorkshire Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr John Scragg | Wiltshire Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Brian Kerr, OBE | Vice president |

Staff present:

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

Claire Goldfinch, projects officer (for part)
Farhana Miah, executive officer
Olivia Kane, receptionist
Claire FitzGerald, administration manager

Chairman welcome:

The chairman welcomed representatives to the meeting and asked assembly members to reflect on the following colleague who had recently passed away:

- Robin Went CBE DL (former NALC chief executive)

Minutes of the previous meeting:

The Assembly confirmed that the minutes of the meeting of National Assembly held on 8 December were accurate.

In matters arising Cllr Liddell requested for his attendance to be amended in the minutes.

RESOLVED: That the chairman be authorised to sign the draft minutes of National Assembly held on 8 December 2021 as a true record of the proceedings.

Changes in representation:

The following changes in representation were noted:

- Cllr Brian Brooks, East Riding North Lincolnshire of Local Councils
- Cllr Alan Humphries, Worcestershire Association of Local Councils
- Cllr Jenny Lawrence, Somerset Association of Local Councils
- Cllr Dave Fleming, County Durham Association of Local Councils
- Cllr Malcolm Butler, Hampshire Association of Local Councils
- Cllr Jonathan Davies, Cumbria Association of Local Councils

The new councillors were welcomed and each briefly introduced themselves setting out their experience and ambitions for the sector.

Updates from NALC committees:

Management Board

The chairman reported that Management Board had proposed to put a recommendation forward on adopting the code of conduct (see item below)

Finance and Scrutiny committee:

Cllr Davey reported that NALC's finances were sound with a projected year end surplus of £13,000. The next meeting in July will focus on the governance review which will involve making amendments to the following documents:

- Pensions Explained
- Financial regulations
- The Constitution
- Risk Assessment and Business Recovery
- Financial Overview

Cash balances at this point are healthy and amounted to approx. £494k compared to £474k in the previous year. On current performance at the lowest point of the year our cash position will be circa £300k. Cllr Parry queried about the current pension scheme, Steve Walker, reported that NALC had two schemes, the local government pension scheme and pensions trust. New staff were currently being enrolled into the pensions trust scheme.

Policy committee:

Cllr Francis welcomed comments on the report, in addition to this, the committee are busy working on the motions received and thanked the county associations for sending them. Recent meetings have focused on extending the deadline for accounts and audit for local councils and principal authorities and the green paper on procurement in the public sector. Cllr Blezzard asked for clarity around face to face meetings as councils are required to meet for their annual meetings and local elections. Justin Griggs head of policy and communications, reported that NALC have been lobbying on this extensively with the MHCLG and stakeholders, and the corona virus webpage will be updated on new developments.

Smaller councils committee:

Cllr Ford provided an update on SCC, the committee is going forward with informal meetings which have been a success, and is considering seeking further information on councils signing up to take action on the climate emergency.

Resolved: That the updates on committees report be received.

Civility in the sector: NALC position on the LGA's national code of conduct. **Joint work with Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)**

The chairman spoke on the LGA's national code of conduct and proposed the recommendation from management board that NALC recommends councils and county associations to consider adopting the new LGA code and that NALC ceases to publish its own code.

Cllr Hirons has reported that Leicestershire and Rutland Association and Principal authority colleagues have highlighted some issues with the code, lawyers in local government confirmed recently a number of authorities have advised not to adopt the model code of conduct..

Cllr Baxter reported that recent correspondence from Luke Hall MP, announcing the government would respond to the committee on standards in public life consultation, was a step in the right direction and NALC are trying their best to move the debate forward on sanctions. The chief executive welcomed feedback on the new code from Cllr Hirons and others to feed into the annual review of the code.

The chairman invited National Assembly to recommend the code to county associations and local councils and for NALC to cease the production of its own code as set out in the board's minute:

'In discussion there was general support for the new code and agreement that it should replace NALC's own code which would no longer be produced. The point was made that NALC's real concern was to see the standards regime have teeth by way of sanctions and other enforcement procedures. These were just as important as the code. It was noted that depending on the supplementary LGA advice there may be need to provide additional commentary and that could be picked up in the light of operating the new code. Noting the opposition of Cllr Francis, the board agreed to propose to national assembly in March that it recommend councils adopt the code and NALC cease to produce its own code.'

Resolved: That councils and county associations be advised to adopt the code and NALC cease to produce its own code. (26 voted for adopting the code of conduct, three voted against and one abstention).

The chairman reported on the recent meeting with SLCC, and the aim is to set up a joint project working closely with them to promote civility in the sector addressing concerns about inappropriate behaviour by councillors, clerks and the public. SLCC and NALC will set up a small group to work on this and regular reports would be made on progress.

Resolved: That the report be received.

Launch of Good Councillors Guide to Cyber Security in partnership with Microshade

National Assembly members were given a presentation by David Astwood from Microshade, on the recently published The Good Councillors Guide to Cyber Security. The presentation provided a summary of what the guide provides. The guide aims to help local councils understand the importance of cyber security and provides practical advice on minimizing risks to the council. It also features information on understanding the most common threats such as phishing, viruses, loss of data and how some simple steps can help protect the council's data and equipment. To read the guide for free, please [log in](#) and see Development tools.

Resolved: To receive the presentation on the Good Councillors Guide to Cyber Security.

The Task and Finish Group – Governance

The chief executive provided an update on the Task and Finish group to assess the implications of remote working and how the committees have been working over the last year. There was a broad consensus that there are some benefits of having face to face meetings and remote meetings which would be put forward to future planning.

Cllr Liddell asked if guidelines will be set when there is to be a face to face meetings, and provide enough notice to colleagues. The chairman noted that it will be noted in the calendar as to which meeting is a face to face and which one is remote.

Resolved: That the Task and Finish Group – Governance report be received and its general direction supported.

Monitoring and managing performance and service delivery

The chairman asked Assembly if they have any questions on the activity report. The chief executive encouraged national assembly to stand for the Assembly Elections at the end of year and informal meetings will be organised for networking.

Cllr Blezzard asked for an update on when the Devolution White Paper will be published, the chairman stated that the government has been preoccupied with the pandemic and it is still very much on the agenda to lobby with the MHCLG. Justin Griggs explained that they have plans to publish later in the year and will ask that question in upcoming meetings.

Cllr McCarthy suggested if it would be possible to detail what quarter the report covers as well as who the author of the report is. The chief executive noted and will take comments on board.

Cllr Francis asked for a brief update on the review of the practitioners guide on council audit with JPAG, the chief executive advised that the final practitioners guide is currently being revised and will be circulated end of March.

Resolved: That the activity report be received.

Next meeting

RESOLVED: That the next meeting of National Assembly be held on 13 July 2021 via zoom. We are also proposing to hold more open councillor sessions in the April and June. Dates to be confirmed.

COUNCILLOR SUE BAXTER

NALC STRATEGIC DIRECTION: MANAGEMENT BOARD PROPOSALS

NALC MISSION

“Local councils across the whole country will be the center 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 and working in partnership with them.

Vibrant, dynamic and effective local councils will help communities to help themselves building strength and resilience and improving the quality of life of residents.”

- Management Board endorsed as still broadly correct

STRATEGIC AIMS

- Strong national and county voices promoting the sector and our prospectus for ultra-localism
 - Creating more local councils in England
 - Supporting councils and councillors
 - Effective national and county associations working together to deliver our vision
-
- Management Board endorsed as still broadly correct
 - Limited updating of prospectus by Policy Committee to reflect levelling up and recovery agenda

POLICY OBJECTIVES

- Prospectus for ultra-localism
- Sets out the sector's offer to government
- Key statistics
- Four pillars (our asks)
 - Empower communities
 - Build capacity and support
 - More devolution and engagement
 - Flexible and diverse funding
- Management Board endorsed as still broadly correct
- Limited updating of prospectus by Policy Committee to reflect levelling up and recovery agenda

INTERNAL MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- Staff team operating broadly effectively from home
- Staff survey suggests productivity maintained and preference for a hybrid home/office working in future
- Move to Office 365 will support this and modernisation of processes to help address potential points of failure
- Risk assessment for partial return to 109 being prepared and with partial return will help identify office/desk space requirements and time to assess long-term office needs and use of 109
- Management Board endorsed this approach and direction

GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

- Governance and oversight by National Assembly, county associations, officeholders and committees
- Remote meetings worked well, move to hybrid solution of one physical meeting and three remote meetings as proposed by Task and Finish Group
- Enables and facilitates more remote meetings and NALC National Networks
- Calendar of meetings being drawn up
- Management Board endorsed this approach and direction

ENGAGEMENT WITH COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS AND COUNCILS

- Increased engagement with county associations including through weekly then fortnightly remote meetings with county officers, should continue
- Move to online events gone well with 1700 attendees, should continue with blended approach in future
- Establishment of NALC National Networks to widen engagement, participation, networking and sharing good practice
- Committee structure will need to be re-considered as networks develop
- Management Board endorsed this approach and direction

DIGITAL FIRST

- Last year shown NALC, county associations and councils increasingly moving online, underscores our agreed ambition to become 'digital first'
- Increasing use of information, advice, guidance and resources available on the website
- Supports our climate emergency declaration
- Investing in Office 365 and website redevelopment
- Management Board endorsed this approach and direction and continued investment in website redevelopment

MEMBER SERVICES

- In line with the strategic plan continued focus and strengthening of member services and shift to more use of externally provided services and the use of strategic partnerships to support NALC, county associations and councils
- These include HRSP, Breakthrough Communications, BHIB Councils Insurance and Local Government Association
- Also helps mitigate the risks of single points of failure within NALC
- Management Board endorsed this approach and direction

SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR STAFF AND COUNCILLORS

- Elections to officeholder positions and committees take place later this year
- Important to ensure candidates come forward and consider how we can encourage more people to get involved
- Need to develop further the staffing structure and capacity and capability at senior officer/middle management level
- Management Board endorsed this approach and direction

RELATIONS BETWEEN NALC AND COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

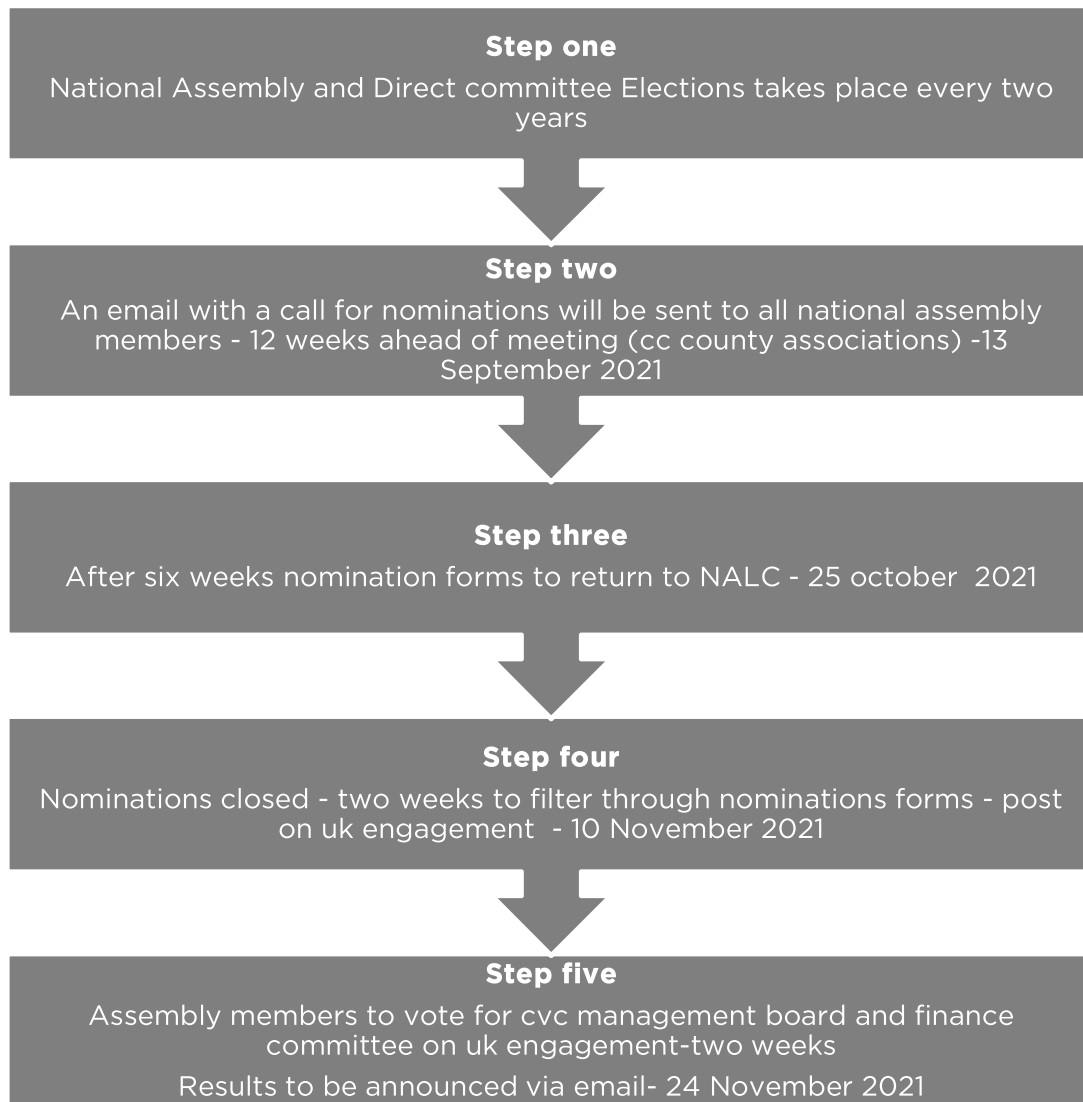
- Close working and trust between county associations as well as nationally and at regional level critical to our success, as is a healthy relationship between county officers and NALC staff
- Weekly then fortnightly remote meetings with county officers worked well and helped relationships and mutual understanding
- Some increased regional working between county associations and challenges in some areas, should continue to encourage close working and regional working
- Relationship between county officers, county association chairs and National Assembly representatives was also vital
- NALC and county association staff need to work closely together, an 'away day' style event would help develop team approach and culture
- Management Board endorsed this approach and direction

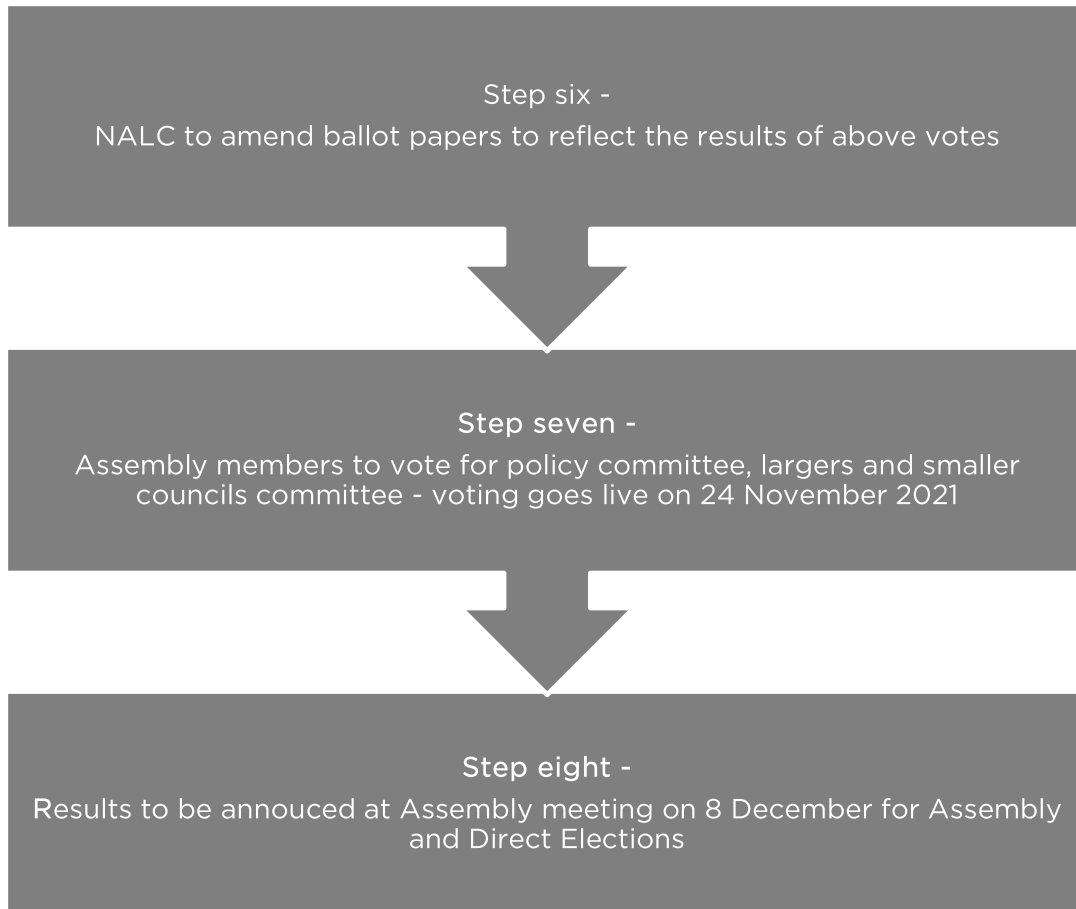
FINANCIAL PLANNING AND SOUND FINANCES

- Current strategy to cover at least 80% of costs from affiliation fees, reduce dependence on unstable sources of income
- Policy on minimum level of reserves is 13 weeks
- Some positive financial outcomes as a result of the last year but need to continue to invest in areas such as civility and respect project and website redevelopment
- Should continue three year budget strategy and build reserves to the minimum level and cover at least 80% of core costs through affiliation fees
- Management Board endorsed this approach and direction

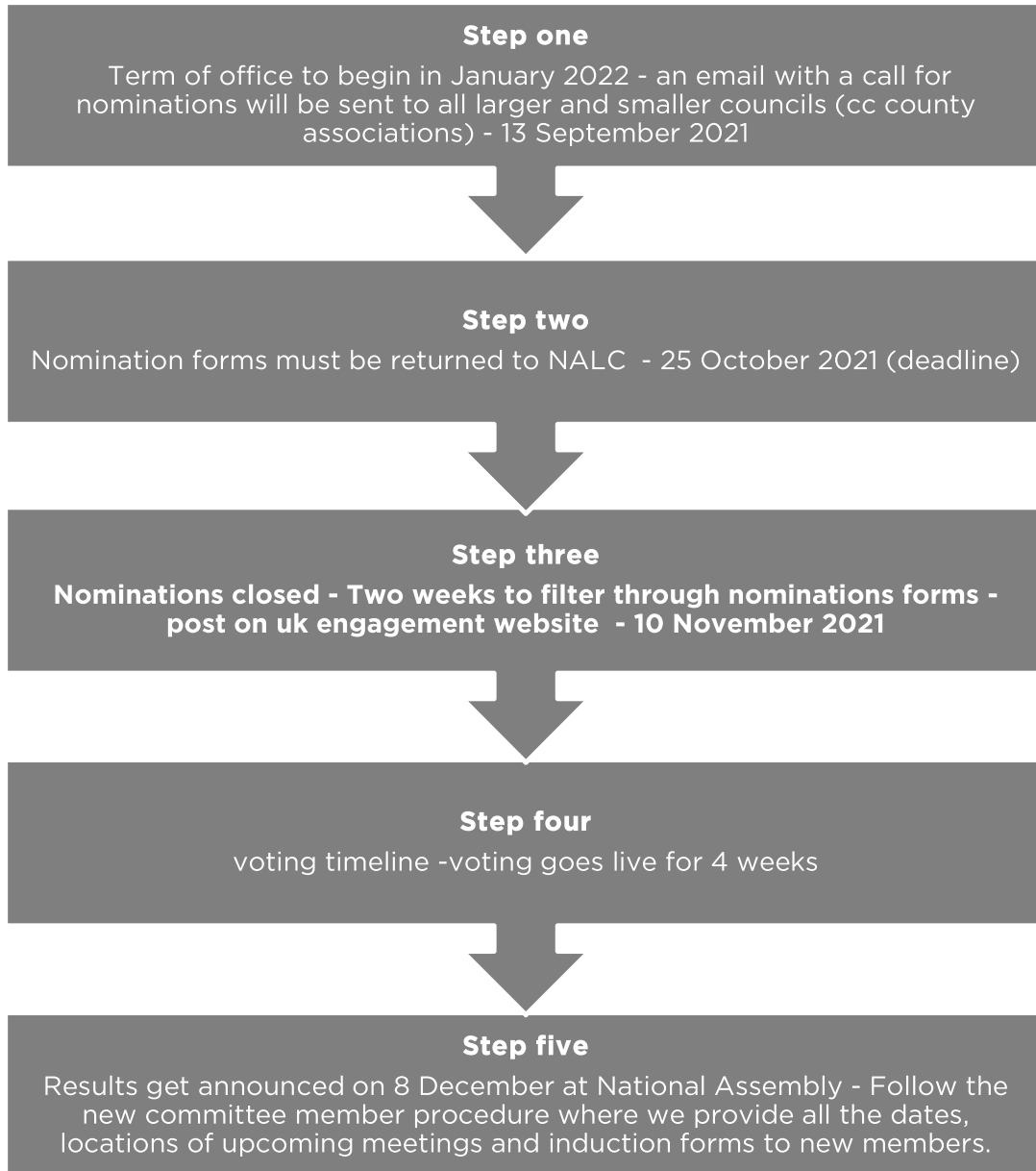
National Assembly process:

NALC elections process is a 12 week timeline from the date of National Assembly meeting on 8 December.





Direct elections process:



Information
Quarterly
summary report

March - May 2021

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INTRODUCTION

This report sets out progress delivering NALC's strategic plan including information on important internal issues, progress with our parliamentary and government affairs work, events, media coverage and publications and legal advice. The report will be largely work around the aims set out in the strategic plan and how we are working to achieve those aims.

This report covers the period since the last report to Assembly - March to May.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE HIGHLIGHTS

The Chairman's open letter to new councillors stressed the importance of upholding the highest standards of conduct and behaviour. This is an important message and not just for new councillors. We are working with the SLCC, One Voice Wales and the LGA on a civility project to ensure the message is heard.

Civility is the key word as it encompasses all relationships including respectful engagement between councillors and residents including in the on-line world. I spoke on this at a conference organised by our partners CCLA arguing that communities and place have never been more central to the future wellbeing of the country. This is a unique opportunity for our sector as the first tier of government. We must embed good governance, healthy workplaces and kindness at the centre of all we do.

Louise Smith of the LGA also spoke at this event about their work and you may find these top tips for councillors on handling on-line abuse and promoting digital citizenship useful. <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/guidance-and-resources/civility-public-life-resources-councillors/digital-citizenship>

Our remote events continue to go well with over 1700 attending and I'd like to mention the young people's event and the challenge from one speaker to all councillors – "could you tell a young person on your patch what your council has done for them?"

Our focus may have been on the local elections and encouraging more people to stand, but its worth noting that 200 neighbourhood planning referendums were held in May too with an average of 87% voting yes on a 43% turnout. No clearer evidence that neighbourhood planning should have a central role in the future planning system.

Finally with the death of the Duke of Edinburgh and the return to face to face meetings the sector has had to face new challenges and I'd like to commend the work of my colleagues and county officers in supporting councils through these difficult times. NALC staff are beginning to think about future working patterns and returning to London and we will endeavour to facilitate this in a sensitive way and consistent with our strategic direction which management board have given some initial consideration to.

POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS

This quarter's key headlines:

- **Engaging with government** – Remote meetings has been a focus through [our response to the High Court Judgement](#), contact with officials and ministers including [Sue's meeting with the local government minister Luke Hall MP](#), media coverage including by the [BBC](#), the remote meetings partners meeting which includes other local government bodies, and our submission to MHCLG's [council tax statistics for all local precepting authorities](#). We continue to provide the secretariat to the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on local democracy who [held their annual meeting to elect officers, review the last year and agree their work programme for the year ahead](#). Consultation responses included proposals for locally-led reorganisation, Lords devolution inquiry, permitted development regulations, net-zero, electronic communications infrastructure and rural broadband. We also met with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman regarding their triennial review and Defra officials in advance of a meeting between Sue and the new rural affairs minister Lord Benyon.
- **Bills and legislation** – The Non-Domestic Rating (Public Lavatories) Bill Lords finally received Royal Assent and concludes a prolonged and successful campaign by NALC and we have been pressing for swift repayment of backdated rebates. [We responded to the Queen's Speech](#) which set out the government's legislative programme for the session of Parliament including a Planning Bill and Levelling Up White Paper. The Environment Bill has moved to the Lords where we will continue to highlight the role local councils are playing in tackling climate change alongside pressing for new powers and funding.
- **Campaigns** – Our [Make a Change campaign](#) was another priority over the last quarter with around 2000 local councils having elections in May, activity included promoting previous resources, publishing councillor stories videos, a targeted Twitter advertising campaign and guidance on co-option. We also worked with the BBC on their [Election 2021: What about parish councils?](#), [Democracy Club on a voting information pilot](#) and held the inaugural meeting of the NALC National Network: LGBT+ councillors. We met with UK Finance to [push for an improvement in banking services to local councils](#).
- **Big themes** – Work is still underway on a dedicated webpage on our theme of young people and case studies publication, our online event on young people sold out and the recording is available for free. The survey on climate change is being analysed and on financial impact and recovery being developed.
- **Sharing good practice** – [Issue 2 for 2021 of LCR magazine](#) is a funding special and also contains [Sue's latest open letter](#) and articles on promoting civility in public life, tackling climate change, engaging young people, reducing car use, insurance guide and cybersecurity. A record number of 224 entries were received for our Star Councils Awards 2021 and are being assessed by our judging panel. Young people and community buildings were the themes of our sold-out online events. Our new [Tree Charter case studies publication](#) showcases the work of local councils protecting trees and woodland.

Next quarter's objectives:

- **Engaging with government:** Lobbying on remote meetings and civility in public life; meeting of APPG on local democracy on levelling up and engagement around the white paper; political party conferences; roundtable meeting with MHCLG officials; meeting with new rural affairs minister; Spending Review submission.
- **Bills and legislation:** Lords stages of Environment Bill; Planning Bill likely in the Autumn.
- **Campaigns:** Policy Committee review of NALC prospectus; meeting with the new chairman of the Greater London Assembly and provide support to campaign areas including Bankside in London; inaugural meeting of the NALC National Network: women councillors; publish local elections surveys.
- **Big themes:** Launch dedicated webpage on young people; inaugural meeting of the NALC National Network: young councillors.
- **Sharing good practice:** Publish Points of Light and issue 3 of LCR magazine; launch our Future Communities online conference taking place on 2 December; online events on planning, high streets and markets, climate change and NALC Star Councils Awards 2021 presentations.

MEMBER SERVICES

This quarters key headlines:

- **Team changes** – There have been many changes in the team over the last quarter. Charlotte Eisenhart's maternity leave started in March as did Jane Moore's temporary role as head of member services. Anders Hanson successfully completed his probation period on 14 May. Linda Hammond left NALC on 12 May and a recruitment process for the projects officer post is underway. Within the legal team, Guvynda Paddan-White's maternity leave began at the start of May. Gary Barker is working an extra day (now three days) and demand is currently being met within existing resources, with Martin Fine able to provide some cover. Demand will be monitored as to whether additional external resourcing is required.
- **High Court remote meetings case** – Being an interested party in the case put an additional burden on the legal team's resources. Although the case was unsuccessful, it served to raise NALC and the sector's profile within local government. We have been advising on the implications of the end of remote meetings (see next item).
- **Coronavirus webpage** – we continue to provide regular updates on the Coronavirus webpage with email alerts to notify members of any changes. This has included new guidance on returning to in-person meetings post the end of remote meetings.
- **Legal queries** – High volume of legal queries and providing informal advices - as well as dealing with 99 written and telephone queries in March, April and May, the legal team provided 172 informal advices. Demand was particularly acute in the run up to the end of remote meetings and local elections (on 6 May) and during the mourning period following the death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh in April.

- **Legal updates** – During this period: we reissued LTN 37 (freedom of information) and L01-21 (pre-election publicity). Members of the legal team provided legal updates/ training at the Yorkshire LCA conference and at Oxfordshire ALC and Leicestershire and Rutland ALC events and at an external Lawyers in Local Government event.
- **Local Council Award Scheme accreditation** – 161 councils were accredited in 2020 across local and national panels. The first round of national panel accreditation for 2021 received 22 applications. The panels have concluded their work and we are now in the process of confirming the results with the councils concerned. Round two has now started with 20 applications and these are in the process of being triaged.
- **Improvement and Development Board** – Received a report from the LGA on its project with Shared Intelligence to produce a devolution toolkit to encourage better partnership working between the tiers. Due to be published shortly.
- **Working with County Officers** – fortnightly Zoom meetings have continued. Meetings are a mix of guest speakers from partner organisations and updates from NALC staff and county officers.
- **E-learning pilot** – Assessment of the pilot is taking place. Since the launch of our e-learning platform 286 individuals have registered for 492 courses. We are working with Breakthrough Communications to bring more courses tailored for local councils onto the e-learning platform.
- **Model Code of Conduct** – The LGA launched their new model code of conduct for all tiers of local government in December last year. NALC was in close contact with the LGA throughout the development of this document. This quarter we have been a key stakeholder in the LGA's development of additional guidance to support the implementation of the new model code of conduct and associated guidance .
- **Civility** – NALC (Jane and Justin) met with the LGA in April to discuss joint working on Civility. The LGA recognised the need for guidance that is also suitable for local councils and recognised the need to engage with NALC at an early stage. Civility work is also underway, working with SLCC, county officers and One Voice Wales.

Next quarter's objectives:

- **COVID19 responsiveness** – We will continue to ensure a swift response to issues related to COVID19 and lockdown restrictions or changes
- **Website review** – We have started working with a user-testing company to help us assess the current website and how it is used. They will be reporting back at the start of June with their learning and recommendations for next steps. A draft plan for the rest of the website review is being discussed with colleagues.
- **E-learning** – Once the pilot assessment is complete we will be moving to commissioning new content that is specifically developed and tailored for local councils We will then be looking at promoting this more widely.
- **Civility** – progressing the sector-led civility work.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

This quarters key headlines:

- **Team changes** – Farhana Miah has recently started Maternity leave. This leaves a maternity leave vacancy which we are recruiting for. In the meanwhile Claire FitzGerald will cover the committees aspect of her role while Olivia Kane has taken on events support.
- **Governance and remote meetings** –NALC governance continues to successfully operate remotely
- **Building management - 109** – we continue to ensure that 109 is well maintained during this period and to work to ensure the building is appropriately managed or adapted to ensure Covid safety as restrictions are reduced.
- **LCAS**- we continue to successfully process new registrations onto the scheme and run meeting panels.
- **Events** – we continue to deliver the administration support and process payments for numerous online events
- **Upgrading NALC systems** – we successfully upgraded the NALC email system to provide greater capacity and reliability. The next step is to move to the Cloud on a managed basis. This work has commenced with a number of Microsoft tenancies having already been purchased as the new platform is being configured.
- **E-learning** – working with Member services to assist with the e-learning platform
- **HR support** - ongoing provision of HR support to NALC staff including contracts to new staff members, and management of other personnel matters including appraisals and recruitment.

Next quarters objectives:

- **HR support** – continuation to ensure that all HR policies are up to date and compliant with HR legislation
- **Employee Assistance Programme** – this has been extended to cover county association staff who want it, for a trial period.
- **Policies and procedures** - ensuring all internal documents are up-to-date and easily accessible to NALC staff. Ensure that policies such as the NALC constitution, standing orders are up to date
- **Governance review**- to assist consideration of existing policies and review documents.
- **Move to cloud based systems** – it is envisaged that the work to complete this project will be completed during this quarter.
- **Support** – our service area provides support to continue to work with other service areas to provide reliable support to our colleagues
- **Year-end audit**- we are working with Milton Avis to complete the audit of 2020-21 accounts.
- **Budget**- work has commenced on setting the budget for the next three years
- **Return to 109** – we are working on the next steps to ensure that the office is covid safe as restrictions change.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

If you would like to see the full set of data, they are available on request.

Publications downloads - as at 13.05.21)

| Publication | Member/Public | Downloads |
|---|---------------|----------------|
| <u>Good Councillor Guides</u> | | |
| Good Councillor | M | 3937 |
| Employer | M | 2580 |
| Finance & transparency | M | 2254 |
| Neighbourhood planning | M | 1044 |
| Community business | M | 914 |
| Cyber security | M | 772 |
| Transport planning | M | 525 |
| | | <u>12026</u> |
| <u>Legal Topic Notes (top ten)</u> | | |
| 05 Parish and community council meetings | M | 1,678 |
| 08 Elections and co-option (2020) | M | 1,477 |
| 31 Local council general powers | M | 1,399 |
| 87 Procurement | M | 1,223 |
| 80 Members conduct and interests | M | 793 |
| 02 The chairman of local councils | M | 699 |
| 09 Complaints | M | 694 |
| 37 Freedom of information | M | 599 |
| 38 Data protection | M | 594 |
| 22 Disciplinary and grievance arrangements | M | 589 |
| | | <u>9745</u> |
| <u>Other (top ten)</u> | | |
| How to respond to planning applications | P | 105,779 |
| All about local councils | P | 32,915 |
| It takes all sorts | P | 20,907 |
| Planning explained | P | 19,398 |
| Practitioners Guide 2019 | P | 15,742 |
| Local councils explained sample pages | P | 15,589 |
| What are local councils (Power to the people) | P | 15,532 |
| How to shape where you live | P | 15,352 |
| What is localism | P | 15,183 |
| Where next for neighbourhood planning | P | 12,760 |
| | | <u>269,157</u> |

Delegate numbers NALC online events July 2020 to present

| Event | Date | Delegate attendance (out of 120) | Total payout (£) | Pre-event information - Good/Very good | Event met expectations - Fully/Somewhat | Ease of access (Zoom) - Easy/Very easy to use | Would recommend NALC's online events to other | Recording payout per event (£) |
|---|------------|----------------------------------|------------------|--|---|---|---|--------------------------------|
| Building back stronger communities | 28/07/2020 | 30 | £ - | | | | | N/A |
| Building back stronger communities | 25/08/2020 | 73 | £ 2,388 | 67.7% | 87.9% | 97.1% | 88.2% | N/A |
| Putting trees at the heart of your community | 08/09/2020 | 120 | £ 97 | 75.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | N/A |
| Planning for the future | 18/09/2020 | 125 | £ 1,112 | 64.5% | 60.6% | 78.8% | 96.3% | FREE |
| Rebuilding sustainable communities | 28/09/2020 | 120 | £ 1,066 | 85.2% | 100.0% | 92.6% | 96.3% | £19.51 |
| Health and wellbeing week | 26/10/2020 | 17 | £ 77 | 72.2% | 94.5% | 100.0% | 94.4% | |
| NALC AGM | 27/10/2020 | 115 | £ - | 71.4% | 86.7% | 100.0% | 85.7% | |
| The future of health challenges post COVID-19 | 28/10/2020 | 26 | £ 520 | 50.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | £19.51 |
| Collaboration for health and wellbeing | 29/10/2020 | 44 | £ 863 | 77.3% | 100.0% | 95.5% | 95.5% | |
| Local councils and hidden disabilities | 30/10/2020 | 37 | £ 633 | 88.9% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | |
| Supporting mental health in your community | 30/10/2020 | 34 | £ 747 | | | | | |
| Frome Town Council (postponed) | 16/11/2020 | 7 | £ 263 | | | | | |
| Frome - Youth first | 17/11/2020 | 50 | £ 484 | | | | | |
| Local councils and the future of play | 09/12/2020 | 71 | £ 1,160 | 85.7% | 100.0% | 95.2% | 100.0% | £19.51 |
| Biggleswade Town Council | 25/01/2021 | 5 | £ 728 | | | | | |
| Biggleswade - Strategic planning for larger projects | 26/01/2021 | 50 | £ 512 | | | | | |
| Why representation in local councils matters | 23/02/2021 | 99 | £ 1,596 | 92.0% | 76.9% | 100.0% | 100.0% | |
| Make a change, become a councillor | 02/03/2021 | 204 | £ - | 100.0% | | 93.8% | 100.0% | |
| Building back resilient communities | 25/03/2021 | 120 | £ 1,414 | 63.6% | 90.9% | 100.0% | 100.0% | |
| Coastal communities | 27/04/2021 | 44 | £ - | | | | | |
| The power of a local council and community business partnership | 29/04/2021 | 85 | £ 2,611 | 86.7% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 66.7% | |
| LCAS - preparing an award winning application | 12/05/2021 | 60 | £ - | 81.8% | 100.0% | | | FREE |
| How to get young people involved in local councils | 13/05/2021 | 120 | £ 3,140 | 90.0% | 100.0% | | 100.0% | FREE |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1656 | £ 19,412 | 78.3% | 93.2% | 96.6% | 94.9% | £58.53 |

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Councils in membership

| | | | | 2020/21 | | | | 2019/20 | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|------------------------|------------|----------------------|---------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| | Councils in mem'ship change | Electorate change | %change of councils in mem'ship | Councils In Mem'ship | % In Mem'ship | No. Of Capped Councils | Electorate | Councils In Mem'ship | % In Mem'ship | No. Of Capped Councils | Electorate |
| Avon | 2 | 16,795 | 1.52% | 124 | 93.9% | 0 | 342,223 | 122 | 92.4% | 0 | 325,428 |
| Bedfordshire | 0 | 9,919 | 0.00% | 116 | 98.3% | 2 | 276,920 | 116 | 98.3% | 2 | 267,001 |
| Berkshire | -1 | -34,093 | -0.07% | 88 | 93.6% | 2 | 325,294 | 89 | 93.7% | 3 | 359,387 |
| Buckinghamshire | 4 | 60,354 | 3.72% | 175 | 96.2% | 1 | 531,363 | 171 | 92.4% | 0 | 471,009 |
| Cambridgeshire | 16 | 73,537 | 8.92% | 195 | 82.3% | 0 | 381,145 | 179 | 73.4% | 0 | 307,608 |
| Cheshire | -10 | 11,561 | -4.46% | 160 | 71.4% | 2 | 357,959 | 170 | 75.9% | 1 | 346,398 |
| Cleveland | 2 | 6,284 | -0.54% | 23 | 71.9% | 1 | 140,689 | 21 | 72.4% | 1 | 134,405 |
| Cornwall | 1 | -787 | 0.51% | 168 | 85.3% | 0 | 388,240 | 167 | 84.8% | 0 | 389,027 |
| Cumbria | -2 | 3,673 | -0.86% | 227 | 97.8% | 0 | 288,453 | 229 | 98.7% | 0 | 284,780 |
| Derbyshire | -8 | -8,342 | -3.92% | 176 | 86.3% | 0 | 359,639 | 184 | 90.2% | 0 | 367,981 |
| Devon | -8 | 12,873 | -1.68% | 339 | 93.6% | 1 | 532,756 | 347 | 95.3% | 0 | 519,883 |
| Dorset | -1 | 6,829 | -0.63% | 155 | 97.5% | 1 | 337,425 | 156 | 98.1% | 1 | 330,596 |
| Durham | -1 | 1,617 | 5.52% | 100 | 92.6% | 0 | 324,490 | 101 | 87.1% | 0 | 322,873 |
| ERNLLCA | -4 | -2,444 | -1.70% | 161 | 68.5% | 1 | 313,777 | 165 | 70.2% | 1 | 316,221 |
| Essex | 2 | 3,801 | 0.36% | 275 | 100.0% | 1 | 673,517 | 273 | 99.6% | 1 | 669,716 |
| Gloucestershire | -12 | 4,523 | -5.31% | 202 | 89.4% | 0 | 335,675 | 214 | 94.7% | 0 | 331,152 |
| Hampshire | -3 | -63,993 | 1.34% | 208 | 88.9% | 1 | 547,659 | 211 | 87.6% | 0 | 2018/19 611,652 |
| Hereford | -7 | -12,707 | -5.26% | 94 | 70.7% | 0 | 68,953 | 101 | 75.9% | 0 | 81,660 |
| Hertfordshire | 1 | 9,427 | 0.87% | 102 | 88.7% | 2 | 397,707 | 101 | 87.8% | 2 | 388,280 |
| Isle of Wight | -1 | 878 | -3.03% | 25 | 75.8% | 0 | 86,635 | 26 | 78.8% | 0 | 85,757 |
| Kent | 2 | 20,779 | 0.65% | 297 | 97.1% | 2 | 753,119 | 295 | 96.4% | 2 | 732,340 |
| Lancashire & Merseyside | -4 | -13,218 | -1.76% | 161 | 70.9% | 0 | 503,531 | 165 | 72.7% | 0 | 516,749 |
| Leicestershire & Rutland | 0 | 9,828 | 0.00% | 197 | 100.0% | 0 | 392,582 | 197 | 100.0% | 0 | 382,754 |
| Lincolnshire | 3 | 18,915 | 0.58% | 321 | 62.1% | 0 | 420,265 | 318 | 61.5% | 0 | 401,350 |
| Norfolk | -47 | -13,916 | -9.71% | 302 | 62.4% | 0 | 379,673 | 349 | 72.1% | 0 | 393,589 |
| Northamptonshire | 0 | 15,359 | -0.45% | 205 | 95.8% | 0 | 321,703 | 205 | 96.2% | 0 | 306,344 |
| Northumberland | -4 | 5,080 | -2.56% | 138 | 88.5% | 1 | 251,874 | 142 | 91.0% | 1 | 246,794 |
| Nottinghamshire | 5 | 30,178 | 3.11% | 154 | 95.7% | 0 | 241,455 | 149 | 92.5% | 0 | 211,277 |
| Oxfordshire | 9 | 30,226 | 3.61% | 239 | 96.0% | 1 | 416,485 | 230 | 92.4% | 1 | 386,259 |
| Shropshire | -1 | 11,410 | -0.56% | 173 | 96.1% | 1 | 379,998 | 174 | 96.7% | 1 | 368,588 |
| Somerset | -11 | 25,667 | -3.96% | 259 | 93.2% | 1 | 391,257 | 270 | 97.1% | 0 | 365,590 |
| Staffordshire | -3 | -11,607 | -1.60% | 155 | 82.9% | 0 | 388,090 | 158 | 84.5% | 0 | 399,697 |
| Suffolk | -3 | 23,998 | -0.81% | 336 | 90.3% | 1 | 420,294 | 339 | 91.1% | 1 | 396,296 |
| Surrey | 0 | 3,939 | 1.18% | 82 | 98.8% | 1 | 280,349 | 82 | 97.6% | 1 | 276,410 |
| Sussex East | 0 | -1,793 | 0.00% | 92 | 100.0% | 0 | 240,303 | 92 | 100.0% | 0 | 242,096 |
| Sussex West | -3 | 4,906 | 0.60% | 133 | 96.4% | 0 | 427,053 | 136 | 95.8% | 0 | 422,147 |
| Warwick | -1 | 3,335 | -0.53% | 177 | 94.7% | 2 | 356,319 | 178 | 95.2% | 2 | 352,984 |
| Wiltshire | 1 | -19,155 | 0.40% | 218 | 86.2% | 4 | 479,613 | 217 | 85.8% | 4 | 498,768 |
| Worcester | 2 | 25,506 | 1.32% | 145 | 96.0% | 1 | 268,775 | 143 | 94.7% | 1 | 243,269 |
| Yorkshire North | -7 | 3,766 | -1.75% | 348 | 78.0% | 0 | 401,620 | 355 | 79.8% | 0 | 397,854 |
| Yorkshire South | 0 | 4,170 | 1.06% | 76 | 90.5% | 0 | 270,721 | 76 | 89.4% | 0 | 266,551 |
| Yorkshire West | 1 | 14,567 | 0.08% | 83 | 93.3% | 0 | 469,575 | 82 | 93.2% | 2 | 455,008 |
| | -91 | 291,645 | -0.16 | 7404 | 86.3% | 30 | 15,465,173 | 7495 | 87.0% | 28 | 15173528 |

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FURTHER INFORMATION

For more details and updates on NALC's activity, please read the chief executive's bulletin, which is circulated every Friday. If you are not subscribed to the bulletin, you can do so at www.nalc.gov.uk/newsletter.

APPENDIX 8.1 | NATIONAL ASSEMBLY | COMMITTEE ISSUES

Management board

Cllr Baxter will provide a verbal report.

Finance & scrutiny committee

Cllr Davey will make a verbal report

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee met on 29 June. Members supported a motion from Shropshire to ban the sale and use of Chinese Lanterns. A motion from Berkshire concerning the standard of new urban drainage systems was deferred to allow further research into the nature and extent of the problem.

Since the previous meeting in March, responses were made on: the need for new legislation to authorise remote, decision-making council meetings; the relaxation of planning controls to support larger communications infrastructure (including 5G); and broadband in rural areas.

Members also considered progress and discussed the next steps regarding:

- The 'Toilet Tax'. This is now in law, but we need to ensure that refunds are made, where business rates have already been paid.
- Banking facilities for local councils (discussions with the banking industry to address various problems)
- Local council elections May 2021 (to launch a new survey of councillors, councils and CALCs)
- Climate Change campaign: to promote the good-practice examples, continue to lobby re the Environment Bill, and to evolve the Task-and-Finish Group into a broader, nationwide network
- Young people: to develop and populate a new area on the NALC website, to promote good-practice case-studies and to publicise safeguards
- Rural proofing: to identify some headline comments on the Government's first (internally-generated) rural proofing report.
- Planning: to take early action to lobby MPs about the prospective Planning Bill (regarding over-simplistic zoning designations, the extension of major 'permitted development' rights, and the application of crudely-determined growth targets). The committee would also draft a new prospectus, based on its existing policies, regarding its vision for the future of the planning system.

The committee also began work on the updating of NALC's 2017 prospectus for ultra-localism.

Larger councils' committee

Cllr Harvey will make a written report

Smaller councils' committee

At its recent meeting the Members of the Smaller Councils Committee made a number of resolutions both for its future activity and endeavours to serve more effectively, directly, constructively and relevantly its particular constituency as currently identified.

These ideas have grown out of a series of informal encounters typified by free and open debate and framed around an agreed set of core concerns. They have been informed by some detailed and useful research by the Committee vice- Chair and Cllr Lillian Burns, encompassing the following considerations which the Committee Members had debated and dissected on earlier occasions as free and open thinking was shared on:

- role function and remit of the Committee;
- its value, influence and regard;
- its interface (together NALC as a whole) with the nominal constituency;
- the opportunities and perceived need for initiatives to inform, support, encourage that constituency growing those Member Councils and their Members self-confidence and appropriate ambition with due regard to the role and function of the County Associations and associated bodies such as SLCC;
- the dearth of 'substantive data' concerning the overwhelming large proportion of the membership of NALC comprised by "Smaller Local Councils" using the current criteria. [It was noted at the out-set that some County Associations have adopted not totally convergent definitions for their own purposes.]

Some other draft ideas from the informal discussions have been referred back to the new Committee to be elected in October for further development and clarification.

At this point, the committee is petitioning National Assembly and The Board and thus to the A.G.M., as might be deemed necessary the following:

- as an immediate first step, the size of the Committee be increased by two members from the 'top-up' Directly Members contingent, effective October 2021:

- that the Chair of the S.C.C. of right be on the Management Board to affirm the status of the much more numerous and seemingly crowded-out Smaller / very Smaller Councils with a similar level of voice as the Larger Councils' Committee;

Internally, the committee plans

- That "Civility" is a standing item on future Smaller Councils Committee agendas;
- That an item be added to the next committee agenda on virtual forums for Smaller Councils, their specific concerns, challenges and aspirations .
- In addition, as soon as possible through the usual internal processes and in the next municipal cycle, the members of the present committee would seek to develop the implications and process of an helpful "qualitative survey" and examine the inter-action with Policy Committee concerning rural issues.

Our recommendations on the two first points are unanimous after full debate and I earnestly ask for support to put them into effect this year..