MEMBERSHIP

Regional nominations
- Cllr Paul Harvey - chair
- Cllr Allan Blakemore – Durham, Cleveland and Northumberland (Steve Ragg)
- Cllr Peter Allison – Yorkshire and Humber (Sheena Spence)
- Cllr Tony Howard – FEMALC (Katerina Evans)
- Cllr Lillian Burns – North West (Jackie Weaver)
- Cllr Steve Cosser – SERCAF (Trevor Leggo)
- Cllr Will Jackson – West Midlands (Lynda Wilcox)
- Cllr Mike Drew – South West (Deborah White)
- Cllr Sue Baxter – vice-president

Expressions of interest directly from National Assembly members
- Cllr David Beechy – Shropshire
- Cllr John Plant – Derbyshire
- Cllr Mick Baker – East Midlands
- Cllr Ray Wickson – Shropshire

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MEETING ONE – QUESTION ONE

Increasing engagement and participation with the sector bodies.

Background:

Recent NALC elections have not been heavily contested and change in membership slow. (see results of elections documents).

County associations also often have similar challenges getting people involved in their governance arrangements (members may want to comment/identify good practice).

Questions one and two:

How do we get more people from all backgrounds involved in their county and national association and how do we ensure wider engagement with sector and succession planning?

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Notes from meeting one

- Many organisations face similar challenges of involvement and survive. This is true of NALC, CALCs and the sector generally.

- The TFG discussed potential to set quotas or targets for involvement by different people, but generally did not support. Though steps should be taken to encourage associations to consider balance and to be open to wider involvement. CALCs should consider a number of things when they appoint a rep to NALC for e.g. diversity, succession planning etc.

- There was some discussions around how to get people more involved in the sector. Make our work more glamorous and publicise the work of county associations and NALC more effectively to reach wider audiences. Share roles around, separate role of chair of associations from assembly rep to ensure knowledge if one leaves.

- Continuation of remote and hybrid committees will help especially engaging with counties a long way away.

- Be clearer about what skills and expertise are required and cascade across all levels – district associations where they exist, counties and NALC.

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RECOMMENDATIONS Q1/2

- Support continuation of NALC approach to remote and hybrid meetings. Most to continue as remote with perhaps one face-to-face or hybrid meeting per "committee" per year.

- Publicise the work of county associations and NALC more effectively demonstrating their value and contribution.

- Identify skills and expertise and role specification for the various roles and cascade across tiers.

- Encourage county associations to think about who they appoint to the assembly role taking into account diversity, rotation, and succession planning.

- Possible use of assembly deputies, direct elections to committees and co-optees (from outside the assembly) to address shortages.

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ELECTIONS AND VOTING METHODOLOGY
Q3 & 4

Background

- In 2021 NALC held its office holder and committee elections (assembly and directly elected) using a web platform provided by an independent external company to enable electronic voting. With some teething issues this worked well. This replaced the previous pre-pandemic on-the-day ballot.

- Many National Assembly members argued that this made it easier to adopt a single transferable vote (STV) approach which NALC should consider. Mike Drew provided a background paper.

- Q3 – Should we continue with electronic voting?

- Q4 – Should we move to STV voting?

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Q3 & 4 VOTING METHODOLOGY – DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Q3. Electoral voting process -** There was some discussions around the elections platform used last year, majority felt it went really well and there is merit in using an electronic voting system as it allows flexibility to any last minute changes, looks professional and flows better in meetings.

- The group recommended that NALC continue to use electronic voting for assembly as well as directly elected elections moving forward.

- **Q4. Single transferable vote –** There were strong views in favour and against this proposal.

- The group felt that this would need to be taken to National Assembly and AGM to make a further decision and may be considered a constitutional change.

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Q5. SCOPE OF TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Q5. How radical do you want the group or its proposals to be? Wholesale review or addressing some of the specific issues already identified (report to follow). Some county officers have argued for a move from solely election to appointment or selection on skills grounds to promote excellence

What others do:

- NCVO has a mixed Management Board directly elected by membership and selected co-optees https://www.ncvo.org.uk/about-us/our-governance

- The LGA's management board is directly elected by its general assembly https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/LGA%20Articles%20of%20Association%20-%20July%202021.pdf#page12

- CPRE appears to appoint its trustees and board https://volunteer.cpre.org.uk/opportunities/26062-trustee-national-cpre-2022-02-21

- (NALC provides for co-optees which could help address these issues)

Q5 HOW RADICAL DO YOU WANT THE GROUP OR ITS PROPOSALS TO BE? DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The TFG discussed at length what the group should focus on and how wide its proposals should go.

- In general the consensus was that there was no need to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Management Board worked well as did Finance and Scrutiny.

- The new national networks encourage greater involvement but need to be clear how they feed into NALC policy and ensure they have officer support (where appropriate).

- The definition of larger and smaller councils needed further consideration and the current survey of smaller councils may provide relevant intelligence

- RECOMMENDATION – That the TFG focus on the discrete issues previously identified rather than range more widely.

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MEETING – 28 JUNE 11.00 - AGENDA

- Definition of smaller and larger councils
- Issues raised by committees
- Role of national networks
- Representations from Isle of Wight representative

For next meeting
- Issues raised in previous review
- Housekeeping/ committee administration matters

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DEFINITION OF SMALLER AND LARGER COUNCILS

- This has been discussed at length in previous reviews and no conclusion reached.

- The current definition for larger council is a council with an electorate of above 6000 or annual budgeted spend or income above £600k. Larger councils can request direct access to NALC services. There are about 1000 such councils.

- The super councils network consists of councils with £1m precept income or £1.5m annual turnover. There are around 70. They can pay an additional fee to access LGA associate membership

- The current definition for a smaller council is any council with an electorate below 6000, probably around 7000 councils.

- Question 6 – Does the TFG wish to recommend any amendment?

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VIEWS FROM MANAGEMENT BOARD

a) Frequency of Management Board meetings and the need for greater councillor involvement in decisions, giving a steer on direction of travel. There should be a call for items for inclusion on the agenda

b) Minutes should be reported to National Assembly for agreement

c) The Management Board terms of reference should include oversight of relationships with trades unions.

d) The board should have a role in hearing grievance appeals

e) the need to promote diversity; the need to encourage more people to get involved in the work of their CALC and NALC;

f) the importance of face-to-face meetings and conferences in encouraging engagement;

g) directly elected positions have provided a route to get people involved in the assembly;

h) the importance of existing assembly members promoting their work to colleagues

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POLICY COMMITTEE VIEWS

a) The preamble sentence was from a previous tidying up exercise and would be deleted.

b) National Assembly would be undertaking a governance review which would provide an opportunity to consider issues raised such as councilors serving on multiple committees.

c) Consideration should be given to speeding up the policy development process through consultations, giving earlier notice and more time to respond and increasing the number of responses.

d) It was suggested that the overall terms of reference document for all committees and National Assembly should include some reference to making co-options (which are permitted via the constitution).

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LARGER COUNCILS' COMMITTEE VIEWS

a) It was suggested a new bullet under the last section be inserted to reflect the committee being a voice for larger councils within the organisation.

b) The definitions of a larger council and for councils in the Super Councils Network (SCN) be reviewed during the governance review being undertaken by National Assembly.

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SMALLER COUNCILS' COMMITTEE VIEWS (!1)

a) The number of directly elected committee members should be increased from up to three to up to five.

b) There was also a typing error in line b and county association should be plural.

c) It was noted Policy Committee would take the lead on rural issues, but the Smaller Councils Committee would be kept up to date and asked for input where appropriate.

d) Communication and engagement with smaller councils was important and needs to be improved.

e) Engagement with smaller councils on the climate emergency is also critical

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SMALLER COUNCILS' COMMITTEE VIEWS (2)

a) Several National Networks had been established and the committee should consider a similar network for smaller councils and reducing meetings of the committee.

b) The definition of a smaller council should be considered in the governance review.

c) The inconsistency of county association communication with smaller councils was highlighted and area committees should have a standing item on smaller council issues.

d) Part of the committee's job is to encourage smaller councils to put proper policies in place to improve governance.

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ROLE OF NATIONAL NETWORKS

- What are your views of national networks?

- How should they develop?

- How do they feed into policy making and overall work of the association?

- Do they need to feature in standing orders or constitution etc

- National Networks (nalc.gov.uk)

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REPRESENTATIONS FROM ISLE OF WIGHT

- See attached note