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TASK AND FINISH GROUP | ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Date: 1 September 2022

Location: Zoom

Present: Cllr Peter Allison, Cllr Paul Harvey, Cllr Sue Baxter. Cllr Stephen Cosser, Cllr Lillian Burns and Cllr Mike Drew, Jonathan Owen chief executive and Farhana Miah executive officer.

Noted current distribution of councils sizes.

Precept	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
-£40**	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (+1)
£0	1,339 (-17)	1,360 (+21)	1,362 (+2)
£1-24,999	5,686 (-113)	5,606 (-80)	5,511 (-95)
£25,000-£124,999	2,105 (+84)	2,142 (+37)	2,172(+30)
£125,000-£249,999	500 (+15)	513 (+13)	538 (+25)
£250,000-£999,999	511 (+26)	529 (+18)	553 (+24)
£1,000,000-£1,999,999	58 (+7)	62 (+4)	72 (+10)
£2,000.000-£2,999,999	5 (0)	5 (0)	8 (+3)
£3,000.000-£6,499,999	3 (+1)	3 (0)	3 (0)
£6,500,000 plus	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Task and finish group re-iterated its previous view that smaller and larger councils' committees were best considered not part of NALC's governance and instead set up special interest groups for the largest and smallest councils. Agreed after vote 4-1 in favour.

ACTION: Assembly to be invited to support drawing up proposals for special interest groups post 2023. Consultation to take place with committees etc. Exact council size coverage to be determined.

ACTION: If the committee structure remains review size etc of committees for 2023 elections.

Committee issues:

- 1) Membership of multiple committees the ruling stopping members of Policy and Finance Committee from serving on the Management Board should be dropped. It is not only not necessary in these days of greater transparency, but it is potentially preventing suitably talented people from serving NALC to the full.
- 2) Alternative proposal from 2019 – remove ability for councillors to serve on several committees

Decision: TFG was in favor to drop these restrictions. But keep under review

- 3) Could it be written into standing orders and the terms of reference that board and committee members are expected to do their best to keep abreast of other committees? There may even be occasions where joint committee meetings are appropriate. This option should be offered in the terms of reference document.

Decision: Need to incorporate into role profiles not standing orders.

- 4) There needs to be a view of the terms of reference of each committee. While there is a governance group in existence, it is appropriate that it should address itself to each committee's terms of reference and ask the question – is each one fulfilling all its purposes.

Comment: The terms of reference are regularly reviewed by committees. Most recently first cycle of 2021/2022.

Decision: The terms of reference need to be reviewed by each committee later.

Areas already identified for consideration by committees during their consideration of their terms of reference in first cycle 2021/2022 include:

Management Board:

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 inclusion on the agenda.

Comment: Done – informal meetings. Draft agenda circulated.

Minutes: Minutes should be reported to National Assembly agreement.

Comment: Reported for info. If agreement decisions, would be delayed. Call in?

Decision: Minutes should be agreed by committee itself and circulate to National Assembly for information, recommendations outside delegated authority be put forward to National Assembly and members may wish to comment.

The Management Board terms of reference should include oversight of relationships with trades unions. In the past these had been overseen by a dedicated committee.

The board should have a role in hearing grievance appeals

Comment: NALC internal grievance procedure includes mechanism for councillors to hear final appeals

Several other points were made which should feed into the governance review including: the need to promote diversity; the need to encourage more people to get involved in the work of their CALC and NALC; the importance of face-to-face meetings and conferences in encouraging engagement; directly elected positions have provided a route to get people involved in the assembly; and the importance of existing assembly members promoting their work to colleagues.

Policy Committee:

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

National Assembly would be undertaking a governance review which would provide an opportunity to consider issues raised such as councillors serving on multiple committees- detailed above

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 – On – going

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

Larger Councils Committee:

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. – Done

2) 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. On-going.

Smaller Councils Committee:

The number of directly elected committee members should be increased from up to three to up to five (but see below for latest SCC proposal)

Decision: To be considered if proposal for special interest groups not accepted.

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

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.

Communication and engagement with smaller councils was important and needs to be approved. – issue for county associations too.

Engagement with smaller councils on the climate emergency is also critical.

Several national networks had been established and the committee should consider a similar network for smaller councils and reducing meetings of the committee – special interest group proposal would meet this objective.

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

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

Part of the committee's job is to encourage smaller councils to put proper policies in place to improve governance – for county associations

Smaller Councils Committee survey report has relevant recommendations

That the committee requests, as a matter of urgency, that the constitutional task and finish group addresses the definition of smaller and other local councils and provides justification for any changes made to the definition.

Resolved (2): That membership of the Smaller Councils Committee should be expanded to include three National Assembly members and eight directly elected members – one from each region, the committee chair to sit on

Management Board and the committee to retain the power to co-opt members based on strengths.

Outstanding issues from 2019 review:

MB to appoint champions for largest and smallest councils to sit on committees. (Alternative, their chairs to sit on management board)	Not progressed - covid	
Limit length of time councillors can be their association representatives and/or sit on committees	Not supported	
Remove ability for councillors to serve on several committees	See above	