

27 August 2015

An Open Letter to Local Councils and County Associations of Local Councils

Dear Colleague

Over many years there has been much discussion about whether the Association's members should be individual councils organised through County Associations or whether it should become a federation of County Association members. This proposal was most recently made in a motion to last year's AGM by Northamptonshire CALC which was defeated by 54 to 24 votes. The motion read:

"That this AGM resolves that county associations should be the members of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), effectively a national federation of county associations, with councils being members solely of the county association."

In order to try and resolve this position for the foreseeable future, National Council asked NALC's retiring President Lord Lytton to establish a small group of independent experts to investigate and make proposals. The group was made up of the following individuals:

- Professor Colin Copus, Professor of Local Politics and Director of the Local Governance Research Unit in the Department of Politics and Public Policy of De Montfort University;
- Freddie Gick, former research scientist and international management consultant, Chair of Civic Voice;
- Earl of Lytton, chartered surveyor and NALC president for 15 years until 2014. Chairman of the review group;
- Lord Mackay of Clashfern former Lord Chancellor (1987-1997);
- Nigel Rawlings, Vice-President of NALC involved in Centenary Trust that acquired 109 Great Russell Street;
- Together with Ken Browse, current Chairman of NALC and Jonathan Owen its Chief Executive.

The Group concluded:

"Whilst the Group recognised that there were conflicting and strong views held by Associations, it was unanimous in concluding that the members are the individual Parish or Town Councils within the County area who are required to organise themselves into a County Association (for obvious administrative and practical reasons)."

On 9 June after extensive debate and a vote (9 in favour, 3 against and 1 abstention) Executive Committee agreed to recommend the report and its conclusions to National Council. National

Council on 30 June then agreed by a vote of 28 to 5 that the report be endorsed and that wider views be sought for reporting to the AGM in October.

It is our intention to invite the AGM at its meeting on 28 October to agree Lord Lytton's report. The AGM is the Association's sovereign body and if the report is agreed we will ask Executive Committee to set up a small task and finish group to commission external lawyers to revise and tidy the constitution accordingly for adoption by the 2016 AGM.

Lord Lytton's report also made some suggestions about working together to improve the sector by enhancing and strengthening the central and essential role of County Associations including building capacity, sharing services and investing as necessary. Of course, as independent bodies it is not for NALC to require such changes, but healthy County Associations are vital to the success of us all and the sector generally. We feel that there is a further conversation to be had about how County Associations should develop and operate in the future and to that end we will propose establishing a task and finish group; reporting to National Council and next year's AGM, to oversee these discussions and identify some principles which County Associations may want to consider.

You can read a full copy of Lord Lytton's report on NALC's website by [clicking here](#) and we would invite you to share any views you may have with NALC and/or your local County Association by October 9th for reporting to the AGM. Please e-mail any comments to us or Claire FitzGerald at NALC for collating (claire.fitzgerald@nalc.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely

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