



—OPEN LETTER—

16 NOVEMBER 2021

RE. TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH

‘Together’ was the theme underpinning this year’s excellent Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) hybrid national conference.

In her keynote speech to that conference, Sue described how in reflecting on the last five years as chair of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), including many successes and achievements during this period, one phrase kept returning to her time and again: together we stand.

The title of that conference – together we can do so much – was aptly taken from a quote by the inspirational Helen Keller.

And in Wales, One Voice Wales (OVW) and the SLCC are working closely together with Welsh Government to develop the capacity of local councils to confidently deliver for their communities.

NALC, SLCC and OVW all believe that these shared sentiments will be the key to the continued success of the first tier of local government in England and Wales and will ensure we can unlock new opportunities.

Because local councils undoubtedly have a bright future and a vital role to play in helping our nations recover from the pandemic, putting community and place at the heart of the key challenges that lie ahead.

Together we stand. And united we will thrive.

But if we are to seize the moment and make the most of our potential, it is crucial we build on our joint work together at all levels.

This includes lobbying on the issues that concern us such as ensuring that local councils are recognised as an integral part of local government, that they have fair funding and financial freedom, and that they can hold remote council meetings in England which is already the case in Wales.

As well as providing expert and professional support to councils, councillors and clerks through advice, guidance, training and other resources, working through our networks of county branches, county associations and area committees.

It is a strength that so many local councils are in membership of NALC and their county association and OVW. And that so many local councils support their clerk's membership of the SLCC. We would like to thank you for that support.

However, to build on this and continue to support you effectively, we are coming together to ask all councils, clerks and councillors to do two things.

Firstly, continue to make provision in your budget for your council's membership of NALC or OVW and your clerk's membership of SLCC. If you are not already a member of either we would strongly urge you to consider joining.

Secondly, invest in training and development of your clerks and councillors. This includes ensuring you have made sufficient budgetary provision.

By being members of both organisations, you will receive complementary support tailored to your local leadership roles as professional clerks and councillors.

In particular, you will be able to benefit from the work of the new civility and respect project which together SLCC and NALC are jointly funding; and OVW actively participating in. You will be able to access via our websites a new suite of resources for clerks, councillors and councils to promote and support civility and respect in the sector. This will include advice, guidance and model policies but also continued work together pressing the UK Government to respond to and implement the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

As the chairs of the NALC, OVW and SLCC, we are certain that membership of our organisations is vital and will make the sector stronger, more respected by the UK and Welsh Governments and better able to meet the needs of residents and communities.



Cllr Sue Baxter
Chair
NALC



Cllr Mike Theodoulou
Chair
OVW



Steve Trice
Chair
SLCC