

LARGER COUNCILS COMMITTEE| AGENDA

Date and time: 30 April 2024 11:00 – 15:00

Location – in person – meeting room 10 at The Office Group, the Bloomsbury Building,
10 Bloomsbury Way, Holborn, London, WC1A 2SL

Any member wishing to submit an apology for this meeting please contact NALC at
NALCcommittees@nalc.gov.uk.

*(Please note there will be a short ten-minute comfort break at 12:05 p.m. and a
sandwich lunch served at 13:00)*

DECISION ITEMS (11:00 a.m. – 12:05 p.m.)

1. Welcome & apologies [11:00 a.m. – 11:02 a.m.]

- 1.1 Welcome to the session (committee chair).
- 1.2 To receive any apologies (committee chair)

2. Minutes arising from previous committee session on 6 February 2024 [11:02 a.m. – 11:05 a.m.]

- 2.1. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2024 – appendix 2.1.

3. Work plan 2024-25 [11:05 - 11:20]

- 3.1 To receive an update on Management Board's feedback on the committee's work plan to deliver the National Assembly work programme/priorities for 2024/25 – see appendix 3.1

4. Artificial intelligence and its application to larger council operations – break-out session [11:20 – 12:05 p.m.]

- 4.1 To break out into smaller groups in meeting room 10 (or elsewhere outside meeting room 10 nearby in the building) and discuss / agree answers to the below short questions regarding the current and future implications for larger councils of artificial intelligence upon their service delivery (suggest one scribe per group):

- What does the term “artificial intelligence” mean in local government terms?
- How does artificial intelligence currently impact the operations and service delivery of your larger council?

- How do you think artificial intelligence will impact on your larger council's operations and service delivery in the future?

Please then re-group in meeting room 10 where one member of each group will be asked to summarise their group's feedback.

To have a short coffee break between 12:05 p.m. and 12:15 p.m.

DISCUSSION ITEM (12:15 – 13:00)

5. Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) update (12:15 – 13:00)

- 5.1 To receive a verbal update on current CIPFA work and campaigns regarding local government financial resilience – Jennifer Bevan, advisor at CIPFA.

Lunch – a sandwich lunch will be served in meeting room 10 between 13:00 and 13:30

INFORMATION ITEMS (13:30 – 15:00)

6. Member services update (13:30 – 14:00)

- 6.1 Larger council workforce update - to receive an update on workforce projects NALC is working on for the sector and to receive feedback from committee members.
- 6.2 Local Council Award Scheme criteria review – to receive an update and feedback on the recent Local Council Award Scheme criteria review, to discuss its implications for larger councils and their support needs.

7. Committee elections feedback 2024-25 (14:00 – 14:15)

- 7.1 To discuss feedback from the 2024-5 committee direct elections process and to feed back to the administration manager.

8. Martyn's law update (14:15 – 14:30)

- 8.1 To receive a short update from the policy manager on the latest meeting of the Martyn's Law Steering Group on 7 March 2024.
- 8.2 To receive a short update on NALC's submission to the Martyn's Law (Draft Terrorism [Protection of Premises] Bill) Home Office standard tier consultation from the policy manager.

9. NALC National Networks (14:30 – 15:00)

- 9.1 To receive short verbal updates in person and via Zoom from each of the co-chairs below on the current work of their NALC National Networks:

- Cllrs Paul Harvey and Mike Drew - Super Councils Network (in person 10 minutes).
- Lisa Bowman - Coastal Communities Network (Zoom, 10 minutes).
- Cllrs Sarah Barker - Climate Emergency Network (Zoom, 10 minutes).

10. Date and time of next committee meeting (15:00)

The next session of the committee will take place by Zoom from 10:00 to Noon on Tuesday, 23 July 2024.

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Appendix 2.1

LARGER COUNCILS COMMITTEE | DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting of the Larger Councils Committee on 6 February 2024 at 10.00 taking place by Zoom.

Present (online):

Councillors Mike Drew (committee vice chair), Iain Hamilton (committee chair), Peter Astell (committee vice chair), Cllr Paul Harvey (Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes), Katharine Keats Rohan (Oxfordshire), and directly elected clerks, Carl Hearn, Shar Roselman and Steve McNay.

Staff present: Chris Borg (policy manager), Charlotte Eisenhart (head of member services), Justin Griggs (head of policy and communications) and Jonathan Owen (chief executive)

Other guests in attendance: Annie Child, chief executive officer at SAAA (for part).

DECISION ITEMS

1. Welcome & apologies

1.3 Welcome to the session (committee chair).

The incoming committee chair welcomed all attendees to the session.

1.4 To receive any apologies (committee chair)

Resolved: It was confirmed that no apologies had been received for the session.

2. Minutes and notes arising from previous committee sessions on 31 October 2023 and 14 December 2023

2.1 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2023

Resolved: That the draft minutes of the formal committee session held on 31 October 2023 be noted.

2.2 To note the notes of the short governance session of the committee on 14 December 2023

Resolved: That the notes of the short governance session of the committee on 14 December 2023, be noted.

3. Work plan 2024-25

3.1 To consider a report on the committee's work plan to deliver the National Assembly work programme/priorities for 2024/25

Resolved: That the committee build into its work plan for 2024-5 the need to monitor the impact of artificial intelligence on larger councils, grant funding for local councils fighting climate change, an ongoing review of thresholds for larger and Super councils and the need to create new larger councils also during boundary reviews.

4. Co-options and additional expertise

4.1 To identify proposals for co-options and securing additional expertise to the committee, as needed.

Resolved: That no co-options be made to this committee currently, but and that the membership of this committee be circulated to it again.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. SAAA update

5.1 To receive a verbal update on SAAA current work projects and implications for larger councils – Annie Child, chief executive at SAAA.

Resolved: That Annie Child be thanked for her excellent and comprehensive presentation, that NALC continues to work closely with SAAA on future reviews of upper and lower audit regime thresholds for smaller authorities, transitioning the AGAR form online, and that the links to the National Audit Office auditor guidance note 2 and the SAAA annual report be circulated to the committee.

A short coffee break ensued between 11:10 and 11:20 a.m.

INFORMATION ITEMS

6. Member services update

6.1 Introduction to NALC's member services - Charlotte Eisenhart, head of member services.

Resolved: That the head of member services be thanked for her helpful and thorough summary of the work of the NALC member services team.

6.2 Launch of the new model and template contracts of employment for local councils - the committee is asked to note the [launch](#) of these new documents.

Resolved: That the head of member services be thanked for her helpful summary of the model and template contracts of employment for local councils and that the committee keeps NALC updated on how they bed in, in their areas.

6.3 Local Council Award Scheme criteria review

Resolved: That the head of member services be thanked for her summary of the ongoing review of Local Council Award Scheme criteria and that committee members encourage their larger councils to respond.

7. Martyn's law update

7.1 To receive a short update from Shar Roselman on the inception meeting of the Martyn's Law Steering Group on 21 November 2023.

Resolved: That Shar Roselman be thanked for her excellent summary of the work of the sector Martyn's Law Steering Group which would met again very soon to inform the NALC and SLCC responses to the [standard tier consultation](#) by 18 March 2024.

8. NALC National Networks

8.1 To receive an update on the NALC National Networks for Super Councils, Coastal Communities and Climate Emergency

Resolved: That committee members from Super councils be encouraged to attend the next Zoom session of the Super Councils Network, taking place on 14 February 2024.

9. Date and time of next committee meeting

The next session of the committee will take place in person from 11:00 to 15:00 on Tuesday 30 April 2024 in meeting room 4 at The Office Group, the Bloomsbury Building, 10 Bloomsbury Way, Holborn, London WC1A 2SL.

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Appendix 3.1

Larger Councils Committee work plan 2024-25

1. Purpose of report

2. For direction.

3. Summary

4. This report summarises the committee's proposed projects and programmes for the 2024/25 cycle.

5. Recommendation

6. That the committee receives an update on the Management Board feedback to the proposals in 13-23, in the following committee work plan.

7. Financial implications

8. All commitments can be met from the within existing staffing resources and budget; some new proposals may have to be considered for the next financial year.

9. Background

10. The meeting of National Assembly on 29 November agreed proposals to develop a two-year work programme for 2024/25.

11. The work programme would comprise:

- current themes and campaigns of climate change, health and wellbeing, young people, make a change, and planning, with a focused piece of work identified for each.
- a new theme of community safety.
- other areas of sector financial resilience, workforce issues and strategy, sector risk register, NALC manifesto, artificial Intelligence, data and a membership survey.

12. Following discussions with the committee chair, officers have developed a draft work plan to deliver the National Assembly work programme and committee terms of reference.

13. Artificial intelligence & cyber security

- NNN: Super councils.
- Online event – Decoding the future of artificial intelligence in local governance - July 2024.
- Gauge impact of AI on larger councils (use of predictive analytics+) and whether / when any of them using it (30 April in person session).

- Attempt to gauge financial impact of AI use on larger / Super councils.
- Continue extended offer of pilot scheme for Super councils of advice and guidance on cyber security from the National Cyber Security Centre.
- Nik W. Of NCSC (cyber security and AI) – to be invited to speak at 10/24 committee session.

14. **Sharing good practice**

- Study visit 2024 – Yate Town Council, youth engagement theme, sold out.
- Study visit 2025 – to take place on 27-28 May 2025 (location and theme TBC).
- Quarterly Zoom sessions and survey of Super Councils Network to inform how best to share good practice amongst circa 100 Super councils.
- Continue to promote take-up amongst Super Councils of corporate peer challenge programme organised between Local Government Association and NALC.
- NNN: Coastal towns.
- NNN: Climate Emergency.

15. **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

- Continue to lobby government for pilot extension of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to Super Councils in first instance (and possible creation of committee working group to scope out the pilot).
- Invitation to Amerdeep Somal, LGSCO (new) to speak at 04/24 committee session (or someone from her office).

16. **Devolution**

- Devolution online event – November 2024.
Create list of areas where recent Devolution Deals have taken place (<https://www.breaking.co.uk/uk-government/60-per-cent-of-england-now-covered-by-historic-devolution-deals-12934.html#:~:text=Devolution%20deals%20now%20cover%2060%20per%20cent%20of,cities%20and%2090%20per%20cent%20of%20the%20North>), draft and issue short survey to be issued to larger councils in those areas via their county associations, and gauge levels of engagement and consultation (based on Lancashire experience).

17. **Market towns**

- Continue to gather evidence and be vocal to government on main issues germane to market town councils – e.g. high street decline (promote funding chances), banking.

18. Community safety

- Martyn's Law steering group – continue committee representation on that group in 2024.
- Inclusion of larger and Super council case studies in new case studies publication for community safety web page to be developed (Q4, 2024).
- Emergency planning online event - Is the fight for standards in local government a losing battle? – 02/25.

19. Workforce issues and strategy

- Be an open door for the committee to feed its views direct to Member Services on impact of workforce issues and strategy on larger and Super councils.

20. Sector financial resilience

- Continue to make the case for larger and Super councils to have flexible and diverse funding.
- Future of local government finance online event – April 2024.
- Annie Child, CEO of SAAA, spoke at 02/24 committee session.
- Owen Mapley, CIPFA CEO (resilience) – to be invited to speak at 07/24 committee session.

21. Data

- Continue to make the case for extension of OFLOG remit to cover local councils, suggested initial pilot to cover Super councils in medium term.
- Develop suite of themes for data metrics on local (including larger and Super) councils.

22. Creation of new councils (including in new towns and community stewardship organisations)

- Continue to promote the creation of new local (larger and Super councils) via triggering of community governance reviews in all un-parished areas of England.

23. External speakers for committee meetings

- Chief executive of SAAA – spoke at 02/24 committee session.
- Amerdeep Somal, new LGSCO – to be invited to 04/24 committee session (or someone from her office).
- Owen Mapley, CIPFA CEO (resilience) – to be invited to speak at 07/24 committee session.
- Nik W. Of NCSC (cyber security and AI) – to be invited to speak at 10/24 committee session.
- Government officials.

- Local Government Association.
- Relevant MPs.

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