

Quarterly activity report

October to December 2023

Introduction

The quarterly activity report shows progress in delivering NALC's strategic plan, including information on critical internal issues, parliamentary and government affairs work, events, media coverage, publications and legal advice.

NALC's mission and strategic objectives:

- Strong national and county voices promoting the sector and our prospectus for ultra-localism
- Creating more local councils in England
- Supporting councils and councillors
- Effective national and county associations working together to deliver our vision

Chief executive updates

- The last quarter saw the recruitment of our new councillor leadership and committee membership which will take NALC forward over the next two years. The next quarter will focus on supporting them in their new roles and setting work programmes for the next two years.
- A considerable focus of our time has been on setting the foundations for our new website and CRM system which will be introduced in the next quarter and have significant implications for the way we work and are organised. And improve our support to councils and county associations.
- One of our key priorities is to persuade government to open up national funding streams to the sector rather than accessing them via principal councils. The community ownership fund was opened direct to our councils, and I'm pleased that before Christmas we learnt that 19 local councils received £4.5 million from the government's Community Ownership Fund to date.

Policy and communications updates

- Campaigns — 185 attendees registered for the joint Local Government Association and NALC election event as part of NALC's Make A Change campaign, and our lobbying has led to the government proposing to continue to exempt local councils from referendum principles for excessive council tax increases for the 2024/25 financial year.
- Engaging with government and parliament — NALC responded to the Office for Local Government consultation on local government data metrics, the Competition and Markets Authority housebuilding study, and the government's consultation on hard-to-reach rural broadband areas.
- Star Council Awards 2023 — NALC's Parliamentary Reception took place in the House of Lords with around 150 attendees. At the event we announced the Star Council Awards 2023 winners, all finalists received certificates, all winners received trophies, winners received a communications pack to share information on their achievement, and a press release sent to national, regional and trade magazines.
- Events — Launched and sold out the study tour to Yate Town Council, delivered and sold out online events on empowering young voices, planning, funding, and Martyn's Law with over 1000 attendees. Feedback from online events that 95% would recommend online events to others and 90% felt engaged throughout the entire event/s.
- National networks — Making improvements to our national networks, meeting dates have been arranged, surveys distributed to collect data to help aid the network's direction, co-chairs have been appointed.

Member services updates

- Funding for places of worship – the Levelling Up And Regeneration Act came into force on 26 December. A legal briefing was issued on 21 December which recommends councils follow the Government’s position, which will mean that councils are not prohibited from using powers, other than in the 1894 Act, for spending money on works to property relating to affairs of the church or held for an ecclesiastical charity.
- Supporting councils as employers – after extensive sector wide consultation and engagement with SLCC, new model and template contracts of employment for local councils were launched in December.
- Legal service — Responded to 204 requests for legal advice. Five Legal Topic Notes (LTNs) and briefings were issued over the quarter alongside ongoing work of reviewing LTNs for NALCs new website.
- HR service – November saw the first anniversary of NALCs new HR service. Over the course of its first year the service has been used by 21 County Associations, with the most common topics being discipline, grievance and contracts.
- Local Council Award Scheme — 26 councils were accredited this quarter (four Quality Gold, six quality and sixteen foundation). Congratulations to all those councils!
- Model Financial Regulations — Consultation on a review of the MFRs is ongoing, with the updated document planned to be launched in March 2023.
- Civility and Respect Project — A number of free training sessions have been organised for January including Tackling Toxic Behaviour run by Worknest and personal safety training from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust.

Finance and administration updates

- NALC's Annual General Meeting was held on 24 October 2023. Baroness Scott of Needham Market was reappointed as president. Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle, Cllr Sue Baxter, Andrew Gwynne MP, The Earl of Lytton and Lord O'Shaughnessy were reappointed as vice-presidents.
- Milton Avis was re-appointed as NALC's auditors. The affiliation fee for 2024/25 of 7.94 pence per elector, capped at £2,037 for larger councils, was also approved by the AGM.
- The 2024 calendar of meetings was approved by National Assembly at its meeting on 29 November 2023. This has now been published on the [NALC website](#).
- Finance update - The management accounts to the end of the second quarter showed a deficit of £15,000 on normal activity. Whilst this was an overspend at 30 September compared to budget, it is not anticipated this will worsen for Q3 as more receipts for commissions and events still due. Affiliations were slightly down on budget but some late additions as some counties continued to get councils in membership.
- During this quarter, NALC has paid 137 invoices valued in total at £125,289.30

Contact

Address: The Bloomsbury Building, 10 Bloomsbury Way, Holborn, London WC1A 2SL

Telephone: 020 7637 1865

Email: nalc@nalc.gov.uk

Website: www.nalc.gov.uk

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/NALC>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NationalAssociationOfLocalCouncils>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/nalc109>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/nalc109>

Mailing list: <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/newsletter>