

Partnership Statement

NALC and SLCC have committed to developing a strong and effective partnership to support clerks, councillors and councils in delivering for their communities. We are ambitious for the sector and confident that it can contribute significantly to addressing many of the challenges facing the country.

We will work together at all levels to ensure that:

- the role of local councils as the first tier of local Government is recognised at the local, county, regional and national level
- councils engage effectively with their communities, empowering residents and community groups and supporting them to deliver community objectives
- councils have the capacity and capability to deliver their changing role and fulfill their potential.

Critical to achieving these objectives is a respectful and professional relationship between clerks and councillors. Good councils have a strong team ethos with professional clerks working to deliver councillors aspirations in an open and positive way. Good councils have councillors who engage with their communities to identify their priorities and work constructively with clerks and other officers to see them delivered.

Good councils invest in training and development for clerks and councillors. Clerks and councillors embrace training and development opportunities, understand their respective roles and provide mutual support and understanding. Councillors are clear of their role as employers and the importance of recruiting, training, supporting and rewarding clerks in their role. Clerks understand that councillors set the strategic direction, reflecting community aspirations and they support and encourage them in this work.

Good councils are part of effective local, county and national networks sharing good practice and learning from each other. NALC and SLCC are clear in their support for councils to be members of their county associations and NALC and for clerks to be members of the SLCC and active in their county branches. In that way councils get the best possible support for the professional development of clerks and training and advice for councils and councillors.

NALC and SLCC will work together to raise the sector's reputation with the public, with Government, and with other national and local stakeholders and to ensure that government and other policies support local councils to help local communities. We will achieve this by:

- highlighting the great things parishes do in the local and national media and telling residents about it too
- lobbying government to ensure legislative change supports councils' work, with NALC's political leadership setting overall policy objectives and the SLCC providing professional advice, input and experience
- increasing understanding of what local councils do and their potential to do more including clear data on the sector's make-up

NALC and the SLCC will work together to enable and encourage councils and councillors to engage effectively with their communities, including them in discussions about how local places need to change over time and what community investment residents wish to see. We

will work together to encourage more people to get involved and stand for elections and to work towards promoting greater diversity in the sector.

We will work together to support clerks and councillors in inspiring their councils to be proactive on behalf of their communities and fulfil their potential as the first tier of local government. We will do this by building the confidence and capacity of the sector especially through its national improvement strategy, sharing good practice and providing advice and support on the changing nature of local councils as devolution and ultra-localism gain pace.

NALC and SLCC have a good history of joint working and delivering for the sector including: setting up the SAAA saving councils millions of pounds through collective procurement of external audit, successfully resisting the imposition of referendum principles, developing and delivering CILCA and the local council award scheme, and working to promote civility and respect. This joint work will become increasingly important, and we will regularly meet through the Improvement and Development Board, twice yearly leadership meetings and on-going remote dialogue between staff.

Memorandum of Understanding

Introduction

1. This memorandum of understanding is between the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) together with the independent County Associations and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and its County Branches. It sets out arrangements for bilateral recognition, mutual promotion and joint working.

Recognition

2. NALC recognises SLCC as the sole professional membership body for local council professionals.

NB As the employers' representative body NALC/CALCs need to support councils as the employers of many types of employees and therefore NALC/CALCs may form and maintain partnerships with other employee representative bodies. This may impact on the relationship with the SLCC as NALC/CALCs will need to balance the needs and always act in the best interest of the council as employers.

3. SLCC recognises NALC as a local authority association and as the sole representative body for town and parish councils.

Co-operation and Communication

4. NALC and SLCC agree to work together to promote the best interests of the local council sector and its employees and their contribution to the wellbeing of communities. It is recognised that the interests of local councils and those of their employees may not always coincide and that each body retains the right to determine and promote its own policies. Where different views exist however, both bodies will make every attempt to minimise differences and identify common ground. Where this is not possible the respective CEOs will agree a public line to limit damage to the reputation of the sector.

5. NALC and SLCC will make best endeavours to ensure that there is good mutual communication and co-ordination including:

- a) A meeting between respective elected office holders and CEOs every six months.
- b) Regular communication at officer level at national, regional and county level
- c) A meeting (in-person or virtual) between the Chief Executives every three months including respective management team members as appropriate
- d) Exchange of bulletins, updates or other general communications issued by NALC and SLCC
- e) Free exchange of journals produced at national level
- f) Attendance by reciprocal arrangement at the respective organisation's national conferences – two free places per conference. (Not travel or accommodation).
- g) Consultation in good time on each other's proposed conference programme.

Links between each other's websites.

- h) The opportunity to update each other's membership on the work of SLCC/NALC e.g. by presentation at Conferences, National Councils and committee meetings etc.

The principle of open exchange and co-operation is agreed at all levels. Specific arrangements for the exchange of local information will be determined by discussion between individual county associations and the appropriate level of the SLCC.

6. NALC and SLCC will ensure that there is mutual communication and as much co-operation as possible at all levels in the planning of events and other initiatives. For example notice of the timing and content of national, regional or local events should be exchanged as a matter of courtesy with the relevant office of the SLCC or of the National and County Associations. Specific contact points will be identified for this purpose.

Mutual Promotion

7. NALC will encourage membership of SLCC among local council professionals and recommend member councils to encourage and promote such membership.
8. SLCC will encourage membership of NALC among Councils and recommend its members to promote councils' membership of NALC through joining their local county association.
9. Both organisations support 100% membership of NALC and SLCC. Under no circumstances will either organisation take any action which encourages disaffiliation of clerks or councils from the respective organisations.
10. NALC and SLCC undertake to make every effort to ensure that their activities are complementary and that the activities of each do not undermine the other. In particular, it is recognised that councils should use the National and County Associations as their primary source of advice and information; that the Society is the primary source of advice and information for officers in their professional capacity and as employees. To this end, NALC and SLCC will work together to ensure that there is a joined up, coherent, effective and efficient advisory framework to support the needs of the sector.

Employment

11. NALC will encourage and recommend its member councils to apply proper standards of reward, training and development in their employment practice. SLCC and NALC will work together to promote joint advice and model procedures including terms and conditions, contracts, recruitment, performance management and working hours.

Policy Co-ordination

12. While both NALC and SLCC recognise that they are independent bodies with the right to determine policy and make representation to government and other organisations, both bodies will actively exchange information on policy issues and will seek to collaborate where there is a common interest.

Joint Projects and Services

13. SLCC and NALC recognise that there are some areas of common activity and should look to co-operate and share services where possible.

Annual Work Programme

14. SLCC and NALC will agree an annual work programme to give effect to this memorandum of understanding. For 2022-2026 this will include:

- a) Encouraging participation in Local Council Award scheme and take-up of CiLCA, ILCA, FILCA and Community Governance qualifications
- b) Reviewing joint membership of SAAA
- c) Developing a workforce strategy including model terms and conditions of employment to encourage recruitment and retention into the sector and support the objective of getting more people from all backgrounds to get involved as councillors
- d) Ensuring that civility and respect remains at the top of the sector’s agenda through promotion of the pledge, joint advice and guidance documents.

.....

Keith Stevens, Chair, NALC

.....

Steve Trice, Chair, SLCC

.....

Jonathan Owen, Chief Executive, NALC

.....

Rob Smith, Chief Executive, SLCC

Date