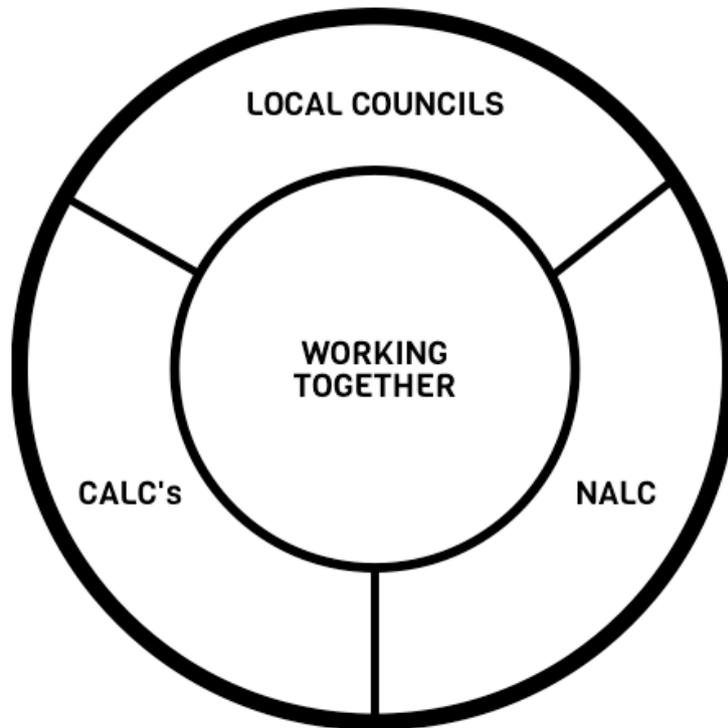


A NEW FUTURE: NALC'S STRATEGIC PLAN



Local Councils	CALC's	NALC	Working Together
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improving quality of life-Participating in the work of NALC and CALC's-Working to local council quality status-Promoting value of local councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Developing local councils-Primary service delivery-Promoting national advice-Local promotion and lobbying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Value for money services-Interactive website-In touch with members-Strong national voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Showing respect-Unity and cooperation-Promoting our work to Government-Securing resources-Building capacity

IMPROVING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

NALC STRATEGIC PLAN - Summary

We are determined to secure a new culture of unity and co-operation, with an effective strategy to take NALC and local councils forward. NALC, County Associations and member councils will work together with a common purpose to create a cohesive supportive whole and form a system that is more than the sum of its individual parts.

We will regularly report on progress with the strategy and its supporting implementation programme. We will review it annually, updating as necessary for agreement by National Council.

Vision

Our vision for the sector is to improve the quality of life for local communities through having vibrant, dynamic and effective local councils.

NALC will be a modern, in-touch organisation that delivers high quality services and works in partnership with County Associations and member councils to support and promote local councils, their staff and their councillors.

We will have healthy and strong County Associations working individually and sometimes together, supporting and being supported by NALC.

There will be local councils wherever communities want them and they will be representative, in-touch with their electors; and effective, working to quality council status.

Priorities

NALC's three priorities are:

- To deliver quality services to member councils and county associations
- To create new councils and grow membership
To promote and represent the sector effectively.

**“A NEW FUTURE”: NALC’s Strategic Plan
(As agreed by National Council 2013 and amended 2014)**

NALC is determined to

- **achieve a new and effective strategy for the National Association and the sector as a whole**
- **ensure that the strategy is delivered successfully**
- **secure a new culture of unity and co-operation.**

Key objectives

There are three key objectives, the foremost of these is

1. Delivering quality services to County Associations and member councils

The other key objectives are

2. Creating new local councils and aiding membership growth

3. Promotion and representation

These three objectives will form the basis for a new culture in our sector, with the National Association, County Associations and member councils all working together with common purpose.

1. Objective 1: Delivering high quality services

- 1.1. All outcomes must be measurable.
- 1.2. Ensure that the Website is a key communications tool.
 - Through better use of the website information will be more readily available and admin time will be reduced.
- 1.3. We need to review current priorities in service provision to assess what our councils need, both at National and County Association level.
- 1.4. We will ensure that all services to members are prompt and effective.
- 1.5. The general principle for service delivery will be that
 - NALC will provide national initiatives, general frameworks, guidance and advice
 - County Associations will provide primary service delivery and support to councils.
- 1.6. It is to be understood that not all County Associations will need to provide all services themselves. They could be outsourced to other County Associations or agencies as may be effective for members.
- 1.7. To give consideration to the structure of affiliation fees by undertaking a study of future funding of NALC including a review of its subscription model.
- 1.8. Current arrangements for 'Direct Access' councils will continue.
- 1.9. The National Association will provide legal services, policy advice, information bulletins and publications, and improvement & development initiatives; these in turn will be delivered locally by County Associations. Each County Association will of course continue to provide any additional services and support which it may choose to offer to both its members and to other County Associations as appropriate. It is to be understood that the NALC legal service is multifaceted in providing briefing notes, assessments of Government legislation, and detailed legal advice to members through their County Association. Some County Associations use additional local legal services to supplement their services to members.
- 1.10. We will:
 - sustain our work in providing support in the core service areas of policy, improvement and development, legal advice and support, accounts and audit support and information, publications and communications.
 - ensure that there is effective operational consideration of how best to deliver these services:
 - by NALC
 - by County Associations, particularly where services need local delivery
 - outsourced from commercial organisations
 - as part of Government-based initiatives with, or without, partner organisations.
- 1.11. assess and consult on new support services including:
 - planning advice, including information and regular updates
 - property management (both buildings and facilities)
 - commissioning services
 - business planning (with templates/toolkits)
 - risk assessment and good practice
 - human resources and employment
 - guidance on mediation
 - IT development, guidance and promotion

- income generation (including guidance on bidding)
 - local lobbying and campaigning.
- 1.12. develop more national and regional workshops and seminars on specific policy or practitioner issues for delivery by County Associations and by NALC.
- 1.13. ensure that there is a clear statement of 'who does what' in our delivery of services at all levels.
- 1.14. ensure that there is a comprehensive information base about membership and electorate numbers and a scheduled review of all publications, notes and the like.

2. Objective 2: Creating new local councils

- 2.1. This is an objective of crucial importance and we regard it as a major initiative in its own right. Two thirds of the electorate live in (primarily urban) areas without any town, parish, community or neighbourhood council. It is a sustainable way of ensuring growth and increased influence for our sector. Devolution to the local level is supported by all the major political parties.
- 2.2. Successful achievement of this objective is of prime strategic importance. It would provide:
- empowered communities
 - greater weight for the sector and its organisations
 - increased income
 - a radical change in the composition of the sector and its organisations.
- 2.3. Creating new councils has been a key objective for many years, with hundreds of new councils formed, especially in urban areas and as a consequence of the shift to unitary principal authorities.
- 2.4. The Government is highly committed to this initiative. While it will not impose a 'top-down' requirement on communities, it is very keen to support communities in developing a new local council. Ministers have already stated their position and a new Government national programme to support the creation of new local councils is expected to be announced shortly.
- 2.5. To pursue this objective, we will:
- work with CLG and Cabinet Office for this objective
 - aid County Associations working with District and Unitary Councils
 - assist effective lobbying of local MPs
 - support the development of local teams to campaign and support communities and new councils
 - seek to reduce or eliminate current restraints at principal authority level
 - work to change current attitudes in some principal authorities
 - work with the LGA as appropriate
 - provide national co-ordination and support.

3. Objective 3: Promotion and representation

- 3.1. It is an important function of the National Association to promote the local councils sector, with appropriate lobbying and campaigning.
- 3.2. We have had a successful political programme for over twelve years, building the profile of the sector and the National Association from one of near obscurity to being part of every political party's objectives. Major legislative change and new powers and a much improved positioning of the sector across the political spectrum has been achieved.
- 3.3. While we need to sustain our current position on the political agenda, using targeted approaches, it is time to build better and more effective services for our members.
- 3.4. We will:
 - significantly enhance our engagement with all relevant Government Departments
 - sustain our work with the political parties and those preparing their manifestos and future policy programmes
 - demonstrate our effectiveness by promoting our achievements
 - develop public awareness of local councils
 - seek Government support for public promotional activity
 - ensure co-ordination and cohesion in promotional and political activities at NALC, County Association and member council levels
 - ensure that all member councils are fully aware of the issues of the day and able to participate more effectively in the development of policy and its implementation
 - ensure effective communication in promotion and representation at all levels
 - ensure that our policies are developed democratically, with full participation and consultation, and member-led
 - ensure we have national political unity, at all levels, in our external representations
 - work with new partners, especially Voluntary and Community Sector organisations and the business sector, for sponsorship, joint working and research, especially in the areas of community development, planning and housing, community safety and economic development
 - consider the scope, and our capacity, for greater links with the European Commission, particularly in relation to programmes and funding
 - expand our promotional work with the media
 - expand our programme of high-profile events.

4. Resources

- 4.1. This strategy is based on working within available resources; but resource generation is an area of fundamental importance if new initiatives are to be delivered.
- 4.2. We will seek new income generation, including
 - New and funded Government programmes on specific initiatives (there is currently progress on the Sustainable Communities Act, community budgeting and, particularly the creation of new councils)
 - New events and conferences, both general and on specific policy and practitioner issues
 - Commercial sponsorship
 - Joint initiatives with the business sector, particularly in housing, planning and economic development

- Joint working with national Voluntary and Community Sector bodies on initiatives for community development
- More profitable outcomes from publications
- Securing improvement and development funding from Government (a proportion of the 'top sliced' funding available to the LGA)
- Possibly securing rental income from better use of property assets.

5. Changing our culture and process

- 5.1. While many of our councils have made huge modernising steps forward, many still operate according to the traditional role of a parish council, not fully developing their potential with their community. This needs to be addressed through improvement and development initiatives.
- 5.2. At county level, there is diversity among County Associations, in both levels of resource and operational capacity. Some have radically modernised their operations, moving to more of a business model; others still operate in a very traditional way. Some County Associations are under resourced and should be encouraged to take services from neighbouring County Associations whilst still maintaining their independent County identity. Clearly direct subsidies are not appropriate but monies and resources could be diverted from NALC to support such initiatives as it is generally in those areas where membership growth needs positive assistance to secure the future and vibrancy of the sector. It should be a major objective of NALC to see healthy and strong County Associations. New models of support, including opportunities for income generation, as already evidenced by some County Associations, for County Associations need to be developed and rolled out; and new meaningful Service Level Agreements are needed at all levels.
- 5.3. At the National Association level, we will concentrate on service delivery and operational working. Once the strategic objectives and programme of initiatives are clear, and are operational, then that will be the time to review our democratic structures aimed at providing a simplified and streamlined arrangement with flexible and dynamic leadership functions fit for this century. More attention needs to be spent on services and developing the entire sector, rather than in looking inwards at structure; too much time has been spent by the leadership on this over the past few years.
- 5.4. We also need much greater ease and frequency of communication, including through a developed website, with County Associations and member councils. The key principle should be that all elected members and officers, at national, county and member council level, should have easy and open access to information.
- 5.5. We need to expand and promote our improvement and development work. Much has been done to improve the quality and development of clerks, with latterly more emphasis on councillor training and development. Progressing an Improvement and Development Board for the sector could provide a focus for work in this area. This needs to be carried out in conjunction with DCLG, DEFRA and other such agencies, but most of all with active participation of the County Associations as the primary delivery agents.
- 5.6. To succeed, it is actions such as those below that will require detailed consideration and targeted action.
 - Concentrate on Service Delivery to Members with inclusion of performance metrics and periodic reviews

- Target achievable policy objectives, with dynamic priorities as political flavours change, to show progress rather than attempt to deliver on an ever widening spectrum
- Seek to secure DCLG 'top slice' funding to promote improvement and development within the sector.
- Develop further models of support for County Associations, including opportunities for income generation
- develop our communications, primarily through a constantly evolving website, and ensure frequent two way communication with member councils and County Associations.
- make effective use of IT, at all levels, including support and guidance to councils.

6. Constitution

- 6.1. This has been a continuing debate for over fifteen years. We need clarity and consensus. We need in due course to review the Constitutional relationship between the National Association, County Associations and member councils.
- 6.2. There are two main options:
 - i. A change to make County Associations the members of the national body, effectively a national federation of county associations, with councils being members solely of the County Association
 - ii. Maintaining the status quo, with NALC as a national association of member councils, grouped into largely independent county associations.
- 6.3. This is a very important issue and it needs very careful consideration. We propose that there is further review and consideration once the new strategy for the future is in place.

NALC - A NEW FUTURE – IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME

PRIORITY ONE – DELIVERING QUALITY VFM SERVICES TO MEMBER COUNCILS AND COUNCIL ASSOCIATIONS				
Performance Measures			Critical success factors (2014/15)	
PIs reported to Executive and National Council Legal response rates improved Increased web hits			SLA agreed and delivered Quality Council Scheme launched New web site set up	
Activity	Milestones	Leads and Resource requirements if any	Target Date	RAG progress assessment (quarterly – Sept 14)
Action 1. Agree new working relationship between County Officers Forum and NALC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement plan agreed and implemented New work programme agreed each year 	NALC CEO/ CoF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First plan agreed June 2014 Second plan agreed June 2015 Third plan agreed June 2016 	Green – first plan agreed July 2014.
Action 2. Report on NALC performance through corporate dashboard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Indicators identified Executive to review and authorise any changes Quarterly report to National Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NALC CMT and Executive Committee Performance improvement may require further investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting processes agreed September 2014 First report to National Council September 2014 (quarterly thereafter) 	Amber – Executive agreed approach, metrics being collected
Action 3. Ensure NALC is providing vfm services, reflecting member requirements and that resources focus on priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolling programme of review of services establishing current position and what improvements or changes to provision could be made Agree annual Service Level Agreement (SLA) Set rolling three-year budget strategy including affiliation fees to reflect above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEO/Chairman to agree programme of review NALC Heads of Service to manage reviews National Council to agree SLA Finance/Executive Committee to recommend budget strategy – supported by NALC Head of Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete programme of reviews November 2016 SLA agreed by national council after AGM each year – December 2014 AGM October 14 	Amber: Executive agreeing programme Sept 2014 Amber: SLAs being drawn up Amber: Budget strategy being reported to Finance Committee September 2014

<p>Action 4. Identify and commission, procure or deliver in-house new services as determined by reviews and appropriate committees</p>	<p>Possible areas to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement/ Commissioning • Audit • Employment advice • Planning • Property management • Business planning and risk • HR and employment • Finance and income generation • Web/ social media • Lobbying and promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive/Finance Committee • Resources will need to be accessed for new services or current services dropped or re-prioritised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business cases to be prepared and considered by relevant Committees as appropriate. • To be considered as part of service reviews and annual work programme and SLA 	<p>Green – new service options reported to Executive Sept 2014</p>
<p>Action 5. Expand and promote NALC’s improvement and development work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain Improvement and Development Board for sector • Resource and recruit to vacant post • Launch new scheme and ensure good take-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NALC Head of Policy and Development / Improvement and Development Board members • Support of CoF • Budget provision to be allocated for post 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme launched 2014 • Recruitment complete September 2014 • 50% of councils covered by 2017 	<p>Green: Recruitment completed, scheme on track for relaunch</p>
<p>Action 6. Establish website as first point of call for information and accessing services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach agreed by Executive June 2014 • Project Plan and team agreed • New website launched September • On-going resources secured to support development • New communications strategy and review of publications/ communications agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NALC Head of Communications • CALCs and Member councils to use • Member councils to set up own websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New website launched September 2014 • Targets set for web hits growth – in SLA • Business case for on-going budget support in 2015. • New communications strategy agreed March 2015 • All member councils to have own web site/ e mail address by December 2017 	<p>Green/Amber – resources allocated for relaunch and support commissioned.</p>

<p>Action 7. Identify new income streams, future grants and shared services opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure Government and other funding for new programmes and share of top-slice for improvement work • Consult and agree on annual programme of conferences and events • Review publications, identify new ones and ensure paid for ones are well marketed. • Secure commercial partners and sponsorship • Identify and target shared service opportunities • Make best use of assets including 109. 	<p>Finance Committee/Executive Committee to oversee.</p> <p>NALC CMT to be responsible for delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going – liaison with DCLG etc., lobby for top slice funding post 2015 election. Identify European potential Jan – March 2016 • Draft conference programme agreed each summer and consulted on • First review of publications complete November 2014 • Opportunities for sponsorship identified February 2015. • Shared services “brainstorm” November 2015 • Property options identified November 2014 	<p>Green – positive discussions with Government re on-going grant funding.</p> <p>Green – Conference programme shared with CALCs and reported to Executive Sept 2014</p>
<p>Action 8. Address constitutional and committee structure issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission review of constitution by President and procure legal advice on options. • Report on conclusions and secure agreement by National Council/ AGM. • Identify process to review Committee structures 	<p>Executive Committee.</p> <p>Resources required for legal advice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Executive Committee March 2015 and implement agreed timescales. 	<p>Amber – President’s Constitutional Commission initiated.</p> <p>Executive Committee agreed approach to review Committees in 2015</p>

PRIORITY 2 – CREATE NEW COUNCILS AND GROW MEMBERSHIP

Performance Measures

Total membership
New council campaign numbers

Critical success factors (2014/15)

Marketing pack produced
Offer for larger councils enhanced
New councils funding secured for 2015

Activity	Milestones	Leads and Resource requirements if any	Target Date	RAG progress assessment (quarterly)
Action 9. Prove our worth! Prepare marketing pack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NALC offer clarified Marketing pack produced On-going identification of new services/ benefits Presentations to AGMs etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Communications to lead Use promotions budget to support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Pack produced October 2014 Annual update and target AGMs 	Amber
Action 10. Increase membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with CALCs to target non-members and win back departing members Set three year target for increasing membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NALC/ CoF to identify approach and target National Council Members to support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree approach and set target April 2016 	Amber – not started
Action 11. Support to larger councils	Relevant and up-to-date services tailored to larger councils needs e.g. town centre management	Larger Councils Committee to oversee Additional resource may be required for work with other agencies	On-going	Amber/ Green – discussions in LCC
Action 12. Deliver and develop new councils programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current programme delivered Engage with DCLG/CO of funding post 2015 Assist CALCs to work with principal authorities, local MPs and overcome barriers Support development of local teams to campaign for new councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Policy and Development to lead Support by CALCs Detailed targets in project plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going 2015 funding secured Jan 2015 	Green – on track

PRIORITY 3 – TO PROMOTE AND REPRESENT THE SECTOR EFFECTIVELY

Performance Measures

Number of press releases etc

Manifesto targets achieved
Number of ministerial meetings

Critical success factors (2014/15)

Manifesto agreed

Elections material produced
APPG working well

Activity	Milestones	Leads and Resource requirements if any	Target Date	RAG progress assessment (quarterly)
Action 13. Undertake policy review and produce short “manifesto” of key objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy review completed. Manifesto produced and distributed to target audiences 	Head of Policy and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First review completed August 2014 Manifesto October 2014 	Green – Policy Review completed and reported to councillors. National Council July discussed manifesto
Action 14. Agree three year promotion strategy	Strategy to support “manifesto” agreed and options identified including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attendance at political conferences, research, future of local councils work, promoting NALC and Participation in elections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairman/ CEO National Council Members, CALC, Member councils to support Grow promotions budget to support – target £80,000 over three years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim plan agreed September 2014 First strategy agreed September 2015 	Green/Amber – attendance at Party Conferences secured, 3 year strategy to be started
Action 15. Support the All Party Parliamentary Group on local democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretariat support Membership grown Annual work plan set. 	Head of Policy and Development	On-going	Green – new Chair in place
Action 16. To hold regular meetings with Government Ministers, other national organisations and opinion formers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targets identified Quarterly meetings with DCLG/ DEFRA and CO. Regular engagement with officials Engage with other departments e.g. BIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairman, other members. Support from county associations and member councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targets identified July 2015 On-going programme of meetings New official roundtable set up October 2014 	Green

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