

# Appendix B

## Updates from the National Association of Local Councils

### A joint statement agreed by Civility and Respect Project Working Group



The Civility and Respect Project Working Group agreed at its latest meeting on 28 June 2021 a joint statement committing to promote civility and respect in public life. The statement, which summarises the core aims and values for securing permanent change in the local (parish and town) council sector, reads:

“Civility and respect should be at the heart of public life and good governance is fundamental to ensuring an effective and well-functioning democracy at all levels.

The intimidation, abuse, bullying and harassment of councillors, professional officers and staff, in person or online, is totally unacceptable; whether that is by councillors, professional officers, staff or members of the public.

## Appendix B

This can prevent councils from functioning effectively, councillors from representing local people, discourage people from getting involved including standing for election, and undermine public confidence and trust in local democracy.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC), county associations and One Voice Wales (OVW), as the membership organisations representing the first tier of local government in England and Wales, and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) as the professional body for clerks, are committed to working together to promote civility and respect in public life, good governance, positive debate and supporting the well-being of councillors, professional officers and staff.

To that end the group will be working to deliver tangible resources, actions and interventions in four main areas: providing councils with the tools to support good governance; lobbying to strengthen the standards regime and encourage more people to get involved; training; and processes to intervene to provide support to struggling councils.”

The meeting of the working group also finalised plans for the appointment of a fixed-term project officer, funded by NALC and SLCC, to drive forward the projects’ key priorities and tangible objectives. Other issues covered at the meeting, which was held online, included a local resolution protocol, links to the Improvement and Development Board (IDB) and lobbying.

## Parliamentarians seeking views on levelling up

Parliamentarians in the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Local Democracy are seeking views on levelling up from local (parish and town) councils at an online roundtable on 12 July 2021.

The government has made it a key priority to address regional inequality in the UK by levelling up underperforming and left-behind parts of the UK.

But what really is levelling up, and what does it mean for the rest of the country? This roundtable provides a timely opportunity for local councils to share with the APPG their understanding of levelling up, what the role of local

## Appendix B

councils should be and what support is required, and how the government's *Levelling Up White Paper*, due later in the year, can address this.

For more information and to register your interest in attending, please email NALC.

# NALC urges the government to make remote meetings permanent

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has again urged the government to make remote meetings a permanent option for local (parish and town) councils.

The move follows a call from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for views from local government and other bodies on the issue.

NALC entered into extensive dialogue across local government and with rural stakeholders. The outcome was the unanimous agreement with NALC that local councils should be permanently allowed the option of holding remote meetings at a time of their choosing (as should the rest of local government). An argument that NALC has put to the government in its consultation response.

NALC recognises that in the future, a hybrid approach to local council meetings may be inevitable.

However, given the recent delay in lifting some lockdown restrictions and uncertainty over the safety of holding local council meetings physically, the government should give local councils the legal option of holding remote meetings if they want to – in the interests of health, safety and society.

Hertfordshire County Council, the Association of Democratic Service Officers (ADSO), and Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) brought a high court case on remote meetings in April 2021. It was unsuccessful.

## Appendix B

# NALC launch new ground-breaking online conference



The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has launched its first-ever one-day online conference, Future Communities 2021, taking place on 2 December 2021.

The online conference will focus on why local (parish and town) councils are pivotal to building back stronger and better and shaping thriving, resilient future communities.

It will feature high-profile experts and leading figures from local and central government and national organisations. And will give attendees a chance to discuss and debate the key issues facing communities, network and share good practice with fellow councillors, clerks and council staff from across England, and connect with sector-specific suppliers at the innovative online exhibition.

The online conference includes:

- Opportunity to hear direct from the NALC chair
- Five inspiring and thought-provoking keynote sessions which include a Q&A segment

## Appendix B

- Four practical workshops running simultaneously (repeated twice) providing advice, guidance and insights
- A dedicated sector-specific exhibition marketplace with information on products and services with 1-2-1 meetings available in real-time
- Meet the conference headline sponsors (BHIB Councils Insurance, Blachere Illumination and CCLA)
- All keynote and workshop sessions recorded and available after the event
- Two coffee breaks and a lunch break to refresh, network and visit the exhibition marketplace
- Online cafe to meet and connect with other attendees

## NALC add a new online event on high streets and town centres to its calendar

The Natation Association of Local Councils (NALC) has added a new online event on the future of high streets and town centres to its calendar, taking place on 29 September 2021.

High streets and town centres are at the heart of local communities. They provide essential services, facilities and spaces that bring people together. Yet 2020 was the worst year for the high street in 25 years, with the closure of many shops and job losses. Footfall has been declining while online shopping has increased, with the pandemic accelerating both.

The event will look at the importance of high streets and town centres and their ever-changing landscape, how to revive them, consider what's next for the future, and provide expert insights and advice.

The expert panel currently features Ojay McDonald, chief executive of the Association of Town and City Management and David Preston, chief executive of the National Association of British Market Authorities. The event is hosted by Katherine Owen, external affairs at Blachere Illumination.

# Appendix B

The event is sponsored by BHIB Councils Insurance, Blachere Illumination and CCLA.

## Future of local government survey

Our colleagues at the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU), a local government think tank, have launched a [survey on the future of local government](#) designed to find out what's important to those working across local government around the world. The LGiU is working with Membership Matters, an independent agency, on the survey to ensure results are independent, impartial and anonymous. Can I encourage you to complete the survey to ensure this project doesn't overlook the challenges and issues facing our tier of local government – thank you!