

National Association of Local Councils

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

NALC have approached Councillor Gary Porter with a request to meet to discuss closer working relations between our two organisations. This paper briefly summarises interactions with NALC in recent years, and the LGA's associate membership scheme for larger town and parish councils.

Recommendation

That Members agree how they want to respond to NALC's request to discuss closer working relations.

Action

Members/Officers to action in line with Leadership Board discussion.

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Background

1. There are around 10,000 community, parish and town councils in England and Wales. They vary from small rural parishes to large town councils with considerable resources, contested elections and responsibilities for managing large scale community facilities and events.
2. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) represents the interests of town and parish councils in England, with about 85% in membership. Its Larger Councils Committee represents the 750 councils with annual budgets exceeding £250,000 and an electorate of 6000 or more.
3. In April 2006, Sandhurst joined the LGA as a non-voting Associate member (their current subscription is £2262). At that time, the LGA Group Leaders authorised officers to work with NALC to develop an umbrella deal giving NALC members access to a menu of LGA information services. There is no record of discussions being progressed.
4. In 2010, following a further approach from NALC's Chairman, Michael Chater, and Chief Executive, John Findlay, the issue of an umbrella arrangement scheme for larger town and parish councils was reopened and a corporate membership scheme jointly drawn up. Under the proposed corporate membership, NALC would pay a single annual subscription to the LGA on behalf of those councils wishing to join the scheme and invoice its members at a rate significantly less than the full Associate rate.
5. Office Holders endorsed the proposals but no response was received from NALC and the original Associate scheme remains in the LGA constitution.
6. In 2010, Councillor David Parsons CBE met Michael Chater to discuss closer relations between the two organisations. NALC were keen to link into the peer review programme, to take specific training and to attend LGA conferences. Although they subsequently approached us with a request to attend a Leadership Board meeting, they did not take up any dates offered.
7. On 30 November, the Chairman is speaking at NALC's annual conference on Local Councils and the General Power of Competence.