

# CUMBRIA ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS LTD

## BOARD MEETING

The meeting of the CALC Ltd Board on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2025 was held remotely via Microsoft teams.

### Minutes

Minutes of the CALC Ltd Board Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 10.00am

Present:

Mary Bradley – Chair

Sue Castle-Clarke – Vice Chair Westmorland and Furness

Andy Coles

Bryan Craig

Jonathan Davies

Mike Higginbotham

Andy Pratt

David Wilson – Vice Chair Cumberland Branch

In attendance: Sonia Hutchinson Company Secretary

#### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Will Huck and Doug Sim.

#### 2. Declarations of interests

No declarations of interest.

#### 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025

The minutes of the meetings held on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025 were approved.

A query was raised regarding the pre-summit meeting and Mary explained that this is covered in the chairs report.

#### 4. Chair Report including NALC overview

##### a. Concerns regarding NALC

Mary explained that the concerns raised regarding the governance arrangements within NALC and the relationships with ALC's etc. is going to be led by the management committee which is potentially at the end of August. Mary sits on that committee so hopefully she will be able to feedback and put CALC's points forward, Mary confirmed that there is recognition that this is urgent, and needs to be completed and progressed. She also confirmed that she had emailed Jonathan Davies and Sue Castle-Clarke to suggest that there

wasn't any further need to meet at the moment. It was noted that currently this item has also gone from the COF meeting agendas.

b. Parish Polls

Mary reported that there had been a long discussion on parish polls at the national assembly meeting and the room did feel that parish polls were very expensive and evaluation showed that they had been of no value. It was agreed to recommend that they went along with other similar organisations recommendations that they should be removed, but it will require legislative changes and it is envisaged that it will be a long time before this happens.

c. Saint and Co

As requested at the last meeting Mary wrote to Saint Co regarding errors in the end of year accounts. They replied quickly stating that they actually understood what the issue was and asked to meet with Sonia, Rachael and Karen. Sonia Hutchinson confirmed that they had met with Saint and Co and they were happy for CALC to continue to complete the accounts on a payment and receipt basis.

d. Remote working

There is no further update on remote working but it is still progressing with everybody supporting the concept of remote working.

## **5. Chief Officer Report**

The Chief Officers report was noted with the following additions, Sue Castle-Clarke provided an update stating that a meeting date has now been confirmed with Tracey Ingham for 20<sup>th</sup> August. Clarification was also sought on the use of electoral statistics by NALC and Sonia Hutchinson explained that the information gathered was used to determine subscriptions for NALC.

## **6. Finance Matters**

a. Budget Monitoring report from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

Clarification was sought on the following: -

- I. The amount that has been spent in year to date on meetings and officer expenses. Sonia Hutchinson confirmed that this was due to an invoice for a meeting which had occurred in March not being received until April and a meeting which was arranged for Directors to look at the Strategic Development Plan being held at the Methodist Hall when there wasn't a room free at Voreda.
- II. The difference between the anticipated expenditure for NALC subscriptions and the income to be received for NALC subscriptions, it was explained that it was down to changes in electorate numbers between budget planning and current actual numbers.

- III. Whether or not councils who have unsubscribed from CALC had been asked their reasons for leaving. Sonia Hutchinson confirmed that they have been asked and in the case of the Town Council she had been informed that it was down to the NALC element of the subscription and the council feeling it was not getting value for money from NALC. Concerns were raised regarding both councils that have unsubscribed and their reasons for leaving. Sonia Hutchinson agreed to contact other Associations to see if the NALC element of the subscription was having any impact of councils in their areas unsubscribing from their association.

The rest of the report was noted.

- b. Budget projection and Annual review of 2026/2027 CALC membership fees.

Mary explained that normally at this time of the year a decision would be made on the subscription fees for the next financial year. A paper had been circulated highlighting a list of issues which are going to impact on the 2026/2027 CALC budget. A piece of work to look in depth at what some of the issues are will need to be carried out before the subscription fees can be agreed. The Business and Development Subcommittee will meet on Monday to discuss this matter and a Special Board meeting will be held in September to agree subscription fees. Mary then asked directors to email her or Sonia if they wanted to add to the list of issues already identified.

Following a discussion on the grants received from both unitary authorities it was agreed that a piece of work needs to be carried out to identify the instances when CALC is mentioned in parish council and local government legislation and why it is therefore necessary to continue to support the organisation through grant funding. Sonia Hutchinson to action.

Community panels in Cumberland were also briefly discussed and Mary explained that at a recent meeting with Colin Cox a very honest and open discussion took place with concerns being strongly raised regarding their effectiveness and structure. It was also confirmed that parish councils in Cumberland can receive grants from the Community panels. It was agreed that CALC will continue to influence where it can through meetings with Senior Managers and annual reviews.

## **7. Strategic Management Plan**

Following a brief discussion the Strategic Management Plan was approved with the addition of the following words "it supports" so that the document reads CALC and the member councils it supports. Jonathan Davies also explained how he has

been working on an interactive version for the website which doesn't contain as much information until you move over a circle when more information is revealed. This was seen as a good step forward.

## **8. CALC AGM speakers**

It was agreed that Sonia Hutchinson will identify two speakers one from a Mayoral Authority to explain what it was like going through the process of moving to a Mayoral Authority and the impact on Town and Parish councils and one speaker from a Town or Parish Council that has gone through the process to give their perspective on the changes.

## **9. Communication Subcommittee**

### **a. Balanced Scorecard**

Jonathan Davies explained the work that is progressing, against the objectives.

The subcommittee is looking at: -

- I. a platform which has the potential to put everything online in a document form so that we can keep everything stored. Rachael Kelly will be sending a link to everyone with two platforms to explore.
- II. emails for events and how they are worded and formatted to improve attendance.
- III. exploring the potential of doing podcasts which member councils /councillors can pick up at their own convenience, with questions being submitted in advance. These could be used to promote the work of NALC/ CALC and member councils especially during the next round of elections to encourage people to stand.

### **b. CALC IT provision and Office Facilities**

Jonathan Davies put forward a proposal to bring IT services in house, rather than continue to use the IT service provided by Cumberland Council, the subcommittee would like to look at the costings which would be incurred in doing so and bring a proposal back to the Board.

Jonathan Davies also proposed looking at our own office facilities instead of using those provided by Westmorland .

Following a discussion it was agreed that the Communications Subcommittee could develop a proposal regarding bringing IT services in house, but that office facilities should be left as part of the SLA with Westmorland and Furness council.

## **10. Business and Development Subcommittee Balanced Scorecard**

Mary Bradley explained the progress that was being made with the objectives regarding the development of audit and locum services, conducting a review of

training and community governance. Jonathan Davies added that developing both the audit and locum services may give CALC the potential to bridge any funding gaps in the future providing some level of resilience. Sonia Hutchinson gave an update on the current position regarding models for the audit service which are being used by other ALC's.

Concern was raised regarding being too predatory with regards to training and our neighbouring ALC's reassurance was given by Sonia Hutchinson that CALC is working with other ALC's before offering training to their areas.

## **11. Staffing and Governance Subcommittee Balanced Scorecard**

Mary Bradley provided a brief overview of the objectives outlined on the scorecard and asked for comments.

A concern was raised that the balanced scorecards require numbers down the sides so that progress can be monitored more easily. Mary pointed out that this was the first quarter for the new format and that the scorecards will evolve.

## **12. Director and Treasurer vacancies**

Before discussing the outcomes for filling the three vacancies, Mary raised the point that the Board has never agreed how vacancies on subcommittees will be filled, and has this has arisen as more than one director is showing an interest in a current vacancy. It was agreed that going forward when there are two or more directors wishing to join a subcommittee then expressions of interest will be asked for and a vote taken on which director will fill the vacancy. Mary then said that once the current director vacancies are filled we can progress to fill any vacancies on subcommittees.

Mary then explained that one nomination had been received from South Lakes which had been taken to the Staffing and Governance Committee but no nominations had been received for Furness area or for the role of Treasurer.

Following a brief discussion when it was brought to the Boards attention that Barrow Town Council had not considered putting forward a nomination as they had anticipated that someone from the other Furness councils would have been nominated, the following was agreed: -

Andrew Povey to be appointed as a CALC Director, subject to Mary having a conversation with him about signing his induction pack.

The Furness vacancy will be re-advertised within the Furness councils.

The Board will look to fill the Treasurer vacancy externally.

Sonia Hutchinson to action.

## **13. Articles of Association changes to number of minimum directors**

It was agreed to reduce the minimum number of Directors required for the CALC Board within the Articles of Association from 10 to 5. Sonia Hutchinson to action.

#### **14. Reports from Cumberland Branch and Westmorland and Furness Branch**

The reports from CALC Branches were noted

#### **15. Reports from CALC Representatives**

The reports from CALC representatives were noted.

#### **16. Next Meeting Date and AGM**

The next meeting date will be the AGM to be held on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> October at Braithwaite village hall.

**Note** a special meeting will be called at the end of September to agree the member subscriptions for 2026/2027 – date to be confirmed.