

CUMBRIA ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS LTD

BOARD MEETING

The meeting of the CALC Ltd Board on 4th December 2024 was held remotely via Microsoft teams.

Minutes

Minutes of the CALC Ltd Board Meeting held on 4th December 2024 at 7.00pm

Present:

Mary Bradley – Chair

Ged McGrath – Treasurer

Sue Castle-Clarke

Andy Coles

Bryan Craig

Jonathan Davies

Mike Higginbotham

Will Huck

David Wilson – Vice Chair Cumberland

In attendance: Sonia Hutchinson Company Secretary

1. Apologies for absence

Not in attendance Nick Perie, Andrew Povey, Andy Pratt and Doug Sim.

2. Declarations of interests

None.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd December 2024

The minutes were approved.

4. Chair report

Mary Bradley stated that the meetings she has attended on behalf of CALC are all in her CALC Representative report. She went on to comment on how CALC is now being asked to attend a lot more meetings / events and that she envisages going forward that it will get even busier, so she suggested that the Board can look at CALC representation during the strategic away day in January.

Mary then pointed out that at the last meeting it was agreed that Ged McGrath would determine by lot which council areas will step down at the end of year 1, year 2 and year 3. Ged then proceeded to draw numbers which Mary identified as different council areas. The results of the draw were: -

Cumberland
Year 1 North Cumberland
Year 2 South Cumberland
Year 3 Mid Cumberland
Westmorland and Furness
Year 1 Eden
Year 2 South Lakeland
Year 3 Barrow-in-Furness

Clarity was then sought on whether or not councillors selected to step down in year 1 were no-longer required at that point. Mary explained that at the end of year one elections will be held in two areas and councillors elected will then stand for a three year term of office. At the end of year 2 again councillors in the areas outlined above will step down and councillors elected will again then stand for a three year term of office and this is the same for councillors outlined above to step down in year three.

Ged McGrath added that this creates a cycle for continuity as outlined in the articles of association and councillors can stand for more than one three year term. Section 19 (9) of the articles of association states: -
“A retiring Director may offer themselves for reappointment for not more than 2 consecutive 3 year terms. Persons having served 2 consecutive 3 year terms can be considered for appointment following a 12-month period from the time they retired from office.”

The three year terms will commence from the elections identified above so in effect anyone stepping down in year 1 and then being re-elected will serve this year plus a possible two further 3 year terms (7 years in total) etc.

Following a brief discussion it was agreed that the rolling program agreed for the areas identified above will be published in a briefing for all parish and town councils so they are aware going forward when their areas will come up for election.

5. Chief Officer report

Sonia Hutchinson explained that she wouldn't go through the report in detail as it had been previously circulated and instead asked for any questions anyone may have on the report.

Reference was made to the fact that very positive feedback has been received on a national peer review undertaken on CALC CiLCA Training, and that this should be utilised to promote CiLCA Training going forward. Sonia added that following the review some aspects of the training are being recommended to be used by other CiLCA Trainers across the country.

A question was raised regarding the Cumberland Building Communities document. Sonia explained that it was on the agenda later but she was happy to

inform the board that that the final document is currently being approved and she is waiting for a response on when it will be launched.

There was a brief discussion on how feedback from the Chief Officer meetings, The Northern Association of Local Councils and the NALC National Assembly meetings can differ. Mary explained that Northampton ALC intend to challenge the NALC AGM on how the voting was conducted and Mary has written an email to Northampton ALC supporting their challenge.

Mary then asked if many questionnaires had been received from the surveys and Sonia said that it was in the region of 20% which was felt was a good return compared to previous surveys. Following a discussion regarding the format in which the survey was circulated it was agreed that it could be discussed at the strategic away day in January as it may be something that a working group takes forward next year.

6. Professional Indemnity Insurance quote

It was agreed to renew the Professional Liability Insurance.

7. Finance Matters

- (i) Budget Monitoring report from 1st April to 31st October 2024

A question was raised on the amount spent on subscriptions which didn't reflect the amount in the budget. Sonia explained that CALC has two Service Level agreements with Wellers Hedleys Solicitors and Steve Parkinson Ltd for expert legal and financial advice for councils. Last year neither party submitted an invoice for their services but they sent two in this financial year one for last year and one for this year.

Sonia also went on to explain that a small amount has not been received against the income line for subscriptions which reflects three parish councils/ meetings that have withdrawn from CALC services this year.

A question was asked regarding how the subscription fees are calculated and it was explained that currently it is based on the cube root of the electorate number. It was again agreed that this may be something to be included in the review of the strategic plan.

- (ii) Annual pay increase for CALC staff – in line with Local Government Services pay agreement from 1st April 2024

It was agreed following a brief discussion to apply the Local Government Services pay agreement to all employees effective from 1st April 2024.

It was also agreed following a vote of the board that any request for an uplift to the hourly rate for Fingertips Services should be brought to the February Board meeting following the January contract review meeting.

Sonia was also asked to circulate the current contract to all members of the CALC board for information.

(iii) Impact of increase in National Insurance

Mary Bradley informed the board that she was with Rachel Reeves yesterday and she had made it clear that she would not be changing her mind on national insurance. Mary went on to say that from a national perspective NALC is looking at the position for parish councils and County Associations but she does not think they will be able to alter the government's position on this. Sonia explained that the increase for CALC would be in the region of £2,880. It was agreed that the budget for 2025/2026 will have to be revised to reflect the impact of the national insurance increases.

(iv) Corporation Tax to be paid for financial year 2023/2024

Sonia Hutchinson explained that CALC have received a bill £1,181.42 for corporation tax which is based on the interest generated from reserves not from any income generated through training which is invested back into the training budget.

8. Balanced scorecard report 2nd quarter

Concerns were raised regarding the number of greens on the rag rating at this stage of the year. It was therefore agreed, following a long discussion, to review the Balanced Score Card as part of the work being discussed on the strategic away day in January, including possibly looking at a web-linked live score card which directors could see and dip into on a regular basis.

9. CALC Board Task and Finish Groups

Mary Bradley suggested continuing to use the Communication Working Group and the Business Development Group which had been established last year. Sonia was asked to circulate the terms of reference for both groups to all board directors and Mary said that the membership of the groups etc. would be looked at on the strategic away day.

10. Building Communities document for Westmorland & Furness Council and Cumberland Council

Sonia Hutchinson pointed out that she had given the Cumberland document update earlier and that with regards to the Westmorland and Furness document she had recently met with Andrew Povey and officers from Westmorland and Furness to discuss progress with communication and asset transfers.

11. Reports from Cumberland Branch and Westmorland and Furness Branch

David Wilson gave an overview of the report explaining where Cumberland Association were with regards to community panels and two health and wellbeing events being held early next year.

Mary added that it was also obvious that a lot of work was being undertaken in Westmorland and Furness as well as Cumberland with representatives attending locality meetings etc.

The report was then noted.

12. Reports from CALC Representatives

Following a long discussion on the number of meetings that are attended and how that information can be shared with parish councils on a live time basis rather than bi-monthly it was agreed that this piece of work could be taken forward by the Communication Working Group.

The report was then noted.

13. Next Meeting Date

Following a discussion on when CALC Board meetings should be held Mary asked Sonia to put out a list for the next year based on the meetings occurring bi-monthly on the 3rd Wednesday evening of the month.

A suggestion was then made on holding the meetings on a Saturday morning again, as there was some agreement to this Mary then suggested that we should try the third Wednesday for the first three meetings in 2025 and see how the attendance was before moving to a Saturday morning.

Sonia Hutchinson also confirmed that the strategic away day will be held on 25th January, hopefully it will be hybrid but securing a location that has the facilities for holding a hybrid meeting is proving difficult. The venue will be confirmed as soon as possible.

Mary Bradley then asked if anyone had anything else they wanted to bring to the agenda.

Boundary Commission Review

Ged McGrath suggested that CALC should have a position on the Boundary Commission Reviews and said that he was happy to write something on behalf of CALC. Following a discussion on the matter it was identified that the Westmorland and Furness consultation on the review was about four months ahead of the Cumberland review and had already closed.

CALC Funding – Police and Crime Commissioner

Ged then went on to suggest that Mary should meet with the Police and Crime Commissioner to discuss an annual donation for the work that CALC undertakes for them. Mary agreed to arrange such a meeting.

It was also pointed out that the Police and Crime commissioner is keen to work with town and parish councils on extending the CCTV systems in place and this may be something Mary could take forward when meeting with him.

CALC AGM

Ged also asked if the excellent work the CALC team did for the AGM in both making it happen on the day and generating a small profit from it could be noted in the minutes.

The meeting closed at 9.15