

ALACE Council Meeting

Date: Monday 18 December 2017 Time: 2pm-4pm

Venue: Westminster City Hall, 5 The Strand, London, WC2N 5HR

Attendees: Tracey Lee (Chair), Michel Saminaden (Honorary Treasurer), Ian Miller (Honorary Secretary), David Hughes.

Attended by telephone conference: Alistair Buchan, Mary Pitcaithly, Duncan Sharkey, Jerry Hutchinson, Alastair Stewart.

The following consultants attended by telephone conference: Richard Penn, Pete Morris.

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed those attending.

2. Apologies

Simon Baker (Vice Chair), Karen Satterford, Charlie Parker, Alison Ward, Mark Williams, Rachael Shimmin. John Sellgren, Liz Bruce, Merran McRae.

3. Chair's update

The Chair said that she had spoken to Gavin Jones, chair of SOLACE, to brief him on the work of ALACE and to thank SOLACE for the work that it does on training and leadership development. They would catch up every 6 months.

4. Minutes from the meeting held on 4 October 2017/Matters Arising

The minutes were approved as an accurate record. The Chairman said that she had drafted "lines to take" on various policy issues and would sound out relevant members first about the merging of head of paid service and the section 151 officer role. The Hon Secretary was following up the suggestion of a Scottish version of the pensions advisory note and membership of the JNC for chief officers.

5. Honorary Secretary's Report

The Honorary Secretary presented an oral report. He had attended a seminar organized by APACE and there had a couple of applications for membership arising from this. Likewise the session that Cheryl

Miller and he had delivered at the SOLACE Summit had been well received by those present. He thanked the consultants for their suggestion that there should be no change to the consultants' hourly rate for 2018, in recognition of the Association's financial position – this was welcomed by the Council and it was recognised that the consultants might submit proposals for 2019. Finally, the Hon Secretary had followed up with SOLACE in Business how they presented the recruitment of investigators for HR issues (which are not the independent investigators under the model terms and conditions for chief executives).

6. Financial and membership report

The Honorary Treasurer led Council through his report. The Association was likely to be in a better position for 2017 than the previous year. The new membership fee arrangements had commenced and may have an impact in 2018. The Association was still spending more than its income and therefore it would need to keep an eye on expenditure. Council noted the report, with approval.

7. Consultants' update

The Chair reminded Council members that any discussion of current cases was on the basis of complete confidentiality.

Consultants referred to a number of ongoing cases. It had been a busy period, particularly on pensions, but also there had been some long-running employment issues. There had been sad news of the death of one member who was being supported during suspension. Six new independent investigators had been recruited for the list maintained with the Employers' Side. After a quiet summer on pensions, arrival of annual pension statements had led to high activity (average of 18 cases each for the pension consultants in the last two months). Anyone whose salary reaches £122.5k is now likely to breach the annual allowance. Council supported the suggestion that case studies should be prepared to assist people in understanding their options.

The Consultants were thanked for their work.

8. Pay claim for 2018 onwards

The report from the Honorary Secretary was considered. The Council agreed that a pay claim should be submitted as drafted. Publicity should be sought if the Employers were not going to provide a swift response. Alistair Buchan and the Hon Secretary would discuss separately the approach to be adopted in Scotland. **Action:** Honorary Secretary.

9. Updated analysis of support to individual members on pensions

Pete Morris introduced the report in Cheryl Miller's unavoidable absence. Council considered and noted the report. It agreed that it

should receive an update twice a year, in order to monitor whether or not to change the approach on what level of free support is provided. The Honorary Secretary would devise a simple system with the Hon Treasurer to minimise bureaucracy for consultants in respect of new members (who were entitled to a fixed number of free support in the first 12 months of membership).

10. Membership rate for retired members

The Honorary Treasurer left the room during the discussion and decision on this item.

Council considered the drafting prepared by the Hon Secretary which described the retired membership rate, including that the rate for any retired member serving as an Honorary Officer should be nil. The drafting was agreed subject to an addition that would make clear that consultancy support might be provided for a retired member on a matter where ALACE had previously provided support; and that there would be discretion for the Hon Secretary in the limited number of cases where departure had occurred just before 31 December to approve support when there were matters “to be tidied up” early in the following year.

11 Analysis of membership data

This item was held over to the next meeting as a result of the unavoidable absence of the Vice Chair through illness.

12 Any other business

No consultation paper had emerged about the £95k cap. The Hon Secretary would continue to monitor developments. Given the Secretary of State’s “minded to” decisions in respect of district council mergers, he would check with members in the affected councils whether there was any further comment on the policy already approved by Council prior to submitting it to the Department

13. Dates of meetings

The next meeting of Council will be at 3pm on Thursday 1 March 2018, London venue to be confirmed.

The AGM will be on Wednesday 4 July 2018, 12 noon to 2pm, Birmingham (venue TBC).