

ALACE Council Meeting

Date: Thursday 24 May 2018 Time: 1.30pm-3pm

Venue: LGA, 18 Smith Square, London

Attendees: Tracey Lee (Chair), Simon Baker (Vice Chair), Michel Saminaden (Honorary Treasurer), Ian Miller (Honorary Secretary), Jerry Hutchinson, Duncan Sharkey, Mary Pitcaithly

The following consultants attended by telephone conference: Roger Morris, Cheryl Miller

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed those attending.

2. Apologies

Alistair Buchan, David Hughes, Merran McRae, Rachael Shimmin, John Sellgren, Karen Satterford, Liz Bruce, Alison Ward, Mark Williams, Charlie Parker

3. Chair's update

The Chair said that senior remuneration had received further coverage from the Taxpayers' Alliance. There had been discussions with the editor of the LGC about a joint survey on stress levels etc of chief executives and other senior staff. If we were happy with the questions, we would promote the survey to relevant members and be able to provide an "advertorial" in LGC to promote our message. The Council was content for Hon Officers to approve these arrangements.

4. Minutes from the meeting held on 1 March 2018/Matters Arising

The minutes were approved as an accurate record. Simon Baker was still looking at potential business partners to raise income. The Chair said that she was beginning to produce a list of regional "leads" on recruitment. Various Council members volunteered for this and suggested other potential names. The Chair would circulate a list. In response to a point from Simon Baker about confidentiality of data on membership, he and the Hon Secretary would devise a mechanism that enabled regional leads to contact the correct people.

5. Financial and membership report

The Honorary Treasurer led Council through his report and said that the financial position looks better: there was growth in new members and quite a few were opting for two years' membership. The audit of

2017 accounts is under way, and it is good that the deficit is down from £50k to £7k. However it needs to be reduced to zero and move to a positive position. The current projection for 2018 is to spend in line with income but a risk relates to the level of pension activity after pension scheme statements are issued and the new Close offer.

The Honorary Treasurer recommended that there should be a £10 increase in membership fees with effect from 1 January 2019. The Council agreed this and the recommendation would be reported to the AGM for decision.

6. Honorary Secretary's Report

The Honorary Secretary presented his report, which was noted.

7. Consultants' update

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

Roger Morris said that there had been a lower employment caseload in the last 12 months compared to previous periods, but more "non-termination" cases. Council/member behaviour is not improving and had been a significant issue in some high profile cases. In 6 cases he had dealt with relating to members who were not a head of paid service, five were women: there seemed to be a disproportionate impact on women.

Cheryl Miller said that the average cost of dealing with pension cases seems to have gone down recently.

The consultants were thanked for their work.

8. Pay claim for 2018 onwards

Mary Pitcaithly referred to a GMB letter about the pay claim in Scotland that was not helpful and would provide a copy for the Hon Secretary.

The Hon Secretary was thanked for his report. Council supported the tactics outlined and agreed that there should be liaison with Unison and GMB in respect of a common front for senior officers. There was the opportunity to seek a formal update on how the new disciplinary procedures were working.

9. Pensions service update

Cheryl Miller introduced the report from Pete Morris and her. It is a popular service. The annual allowance is causing most problems, with sudden tax bills reaching members last autumn. Council members found the paper very helpful. For the new paid for service in respect of the annual allowance, a fact sheet would be produced on what information members need before they approach Close, in order to minimise calls on the consultants to assist.

The Council considered the idea of charging a higher fee for this service with a percentage coming to the Association. This idea was not agreed because it would give rise to a risk of liability for ALACE.

10 Policy on data use and privacy

Council noted the report from the Hon. Secretary, which concluded that ALACE does not need to register with the Information Commissioner's Office, and approved the data use and privacy policy that would be included on the website and drawn to the attention of members.

Action: Hon Secretary

11 Draft response to Welsh Government green paper "Strengthening Local Government: Delivering for People"

Council agreed the thrust of a draft response and delegated authority to the Hon Secretary to finalise it in consultation with members in Wales.

Action: Hon Secretary

There might be membership opportunities in Wales if reform proposals were progressed. It was noted that local government reorganisation is also "bubbling up" in England.

12 Any other business

No consultation paper had emerged about the £95k cap. This was welcome. The Hon Secretary would continue to monitor developments.

Best wishes were repeated to Mary Pitcaithly on her retirement in June and she was thanked by the Chair for her contribution to ALACE.

People would be encouraged to attend the AGM including non-members. The AGM would be used to as an opportunity to promote services and there would be a presentation from Cheryl Miller on the annual allowance. It was confirmed that all consultants would attend the AGM and meet the Hon Officers in advance.

13. Dates of meetings

The next meeting of Council will be in the autumn, date TBC.

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