

 <b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee – 5</b> <b>February 2019</b>		<b>Agenda Item No. 10</b>
<b>Title</b>	Briefing Note: Follow-up to “Annual feedback on Outside Appointments” report – National Association of Councillors	
<b>For further information about this report please contact</b>	Councillor Kristie Naimo	
<b>Wards of the District directly affected</b>	None	
<b>Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?</b>	No	
<b>Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number</b>	27 November 2018, minute 62	
<b>Background Papers</b>		

<b>Contrary to the policy framework:</b>	No
<b>Contrary to the budgetary framework:</b>	No
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)</b>	No
<b>Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken</b>	Not applicable

<b>Officer/Councillor Approval</b>		
<b>Officer Approval</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
Democratic Services Manager	23/01/19	Graham Leach
<b>Consultation &amp; Community Engagement</b>		
All WDC Members were asked if they used the services of the National Association of Councillors.		
Coventry City Council and Warwickshire County Council were contacted to see if their Members were subscribed to the National Association of Councillors. Rugby BC, Nuneaton and Bedworth BC and North Warwickshire BC did not list the National Association of Councillors on their Outside Bodies list.		
Councillor Naimo contacted the National Association of Councillors.		
<b>Final Decision?</b>	No	
<b>Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)</b>		
The recommendation from Overview & Scrutiny Committee will be sent to the Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer to action as he sees fit with his recommendation to Council at its Annual Meeting in May 2019.		

## 1. **Summary**

- 1.1 At Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 27 November 2018, the Committee considered the annual reports of Councillors who represent this Council on Outside Bodies. Councillor Naimo represents this Council on the National Association of Councillors and it was her submission that this Outside Body support should cease.
- 1.2 The Committee asked her to look into this further and advise the Committee whether the recommendation should be made to the Deputy Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer to end membership of the National Association of Councillors.

## 2. **Recommendation**

- 2.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommends to the Deputy Chief & Monitoring Officer that the Council no longer subscribes to the National Association of Councillors and that he takes appropriate action to end the membership.

## 3. **Reasons for the Recommendation**

- 3.1 In Councillor Naimo's annual Outside Bodies submission to Overview & Scrutiny in November 2018, she pointed out that no-one had attended meetings of the National Association of Councillors in the last six years. Meetings held by this Outside Body were focussed heavily in the north of the UK and London.
- 3.2 All Warwick District Councillors were asked if they used the services of the National Association of Councillors. 18 Councillors responded and not one used the service.
- 3.3 The Council is paying an annual subscription of £883 in June each year for a service that is not used. Some Councillors pointed out that they could obtain the same service from the Local Government Association.
- 3.4 The Council's Constitution, Section 4 – Scheme of Delegation stipulates that:

The Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) & Monitoring Officer shall have authority to:

MO(2) – Subject to consultation with Group Leaders, make appointments to outside bodies in accordance with the political balance already agreed.

This delegated power allows the Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) to determine which outside appointments can be discontinued after consulting with Group Leaders.

## 4. **Background**

- 4.1 The National Association of Councillors is an organisation which represents elected Members in all types of Local Authorities and all political persuasions. It is not only run for elected Members, it is also run by elected members. One of its main activities is the provision of study courses. It also provides a forum for

Members to meet and discuss problems. Details of the Association can be found on its website [www.nationalassociationofcouncillors.org](http://www.nationalassociationofcouncillors.org) .

- 4.2 This Council subscribes all of its Councillors to this Association and an annual subscription fee of £883.20 was paid in June 2018. Records of subscriptions paid sent to the Principal Committee Services Officer went back to 2009 when the annual subscription was £846.40 but the Council's membership pre-dates 2009.
- 4.3 When Councillors were elected to this Council in 2015, they were provided with a booklet called "A Guide for New Councillors". In the section "External sources of advice and information for Councillors" was listed their membership of the National Association of Councillors:

## National Association of Councillors

All Warwick District Councillors are provided with membership to the National Association of Councillors, an organisation which is set up to look after Councillors' interests. For more information, please see the NAC website – [www.nationalassociationofcouncillors.org](http://www.nationalassociationofcouncillors.org)

- 4.2 This Council appoints a representative to the National Association of Councillors and each year asks that appointee to inform the Overview & Scrutiny Committee what actions they have taken in respect of this Association. In November 2018, Councillor Naimo, this Council's current representative, reported that she had not attended any of the Association's meetings and as far as she could see, no one had for at least the last six years. She reported that most of the activity took place in the north of the UK and indeed, when examining the events and conferences stated on the website, it is true that the events and conferences focus on the north of the UK and London. There is nothing on the website showing events and conferences in the Midlands.
- 4.3 An email was sent to all Councillors and 18 replied stating that they never used the services of the National Association of Councillors. Some pointed out that they did not even know it existed, despite its mention in the "A Guide for New Councillors". Others did know about its services but pointed out that they could obtain the same help and information from the Local Government Association.
- 4.4 Both Coventry City Council and Warwickshire County Council do not use the services of the National Association of Councillors and Warwickshire County Council stated that its Councillors used the services of the Local Government Association. Examination of the Outside Bodies membership on the websites of Rugby Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and North Warwickshire Borough Council revealed that they did not subscribe to the National Association of Councillors.
- 4.5 Councillor Naimo contacted representatives from the National Association of Councillors and below are the details of what she found:

Representatives from the National Association of Councillors felt that Membership is holding steady with some new Town & Parish Councils joining. There are very few members from the midlands area and indeed no one from

Warwick District has attended however they urged us to consider remaining a member and trying to take advantage of their services.

It was confirmed that most of the meetings and activities do take place in the North of England or London - mostly due to accessibility for members. The organisation encourages networking opportunities - just between Councillors - unlike the LGA which also has officer involvement. Representatives found it was particularly useful for networking and sharing best practice. They are able to report back to their Councils and had a particularly interesting speaker on Single Use Plastics recently.

The organisation also offers training opportunities - although I have not seen details of that.

I pointed out that given the additional pressures on Councillors these days, with many trying to fit their commitments around work, families and so on, it was difficult for many to access a weekend conference or other networking opportunities especially given the travel time or distance.

At the time of this report going to print, I was unable to confirm what the notice period is for leaving the organisation before our next payment is due in June. I intend to give a verbal update to this at O&S.