

# **CORNWALL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

Affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils  
Serving Cornwall's Parish and Town Councils



## **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

**FOR**

**THE PROVISION OF SERVICES**

**TO**

**MEMBER COUNCILS**

## OBJECTIVES

This Service Delivery Agreement sets out the arrangements for the servicing, promotion and representation of member councils by the Cornwall ALC Ltd trading as the Cornwall Association of Local Councils (CALC). It also defines the working relationship between the CALC and the National Association of Local Councils in providing services to member councils.

The CALC role is to represent the interests of local councils and to provide opportunities for local councils to express their views; it will not attempt to represent the interests of an individual council.

It is generally expected that the Cornwall Association of Local Councils and the National Association will comply with the terms of the agreement, however due to resource constraints, it is recognised that in some cases the targets set out will not always be met in the first instance. Nevertheless, we are committed to complying with the Agreement in full wherever possible.

This SLA is based on three key objectives:

- 1) Ensuring the highest standards of service to member councils
- 2) Effective promotion and representation of the parish and town council sector within Cornwall
- 3) Effective partnerships with other bodies including principal councils and government agencies to deliver information and training in a variety of formats

The Agreement recognises the distinct but complementary roles of the Cornwall Association of Local Councils and the National Association of Local Councils.

Glossary :

CALC Cornwall ALC Ltd trading as the Cornwall Association of Local Councils

NALC National Association of Local Councils

## SERVICE PROVISION

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils will:

- 1) Provide a well resourced office and trained staff able to address and support member councils.

The normal office hours will be:

Monday – Thursday	9.30am – 4.30pm
Friday	10am – 3pm

At the discretion of the County Executive Officer, the Association may provide additional out of hours emergency service to support member councils via telephone and email.

- 2) Provide guidance, information and support to member councils.
- 3) Deliver legal and procedural advice in a variety of formats including publications and training on changing legislation affecting parish and town councils.
- 4) Representation and promotion of local councils at county, regional and national level.
- 5) Provide a framework for consultation and develop suitable arrangements for the effective representation and promotion of local councils.

The Association recognises the benefits of e-government and the use of email and its website to provide a faster and more effective service. We are committed to making this the primary method contacting and communicating with member councils.

## LEGAL SERVICE

- 1) Legal queries from member councils should be addressed in the first instance to the County Association. We will provide a telephone and email service to give simple legal advice and interpretation.
- 2) If further advice, guidance and support from the National Association is required, you will be asked to submit your query in writing with any supporting documents. CALC will forward the query to NALC for more detailed consideration.
- 3) We will acknowledge receipt of any correspondence within 3 working days and will advise of a likely response date from NALC.
- 4) NALC responses to legal enquiries will normally be returned to the County Association within 15 working days and forwarded to the member council within 3 working days to the member council. We will make every effort to forward emails on the same day.

If we find that a response will take longer, we will contact you and explain the circumstances, giving a new expected response time.

Whilst we will make every effort to provide a quick response to all legal enquiries, member councils are encouraged to make the earliest possible contact to help avoid delays in meeting your response times. Every effort will be made by CALC and the National Association to respond to genuine emergency issues as a matter of priority.

NALC Updates and legal briefings will be circulated to member councils as appropriate so that they can develop their own local database of information. They will also be available on the membership restricted part of the NALC website, using the password provided by the CALC on affiliation to the CALC.

## **POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT**

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils will

- 1) Consult with member councils as appropriate on issues of national concern and on government consultative documents by circulating papers and initiating discussion through its membership and committees.
- 2) Take an active part in the development of county, regional and national policy, to represent the interests of parish and town councils in Cornwall.
- 3) Take an active role in the lobbying of and partnership with Cornwall Council, other local government bodies and partner stakeholders to enhance the role of parish and town councils and their ability to deliver services to their communities.
- 4) Communicate the outcome of all consultations to the National Association to ensure affective representation of the views of member councils.

## **COUNCILS' DEVELOPMENT**

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils will

- 1) Offer guidance and support to member councils to develop their role in the community.
- 2) Offer specific support and guidance on the implementation of the Local Council Awards Scheme.
- 3) Produce updates and publications to support member councils.
- 4) Organise and participate in development, briefing and training meetings at county, regional and national level for the better delivery of information and training at a local level including the benefits of email as a method of enhanced communication.

## **EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT**

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils will

- 1) Offer support and guidance on matters relating to the recruitment and employment of staff.
- 2) Offer assistance in the implementing pension or gratuity provision.
- 3) Distribute national advice and guidance on employment issues.
- 4) Refer particular issues, where appropriate to national level for further guidance and support

If invited, CALC may be able to offer low level mediation and support in the breakdown of working relationships at council level. (There will be a charge for this service which shall be agreed in advance.)

## **FINANCE SUPPORT**

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils will:

- 1) Provide member councils with local support and guidance on accounting and audit procedures
- 2) Distribute national advice and guidance
- 3) Work with the Cornwall County Training Partnership to organise appropriate briefings and training

## **TRAINING DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT**

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils will

- 1) Implement the National Training Strategy through participation in the Cornwall County Training Partnership and related initiatives
- 2) Organise a comprehensive programme of training provision for member councils, including both staff and elected members
- 3) Deliver tailor made training events to individual member councils to address local needs. (There will be a charge for this service.)
- 4) Work with outside partners to develop standard training packages for delivery to parish and town councils.

## **PLANNING**

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils will ensure that national information and guidance on planning matters is conveyed to member councils; and will provide advice and support to member councils in accordance with that guidance and local knowledge.

## **LOAN SANCTIONS**

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils is the body responsible for the checking and submission of Loan Sanction Approvals by Parish and Town Councils in Cornwall.

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils will

- a) Advise parish and town councils on the submission of loan sanction applications
- b) Check applications for compliance with government requirements
- c) Submit applications directly to Communities and Local Government for approval

The National Association of Local Councils liaises with central government with regard to the operation of the loan sanction scheme. The Cornwall Association of Local Councils will ensure that current criteria and implementation information is available to member councils.

## **OFFICER SUPPORT AND ATTENDANCE**

Officers are available to attend area meetings of local councils by invitation.

CALC will also ensure that, where appropriate, its officers participate fully in the work of the National Association for the benefit of CALC member councils.

The Chairman of the Association welcomes any invitation to attend a meeting of a member council, ceremonial occasion and other events to further the profile of parish and town councils in Cornwall.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS**

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils will publish regular updates of information and guidance to its members. It will also report on its work representing member councils on outside bodies and give information on initiatives of benefit to members.

The Association will ensure that the information and guidance available via its website is the most current and up to date available for the benefit of its members.

### **NALC Updates and Publications**

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils will ensure that information and updates published by NALC is conveyed as rapidly as possible to member councils. It will maintain an up to date register of information in a directory available on its website.

### **Developing e-communication**

Wherever possible, CALC will communicate updates directly to member councils via e-mail. Where this is not possible, we will ensure that systems are in place for member councils without e-mail to receive as full a version as possible of national updates designed for member council use.

The Association may provide additional printed copies of e-documents on request. A charge will be made for this service to cover costs.

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils will work in partnership with the National Association and other agencies to facilitate the electronic communication of updates and other material directly to member councils.

The County Association will work with the National Association, government departments and other agencies to help source funding to provide IT equipment and training to all member councils.

### **Conferences, seminars and briefing meetings**

#### **National, Regional and County Events**

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils will ensure that, wherever possible, it is represented at all national, regional and county conferences, seminars and information events in order to represent the views of its member councils.

The Association also undertakes to deliver similar briefings and seminars at county and/or regional level to ensure the full participation and involvement of member councils.

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils is committed to representing its member councils are NALC conferences and events where appropriate.

### **Cornwall Association of Local Councils' Annual Conference**

The Association is committed to hosting an annual conference normally in February of each year. The event will deliver briefing and information events, training sessions and other activities designed to inform all local councils in Cornwall.

## **ORGANISATION**

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils recognises that a parish or town council should be well informed, well funded and well equipped to best serve the needs of its local community. The Association also recognises that all local councils in Cornwall should be represented at local, county, regional and national level in order that their views are considered in the drawing up of policy.

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils will continue to promote the development, recruitment and retention of membership of the Association among parish and town councils in Cornwall. This will include the production of promotional material to support membership recruitment.

### **Organisational support**

The Cornwall Association of Local Councils will work in partnership with the NALC to ensure the best possible levels of support for the servicing, promotion and representation of member councils.

The Association may from time to time subscribe to other outside bodies to provide up to date information on specific areas of interest.

### **Regional co-ordination**

Through its membership of the South West Regional Conference of Local Councils, CALC will ensure that suitable arrangements are in place for member councils and their representative bodies to respond to developments arising from regional government and other regional agencies and bodies.

Within the capacity of the Association this will include

- a) Campaigning to secure government support for enhanced local council participation in regional government
- b) Securing direct local council representation on regional agencies and bodies
- c) Establishing effective arrangements for the development, co-ordination and implementation of regional policy initiatives and their representation

- d) Developing properly resourced support for regional representation and organisation
- e) Ongoing consideration of possible organisational developments to secure the best deployment of financial and servicing resources within regional groupings of the County Association.
- f) Participation in regional projects and initiatives for the benefit of member councils.