

## **Background and overview**

The ICAEW has long been trying to find an effective way of integrating the activities carried out centrally with those carried out in the District Societies (“DSs”) and ensuring that members across the country have equal provision of services and similar opportunities of access. The conundrum has been to try to preserve the unique network, history and attributes that mark out each DS from its neighbours, whilst trying to ‘level-up’, so that services available to members are not restricted by geographical location.

In 2019 a significant review and consultation took place, looking at the type of programmes that DSs should offer and highlighting best practice in each area. The pandemic delayed progress and implementation of this work, then pilots were launched in 2022 to allow DSs to convert into Local Networks (“LNs”). The aim of the new LN structure is to free local active member volunteers from the administration and risks that are inherent within the independent DS structures, and spend more time and effort in networking with, and responding to the needs, of their local community of Chartered Accountants.

The LSCA has developed over the past 150+ years, and finds strength in its independence. This is recognised by the ICAEW, as there is provision within the current proposals for those DSs that so wish, to remain independent but operate on a similar footing to the LNs. The focus is to ensure that members are not disadvantaged by whichever path the membership chooses.

There are pros and cons of both choices, and representatives of the LSCA Executive committee have been liaising with the ICAEW and other DS representatives to fully understand the consequences of each route. The LSCA Executive Committee discussed the options with LSCA’s active members at a Main committee meeting on 26 September. This was an opportunity for active members to discuss the proposals and give feedback on their thoughts.

Points arising from that process now inform proposals being put before the LSCA’s wider membership at a Special General Meeting on 27 November 2023. Members will have the chance to ask questions and vote on the choice between becoming the ICAEW London Network, working with and fully supported by the ICAEW regional team, or to remain as the London Society of Chartered Accountants supported by a Service Level Agreement with the ICAEW.

If the members choose to become the ICAEW London Network, the LSCA would update its constitution and continue in a low-key form to manage the LSCA’s reserves and provide support to the ICAEW London Network and support to the membership.

Throughout this process, the focus is on trying to make the best provision possible for our Chartered Accountant members in London, to support their job roles, CPD, networking, career development, career change and retirement, alongside making best use of the LSCA’s resources.

LSCA members who have provided the ICAEW with an email address and have given permission to use it for governance purposes will receive the formal Notice of SGM and can book to attend and vote in person or online, or vote by completing and returning a proxy form.