



The Chairman told the members this was the last meeting that Cllr John Buchanan would attend as he was not standing for Council at the May elections. The EALC would be sorry to lose him and a presentation was made by the CEO in recognition of his past work and support.

## 1. Chairman's Welcome and Announcements

The meetings and events attended or to be attended from the last EALC Executive meeting to March 2016 are shown below.

- ✓ Strengthening Communities Principals Meeting – County Hall
- ✓ Rochford Hundred Association Meeting – Hockley Parish Hall
- ✓ Safer Essex / CVS Conference – Weston Homes Stadium Colchester
- ✓ Rural Crime Forum – Margaretting Village Hall
- ✓ Two Superfast Essex Meeting – County Hall
- ✓ All Party Parliamentary Group Meeting – Star Council Award – London
- ✓ Devolution Agenda Programme Director meeting – Gt Dunmow
- ✓ LLCF – Gt Dunmow
- ✓ EALC CEO and Chair Monthly update meeting
- ✓ EALC Personnel & Finance Meeting - Gt Dunmow
- ✓ EALC Police Conference – Gt Dunmow

Other Activities Undertaken - Not expensed by the EALC

- ✓ PCP Local Government Association Learning Event – London
- ✓ PCP Eastern Regional Network event
- ✓ PCP Police Budget Approval meeting

Resignation of Executive Members:

Cllr John Buchanan Basildon Association of Local Councils  
Cllr Colin Letchford Canvey Island Town Council

## 2. Apologies for Absence

Brian Hindley	Colchester
Kathryn Richmond	Epping Forest
Cllr Bryan Ledger	Maldon

### Not Present

Cllr Linda Belgrove	Tendring
*Cllr Keith Artus	Uttlesford

Cllr Richard Herbert	Southend
----------------------	----------

**\*Apology received by email after the meeting, sent evening prior.**

### **3. Minutes**

#### 3.1 Minutes of the EALC Executive Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016

Amendment to page 402, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraphs, delete 0 to 10, and insert by 2020

With the above alteration Cllr Gili-Ross signed the minutes as a true record.

#### 3.2 Minutes of the Finance Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015 – were noted

### **4. Personnel – Cllr Gili-Ross to report**

Personnel Committee agreed salaries and considered future strategy for staffing for the future.

No other matters to report

### **5. Finance**

#### 5.1 Budget Report

Cllr McPherson-Davis went through the budget, and highlighted the headlines of the current year to date, the proposed budget and the plan year.

Lease extension is possible and negotiations with the landlord has commenced.

Expected accounts are estimated £4 k surplus for the year end.

Cllr McPherson-Davis explained that ECC had guaranteed the rent and core grant (30,000 core funding, £10,000 training grant and £21,000 rent) until 2022.

#### 5.2 Statement of Reserves

Statement noted

Finance Officer to work on a revised estimate of current liabilities for the next Finance Meeting.

### 5.3 Budget Proposals 2016/2017

- Budget for courses continues
- publications gone down
- Affiliation Fees
- Core grants should be maintained and is part of the six year deal with ECC
- Transparency grant – should continue in the next financial year
- Salaries +2% inflation

The Plan is very basic, transparency funding removed

Looking at the 2 years there is a small deficit

Cllr McPherson-Davis and Cllr Peter Davey thanked Cllr Mick Page and this was echoed by all Members present. In response Cllr Page commented on the excellent work the EALC does is recognised by ECC.

The budget for 2016/2017 was Proposed by Cllr Stuart Berlyn and seconded by Cllr Mick Page, with the budget proposal being carried unanimously.

## **6. New Initiatives and Other Matters for Decision**

6.1 Letter to David Finch from Cllr John Gili-Ross – response noted

6.2 Policy Matters – The issue over Members Allowances for non elected Councillors is an issue that NALC continues to lobby on.

## **7. Essex Matters**

7.1 Essex County Council – Update Cllr Mick Page

Cllr Page commented that a 2% rise in Council tax only collects £11 million for the Social Services budget, and it should be noted that Essex has to find further funding of £5 million.

Devolution – discussions continue with the principal authorities.

Cllr John Gili-Ross added

Superfast Essex programme is going really well, 25% ahead of the implementation target. Phase 2 will start early, so this is excellent work by ECC. WIFI in village halls is important and CIF will be supporting this. Cllr Gili-Ross thanked ECC for this work.

CIF opens in April with the same funding

## 7.2 Staff Reports

Training – Joy Darby and Linda Golding gave an overview of the courses and the Police Conference,

Transparency Fund - Amanda Brown and Kelly Holland – noted

Transparency funding to continue into the next financial year.

## 7.3 Essex Rural Partnership

- Essex Rural Partnership January Newsletter
- Essex Rural Strategy Steering Group
- Essex Rural Strategy

Cllr Roger Hirst reported back to the ERP on a meeting he attended with Ministers held on the Rural Network.

SELEP representative explaining the funding and the processes.

Leader going well – 4 LAGS representing Essex, funding easier to access.

A number of funding streams – SELEP has been able to pilot some funds, but the window closed early, and all other LEPS window is still open. This is unsatisfactory.

Cllr Page explained that the strategy should keep moving, with Parish Councils being able to use this as an evidence base for the future.

## 7.4 PCC Rural Crime Forum Notes

This is a worthwhile forum and it is hoped that the new Commissioner will put this in place for the future.

## 8. Regional Matters

None to date

## 9. National Matters

9.1 Joint Letter to NALC from EALC/SALC and KALC – the letter was asking for long term planning. A working party to look at the Finances and Cllr Peter Davey has indicated that he wishes to sit on the Council meeting.

9.2 Letter from Yorkshire Association of Local Councils – this is interesting to note that the 3 counties in Yorkshire that work together support the thinking of Essex, Suffolk and Kent.

### 9.3 NALC Report

Cllr Peter Davey sent an initial very detailed report to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the NALC Finance Committee over the Christmas period covering all the key issues as he saw them and subsequent dialogue has taken place culminating in an action plan being agreed at the first NALC Finance Meeting that took place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016. Snapshots from that meeting are as follows:

In spite of the 18% increase in the NALC Affiliation Fees the 2016/17 budget projected a loss of over £80,000. As a result the Chief Executive was requested to come up with operational savings which amounted to £50,000

The net effect of this is that the 2016/17 budget will show a smaller loss of around £24,000. This does include some one off costs and therefore the 2017/18 budget will show a small profit of around £30,000.

NALC has agreed to form working committees to focus on the two key issues, namely the affiliation Fees going forward and the future of 109, Great Russell Street and it is my intention to sit on both of these committees.

Following on from the EALC meeting with the Kent and Suffolk CALCS in December Cllr Davey was instrumental in the drafting of the letter that we agreed to send to the NALC this month expressing our concern at both the way the AGM was handled and the Affiliation Fees increase making it clear that for the 2017/18 Financial Year we expected the NALC Affiliation fees to increase by no more than inflation whilst a full review was carried out.

The next NALC Finance Meeting will be held on the 17<sup>th</sup> May and Cllr Davey will be going through the paperwork with both the EALC CEO and Treasurer in advance of the meeting in order for Cllr Davey to be able to 'make points' in the confidence that he have the EALC's backing.

In NALC's 2016 programme is a continuation of engagement with Local Government Authorities and its interest groups will include promoting and sharing good practice, developing the leadership capacity of councillors with significant investment by LGA in a series of events and attending their annual conference.

Maintaining their influence with government, civil servants and Parliamentarians

NALC held a Local Democracy reception in February and our Star Councils winners and finalists took centre stage at a parliamentary reception hosted by the All Party Parliamentary Group on local democracy. This was NALC's first parliamentary event of this kind for several years and we were delighted that around 100 guests including MPs, Peers, ministers, shadow ministers, and others joined us in Portcullis House to celebrate and recognise the work of our councils. The event was sponsored in the main by Aon and also saw the APPG's chair Andrea Jenkyns MP launch this year's Star Councils.

NALC have met all of the new Ministerial team and they have been most supportive of the role and importance of local councils. NALC have been awarded £3.7m to set up a Transparency Fund to help smaller councils buy computer equipment and set up websites and to make financial and other information more readily available to their residents.

To date 272 applications to the Transparency Fund have been approved, a total of £234,000; this takes the overall amount awarded to smaller parish councils to just over £748,000. NALC have just confirmed the continuation of the scheme into the next financial year which has been reflected in our own budget.

NALC will continue to lobby on your behalf and build on previous successes including winning the argument about council tax referenda principles, slowing the withdrawal of council tax support funding, making it easier to set up new councils and reforms to parish polls.

There will be a national lobby day on the 12<sup>th</sup> April and NALC members will be spending the day at Westminster.

### **What is Lobby Day?**

Lobby Day is an important part of our advocacy programme aimed at promoting parish and town councils in Parliament. It takes place the same day as the NALC National Council and involves representatives of County Associations and NALC meeting with Members of Parliament (MPs) to raise the profile of Parish and Town Councils.

Last year's inaugural Lobby Day on 30<sup>th</sup> June saw NALC and County Association colleagues meet with over 50 MPs including government ministers such as Greg Clark MP, Brandon Lewis MP, Mark Francois MP and Rory Stewart MP, plus shadow ministers such as Emma Reynolds and Steve Reed. Parliamentary Outreach also delivered a workshop on 'How Parliament Works'.

Many county associations also met with MPs in the constituency in the days and weeks following Lobby Day.

9.4 Lobby Day – Cllr John Gili-Ross asked Members what they wished to do in respect of the lobby day.

Proposal – Cllr John Buchanan and 2<sup>nd</sup> – Cllr David McPherson-Davis

At Constituency Surgeries – each District Association to contact the MP for a meeting, to raise the profile of the sector; a briefing paper to be issued by the EALC to inform the meeting, ensuring a consistent message.

The motion was lost with 3 in favour and 10 against.

#### Proposal

Proposed by Cllr Peter Davey and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Cllr Stuart Berlyn

The EALC CEO to write to the NALC CEO and Chair to ask that the Lobby Day was not arranged the same as the previous years; Ensuring that any CALC representative are included in the meeting room, at the National Council.

The motion was carried with 11 votes in favour.

If there is a positive response from NALC, the EALC office will write to MPs

The CEO to write a briefing Paper on raising the profile of the sector to MPs

Cllr Gili-Ross, Cllr Peter Davey, Cllr Stuart Berlyn and Mrs Joy Darby to attend if meetings are arranged

Locality Boards – do Councils have representation as in Epping – Matter raised by Cllr Mrs Jackman

9.5 Benefits of Membership – available for the next meeting

9.6 Draft Minutes LLCF – noted

Essex LLCF – excellent meeting, well organised and chaired.

## **10. Meeting Dates**

Date	Venue	Time
12 <sup>th</sup> May 2016	42b High Street Great Dunmow	10am – 12 noon
21 <sup>st</sup> July 2016	42b High Street Great Dunmow	10am – 12 noon

8 <sup>th</sup> September 2016	42b High Street Great Dunmow	10am – 12 noon
EALC AGM – Noon – 5 30 pm 22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2016		
17 <sup>th</sup> November 2016	42b High Street Great Dunmow	10am – 12 noon

## 11. Feedback and Next Agenda

11.1 Rural Strategy Steering Group – replacement for Cllr Buchanan next Executive

11.2 New Deputy for NALC required – after May – Next Executive

11.3 Thanks to Ian McGregor for stepping in for Mrs Pink whilst a new representative

11.4 Possible AGM Speakers: John Whittingdale MP, New Crime Commissioner, Lord Matthew Taylor of Gosmore, Highways England – new route Braintree to Marks Tey, Coastal Path, Health Speaker

11.5 Natural England – report from Mandy - noted

## 12. Meeting Closure

Cllr Gili-Ross thanked Cllr Buchanan and bid him farewell thanking him for everything he had done for the EALC over the last few years

**The meeting was closed at 11.45 am**

**Signed .....**      **Dated .....**