



WEST SUSSEX ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS LIMITED

Minutes from the Board Meeting of West Sussex Association of Local Councils Limited Held at Billingshurst Community & Conference Centre Thursday 18th April 2019

Directors Present	Cllr Terry Oliver	Horsham District Association and Chair
	Cllr Mike Beal	Chichester District Association and Vic Chair
	Cllr Lilian Richardson	Arun District Association
	Cllr Val Court	Horsham District Association
	Cllr Rodney Jackson	Mid Sussex District Association
	Cllr Ian Gibson	Mid Sussex District Association

Presidents and Vice Presidents Present	Michael Chater OBE	President
	Cllr Alan Grant	Vice President

Also in attendance	Tim Burr	South Downs National Park Authority
	Alun Aylesbury	South Downs National Park Authority
	Julie Holden	Representing SLCC
	Ch. Insp. Miles Ockwell	Sussex Police
	Mandy Jameson	Senior Communications Manager, Sussex PCC
	Trevor Leggo	CEO SSALC
	Paul Richards	Clerk to the Boards SSALC

- 1. Apologies for absence**
Apologies were received and accepted from Laurie Pocock and Mark Mulberry.
- 2. To approve the minutes of meeting held on 17th January 2019**
The minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.
- 3. Matters Arising (not on this Agenda) and update on actions from the last meeting**
 - Rural crime** - Mandy Jameson (PCC's office) provided the requested update. She advised that several WSALC Board members attended the recent Rural Crime roundtable event chaired by the PCC. The wide-ranging debate focussed on issues including poaching, coursing, theft of farm equipment and the sense of isolation and abandonment in rural communities. Additional roundtable events are planned and she agreed to report back on progress. The Chairman encouraged DALCs to invite local Sussex Police officers to their Association meetings.
- 4. WSCC update on Health and Wellbeing**
 - Report from the Chairman following NALC Assembly of 13th March** – The Chairman reported that the Assembly provided an opportunity to update colleagues on the progress of the project following the recent National Award. The positive engagement with WSCC portfolio holders and senior officers has

proved critical to the success of the initiative. He gave a progress update on the Broadbridge Heath Parish Council operating model with Age UK (Horsham) and advised that he would be seeking resources from SSALC to fund the project until 31st March 2020. Members **AGREED** to support this request for funding which would initially see local engagement at the DALC level.

- **Report from the Chairman following a meeting with the WSCC Cabinet member and officers on 28th February 2019** – the Chairman reported that, together with the Vice-Chair and SSALC Project Officer, he met with two WSCC portfolio holders and their senior officers to raise the profile of local councils in West Sussex. He advised that the intention for WSALC is to be a non-voting member of the WSCC Health & Wellbeing Board.

He also advised the WSCC team that he had met with County Association colleagues from Essex, Kent, Surrey and Sussex where the Essex Association invited WSCC to a joint meeting to share best practice.

- **Presentation by Paul McKay, Director of Adult Services, WSCC** – Mr McKay did not attend as he was engaged in another meeting.

5. Police matters

- **Community Policing concerns raised by Dr Ian Gibson, Chairman MSALC** – Cllr Gibson presented a report which highlighted community concerns following Neighbourhood Plan local engagement events. Amongst the findings, anti-social behaviour appeared to be on the increase, but the main community concern was the lack of a visible police presence. He discussed the role of PCSOs and Community wardens (which had a poor take-up). The Board thanked Cllr Gibson for his presentation and discussed the issue of wardens and the poor state of the 101 service. The Chairman invited Ch. Insp Ockwell to respond. He advised that he would refer to the 101 service in his report but did confirm that the current policing model saw PCSOs as part of the prevention team.
- The Chairman sought Board approval to invite the Chief Constable and PCC to separate WSALC Board meetings in the future. Members **AGREED** to invite these officers and asked the CEO to arrange.

Action: The CEO to (a) invite the Sussex Police Chief Constable to the next WSALC Board meeting to discuss operational matters and (b), following this meeting, arrange for the PCC to attend. Board Members should be prepared to present topics for discussion.

- **Independent Advisory Group to review the effectiveness of communications with the public, CEO to report** – The CEO reported that an independent group will work with the PCC and Sussex Police to review the effectiveness of communications with the public (with a specific focus on the 101 service). SALC has been invited to represent local councils. Members noted his report.
- **Custody Suite Visitors – need to recruit more volunteers, CEO to report** – the CEO reminded Members that the Custody Suite Visitors are an independent panel with a right of access to custody suites at any time. SALC are assisting in the recruitment of new members. Members noted his report.
- **Matters for discussion with Chief Constable at the next meeting on 24th May** – the CEO reported that only three local councils across Sussex had come forward with questions. The Chairman asked in Board Members would like to submit questions.

Action: Board Members to submit written questions to the CEO ahead of the meeting on 24th May 2019.

- **Report by Chief Supt Jerry Westerman (or nominee) on operational matters in West Sussex** – Chief Inspector Miles Ockwell represented the Chief Superintendent and reported on: -
 - **Recent trends** showed a reduction in burglaries but an increase in reported violent crime. A partnership approach to address these matters with local communities is ongoing;
 - **Reporting** is on the increase however crimes such as domestic abuse continue to be under-reported;
 - **Priorities** remain unchanged; Keeping communities safe from harm;
 - **Demand** on Police resources has seen a recent change particularly in the areas of sexual violence and cybercrime which have both been under-reported in the past. There is also an increase in organised crime group activity and sexual exploitation. He reported that there is a regional and national demand for more trained police firearms officers with a resultant drain on local resources;

- **Local policing** will see a much-welcomed increase in recruitment with, for example, 100 extra PCSOs to be employed across Sussex; and
- **The Transformation Programme** is ongoing with specific focus on communications and the 101 service (where only 40% of calls relate to crime matters). The enhanced deployment and use of new technology continues.

6. NALC matters

The CEO gave the following updates: - [Trevor – I stepped out at the beginning on this section to say goodbye to Miles and Mandy – I may have missed some items]

- Finances – year end accounts suggested a surplus of circa £50,000 due mainly to staff reorganisation cost savings. This is the first surplus for many years. The future budget figures were being prepared;
- NALC has responded following a recent unrepresentative Sunday Times article; and
- The training approach for councillors was reviewed.

7. Elections 2019

The CEO provided a list of town and parish contested council elections. He reported that over 150 local council Clerks had been trained on the election process.

8. South Downs National Park Authority

- **To note arrangements for the election of parish council representatives** – the CEO reminded Members of the process to nominate and elect local council representatives to the SDNPA. SALC would manage this election process after the May elections for those local councils within the National Park.
- **To receive a report from Tim Burr** – Cllr Burr's report included: -
 - A Government led Rural Housing pilot within the SDNPA area and the introduction of a new land assembly development fund (e.g. for Burgess Hill);
 - Concerns were raised due to the EA's recent decision on flood management in the Arun Valley. Successor arrangements have been deferred following SDNPA's concerns;
- **To receive a SDNPA Local Plan presentation from Alun Alesbury** – Cllr Alesbury's presentation included:
 - Local councils are well represented on the Authority's Board;
 - The draft Local Plan is progressing well but not yet at final stage following examining Inspector comments last year. Public consultation on those comments closed on 31st March 2019;
 - Once the Inspector approves the final draft, the Authority can adopt it at the May or June Board meeting;
 - The Local Plan will replace 1026 local authority plans/strategies and aims to provide for a medium level of dispersed growth e.g. around the edge of existing settlements;
 - A new policies map will be available on line and in paper format; and
 - The SDNPA is the full planning authority for 87 local councils in West Sussex. Local councils and WSALC Members will be invited to training sessions once the Plan is adopted.

9. Update from the Society of Local Council Clerks

Julie Holden advised that she would be replacing Pauline Whitehead as the SLCC representative. She drew attention to: -

- The AGM in April that was well represented by local Clerks and was attended by the National President. The SLCC Conference will be held on 6th and 7th June with a theme of Leadership in Action;
- The society will be issuing a new suite of policies including HR and the use of drones;
- A job evaluation review and evaluation service is now available from SLCC; and
- The society continues to struggle to attract members with a meeting average attendance of around 16 Clerks.

10. West Sussex Civilian & Military Partnership Board

The CEO provided an update and advised that he has written to all WSCC local councils with a proforma sheet to be used when requesting uniformed Military personnel attend local events e.g. D-Day commemorations. 2 such requests have been received to date. The request cut of date for events on 6th June 2019 will be 26th April 2019. The Chairman thanked the CEO for his work in this area which raises the profile of the Association.

11. Recruitment issues

The CEO provided an update which reviewed the current engagements that are being managed by SALC. Starting salaries for un-qualified Clerks are circa £16 per hour and are dependent on local market rates.

12. Planning – reduction in size of planning committees

The Chairman referred to HALC's concerns regarding the proposed reduction in size and constitution of the HDC Planning Committees. This proposal has taken place without consultation and HALC are writing to the HDC CEO to ask him to reconsider.

13. SALC Newsletter

The CEO reported that the SALC newsletter is an important source of update and guidance for all local councillors. However, these updates are often not read or even distributed. The Board discussed how to increase awareness of these important updates and asked the CEO to raise this matter at the next SERCAF Board.

Action: The CEO to raise the issue of councillor updates at the next SERCAF meeting.

14. SERCAF

The next meeting is schedule for 17th May 2019 on the Isle of Wight. The morning meeting will be followed by an afternoon training session.

15. Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies

The Chairman reported that, regrettably, Cllr Val Court was stepping down after many years service. The Board asked if she could be retained as a non-voting advisor to the Board on Village Hall matters. She agreed to do so. The CEO was asked to provide the necessary brief for her

Action: The CEO to provide a brief to Cllr Court.

16. A27 Arundel Bypass Scheme Update

The CEO advised that further consultation might be planned in late summer 2019.

17. Reports by District Associations

(a) **Adur** – no update.

(b) **Arun** – Cllr Richardson advised that the Association would be re-formed after the May elections.

(c) **Chichester** – Cllr Beal advised that the Police attended their last meeting. He would be writing to Chichester local councils to remind them to nominate their Chichester DLC representatives.

(d) **Horsham** – Cllr Court reported that HALC met on 25th March 2019 with 16 out of 32 local councils in attendance. A presentation by the Safer Roads Partnership was well received. The next HALC meeting will be on 25th June 2019.

(e) **Mid Sussex** – Cllr Gibson advised that the annual meeting with WSCC and Mid Sussex DC took place on 22nd February 2019. The event was well attended. The next MSALC meeting will be on 13th June 2019

18. Chairman's update on relevant issues

The Chairman advised that the HALC Chairman, Cllr Val Court, was stepping down and Members thanked her for her many years of valuable service. Thanks were also recorded for the former Adur ALC Chairman, Tony Gardiner, who had resigned. The Chairman asked the Clerk to send a letter of thanks from the Board.

19. Any other urgent matters to be raised by Board Members

The CEO reported that Ashington Parish Councillor Lt. Col. Graeme MacPherson has informed him that 11 Brigade are undertaking a 'CARE' style tour and will be at Fontwell on 22nd May 2019.

The meeting closed at 2:44pm

Next Meeting Date - Tuesday 30th July 2019 at the Billingshurst Community & Conference Centre commencing 10am.
[Note that Members did consider re-locating the venue to Bolney but, regrettably, the Village Hall is not available]

Signed (Chairman) _____

Dated _____