



## HEADLINES FROM SALC



### **SALC CONTINUES TO PUSH FOR BETTER ENGAGEMENT**

SALC continues to push for better engagement and communication with Parish and Town Councils across all tiers of government. We have been attending regular meetings with the National Association of Local Councils and Senior Executives at Surrey County Council to continue to raise awareness of the sector, highlight issues you are facing and push for better engagement. In May we have been invited to brief your Surrey County Councillor's on the importance of our sector and why they need to collaborate with you more closely.



### **SALC PARTNERSHIPS FOR 2024/25**

In April we will welcome Surrey Hills Solicitors as our new legal advice partners for 2024/25. Surrey Hills Solicitors have a limited retainer agreement with SALC so to offer members brief urgent advice for complex matters. Requests for this service need to go via your Chief County Officer. If the matter cannot be resolved briefly then members will be asked to cover additional costs with Surrey Hills directly for an agreed hourly rate.

On top of this service, Member Councils can also receive legal advice from NALC's legal team. Again, requests need to be raised via your Chief County Officer. There is no charge for the NALC advice, and it comes as

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part of the NALC subscription.

SALC welcomes the return of Mulberry and Co and Breakthrough Communications as our training partners. Members can receive preferential rates for Mulberry and Co courses at £45 plus VAT versus a non member price of £65 plus VAT. We are also offering Breakthrough Communication courses at a very competitive market rate of £45 plus VAT. Full details on our training courses can be found here [Training \(surreyalc.co.uk\)](https://www.surreyalc.co.uk/training).



### **JOINING THE GOV.UK MOVEMENT**

The Central Digital & Data Office has set up a Parish Council Domain Helper Service Team to help Parish and Town Councils move over to a gov.uk. domain. It is important to have a gov.uk. domain as: -

- It sends out a clear message to your community, partners and suppliers that your council is a part of wider government and is committed to professional standards of working online.
- It will build trust, enhance your credibility and demonstrate that you are committed to safeguarding data. A secure gov.uk domain also means greater awareness of, and better protection from, potential cyber threats.
- It makes it easier for your community to find you through online search.
- Using gov.uk email addresses makes handling of Freedom of Information or Subject Access Requests easier.

The Parish Council Domain Helper team will be running a free of charge webinar in on 12th June for SALC member councils (<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83254226451>) and will present at our SALC Conference in November. In the meantime, you can view a useful FAQ document [here](#) and register your interest in transitioning by emailing at this address [parish.helper@domains.gov.uk](mailto:parish.helper@domains.gov.uk). Separately NALC have also issued an updated briefing on Councillor email addresses [file \(nalc.gov.uk\)](https://www.nalc.gov.uk).

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### **A NEW NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)**

In December last year the government published its delayed new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The focus is on housing delivery, but it does include several other provisions including: -

- Plan Making – It emphasises that preparing and maintaining up-to-date locally prepared plans (Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans etc.) is a priority and providing for sufficient housing and other development in a sustainable manner is a main objective of this.
- Calculating Housing Need – It confirms that the standard method for calculating housing need in a local authority is an advisory starting point but adds that exceptional circumstances will be required for using an alternative method. Local authorities with an up-to-date local plan will no longer need to continually show a deliverable five-year housing land supply.
- Housing Land Supply Buffers – The 5% and 10% buffers that can be applied to local authority housing land supply calculations have been removed, but where there is a history of under delivery of housing a 20% buffer may be applied.

Full details can be found here:- [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/national-planning-policy-framework). There is also a plethora of information to assist you on your Planning decisions on the NALC Planning webpage [Planning \(nalc.gov.uk\)](https://www.nalc.gov.uk).



### **SURREY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE CONSULTATION**

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service is reaching out to Surrey residents and communities to actively participate in an upcoming consultation on its Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-2030. The plan will address foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks, such as fires in buildings, road traffic collisions, and other seasonal risks such as wildfires

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and flooding. It will outline strategic approaches to manage and mitigate these risks and to keep Surrey residents and communities safe.

The CRMP consultation will open in May, allowing the public to give feedback through their survey on the draft plan and proposals. By **signing up for the mailing list**, you will be notified as soon as the consultation is open online. Sign up here:

[pages.comms.surreycc.info/pages/crmp-consultation](https://pages.comms.surreycc.info/pages/crmp-consultation). Surrey Fire team will be attending the SALC Clerk Forum on the 23rd of April and the Councillor Forum on the 24th of April to further brief you on this consultation.

## SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL (SCC) UPDATES



### DEVOLUTION BUDGET ANNOUNCEMENT

Following the Spring Statement announcement that the government is extending devolution powers through new Level 2 devolution agreements to Surrey County Council, Surrey County Council have issued the following statement : [Surrey's County Deal agreed with government | Surrey News \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

Surrey County Council are awaiting further contact from DLUHC officials as to the practical next steps to take this forward and will be in touch with SALC when this becomes clearer. We will keep you updated on any further communications.



### THE BIODIVERSITY CHALLENGE

We had representatives from 50% of Surrey's Parish and Town Councils attend our free February Biodiversity webinar run by SCC Chief Ecologist Vivienne Greenough and Surrey Greener Futures lead Ben McCallan. They noted that the UK has lost 40% of its biodiversity in the last 40 years and Surrey is one of the worst regions for losses. They shared some excellent insight on what Parish and Town Councils can do to boost

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biodiversity in their communities so to meet the requirements of the Environment Act 2021 which made changes to the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 in respect of biodiversity placing a duty on Parish and Town Councils to consider what action the authority can properly take to further the general biodiversity objective.

The SCC team are working on the following next steps: -

- They will send out a survey via SALC to start assessing where each Parish and Town Council is currently at with Biodiversity and how SCC might best help moving forward etc.
- They will provide some useful support documents which will include:
  - Checklist to use when commenting on planning applications.
  - Policy template
  - Planting Project Toolkit
  - They are also putting together a document on general guidance & useful resources.

Ben McCallan will be attending our Clerk and Councillor calls on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> July to further update you on the work him & Viv are doing.



### **LOCAL RESILIENCE PLAN FOR PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS**

The dramatic start to the year courtesy of Storm Henk saw large numbers of Surrey residents and businesses suffering serious flooding and an extended period of recovery. Surrey Prepared Team at SCC is working hard to make sure that as much useful information as possible is readily available to help residents prepare ahead of these serious incidents. Advice on what to do in relation to Surrey's key local risks can be found here [Risks in Surrey and how to prepare - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk). The Surrey Prepared team will be attending the SALC Clerk Forum on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2024 and the Councillor Forum on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2024 to speak about community resilience and the resources that are available.

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## SURREY ROAD SAFE VISION ZERO PUBLIC CONSULTATION

(Deadline 24<sup>th</sup> March)

SCC, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, National Highways, Surrey Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner, have set out their plans to eliminate road collisions resulting in death or serious injury by 2050. In line with international and national best practice, a new, draft 'Surrey Road Safe Vision Zero' strategy has been developed by the partners, which focusses on five areas to help minimise the risk on Surrey's roads. These are:

- Safe speeds – ensuring our roads have appropriate speed limits, people comply with speed limits, and they are safe for walkers and cyclists.
- Safe road users – encouraging competent, safe, and respectful road users.
- Safe roads and streets – streets that are well-designed, well-maintained streets and support active travel.
- Safe vehicles – vehicles are well-maintained and designed.
- Post Collision Response – a fast and effective multi-agency response to collisions.

**SCC is carrying out a public consultation on the strategy that runs until 24 March 2024.**



## SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL POTHOLE UPDATE

SCC aim to repair potholes within a month. They make semi-permanent repairs on roads where resurfacing is planned as part of our Horizon Programme. Where roads are not in the horizon programme, they are developing an emergency patching programme. You may notice an increase in temporary pothole repairs in these locations to keep the road safe while SCC plan new, larger scale repairs. SCC always try to co-ordinate repairs with planned works by utility companies in the local area to limit disruption. Visit SCC's online reporting tool [Tell us about potholes or other issues with roads and cycle lanes - Surrey County Council](#) ([surreycc.gov.uk](http://surreycc.gov.uk)).



### SCC HIGHWAYS BULLETIN

SCC weekly Highways Bulletin details the location of works alongside their expected start and finish dates. Sign up via the link to receive weekly updates on highways works, this includes news stories and the weekly bulletin of upcoming and completed roadworks in your local area.

[Your Highways update MD email \(surreycc.info\)](mailto:surreycc.info)

## KEY MESSAGES FROM NALC



### S137 EXPENDITURE LEVEL FOR 24/25

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has notified the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) that the appropriate sum for section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 (the 1972 Act) for local (parish and town) councils in England for 2024/25 is **£10.81**.

Section 137 expenditure enables the first tier of local government to spend a limited amount of money for purposes for which they have no other specific statutory power, helping them continue to invest their small share of council tax to support and improve their communities.



### NEW MODEL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

A set of new model financial regulations is expected to be published this April. Keep an eye on the [Latest News & Updates \(surreyalc.co.uk\)](https://www.surreyalc.co.uk) on our website and SALC email briefings in the new financial year.

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### **MARTYN'S LAW STANDARD TIER CONSULTATION (Deadline 18<sup>th</sup> March)**

The Home Office are consulting with Parish and Town Councils (amongst other groups and individuals) who own or operate publicly accessible premises or events that the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill will potentially affect.

They are seeking views from those responsible for smaller premises (capacity of 100-799 individuals) which would fall within the standard tier. The bill will impose requirements in relation to certain premises and events to increase their preparedness for, and protection from, a terrorist attack by requiring them to take proportionate steps, depending on the size and nature of the activities that take place at the premises.

The proposed requirements would apply to those responsible for qualifying public premises and qualifying public events.

You can complete the consultation here:- [Martyn's Law: standard tier consultation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).



### **NEW MODEL CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT**

NALC and the SLCC leadership teams have launched a new model employment contract for local councils when recruiting new employees. This model contract incorporates Green Book terms, which both NALC and SLCC recommend councils offer to align with the best practices within the local government sector. Offering good terms of employment supports the recruitment and retention of a high-quality workforce and demonstrates that the council is a good employer that values its staff. This document, produced by NALC and endorsed by SLCC, aims to support councils to attract and retain the most talented staff in their organisations and to support them in their professional development.

[READ MORE](#)

[MODEL CONTRACT & GUIDANCE NOTES](#)

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### **KINGS PORTRAIT OFFER (Closing date 28<sup>th</sup> March)**

The government is offering a free portrait of His Majesty The King to all town, parish, and community councils in the United Kingdom.

Town, parish and community councils can apply for one free framed portrait per council and also access frequently asked questions document for questions about the portrait and the scheme using this link.

Once the registration has been accepted, an order can be placed, and delivery details can be provided.



### **NEW NALC BANKING WEBPAGE**

NALC have launched a **new banking web page**. The web page features essential information such as contact details, initiatives involving engaged banks, relevant resource links, a summary of NALC's 2020 banking research, a specific note for high street banks defining the roles of local councils, and updates on relevant news stories.



### **NEW PUBLIC PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS**

There has been an update to Legal Topic Note 87 on procurement with new public procurement thresholds taking effect on 1 January 2024. The thresholds apply to public works, public services and public supply contracts. You can find the updated guidance in the **members area of the NALC website** (login required).

YOUR QUARTER 1 FOCUS



We recommend Councils focus on the following actions over the coming months: -

April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Start of new financial year.</li><li>• Agree programme of councillor and staff training for year.</li></ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Annual Council Meeting - includes electing Chair, agreeing committee membership, appointment of representatives to outside bodies, etc.</b></li><li>• Agree meeting schedule for civic year.</li><li>• Review Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.</li><li>• Induction of new councillors.</li><li>• <b>Annual Parish Meeting (or Assembly) (must be held between 1 March and 1 June)</b></li><li>• Year end internal audit.</li></ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) signed off by council and submitted for external audit (by end of June).</b></li><li>• End of quarter review of financial position.</li></ul>

#### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



##### **SALC Clerk Online Forum**

10:30 - midday - Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84549712003>

##### **SALC Councillor Online Forum**

19:30 - 21:00 - Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82670974934>

**ARMED FORCES AWARENESS TRAINING – free one hour sessions**

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**from Forces Connect delivered by the Surrey Military Team, Surrey County Council**

10:00 - 11:00 - Thursday 16th May 2024

& 14:00 - 15:00 - Monday 16th September 2024

**The training will take place on Microsoft Teams**

[Book here](#) or email [fcse@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:fcse@surreycc.gov.uk)

**SALC & Digital Cabinet Office .GOV.UK Domain Briefing Webinar**

10:30 - midday - Wednesday 12th June 2024

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83254226451>

**SALC Clerk Online Forum**

10:30 - midday - Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85448958036>

**SALC Councillor Online Forum**

19:30 - 21:00 - Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88485081773>

**SALC Clerk Online Forum**

10:30 - midday - Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82236840939>

**SALC Councillor Online Forum**

19:30 - 21:00 - Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86030968084>

**SALC AGM/Conference**

10:00 - 15:00 - Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at Dorking Halls, Dorking.

## TRAINING



SALC are pleased to provide a range of online and in person training events through our training partners Mulberry & Co and Breakthrough Communications.

For further information on training courses provided please visit their websites:

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MULBERRY & Co - New Councillors, Planning, Finance, New Clerks

BREAKTHROUGH COMMUNICATIONS - Data Protection, GDPR, Social Media, Communications

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**\*\*Highlighted training for Spring\*\***

Co-option, Elections & Annual Meetings - Covering the requirements of the Annual Meeting of the Council and understanding the Annual Parish Meeting

**\*NEW\*** The Essentials of Pre-application Meetings and Discussions - increase your understanding of the role pre application discussions play in the planning system and the practicalities involved

**\*NEW\*** The Future Shape of the Planning System - what's changing and what you need to be ready for.

**\*NEW\*** Making Effective Planning Representations - suitable for both clerks and councillors, learn how to understand and respond effectively to planning applications.

## VACANCIES



### **Board Director**

#### **Surrey Association of Local Councils**

Surrey Association of Local Councils (SALC) is seeking an individual who is willing to offer their time, energy and expertise to serve as a volunteer Board Director. The Board governs the affairs of SALC and provides strategic leadership and oversight of its operations in fulfilling its role to support, protect and grow the Parish and Town Council network in Surrey and be their collective voice at all levels of government.

If you are interested please send an email outlining your relevant experience and reasons why you would like to join the SALC Board to [chiefofficer@surreyalc.co.uk](mailto:chiefofficer@surreyalc.co.uk).



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**Our mailing address is:**

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