



**Essex Association of Local Councils
Minutes**

EALC Executive Meeting Minutes Thursday 26th May 2022 at 10 am

26th May 2022

Members Present

Cllr Peter Davey	Brentwood	Cllr David McPherson Davis	Basildon
Cllr John Gili-Ross	Colchester	Beverley Rumsey	Epping Forest
Cllr Sheila Jackman	Epping Forest	Cllr Angelina Marriott	Rochford
Cllr Wendy Stamp	Maldon	Cllr Michael Talbot	Tendring
Cllr Stephanie Gill	Uttlesford	Cllr Alan Townsend	Uttlesford
Cllr Mike Eldred	LLC Representative		

Also present – Chief Executive Officer Charlene Slade
Financial Controller Stephanie Robinson

1. Chairman's Welcome and introduction to;

Our Financial Controller - Stephanie Robinson

Welcome to Mike Eldred, Michael Talbot, Cllr Lewis Barber, Cllr Angelina Marriot

The Chairman attended the following meetings:

29 th March	NALC Management Board meeting
31 st March	Buckhurst Hill Accreditation- Took place in the library with 30 people present
4 th April	EHWB Agenda setting meeting
5 th April	NALC National Assembly
11 th April	NALC CVC and Management Board meetings
20 th April	Spring Climate Conference at County Hall
21 st April	EALC CVS meeting
26 th April	Essex Honours Panel meeting
28 th April	ERP meeting
3 rd May	EALC Personnel meeting

6 th May	Woodham Ferrers and Bicknacre Accreditation
9 th May	NALC CVC meeting
11 th May	Safer Essex meeting
12 th May	Rural Crime Forum meeting
12 th May	EALC Finance sub-committee meeting
13 th May	Canvey Island Town Council meeting
18 th May	EHWB at County Hall
23 rd May	Climate Commission annual meeting
24 th May	PFCC annual meeting at Colchester Community Stadium
26 th May	EALC Executive meeting at GT Dunmow

2. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Danny Botterill
Cllr Abdul Hafiz
Cllr Martin Lee
Cllr Paul Lees
Cllr Richard North
Cllr Sue Martin

3. Minutes

3.1 Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 24th March 2022.

Proposed: Cllr David McPherson- Davis
Seconded: Cllr Wendy Stamp

All those present agreed the minutes are an accurate record of the meeting.

Actions from the meeting: MP Lobby day briefing paper to be circulated to the Executive Committee on the outcome of the day. ECC levelling up funding, Cllr Wendy Stamp is in communication with the ECC on various initiatives.

4. Personnel – The Personnel Committee update.

4.1 Update from the Chief Executive Officer.

Welcome to Stephanie Robinson the Financial Controller of the EALC who joined on May 9th. There are some changes to the staffing structure which the personnel committee are aware of, a recruitment plan is in place.

The administration of the Local Council Awards Scheme is being managed by the National Association of Local Councils and all awards will be assessed in line with the NALC accreditation panel meetings. The EALC have retained the Essex Accreditation panel and will still assess applications prior to the final approval and certification from the Chairman of the NALC accreditation panel. The Essex Local Council Award panel continue to be supporting the association on various initiatives to retain the knowledge within the sector.

Member enquires are being supported by NALC legal team. There were over six hundred member enquires during 2021 most of these were answered in house and moving forward will have the support of the NALC legal team.

The Health and Wellbeing function is being reviewed and EALC are currently in negotiation with Essex County Council with regards to Health and Wellbeing and Climate Engagement functions for the next three years. There will be a need for a meeting with ECC representatives to ensure the detail of the service level agreement agreeable and achievable.

The EALC Health and Wellbeing Board are being kept informed, the EALC will keep the membership up to date with current Health and Wellbeing initiatives and signposting where possible.

The Funding Officer has done a sterling job administrating the grant funding on behalf of ECC. Recruitment is currently underway to recruit a funding officer to the role to ensure that the funding streams are administered effectively in a timely manner. Both the Funding Officer and Sage Administrator roles directly report to the Financial Controller. Systems are being reviewed to ensure there is no duplication of work to better streamline the office administration.

Exit interviews are being carried out by Vice Chairman Cllr Wendy Stamp to ensure continuity so that the EALC can learn from the feedback received from exiting staff and move the association forward. The reports will be confidential to the personnel committee.

Communications from the EALC will be changing. Feedback from the membership is being listened to, to reduce the amount of communications the association sends. The IT company are providing support to monitor systems, this includes replacement of all laptops and pc's, the hosting of the website and support with updating the way communications are sent to the membership.

The EALC has experienced a lot of change since covid.

Recruitment drive, Beverley Rumsey and Cllr Mike Eldred have offered support in this area.

5. Finance

5.1 Minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee Meetings held on 10th March 2022.

Proposer: Cllr John Gili-Ross
Seconder: Cllr Stephanie Gill

All those in agreement with the minutes.

5.2 Revised Budget Report.

The previous year's accounts have been audited internally, they have been audited externally over the last 18 months. There has been some work going on to ensure that sage

correctly reflects the accounts. There has been a lot of work going on to correctly reflect the year end accounts. Was purely a bookkeeping error, no monetary amount was missing. To ensure the balance sheet is correct there will need to be an adjustment to the 21/22 accounts to correct the accounting errors where line 3 was over compensated.

The error was purely a booking error on a spreadsheet. There was an error showing in the balance sheet and this was anticipated income in that was never going to be received. There is no monetary amounts omitted. The spreadsheet data has been checked and audited internally over a number of months and in the last few weeks we are now confident that the figures in the accounting system correctly reflect the accounts. The Financial Controller is confident that the accounting figures are a true record of the accounts. The budget report will be reviewed and this may take some time to achieve.

Cllr Wendy Stamp would like to acknowledge the huge amount of work that the staff have undertaken as a team as this is forensic accounting taking place by the team.

The year to date figures on the budget report are subject to minor adjustments prior to the presenting the year end accounts.

5.3 Treasurer's report on the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years.

Detail to be included.

Future working plan.

5.4 Bank Balances latest version.

The bank balances were noted.

The EALC are holding a large amount of money for the foodbanks.

It was noted there was a difference in the balance from last year, this is due to the administrative function of flipping the invoice with the purchase order needed to be done to receive the payment.

£130,000 of funding has been provided by ECC to the foodbanks, the funding was allocated to the foodbanks in three days. There is clearly a need for the foodbanks to be supported. A recognising of the amount of work that the EALC staff have carried out to administer the funding to the organisations that need it in this quick timeframe.

5.5 Weekly Grant Report latest version.

There are weekly reports being generated, however there is a lot of work being done to achieve this in the timeframe and this report may change to monthly reporting to ensure that accurate data is given in a timely manner.

Weekly reporting is not a necessity, it is important the systems are correctly and accurately recording the data. The reporting needs to be reflected monthly once all accounts are reconciled.

The team of officers have been communicating to get to the position of a workable service level agreement that reflects the change and frequency of the monthly reporting.

5.6 EALC Reserves Policy.

The report will be updated and reviewed once the year end is complete. There are sufficient funds on the association to meet the current short and long term liabilities.

There will be a statement from the finance committee and to the AGM to confirm the funding reconciliation of all funding streams.

Any discussion within the committee meeting must remain confidential within the executive committee.

The Chairman wanted to acknowledge a disappointment in the lack of representation on the Executive Committee, that the Committee recognise the work that the members are doing but this needs to be addressed.

All the documents and items discussed at the meeting are confidential to the committees of the EALC and therefore should not be shared outside of the meeting.

6. Vice Chairman Report – Cllr John Gili-Ross

Cllr John Gili- Ross: Feedback

The Vice-Chairman attended the following meetings and provided an update at the meeting to the Executive members.

Activities for the EALC have been with regards to personnel.

Cllr John Gili-Ross attended the Essex Rural Partnership, the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner Annual Conference. This was a good meeting with the partners of the EALC. The meeting was disturbing and emotional as it gave reports from individuals of how they were subjected to violence, this reflected changes to the way in which the world has changed.

Cllr John Gili-Ross is the Chairman of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel.

There has been a consultation program in regards to the policing protocol. The Home Office wants to take back some of the power from the commissioners. The consultation on the fire and rescue service, the Home Office wants all counties across the country to move in the same direction. One commissioner is responsible for both Police and Fire. Essex was the first county to operate this structure.

Thanks to Cllr John Gili-Ross for his work and reporting back to the EALC, this work is so important for the parish and town councils in Essex and for the panel to have a representative influence. There are only two members allowed on the panel.

7. Vice Chairman Report – Cllr Wendy Stamp

Cllr Wendy Stamp: Feedback

The Vice-Chairman attended the following meetings and gave an update to members.

Cllr Wendy Stamp attended the Spring Council Conference.

Attended various EALC meetings, including personnel and finance committee meetings along with supporting the staff and visiting the office.

The Chairman acknowledged the support and work that Cllr Wendy Stamp has given in supporting the Executive and staffing team.

8. Essex Matters

8.1 Essex County Council Report

Cllr Lewis Barber gave an update on various topics and events. The CIF fund will go live on Monday 30th May and will close for applications on August 19th 2022.

The launch of the CIF has been delayed due to the Ride London event which took a lot of staff resources setting up the event and coordinating presentations across the county. The EALC provided briefing events online to members councils were the Ride London cyclists would travel through the county. The EALC on behalf of ECC launched a funding opportunity to support the event.

8.2 EALC/ECC Initiative Climate Change and Health & Wellbeing

The Health and Wellbeing Board of ECC is challenged in two ways, there are small parish and town councils who are too time restricted to support health and being initiatives. This relies on the resource of the Clerk and the Cllrs, the sector is hugely run by volunteers and is very time limited. Some councils have precepts as little as £19,000

ECC wish to support with social isolation, and want to create collaboration with the smaller communities specifically looking at level of reserves that councils have, to seek ways of supporting the Health, Wellbeing and Climate Crisis agenda.

In response, the Chairman explained that the reserves of parish councils have to be justified as to why they are there and to justify to the residents the reason for the reserves. Reserves are accumulated over time for the purpose of specific projects. External auditors will advise parish and town councils to hold 8-12 months in reserve.

Update given on the devolution project and the cost of living fund, asked for information to

be shared.

The chairman asked for Cllr Lewis Barber to pass on our thanks for all the initiatives the ECC are working hard to achieve and also for the support given to the EALC.

9. NALC Update

There are many events the NALC are delivering, including a Hybrid training initiative. The NALC are focused on Health, Wellbeing, the levelling up agenda and lobby each week in parliament.

Essex Councillors should be contacting our Essex MP's often to ensure that they are involved in these initiatives.

The Chief Executive Officer, of the NALC, Jonathan Owen sends weekly updates. Over 3,500 members have attend online conferences.

The premises 109 Great Russel Street in London is an asset which is being realised. Staff of the NALC are using the premises as a hybrid hot desk environment.

10. RCCE / ERP Update.

The RCCE represent the EALC on the ERP they are working on the strategic review. The Chair and Vice-Chairs meet when required.

11. New Initiatives and other matters for discussion.

11.1 Local Council Awards. There was a request for a nomination for an Executive Committee member to join the panel. A nomination has been received from Cllr Jim Devlin. A new procedure for the administration of the awards has been launched.

The acknowledgement of the Clerks and the work that has been done to achieve this work.

Nomination received from Cllr Jim Devlin.

Proposed: Cllr John Gili-Ross

Seconded: Cllr Wendy Stamp

All those present agreed and welcomed Cllr Jim Devlin to the Local Council Award Panel. The panel requires an annual meeting to vote the positions of Chair into the panel.

Congratulations to Cllr Jim Devlin, the panel members will be informed and a meeting convened.

11.2 EALC Website development update.

The EALC website is under development. Including the hosting of the site.

11.3 Larger Local Council Forum Jim Devlin to Introduce Cllr Mike Eldred.

Cllr Jim Devlin, Chairman of the LLCF, gave an update at the meeting on the future format and anticipated date of the first LCF meeting.

Cllr Jim Devlin welcomed Cllr Mike Eldred to Local Council Forum as the Vice Chair to the LCF. The panel have met a few times to seek how to move the forum forward. The committee decided to remove the word 'Larger' from the title, the meeting has never excluded any size of council.

17th June is the next Local Council forum at the Billericay Chantry Hall, in Chantry Way. This is a site that the Billericay Town Council has taken over.

The meeting will be more active, bringing more talking and discussion between town and parish councils. If there is anything that members wish to discuss in particular please let Cllr Jim Devlin know or Pearl Willcox the Executive County Training Officer.

There will be interesting speakers to keep members engaged.

There will be topics for discussion such as hybrid meetings.

The agenda will be circulated next week.

12. District Association Representatives Feedback 25 minutes.

Each representative from each district gave an update to members around the table.

12.1 Basildon

East Anglia Green Pylons consultation ends 16th June. The EALC have sent a bulletin to the membership.

New Town Council, Wickford Town Council is newly formed following the elections in May and they have joined the Basildon Association. The EALC has been supporting Wickford Town Council for some time.

Other matters of interest in the UK Share Prosperity Fund.

12.2 Braintree

The Chairman acknowledged that the Braintree Association is now up and running.

12.3 Brentwood

Update given.

12.5 Colchester

Colchester has become a City.

12.6 Epping Forest

Ride London has taken a great amount of capacity and work the residents are split and some in favour and some are not.

The Ride London team has been helpful, there have been exhibitions, and presentations.

12.7 Maldon

Ride London starts in the high street in the town. The highways are doing a walk which Cllr Scott is taking part in. The initiative has been good in that the potholes and roads have been filled in the areas where the ride comes through the town.

12.8 Rochford

There is a hut in the district to support the Ukraine refugees.

There has been consultation to ask what they need. Keep the guard on s106 funds.

Cllr Scott attends the meetings of the parishes and does respond to enquiries, Cllr Scott is looking at changing policies to look at the Highways panel Terms of Reference.

12.9 Castle Point

Update that Chairman Cllr Peter Davey and Vice-Chair Cllr Wendy Stamp attended the town council on Friday 13th May, Canvey Island Town Council have decided not to re affiliate to the EALC for the financial year 22/23.

They felt they didn't receive the support they required. The councillors who raised the enquiries did not attend the meeting.

This means that Cllr Acott will unfortunately no longer be an EALC representative.

The EALC spent two years setting up the Town Council. Consulting with residents.

The election is 23/24. There is an opportunity join the half year at November.

12.10 Tendring

The TDALC met last night

12:03pm JGR left the meeting

The CEO of the TDALC Ian Davidson attended the TDALC meeting yesterday. The controversial topic is the huge power line under the East Anglian Green which is planned to go through the centre of the county to power the electricity.

This topic is being discussed across the county by the National Grid.

This will be Cllr Michael Talbot's final meeting after a very large amount of years as a representative since 1998.

Thank you for the personal support that you have given the EALC of the years. Cllr Michael Talbot on behalf of the NALC travelled across the country visiting all county associations.

12.11 Uttlesford

CEO Peter Holt is the new chief executive.

Uttlesford is in planning special measures.

M11 roundabout at Birchanger is closed for the next 5 weeks Friday to Monday. The diversion is 17 miles. Will not be closed for jubilee.

Cllr S Gill is asked to sit on the interview panel for Uttlesford.

Cllr Lewis Barber left the meeting.

13. Staff Reports

13.1 Chief Executive Report

Noted.

Chairman asked members to champion the EALC AGM and joint conference.

Arrival is from 9:30am for 09:45 start. Parking is free of charge and this is a 'Free' event.

All the AGM details have been announced to the membership.

13.2 Executive County Training Officer Report

Noted.

13.3 Funding Officer Report

Noted.

13.4 Communications Officer

Noted.

13.5 Sage Administrator

Noted.

15. Feedback and Next Agenda

15.1 Feedback.

Build in the agenda comfortable break.

CIF Fund Grant at a total of £300,000.00 with a total of applications received of 1.3 million, means that the fund is over subscribed.

A really sad farewell to Cllr Michael Talbot who celebrated his 91st Birthday yesterday.

16. Date of Next Meetings

21st July 2022

1st September 2022

Annual general meeting 22nd September 2022 to be held at Hylands house, this is an all-day event.

17. Matters for future agenda items

- Funding for playgrounds.
- Grant Finder.

18. Meeting Closed at 12:31