

## **RALC Local Government Organization Working Group**

### **Minutes**

**10<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

**Present.** Kay Moss, Cathryn Gallagher, Martin Griffiths, Keith Robertson, Sue Prochak, John Barnes, David Penrose, David Todd, Jenner Sands, Paul Redstone, Alice Nolan

1. **Introductions** – Cllrs Kay Moss (WDLC) and Cathryn Gallagher (LDALC) were welcomed to the meeting.
2. **Review of minutes of last meeting [24<sup>th</sup> October 2025]**
  - 2.1. Noted that the invitation to Tandridge Council will be deferred until the next meeting.
  - 2.2. Minutes agreed.
3. **Update on devolution and LGR.**
  - 3.1. Noted the delay to the Mayoral elections. Assume for now that the LGR timetable will continue as planned. Also noted that Govt ministers are meeting this week to discuss.
  - 3.2. Noted that an MP has proposed an amendment to legislation to give Parishes a statutory right to engagement with the Primary Authority.
  - 3.3. LGR Gov Consultation (Open until Jan 2025). RDC will respond and share their final responses before the close of the consultation. Some Parishes have stated they do not have the resources to respond. Others have. This is also open to individuals.
  - 3.4. LDALC noted that Lewes and some Parishes on the South Coast do not want to be drawn in the Primary proposed by Brighton and Hove.
  - 3.5. Discussion was had on the ability of Parish Councils to engage with the Unitary Authority, and potential Neighbourhood Area Committees (NAC).
4. **Liaison with other local council associations.**
  - 4.1. With Wealden and Lewes District Associations joining the meeting it was hoped that we may find common purpose and an agreed response to the LGR from all three districts. Cllrs from LDALC and WDALC were invited to join again in future RALC LGR meetings and contribute.
  - 4.2. MG confirmed we have invited Tandridge district (Surrey) and Cornwall (Primary ??) to join our next LGR review meeting.
  - 4.3. We will also reach out to District Associations and other stakeholders in Cornwall to hear their view of their move to a Primary structure and its impact on Parishes.
5. **Review of proposals put forward by Surrey Association and by NALC.**
  - 5.1. The proposals from SSALC were thought to be a good starting place as template for a RALC proposal but it was noted that the demographic of Surrey with roughly half of its area with Parishes did not quite fit with the needs for Rother.
  - 5.2. The NALC proposal were welcome and more Parish focussed.
  - 5.3. We will create a template of “header” items which will address all of the relevant points needed for a proposal. This will provide a template into which we can add detail and survey stakeholders for opinion and review.
  - 5.4. We need to understand how the NAC’s have worked, good and bad, with other Primary Authorities. Alice Nolan (Policy Officer RDC) has already compiled some responses from Cornwall and other regions which she will share.
  - 5.5. Noted that when considering any responses, access to and the set up of NAC’s or other groups we must include “partner” organisations ( e.g Health, Education, Emergency) to

asses all services we need to engage with. Do we also need some access to boards other than NAC's

**6. Communication and engagement – feedback from meeting with Anne Rathbone.**

- 6.1. The process applied by Anne with Bexhill Town Council to engage with all stakeholders was of high value. This included focus groups to gather views from local stakeholders.
- 6.2. We have two (at least) levels of engagement needed to gather data to support a proposal which could benefit from this approach.
  - 6.2.1. From residents. This could perhaps be framed around their perception of the need and availability of services that in the future will be provided by the new unitary. This could be by Parishes holding face to face meetings with residents, business, Schools etc and by survey to extend reach
  - 6.2.2. From Parishes to assess how effectively they are currently able to engage and influence service delivery with other authorities, and what they perceive is needed to engage with and influence the Primary Authority.
  - 6.2.3. From other districts authorities that are in or have completed the process of transfer to a Unitary Authority.

**7. Report back to next RALC meeting [14 January 2026]**

- 7.1. An agenda item is set for LGR at the RALC meeting. MG to amend as needed.

**8. Agreed next steps and date of next meeting.**

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| 8.1. create a first draft of a template/headers to enable more detailed work.    | MG  |
| 8.2. Define questions for engagement with residents and other local stakeholders | TBA |
| 8.3. Continue to engage with other authorities for feedback                      | MG  |
| 8.4. Provide more admin resource for LGR meeting arrangement, agendas, minutes.  | KR  |
| 8.5. Update the RALC website with an LGR section.                                | KR  |
| 8.6. Resend link to Gov Consultation   | AN  |
| 8.7. Meeting date TBA  | MG  |