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| <b>Committee</b>   | <b>FULL COUNCIL</b>     |
| <b>Date</b>        | <b>15 February 2021</b> |
| <b>Agenda Item</b> | <b>17</b>               |

## **Braintree Association of Local Councils (BALC)**

The Chief Executive of EALC has forwarded a letter from BALC to all local Clerks. She has asked for a response from all Councils by 5 February ,but the next meeting will be on 25 February for Chairmen or their elected deputies.

Dear Chairman,

We undertook to look into the revival of the Braintree District Association of Local Councils (BALC),and to report back. We believe it will benefit our councils if we establish a brand new BALC that works on behalf of all our 50+ parish and town councils, large and small. A brand new BALC would, for example:

- be member-led, democratic in its decisions, with a focus on actions, not a “talking shop”;
- be able to offer support to any of us if needed, but respecting everyone’s independence;
- by acting together provide a strong and clear voice when speaking with the District and County Councils, promoting genuine co-operation;
- promote sharing of good ideas that work by regular networking opportunities across the District;
- contribute positively to solving traffic problems through the Local Highways Panel and Parking Partnership, with appropriate representation;
- take part in progressing the A120 improvement scheme;
- seek a way through the Braintree’s Local Plan shambles to avoid yet more inappropriate planning decisions;
- provide a Braintree representative voice on the Essex Association of Local Councils Executive Committee;
- as EALC Exec Members Braintree will have appropriate representation on the ECC Community Initiative Fund award panel;
- shine a light on district and county decision-making by holding local councillors to account;
- contribute to greater community safety and crime reduction through joint actions;
- would seek representation on Braintree District Council's Standards sub-committee when dealing with Code of Conduct complaints affecting parish councillors.

The government are known to be looking at new local government arrangements that may result for example in replacing the county and district councils with three unitary councils across Essex.

The last major reorganisation took several years to implement and originally considered a proposal to abolish parish councils. It’s not too early to be thinking how parishes can feature in any new landscape.

This is a large District so the new BALC must ensure equal access from all parts and may need to hold regular sessions at different locations, also making use of remote meeting technology where appropriate.

Working positively together we are convinced a new BALC can deliver at low cost worthwhile

improvements in local life for our residents, visitors and businesses.

We would like to hear, preferably by February 5th, what you want the new BALC to do, and if we are on the right lines so far. Only when we know this can we move on to the administrative details, including a modest subscription as determined by the membership.

We propose next to report back with a meeting on Zoom for all chairmen or their (elected) deputies on February 25th, to make some decisions on the way ahead.

We are looking forward to hearing your views.

With kind regards,

Cllr John Bendall (Earls Colne)

Cllr Dave Gronland (Halstead)

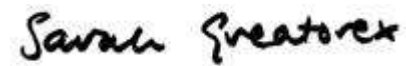
Cllr Michael Lager (Witham)

Cllr Martin Lee (Sible Hedingham)

Cllr Paul Lees (Feering)

Cllr Jane Taylor (White Colne)

**Recommendation:** that HTC endorses the proposal by BALC, and adds some further objectives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Greateorex'.

Sarah Greateorex  
Town Clerk