

Report from Representatives on Outside Bodies

Rural Services Network (RSN) Rural Conference – 4-5 Sept 2018 – Cllr Richard Sherras

I attended this conference at the suggestion of the CEO & the Director of Resources, as apart from the interesting programme of presentations on many rural matters there were contributions on Fairer Funding & Rural Areas.

It was a worthwhile exercise & to report in detail would be too great, however with the wonders of modern technology the material provided is easily accessible. The full list of presentations, etc & accompanying slides are available by following the links (Events & Meetings near bottom) in the latest Rural Bulletin (dated 11 September & circulated by me as usual to members on 12 September) to the RSN website.

From a finance point of view, I would particularly draw attention to the presentations & slides from Dan Bates – Fairer Funding & Rural Areas [workshop 4, 12.20 Wed] - and from Tony Travers – Local Government Futures & Innovation [14.00 Tues]. The Dan Bates presentation did illustrate the importance of responding to the Gov consultation on Fairer Rural Funding (which RVBC have done), so it is worthwhile looking at the RSN Consultation response. That can be accessed by following the links Fairer Funding near the bottom of the RSN Newsletter. The points made are similar to those made in the RVBC response but it also gives a picture of the wider national situation.

There were several sessions which could be of particular interest to the Economic Development Committee – there are a lot of interesting things/innovations happening out there. I have arranged with the Chair (Cllr Swarbrick) to make a report to that Committee for their meeting on 20 Sept.

On a separate topic, the session: West Suffolk District merger – Creating a single Council for West Suffolk was very interesting. There were many problems even though the 2 Councils involved were very similar rural authorities & the gestation period has been 10 years. Combining disparate councils might be a bigger task?