
Cabinet Report: Delivering Our Council Plan 2021-25

This report sets out the key strategic decisions, policy and programme initiatives, consultations, government announcements and key events within each Cabinet portfolio area to deliver our strategic priorities.

Leader – Paul Marshall

- On 19 January the Leader attended a meeting of the **SE7 Leaders' Board**, which included a discussion on proposals to support collective lobbying on issues for the region and to agree next steps, ahead of the Government's Levelling Up White Paper. The meeting also provided an opportunity for Leaders to share updates on the latest issues and priorities, with a key emphasis on the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, budget plans, water neutrality and the pressure that proposed changes to the adults' social care system may have on areas with a high number of self-funding residents.
- The Leader has been working with district and borough councils, Natural England, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Ofwat, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Southern Water on **water neutrality**. Discussion focused on short, medium and long-term measures to mitigate the effects of water neutrality on the planning system and address the delays that this is leading to in housing and commercial development in the county. As part of this, a range of lobbying activity is being undertaken to raise the issue with the Government and to seek to balance the need to address water supply constraints overall with the need to enable development to progress. Work is also being undertaken with partners to progress a Water Neutrality Strategy for the area.

Adults Services - Amanda Jupp

- The Council has been working to co-design with staff, customers, carers and partners a **longer-term vision and strategy for adult social care**. The creation of the strategy will support better understanding of what has changed for people since the start of the pandemic and what they want from their lives, so the care and support provided can be shaped to meet the needs of the people the County Council supports, in alignment with the [recently-published White Paper](#). The first phase of co-design activity included nine workshops, 17 focus groups and a survey that yielded almost 1,000 responses. [The Adult Social Care Strategy](#) (PDF, 536KB) was shared with everyone involved in its creation before being finalised by the [Cabinet](#) on 1 February.

Children and Young People (Lead Member for Children) – Jacquie Russell

- A [campaign has been launched](#) by the County Council **to encourage people to consider fostering teenagers**. Of the children the County Council cares for, 64% are aged between 11 and 17 and it is crucial that these children are provided with a safe, stable home where they can be themselves and have the help they need to guide them into adulthood. Those interested in finding out more are encouraged to [watch the inspiring story](#) of Michelle Barnes, a West Sussex Foster Carer who has fostered teenagers for 26 years.

Learning and Skills – Nigel Jupp

- The County Council has been successful in its bid to be part of a **national project that [improves the support and awareness of autism in schools](#)**. Funding will be provided to train Autism Champions within schools who will drive new and innovative measures to support autistic children. A partnership created between the County Council, the Parent Carer Forum and local charities will work intensively with 21 West Sussex schools over the next year to deliver the project.

Community Support, Fire and Rescue – Duncan Crow

- The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) co-ordinates a number of national safety initiatives and during the month of February the **West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service is supporting the NFCC Campaign on [Safer Cooking](#)**. More than 50 per cent of accidental fires at home are started by cooking - kitchen fires occur when people are distracted or leave things unattended. This campaign aims to raise public awareness and reduce preventable deaths.
- A significant area of focus for West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service is the **[prevention of Accidental Dwelling Fires](#)** as these fires relate directly to targeted prevention activity such as **[Safe and Well Visits](#)** post incident close call activity, community engagement events and service communication, as well as other targeted activity across social media platforms. This focus is designed to prevent accidental dwelling fires and the devastating consequences that result from these avoidable incidents.
- **[Libraries in the Chichester District](#)** are challenging residents to read 12 books in 12 months. The theme of each month differs to include genres that readers may not have experienced before, including books that celebrate diversity, a children's classic, and a book with a local connection. Alongside the enjoyment of reading for pleasure, which is a great way to look after mental health and wellbeing, participants can also share their love of books with other challenge members by emailing book reviews and recommendations to library.events@westsussex.gov.uk.

Environment and Climate Change (and Deputy Leader) - Deborah Urquhart

- The **[West Sussex Chargepoint Network](#)** aspires to work in partnership with all community landowners to provide a comprehensive and cohesive Electric Vehicle charging solution on public land. Community landowners that can join the chargepoint network include parish and town councils and village halls. The Cabinet Member jointly hosted a webinar with **[Connected Kerb](#)** on 27 January to share details of the contract and answer questions from these organisations. The event, promoted by **[West Sussex Association of Local Councils](#)** and **[Action in Rural Sussex](#)**, was well attended by 80 people from 71 different organisations. Any landowners were encouraged to register their interest in taking part on the **[West Sussex Chargepoint Network website](#)**. Since the event 12 organisations have registered sites for consideration, despite there not being a deadline for applications.
- For the year ending 2020/21 the **County Council has achieved a recycling rate of 53.1%**, as **[published](#)** by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). A benchmarking exercise has highlighted that the County

Council is outperforming the majority of its south-east partners. Operations and initiatives supporting this outcome include a high performing [Materials Recycling Facility \(MRF\)](#) with good quality input material, street sweepings recycling, high tonnage of green waste and wood recycling and production of Compost Like Output from the [Mechanical Biological Treatment Plant \(MBT\)](#).

Highways and Transport – Joy Dennis

- A **safety scheme is planned on the A24 at Findon** to improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. The scheme will join to an existing path to provide a greatly enhanced route between the South Downs National Park and the coast. Funding for the scheme has come from the Government's Active Travel Fund. This represents another step towards achieving the Council's target of 30km of new cycle path across the County through the period of our [Council Plan](#).
- National Highways have started the [statutory consultation](#) of their **proposals for the A27 Arundel bypass**. The consultation is open until 8 March. A member briefing by National Highways on the proposals was held on 26 January. The County Council is a consultee of this project and its response will be considered by the Cabinet in March. The decision to proceed will be made by the Secretary of State through the Development Consent Order process.

Public Health and Wellbeing – Bob Lanzer

- To support **Alcohol Awareness Week (AAW) 2021** (15 to 21 November), Council staff in Public Health and Communications developed a communications campaign to encourage people to consider their relationship with alcohol and [take the DrinkCoach alcohol test](#). This enables people to identify how risky their drinking is, receive tailored online feedback and take steps to reduce this risk through a range of measures including accessing free online sessions with a specialist DrinkCoach. A free app to track and change drinking habits and signposting to local support services are also available. [A large increase in visits to the DrinkCoach website](#), completion of alcohol tests, and visits to the dedicated AAW webpage at [West Sussex Wellbeing](#) was reported during this period. Building on the success of this approach, a similar communications strategy has been adopted to encourage people to take part in Dry January 2022 and to continue taking the DrinkCoach alcohol test.
- Looking after **mental health and wellbeing** is as important as supporting physical health. A range of services are available for individuals to provide support with mental health, which can be accessed through self-referral and via GPs, and [West Sussex Wellbeing provides](#) further information and signposting alongside programmes that can support improving low level stress and anxiety, such as through physical activity. In addition, the Council has developed and commissioned a range of initiatives including Mental Health First Aid training for staff with additional training modules for managers, to increase confidence and skills to have conversations about mental health, spot the signs of distress, proactively address problems, and champion good mental health at work. [Free mental health and suicide prevention training](#) is also available for small and medium enterprises in West Sussex. These are delivered by Grassroots in partnership with the Sussex Chamber of Commerce, the County Council, and district and borough council economic development teams.

Support Services and Economic Development – Steve Waight

- Work is ongoing to replace the current locally operated SAP enterprise resource planning system which supports internal Finance, Human Resources and Procurement functions with **cloud-based business application system [Oracle Fusion](#)**. This system is based on a set of design principles that seek to establish 'a single source of truth' for key data and information relating to Finance, Human Resources, Payroll and Procurement and Contract Management Services. This will support strategic and operational decision making and planning, whilst also providing an opportunity to introduce productivity gains via business process improvements. Implementation is planned by the spring of 2023.

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Background papers

None