

Public Document Pack

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15 December 2023

Dear Member,

County Council - Friday, 15 December 2023

Please find enclosed the following documents for consideration at the meeting of the County Council on Friday, 15 December 2023 which have been issued since the agenda was published.

Agenda No	Item
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2.	Members' Interests (Pages 3 - 4)
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List of declared interests.

4.	Appointments (Pages 5 - 6)
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Nominations.

9.	Question Time (Pages 7 - 18)
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Supplementary Question Time report and written questions.

10(a)	Motion on Funding (Pages 19 - 24)
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Briefing note and proposed amendment by Cllr Wall.

10(b)	Motion on Food Security (Pages 25 - 30)
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Briefing note, revised motion wording and proposed amendment by Cllr Lord.

Yours sincerely

Tony Kershaw
Director of Law and Assurance

To all members of the County Council

County Council 15 December 2023**Agenda Item 2****Declaration of Members' Interests**

Members have declared interests as shown, in the paragraphs specified. Unless otherwise indicated, all the interests are personal but not prejudicial. "DC" = District Council, "BC" = Borough Council and "TC" = Town Council.

Member	Item	Nature of Interest
Cllr Ali	9 – Question Time	Member of Crawley BC
Cllr Ali	10(b) – Notice of Motion on Food Security	Member of Crawley BC
Cllr Atkins	9 – Question Time	Member of Worthing BC
Cllr Atkins	10(a) – Notice of Motion on Funding	Member of Chartered Institute of Fundraising
Cllr Atkins	10(b) – Notice of Motion on Food Security	Member of Trussell Trust UK Foodbanks
Cllr Baxter	9 – Question Time	Member of Worthing BC
Cllr Bradbury	Chairman's Introduction	Chairman of Building Heroes Education Foundation
Cllr Burrett	6- Governance Committee: Minor Revisions to the Constitution (Pension Advisory Board)	Deferred member of the Local Government Pension Scheme
Cllr Condie	9 – Question Time	Member of Burgess Hill TC
Cllr Cornell	9 – Question Time, Written Questions	Governor at Manor Green College, Crawley
Cllr Gibson	9 – Question Time	Member of Mid Sussex DC
Cllr Greenway	9 – Question Time	Member of Arun DC
Cllr Lanzer	6- Governance Committee: Minor Revisions to the Constitution (Pension Advisory Board)	Deferred member of the Local Government Pension Scheme
Cllr Mercer	9 – Question Time	Chair of Orchard Hill College Academy Trust and Member of Horsham DC
Cllr Turley	10(a) - Notice of Motion on Funding	Member of Worthing BC

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Member	Item	Nature of Interest
Cllr Turley	10(b) - Notice of Motion on Food Security	Member of Worthing BC

County Council – 15 December 2023**Item No. 4****Committee Appointments**

Committee	Change
Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee	Cllr N Jupp in place of Cllr Ali
Planning and Rights of Way Committee	Cllr N Jupp in place of Cllr Ali

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Supplementary 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.

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

- [Approval has been given](#) to launch a **consultation seeking views on the proposal to relocate Jessie Younghusband school in Chichester** to a new primary school site being built at the Minerva Heights development. This would enable the expansion of St Anthony's special school into the building vacated by Jessie Younghusband, creating much-needed new places for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Parents, carers and members of the community who wish to express their views on these proposals, and the associated catchment area changes which would be required, are encouraged to respond to the consultation, which is due to run for seven weeks.

Contact Officer: Helen Kenny, Head of Democratic Services, 033 022 22532,
helen.kenny@westsussex.gov.uk

Background papers

None

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West Sussex County Council – Written Questions

15 December 2023

1. Written question from **Cllr Cornell** for reply by **Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Education and Skills**

Question

Given the rise in complexity and demand for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) places for children in West Sussex (and nationally) and the current clear struggle to meet demand, can the Cabinet Member tell us:

- How many SEND student places have been created each year in Local Authority Special Schools across West Sussex since 2018?
- How many Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) have been awarded each year since 2018?
- How closely have the former tracked the latter?

Answer

- (a) Special School Places 2018/19 to 2023/24:

School	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	
Cornfield	62	62	62	64	64	72	
Fordwater	121	130	130	136	136	144	
Hérons Dale Primary	99	99	125	131	130	130	
Littlegreen	75	75	75	80	80	81	
Brantridge	0	0	36	40	44	48	
Manor Green College	208	210	216	210	210	212	
Manor Green Primary	185	200	208	210	210	220	
Oak Grove College	260	256	256	263	264	274	
Palatine Primary	136	136	151	158	175	175	
QEII	100	105	105	110	120	120	
St Anthony's	206	213	213	222	225	235	
Woodlands Meed	268	259	259	259	259	259	
	1720	1745	1836	1883	1917	1970	
Additional Places		25	91	47	34	53	Total 250

- (b) Data taken from [Education, health and care plans, Reporting year 2023 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

Number of New Plans issued in West Sussex 2018 to 2022 (January to December of each year):

Year	Number
2018	615
2019	764
2020	649
2021	678
2022	695

- (c) There have been an additional 250 places created in our special school and an increase in the number of new plans issued each year from 615 in 2018 to 695 in 2022.

We are aware of an increasing demand for special school places over this period of time.

2. Written question from Cllr Smith for reply by Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Education and Skills

Question

Adur families applying for Year 7 places in September 2024 will undoubtedly welcome the announcement of 70 more places being made available at the Sir Robert Woodard Academy. However, as this is due to the current large Year 11 cohort leaving the school rather than West Sussex proactively increasing local provision in the area, could you please advise the following:

- (a) Based on the numbers of pupil places available (PAN) in the 2024 intake cohort, how many children will be offered a place at their first, second or third preferences next September in the two Adur High Schools, Sir Robert Woodard Academy and Shoreham Academy?
- (b) How many children will need to be placed at a school outside of Adur?
- (c) How are places now being actively planned for Year 7 applications for 2025 and beyond to avoid a repeat of 2023 allocations issues?

Answer

- (a) The Admission Number for September 2024 entry to Shoreham Academy is 300 and 310 at Sir Robert Woodard Academy and we expect places to be offered up to those numbers. The information on how many children will be offered a place at their first, second or third preference school will not be available until all the places have been offered and decisions conveyed to parents on 1 March 2024.
- (b) We will not have that information until all the places have been offered and decisions conveyed to parents on 1 March 2024.

- (c) As both Shoreham Academy and Sir Robert Woodard Academy are their own admissions authority it is for them to confirm how many places they will offer. The County Council will continue to discuss the opportunity for both schools to offer in excess of the Published Admission Numbers of 300 and 240 respectively for Year 7 in 2025 and beyond.

3. Written question from Cllr Gibson for reply by Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change

Question

Could the Cabinet Member please advise:

- (a) What evidence supports the proposed introduction of a booking system at the Billingshurst, Burgess Hill, East Grinstead, Midhurst, and Westhampnett Recycling Centres?
- (b) For each centre, in the last 12 months:
- (i) How many residents using the centre have requested the introduction of a booking system?
 - (ii) How many users have been turned away due to exceeding the maximum number of visits allowed?
- (c) For recycling centres operating the booking system, what percentage of users reached the maximum number of visits allowed in the last 12 months?
- (d) Based on the latest 12 month figures, what are the recycling rates for recycling centres with and without booking systems?
- (e) How has the anticipated saving of £200,000 been calculated?
- (f) What is the expected cost of handling the increased number of telephone bookings?
- (g) What processes and agreements have been put in place to allow non-West Sussex residents to continue to use the East Grinstead centre?

Answer

The County Council does not hold information on the number of residents using the centres that have requested the introduction of a booking system nor on the number of users that have been turned away due to exceeding the maximum number of visits allowed. Similarly, the percentage of users that reached the maximum number of visits allowed in the last 12 months is unknown.

The booking system limits bookings to no more than five per month (but does not report on the number of attempted exceedances). Visits to Recycling Centres that do not have a booking system are currently unrestricted.

A breakdown of the recycling rate achieved for each Recycling Centre has been provided on page 13.

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Waste has reduced by just under 3% at Recycling Centres with booking requirements. The same level of waste reduction has been used to estimate the saving that would result from the introduction of booking at the remaining sites.

There is not expected to be an increase in costs from the handling of telephone bookings. Over 98% of residents book online, so the increase in calls should be managed within existing resources.

Surrey County Council has an agreement with West Sussex to allow for residents living in certain Surrey postcodes (RH7 6, RH10 3, RH19 2, RH19 3, TN8 7, TN8 5 and TN8 6) access to the East Grinstead site. Residents in these postcodes will still be allowed access and can make a booking via the booking system.

Breakdown of the recycling rate achieved for each Recycling Centre

Including Green Waste 2022/23

With Green	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Billingshurst	68.50%	74.87%	73.43%	76.58%	73.55%	74.09%	74.96%	74.08%	70.15%	70.41%	70.91%	73.63%	72.93%
Bognor Regis	77.14%	78.23%	82.49%	74.31%	77.60%	76.83%	73.78%	73.54%	72.77%	68.98%	75.20%	75.52%	75.53%
Burgess Hill	79.97%	80.32%	78.34%	80.19%	76.17%	76.84%	80.33%	72.78%	76.51%	70.24%	73.14%	71.71%	76.38%
Crawley	74.16%	74.14%	81.15%	80.03%	74.98%	74.70%	79.37%	81.72%	65.81%	72.01%	71.72%	72.45%	75.19%
East Grin'd	84.56%	82.33%	84.88%	85.10%	79.09%	84.00%	83.64%	82.38%	76.40%	74.34%	79.42%	79.82%	81.33%
Horsham	72.62%	73.45%	77.28%	70.51%	70.90%	77.74%	76.94%	76.15%	61.77%	69.55%	70.68%	73.56%	72.60%
Littlehampton	74.87%	79.88%	82.10%	78.37%	79.52%	79.90%	79.53%	76.18%	70.54%	70.16%	76.73%	78.01%	77.15%
Midhurst	69.57%	70.56%	77.40%	70.03%	72.02%	73.11%	71.88%	75.31%	65.99%	67.27%	72.05%	72.20%	71.45%
Shoreham	58.90%*	78.11%	81.69%	78.88%	76.80%	75.27%	78.10%	75.35%	66.29%	70.45%	78.68%	72.56%	74.26%
Chichester	80.22%	82.95%	82.78%	83.15%	80.65%	81.10%	83.59%	78.22%	80.34%	73.97%	78.29%	80.19%	80.45%
Worthing	54.75%*	73.78%	73.68%	72.56%	71.85%	71.21%	72.59%	68.77%	61.47%	60.42%	71.59%	68.98%	68.47%

Excluding Green Waste 2022/23

Excluding Green	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Billingshurst	62.32%	68.12%	73.43%	76.58%	73.55%	74.09%	74.96%	74.08%	70.15%	68.44%	64.20%	69.39%	70.78%
Bognor Regis	71.25%	71.27%	82.49%	74.31%	77.60%	76.83%	73.78%	73.54%	72.77%	68.98%	75.20%	72.81%	74.23%
Burgess Hill	80.10%	76.66%	78.34%	80.19%	76.17%	76.84%	80.33%	72.78%	76.51%	67.19%	69.03%	70.26%	75.37%
Crawley	70.39%	72.42%	81.15%	80.03%	74.98%	74.70%	79.37%	81.72%	65.81%	72.01%	68.81%	70.17%	74.30%
East Grin'd	79.95%	77.57%	86.71%	86.69%	80.82%	85.60%	85.55%	85.19%	79.28%	72.05%	75.96%	79.32%	81.22%
Horsham	70.19%	70.13%	77.28%	70.51%	70.90%	77.74%	76.94%	76.15%	61.77%	69.55%	70.68%	72.11%	71.99%
Littlehampton	69.53%	73.66%	82.10%	78.37%	79.52%	79.90%	79.53%	76.18%	70.54%	70.16%	72.39%	74.74%	75.55%
Midhurst	60.11%	58.27%	77.40%	70.03%	72.02%	73.11%	71.88%	75.31%	65.99%	67.27%	62.67%	66.06%	68.34%
Shoreham	51.74%*	74.36%	81.69%	78.88%	76.80%	75.27%	78.10%	75.35%	66.29%	70.45%	75.30%	70.28%	72.87%
Chichester	83.67%	85.95%	87.90%	87.84%	87.32%	83.85%	87.27%	82.62%	90.77%	81.11%	78.75%	81.37%	84.87%
Worthing	47.42%*	67.76%	73.68%	72.56%	71.85%	71.21%	72.59%	68.77%	61.47%	60.42%	68.88%	65.73%	66.86%

* Adur and Worthing strike

4. Written question from Cllr Kerry-Bedell for reply by Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change

Question

The Energy Act 2023 has finally been enacted and promotes: (a) a net zero objective; (b) a security of supply objective; (c) an efficiency and economy objective. This Act allows for the development of local hydrogen generation and power as an alternative to hydrocarbon based fuels and electric power. The completion of Rampion 2 will create over 1GW of offshore wind power, but could also allow the county to develop an alternative future hydrogen fuel supply source that is less reliant on fossil fuels and is less constrained by the know limitation of the electricity power grid network.

Will the County embrace the opportunity to request the Government to look at all options to build a hydrogen plant offshore of the West Sussex coast where the Rampion 2 power line comes ashore?

Answer

Although the Act may allow for the development by third parties of hydrogen production and related initiatives, the Government itself is not looking at developing such schemes. Therefore, there is no reason to "request Government to look at all options to build a hydrogen plant offshore of the West Sussex coast".

Rampion 2, the extension to the existing Rampion Offshore Wind Farm, is a private development being taken forwarded for consent under the statutory Development Consent Order (DCO) process. The County Council is only a statutory consultee in the DCO process and is not the decision maker with regards to the development of the scheme. As with any planning application, the County Council cannot insist the applicant builds a substation at their cost where the cable comes ashore to facilitate a possible hydrogen plant, notwithstanding the fact that this area is at risk of flooding.

The County Council does not have the resources, capacity, or capability to develop commercial hydrogen projects and as such is supporting [Shoreham Harbour's aspirations](#) in this area.

5. Written question from Cllr Kerry-Bedell for reply by Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change

Question

A Liberal Democrat motion on setting up a water quality group was proposed in October. The Chairman of the County Council declined to include it on the agenda for debate, stating that it is already setting up a similarly focused Water Summit. Despite this Summit being announced to in the members' Bulletin on 11 October there have been no further details forthcoming. The questions are:

- (a) When will the first Water Summit be held?
- (b) Will members of all parties be invited to attend?
- (c) Will the Water Summit cover all seven of the key elements of water quality, supply and impact?

- Water supply and management
- Water neutrality
- Nitrate neutrality
- Sewage capacity
- Storm sewage overflows
- Flooding driven by climate change

Answer

- (a) Positive discussions have taken place with the Environment Agency (EA) about holding the first Water Summit in the first quarter of 2024 (given the EA's need to prioritise operational matters at this time). The County Council is also in contact with Water Resource South East (comprising the six water companies in the region) and has yet to receive a response from Southern Water.
- (b) The intention is that the Water Summit provides a forum for high-level dialogue between senior members/representatives of each organisation. Therefore, it is proposed that the Leader and Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change attend on the County Council's behalf and a Leader and Chief Executive of one of the coastal district/borough councils will be invited to attend.
- (c) The proposal is that the Summit builds on the spirit of co-operation demonstrated at the Member Development Session in September 2023 and seeks to develop agreed actions for each organisation and embed a shared understanding of who is doing what, under the three themes in the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' 'Our integrated plan for delivering clean and plentiful water':
- Transforming management of the whole water system: to address flood risk and related matters, such as land-use planning and nature recovery.
 - Deliver a clean water environment for nature and people: to address water quality, pollution prevention, storm overflows and nutrient neutrality.
 - Secure a plentiful supply of water: to address resilience to drought, managing demand and disruption, improving efficiency, reducing leakage and water neutrality.

6. Written question from **Cllr Wild** for reply by **Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change**

Question

Flooding in Bognor Regis

In 2014, the Aldingbourne Rife reached a record height of 1.14 metres. But on 3 November 2023 it reached a new record of 1.69 metres. The Environment Agency tell me that the Aldingbourne Rife pumps supplement the natural outflow of water at low tide, and over the past weeks the capacity for the catchment to drain via the gravity outfall has been reduced due to high neap tides.

Given the latest evidence shows an underestimate of future sea level rises, can the County Council, as the flood authority, influence and persuade Arun District Council as to the severity of the flood risks within the Aldingbourne Rife flood plain, given there is an application for 480 houses on the Bognor golf course, and the Arun local plan

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has made provision for north/south road next to the Aldingbourne Rife and light industrial units on land adjacent to the former Lec Airfield?

Answer

The County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority, is only a statutory consultee for major planning applications in relation to potential flood risk to new development from surface water and groundwater.

The Environment Agency (EA) is responsible for flood risk from rivers, which includes the Aldingbourne Rife. The EA is a statutory consultee for development in Flood Zones 2 and 3, which (respectively) have medium and high probabilities of flooding from rivers and the sea.

Bognor Golf Course and adjoining land is within Flood Zone 3. Therefore, the planning application should be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), which should include an assessment of all sources of flooding (including from the Rife) and take account of climate change allowances.

The EA's consultation response should address the veracity of the submitted FRA, including whether it has taken full account of the impacts of climate change on the Rife and on sea levels.

With regard to potential risks to new development from flooding, Arun District Council, as the Local Planning Authority, has a duty to take account of all material considerations, which includes consultation responses from statutory consultees.

7. Written question from **Clr Wild for reply by **Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport****

Question

I have received a massive number of complaints regarding flooding on the roads in various areas of Felpham, and probably other councillors have as well in their areas. This flooding always seems to exist in the same areas and I would like to know:

- (a) What historical records you keep of continual flooding?
- (b) Why, because of this history, haven't the problems been solved over time?

Answer

- (a) All reported highway flooding is recorded, so flooding hot spots can be identified and this informs the drainage maintenance programme.
- (b) The Council, as Local Highway Authority (LHA), ensures that highway drainage infrastructure is well-maintained and effective. However, there will always be occasions when factors outside the LHA's control result in highway flooding. When this happens, officers ensure locations are safe by erecting flood signs, implementing traffic management, or (as a last resort) closing the road.

Regarding Felpham, the Bognor area received significantly higher rainfall in October; 274mm compared to the average of 62mm.

Most highway water runs into surrounding watercourses and, in many cases, directly into the sea. The recent heavy rainfall quickly overwhelmed local

watercourses even where they are well-maintained. In this case, water can no longer drain away, and it floods the highway.

Furthermore, outlets into the sea are protected with tidal flaps that close when the tide is in (to prevent tidal water travelling the wrong way). When the flaps are closed and there is very heavy rainfall, the system fills with water resulting in highway flooding until the tide recedes, and the flaps open.

In addition, we have seen the impacts of main river flooding (the Aldingbourne Rife), which is the responsibility of the Environment Agency. Many highway drains outlet into the Rife; this is not possible when in flood and leads to flooding on the highway. The direct impact of the Rife bursting its banks was flooding on the highway and adjacent property, including the Council's offices at Durban House.

The County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority, will continue to work with key partners, including the Environment Agency, district and borough councils and water companies to understand the causes of flooding and to identify potential solutions. The review of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy will set out a plan to address flood risk in the county over the longer-term, as well as identifying specific actions to be delivered in the short-term by the responsible bodies.

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County Council – 15 December 2023**Item 10(a) – Notice of Motion from Cllr Kirsty Lord on Funding****Briefing Note****Local Government Funding**

Funding from the Government for local authorities is through the Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA).

The SFA is a combination of Revenue Support Grant and business rates baseline funding and is determined through a national formula. Since 2015/16, SFA for West Sussex County Council has reduced from £157m to £82m in 2023/24 – a reduction of £75m (48%).

Core Spending Power

Each year, the Local Government Finance Settlement also publishes figures for Core Spending Power. In addition to the SFA, this includes other general service grants and forecast income from Council Tax collection. Core Spending Power will always assume that Council Tax is increased by the maximum allowable subject to referendum thresholds as well as making assumptions for our Council Tax Base and collection rates.

Since 2015/16, Core Spending Power has increased by 41%. This is largely driven by increases in Council Tax, dedicated Adult Social Care grants and the general services grant. All such grants are time limited and local authorities remain unclear year on year on their continuation which makes long term planning and financial sustainability extremely challenging.

Autumn Statement 2023

On 22 November the Chancellor published his Autumn Statement 2023. Although additional funding was announced for councils with housing and planning responsibilities, there was no reference to additional funding for county councils or any recognition of the significant financial pressure facing county councils.

Local Government Finance Settlement 2024/25

The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024/25 is expected to be published the week commencing 18 December 2023. Similar to last year, the Government published a 2024/25 funding policy paper on 5 December 2023.

The policy paper gave an indication of the inflationary uplifts in government funding expected for 2024/25 and which are broadly in line with the current assumptions. Similar to the Autumn Statement, the policy paper did not indicate any new funding for social care and home to school transport – the two biggest financial pressures currently facing West Sussex. The County Council will now await the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024/25 but based on the Autumn Statement and the Policy Statement it is unlikely there will be any new funding.

The provisional settlement is expected to be subject to 28 days consultation as in previous years before the final settlement is published in February 2024.

Lobbying

Lobbying plays a critical part in discussions with the Government on Local Government Funding. This takes a variety of forms through the year:

- Through work with district and boroughs;
- Engagement with local MPs to raise awareness of local issues for their support in lobbying for local issues with the Government;
- Collectively with the South East 7 group of Local Authorities (West Sussex, East Sussex, Brighton and Hove, Hampshire, Medway and Kent);
- Through the County Councils Network (CCN);
- In collaboration with partners of service specific issues; and
- Writing directly to ministers.

Prior to the Autumn Statement 2023, specific lobbying activities relating to funding included:

- West Sussex took part in the Society of County Treasurers Budget Survey which supported the CCN in its calling for emergency funding for children services this year;
- West Sussex support to a CCN letter to the Chancellor and Levelling Up Secretary outlining the findings of the budget survey and based on this evidence the Autumn Statement financial asks. This received extensive media coverage through the BBC, Sky News, The Guardian, Independent, The Sun, Talk TV and across BBC regional radio.
- A letter from the Leaders of the five county councils that are part of the SE7 group to the Chancellor urging the Government to provide essential funding for children's social care and home to school transport in the Autumn Statement and Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

Given the disappointment in the announcements made in the Autumn Statement 2023, lobbying has continued to try to encourage the Government to recognise the role local government plays in delivering services to its residents and the risk to front line services if no new funding is identified in the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement due to be published later this month. This has included:

- A joint letter from the Leaders of the county councils through the County Councils Network expressing concern that the Autumn Statement did not address the severe and mounting financial pressures facing well run, county and unitary authorities.
- A letter to the Chancellor from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property expressing disappointment with the Autumn Statement at acknowledging the pressures faced by upper tier authorities and with specific reference to West Sussex's financial challenges – soaring inflation, children's social care, home to school transport and the need for direction on the funding of the DSG deficit when the current statutory over-ride ends.

Lobbying will continue in the run up to the publication of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement later this month and throughout the consultation period to February 2024.

Funding 2025/26 onwards

There remains a significant financial challenge for West Sussex from 2025/26 onwards with an estimated budget gap of between £87m and £140m depending on the level of Council Tax increase. Officers and members will continue to work with the Government for long term funding reforms both directly and through the channels above. This will include funding for Children's Social Care and the Josh MacAlister recommendations, Adult Social Care and the delayed reforms, SEND and the increasing number of young people with EHCPs and wider funding reforms, previously referred to as the Fair Funding Review.

Taryn Eves

Director of Finance and Support Services

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County Council 15 December 2023

Item 10(a) – Notice of Motion amendment from Cllr Wall

For 2024/25 and beyond, councils are experiencing budget pressures greater than those experienced at any time before. The Local Government Association (LGA) reports that councils have experienced a 27% real terms cut in core funding **from** central government since 2010. Meanwhile, cost and demand pressures will have added 29% to the cost of delivering council services between 2021/22 and 2024/25.

Cost pressures are particularly acute in adult and children's services for all councils including West Sussex County Council. These include but are not limited to the cost of increasingly complex care alongside the increasing difficulty of finding appropriate provision within the care market, more requests for Special Educational Needs (SEND) support than can be processed each month, and continually rising costs in home to school transport. **It is currently projected that** Children's services **will** accounts for £22.8m of WSCC's predicted £26.5m overspend **on portfolio budgets** this year.

This Council has consistently lobbied the Government for increased funding for all of the services referenced above, especially recognising the need for a considerable increase in the funds needed to provide appropriate levels of services for vulnerable people, alongside adequate funding for those services used by all residents, such as Highways and Library services.

Despite ***In view of the challenges being faced and the continued*** lobbying of government by the County Councils Network and the LGA and of our MPs by this Council, ***the Council is disappointed that*** the Government provided ***little or*** no protection for ***council services*** councils from real-terms cuts in the Autumn Statement and there was no increased funding in children's and adults' services.

Alongside other county councils, West Sussex County Council ***remains*** is in the ***likely*** invidious position of having to ***propose an*** increase ***in*** council tax by the maximum available during a ***difficult financial time for our residents*** cost-of-living-crisis whilst also having to find savings ***through efficiencies*** from the services it offers to residents. Even with this there is currently a predicted shortfall of £4.4 m in the council's budget for 2024/25 with a cumulative budget gap out to 2026/27 of £51.1m and of £91.8m out to 2028/29.

Therefore, this Council ***strongly supports*** calls on the ***efforts of the*** Leader ***and Cabinet*** to:

- (1) ***Continue to support*** Call upon our MPs to make the cause of adequate funding for West Sussex County Council their top priority in the final year of this ***Parliament*** government;
- (2) ***Continue to call*** upon the Government to urgently address the acute financial challenges affecting councils in order to protect the local services our communities rely on;

- (3) **Continue to back** the County Councils Network calls for emergency funding for children's services this year and next;
- (4) **Continue to back** the LGA's calls for a long term plan for adequate council funding from government; and
- (5) Write **once again** to the Secretary of State and our MPs to lobby for an urgent injection of funding before our budget needs to be set in February 2024 and for the local government financial settlement to **set out** ~~guarantee~~ adequately increased funding ~~out~~ to at least 2026/27 to allow for certainty in planning.

County Council – 15 December 2023**Item 10(b) – Notice of Motion from Cllr Duncton on Food Security****Briefing Note****Background**

Currently, the County Council provides a blend of provision, dependant on the service required. The Council's catering services either directly or indirectly provided by the Council provide more than five million meals each year, mostly in schools and through meals on wheels.

West Sussex economic impact

The Council's catering services contribute significantly to the local economy by employing around 750 local people to deliver its in-house and commissioned services, across more than 200 sites throughout the county. Wherever possible local supply chain is incorporated into the offer. In the Council's directly provided Special School meals service all meat is sourced from Solent Butchers and fruit and vegetables from Munneries (East Wittering). Where local supply is not possible the Council encourages use of UK produce. These requirements are written into all our contracts. West Sussex is also a Fair-Trade County and the use of Fair-Trade produce is also encouraged in all catering services.

Plant-based meals

The Council is focused on ensuring that all its outlets that serve food, both in-house and sub-contracted, provide a balanced offer of meat, fish, and plant-based foods. The need for a balanced food offer is written into the Council's contractual, and or direct service arrangements, and is monitored by the Council as part of its contract management and operational service functions.

The Council is investigating opportunities surrounding the food it serves alongside its strategy to be carbon net zero by 2030. Our commissioned providers are working hard to contribute to these. This includes ensuring minimising food waste; that UK foods are used wherever possible to reduce food miles and support UK growers and that customers are better informed about the food on offer. One example is for school meals allowing parents to choose the meal and remove estimation and unnecessary food waste.

The Council has supported the work of the [Eat Them to Defeat Them](#) campaign aimed at encouraging children to eat more vegetables, as part of a balanced and healthy diet, and will again in 2024. We have also worked with schools via our service provider to highlight the importance of [bees](#) in pollinating our crops, and will do again in 2024.

Meat and fish-based meals

The Council catering service believes in providing all customers with choice. We conduct annual surveys of customers to understand what people want from the service. All new dishes need to pass through a customer tasting and development process, to ensure feedback is captured. Provision of plant-based foods and meat and fish is a requirement of contractual specifications. The [School Food Standards](#) 2014 stipulate that a portion of meat or poultry must be available on three or more

days each week on every school meal menu. Currently, all our school meal menus are based around the principle of a 'meat free Monday' and a 'fish only Friday', with Tuesday to Thursday featuring meat and poultry options. This has become very standard across the industry in support of encouraging a healthy and balanced sustainable diet.

Key contracts and services serving meals

Chartwells – approximately 180 schools provided with hot meals via the innovative Steamplcity model. This contract was let in 2016 and runs until end July 2026. [Video](#) giving an overview of the model. [Sample menu \(PDF, 291KB\)](#). Employs around 650 local people and serves around 23,000 meals each school day.

Easy Lunch – eight schools in the Horsham area without their own kitchens are provided with hot meals via a delivered hot meals model. This contract was let in 2016 and runs until end July 2026. Menus and company history are available on the company [website](#). This is a local (Horsham) run SME business we have worked with and developed since around 2010.

Health and Independent Living Support (HILS) - Took over the Meals on Wheels service October 2022, contract runs until October 2027, with a potential extension to 2029. Provides around 180,000 meals a year across the county to elderly and vulnerable clients, including safe and well checks, a preventative service as well as a meals service. Also provides meals to the Council's Day Centres. The service employs around 30 local staff, operating from local premises. Further information is available on their [website](#).

County Catering Services – Operating as in-house Council service providing meals for 11 maintained special needs schools, serving around 1,000 meals each school day, based within the Communities Directorate. A cook from scratch model, the service employs around 40 local staff. Recently awarded the LACA (School Meals People) Business of the Year 2022 award, and the Footprint Sustainability Public Sector 2023 award for its meal services. [Sample menu \(PDF, 2MB\)](#).

Summary

The Council has a key role to play in providing meals served in schools, day centres, children's homes and in its Meals on Wheels service. In many of these services there are national standards that must be adhered to, such as The School Food Standards, 2014 and The National Association of Care Catering standards for Meals on Wheels. The Council ensures that these are continually met and monitored for compliance. The standards ensure that a varied diet is catered for. Provision is also made for special diets for medical requirements, and for lifestyle and faith reasons. Every day there are two to three meal options for children in schools, across the 190-day academic year. Meals on Wheels residents, some of whom are on a 365-day service, are able to choose from five main meal options daily. We seek to ensure that all people, regardless of their individual circumstances or need, can access a safe, nutritious, and varied meals service.

Lee Harris

Director of Place Services

County Council 15 December 2023

Item 10(b) – Notice of Motion from Cllr Duncton on Food Security

This Council notes the importance of farming, growers, **fisheries** and agriculture to the West Sussex economy, and recognises that many West Sussex residents rely on **these industries** for their livelihoods.

The Council is concerned that initiatives to limit the availability of non-plant based foods, supported by other local authorities, would have a serious detrimental effect on the farming **and fishing industries** in West Sussex, and would impact on the livelihoods of our residents as a result, as well as limiting choice for those residents who eat meals at Council-run establishments.

The Council therefore resolves to ask the Leader and Cabinet to ensure that all commissioned meals served in West Sussex schools, care homes and other establishments where food is provided for users of our services continue to offer the full range of meat, fish, dairy, vegetarian and vegan options, so as to enable the full range of choice and balanced diets to be available to all those residents who use the Council's services.

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County Council 15 December 2023

Item 10(b) – Notice of Motion on Food Security

Amendment by Cllr Lord

This Council notes the importance of farming, growers, fisheries and agriculture to the West Sussex economy, and recognises that many West Sussex residents rely on these industries for their livelihoods.

The Council is concerned that initiatives to limit the availability of non-plant based foods, supported by **some** other local authorities, **could** ~~would~~ have a ~~serious~~ detrimental effect on **some parts of** the farming and fishing industries in West Sussex, and **may** ~~would~~ impact on the livelihoods of **some of** our residents as a result, as well as **potentially** limiting choice for ~~these~~ **some** residents who eat meals at Council-run establishments.

The Council therefore resolves to ask the Leader and Cabinet to ensure that all commissioned meals served in West Sussex schools, care homes and other establishments where food is provided for users of our services continue to offer the full range of meat, fish, dairy, vegetarian and vegan options, **preferably using West Sussex produce**, so as to enable the full range of choice and balanced diets to be available to all those residents who use the Council's services.

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