

West Sussex County Council – Written Questions

18 October 2019

1. Written question from **Mr Jones** for reply by the **Chairman of Governance Committee**

Question

Can the Chairman please produce a list of all post-holders appointed from Director to Head of Paid Service level at West Sussex County Council from 2010 to 2019, including their job title, start dates and end dates (where applicable)?

Answer

The information requested is provided in the table below. Please note that some post-holders are shown multiple times following changes in job titles and/or roles following reorganisation or restructuring.

Position Title	Name	Start date	End Date
Programme Director (Transformation)	Alison Young	01/05/2016	30/01/2017
Director of Customer Services	Amanda Anderson	02/02/2015	30/11/2016
Director of Adult Operations	Amanda Rogers	01/09/2014	02/08/2015
Director of Adult Services	Amanda Rogers	01/01/2011	31/08/2014
Director Operations Adults	Amanda Rogers	01/04/2009	31/12/2010
Director of Property & Assets	Andrew Edwards	30/09/2019	Not applicable
Director of Children & Families	Andrew Fraser	19/11/2018	13/04/2019
Director of Public Health	Anna Raleigh	03/01/2018	Not applicable
Director of Children & Family Services	Annie MacIver	01/03/2018	31/01/2019
Director of Family Operations	Annie MacIver	01/04/2015	28/02/2018
Exec Director Children, Adults, Families, Health & Education	Avril Wilson	01/12/2016	31/12/2017
Executive Director Care, Well-being & Education	Avril Wilson	02/02/2015	30/11/2016
Director of Economy, Planning & Place	Bernadette Marjoram	18/07/2016	30/01/2017
Executive Director Residents Services	Bernadette Marjoram	01/05/2016	17/07/2016
Director of Strategic Planning & Place	Bernadette Marjoram	17/08/2015	30/04/2016
Commercial Director	Camilla Black	30/06/2014	01/12/2014
Director of Public Health	Catherine Scott	01/06/2015	31/10/2015
Exec Director Residents & Place Services	Cathryn James	16/03/2015	31/01/2016
Director FSR Programme	Charlie Stewart	01/10/2009	30/09/2010
Joint Strategic Director of Commissioning	Chris Clark	01/10/2019	Not applicable
Director for Strategic Planning & Place	Colin James	29/09/2014	30/11/2015
Director of Adult Services	Dave Sargeant	05/07/2018	19/12/2018
Director of Learning	David Swor	01/01/2011	31/12/2012
Director Operations Learning	David Sword	01/10/2009	31/12/2010
Director of Adults' Operations	Debbie Medlock	17/07/2015	30/06/2017
Director of Education & Skills	Deborah Myers	01/09/2016	02/09/2018

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Position Title	Name	Start date	End Date
Director of Strategic Development	Derek Irvine	01/01/2013	31/12/2014
Director of Commercial Services	Derek Irvine	01/01/2011	31/12/2012
Director Operations - Support Services	Derek Irvine	18/01/2010	31/12/2010
Director Business Development	Derek Irvine	01/09/2009	17/01/2010
Exec Director Residents & Place Services	Diane Ashby	01/09/2014	05/10/2014
Chief Operating Officer & Director of Special Operations	Diane Ashby	17/02/2014	31/08/2014
Director of Service Operations	Diane Ashby	01/01/2013	16/02/2014
Executive Director Customers & Change	Diane Ashby	01/01/2011	31/12/2012
Executive Director Customer Services	Diane Ashby	18/01/2010	31/12/2010
Director Operations - Community Services	Diane Ashby	01/10/2009	17/01/2010
Director of Fire Service Operations & Chief Fire Officer	Gavin Watts	01/07/2019	08/07/2019
Director of Operations & Chief Fire Officer	Gavin Watts	21/11/2016	30/06/2019
Director of Communities	Gavin Watts	21/12/2015	20/11/2016
Director of Infrastructure Strategy	Geoffrey Mee	01/06/2015	17/07/2016
Director of Highways & Transport	Geoffrey Mee	01/09/2014	31/05/2015
Chief Operating Officer	Gill Steward	01/09/2014	24/03/2016
Transformation Director	Gill Steward	24/02/2014	31/08/2014
Director of HR & Organisational Change	Heather Daley	03/04/2018	Not applicable
Director of Resources & Performance	Ian Millar	18/01/2010	31/03/2013
Director Operations - Support Services	Ian Millar	01/04/2009	17/01/2010
Director of Adult Services	Jana Burton	26/03/2018	03/07/2018
Director of Education & Skills	Jay Mercer	01/07/2015	06/07/2016
Executive Director Adults & Children	John Dixon	16/10/2008	31/10/2010
Director of Children & Families	John Readman	15/04/2019	Not applicable
Programme Director	John Stevens	01/06/2016	30/01/2017
Director of Public Health, Commissioner for Health & Social Care	Judith Wright	01/08/2013	31/05/2015
Director Public Health	Judith Wright	01/10/2011	31/07/2013
Director Operations Infrastructure	Julian Harris	18/01/2010	17/12/2010
Director of Finance, Performance & Procurement	Katharine Eberhart	31/12/2016	Not applicable
Director of Finance & Resources	Katharine Eberhart	01/02/2016	30/12/2016
Director of Family Operations	Kevin Peers	01/09/2014	05/06/2015
Director of Children's Services	Kevin Peers	21/04/2014	31/08/2014
Director of Operations & ACFO	Kieran Amos	21/12/2015	12/06/2017
Chief Executive	Kieran Stigant	17/12/2010	14/02/2014
Executive Director Communities	Kieran Stigant	18/01/2010	16/12/2010
Exec Director Customers & Communities	Kieran Stigant	16/10/2008	17/01/2010
Exec Director Children, Adults, Families, Health & Education	Kim Curry	01/01/2018	Not applicable
Executive Director of Place Services	Lee Harris	01/07/2019	Not applicable
Executive Director Economy, Infrastructure & Environment	Lee Harris	27/02/2017	30/06/2019
Executive Director Communities & Public Protection (& Chief Fire Officer)	Lee Neale	01/08/2016	26/02/2017

Position Title	Name	Start date	End Date
Executive Director Communities & Public Protection	Lee Neale	25/03/2016	31/07/2016
Director of Public Protection & Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Lee Neale	01/09/2014	24/03/2016
Executive Director Business Services	Lesley Ottery	16/10/2008	15/01/2010
Director of Highways & Transport	Lucy Monie	18/01/2016	30/06/2016
Chief Executive	Mark Hammond	01/01/2003	30/09/2010
Director of Adult Services	Mark Howell	01/03/2018	27/05/2018
Director of Adults' Operations	Mark Howell	16/02/2016	28/02/2018
Director of Highways, Transport & Planning	Matt Davey	01/07/2019	Not applicable
Director of Highways & Transport	Matt Davey	04/07/2016	30/06/2019
Director of Resources	Matthew Sturman	05/10/2009	31/03/2013
Director of Health & Social Care Commissioning	Michael Sadler	01/01/2013	31/07/2013
Executive Director Health & Social Care	Michael Sadler	01/03/2012	31/12/2012
Director of Transformation, Change & Support Services	Natasha Edmunds	01/01/2017	17/10/2017
Director of Workforce, Organisational Design & Delivery Support	Natasha Edmunds	01/09/2014	31/12/2016
Chief Executive	Nathan Elvery	27/06/2016	Not applicable
Director of Public Protection & Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Neil Stocker	25/03/2016	Not applicable
Director of Economy, Planning & Place	Nicholas Smales	19/09/2016	08/07/2018
Executive Director Communities & Public Protection	Nicola Bulbeck	09/01/2018	30/06/2019
Director of Highways & Transport	Nicola Debnam	26/01/2015	10/01/2016
Director of Public Health & Wellbeing	Nike Arowobusoye	18/01/2016	24/12/2016
Director of Adults' Services	Paul McKay	07/01/2019	Not applicable
Director of Education & Skills	Paul Wagstaff	01/12/2018	Not applicable
Director of Public Health	Peter Brambleby	28/09/2015	30/03/2016
Executive Director of Corporate Resources & Services	Peter Lewis	01/05/2016	31/12/2016
Exec Director of Corporate Resources	Peter Lewis	01/09/2014	29/04/2016
Director for Finance & Assurance	Peter Lewis	30/06/2014	31/08/2014
Director of Communities	Rachel North	07/11/2016	01/09/2019
Executive Director of Resources	Richard Ennis	09/07/2019	27/09/2019
Director of Finance & Assurance	Richard Hornby	01/01/2013	31/08/2014
Exec Director Finance & Performance	Richard Hornby	18/01/2010	31/12/2012
Director Finance	Richard Hornby	01/04/2009	17/01/2010
Director Policy & Partnerships	Richard Perry	18/01/2010	09/01/2011
Director Policy & Performance	Richard Perry	01/10/2009	17/01/2010
Director of Fire Service Operations & Chief Fire Officer	Sabrina Cohen-Hatton	01/09/2019	Not applicable
Director Joint Commissioning	Sally Burton	01/10/2012	07/03/2013
Deputy Chief Executive, Exec Director Communities & Public Protection & CFO	Sean Ruth	28/02/2017	12/06/2017
Executive Director Communities & Public Protection (& Chief Fire Officer)	Sean Ruth	27/02/2017	27/02/2017
Executive Director Economy, Infrastructure & Environment	Sean Ruth	01/12/2016	26/02/2017

Position Title	Name	Start date	End Date
Exec Director Residents & Place Services	Sean Ruth	18/07/2016	30/11/2016
Deputy Chief Executive & Executive Director Communities & Public Protection	Sean Ruth	27/06/2016	17/07/2016
Chief Operating Officer	Sean Ruth	25/03/2016	26/06/2016
Executive Director Communities & Public Protection	Sean Ruth	01/09/2014	24/03/2016
Director of Energy, Waste & Environment	Stephen Read	30/05/2017	Not applicable
Director of Children's Services	Stuart Gallimore	01/01/2011	21/04/2014
Director Operations Children	Stuart Gallimore	01/04/2009	31/12/2010
Director of Communities Projects	Sue Hawker	21/12/2015	31/03/2016
Director of Communities	Sue Hawker	01/09/2014	20/12/2015
Director of Communities Commissioning	Sue Hawker	01/01/2013	31/08/2014
Director Operations Communities	Sue Hawker	18/01/2010	31/12/2010
Director of Business Change	Sue Hawker	01/01/2011	31/12/2012
Director of Law & Assurance	Tony Kershaw	01/01/2017	Not applicable
Director of Law, Assurance & Strategy	Tony Kershaw	01/09/2014	31/12/2016
Director of Communities & Infrastructure	Tony Toynton	01/01/2011	31/10/2012
Director Business Development	Tony Toynton	18/01/2010	31/12/2010
Director Operations Infrastructure	Tony Toynton	16/10/2008	17/01/2010
Director of HR & Organisational Development	Tricia Palmer	04/09/2017	31/03/2018

2. Written question from Ms Sudan for reply by Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Question

Earlier this year Ofsted published its inspection report on the Council's Children's Services which gave an 'inadequate' judgement. Arising from this a Statutory Direction from the Department for Education (DfE) required the County Council to prepare an improvement plan and appointed a Commissioner for Children's Services to oversee the Council's response to the Statutory Direction.

The Commissioner was expected to report to the Secretary of State by 30 September 2019 giving his view on whether operational service control for children's services should remain with the County Council.

Can the Cabinet Member confirm that:

- (a) He has seen the response to the Secretary of State and if so:
- (b) Whether he is able to share details of the recommendation made by the Commissioner to the Secretary of State with members (either confidentially or otherwise);
- (c) If he is unable to share the outcome at this stage, can he advise members when he anticipates this information being shared (i) with members of this Council and (ii) with members of the public.

Answer

(a) and (b)

I have seen a draft of the Commissioner's report and his recommendations to the Secretary of State for Education: this was subject to further amendment and discussion before being finalised. It is not possible for me to comment on a draft report and its contents cannot be shared at this time.

(c) The Commissioner's final report is now expected to be published by the end of October and will be available to members of this Council and the general public at that time. There will be a full debate about the report and its implications, once its recommendations have been accepted by the Secretary of State and it is in the public domain.

3. Written question from Ms Sudan for reply by Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Question

The Children's Commissioner for England recently published details of a six-point plan that she would like all political parties to include in their election manifestos to transform the life chances for disadvantaged children. The plan includes:

- extending and expanding the troubled families programme;
- a child and adolescent mental health counsellor in every school;
- adequate funding for special educational needs and disabilities;
- schools open in the evenings, weekends and holidays;
- police officers and youth workers in school; and
- a cross-government cabinet committee for children.

She also calls for existing statutory services to be put in a sustainable financial footing. Can the Cabinet Member tell me if he supports these ambitions and whether he will write to the relevant Secretary of State urging them to consider adopting and funding these initiatives?

Answer

The recent 'Manifesto for Children' from the Children's Commissioner for England is a national-level initiative, addressed in the first instance to the main political parties in anticipation of a future general election. It powerfully lays out the issues faced by so many of our children across England, and the factors involved undoubtedly have implications for the future of our country. I would commend it to all members to study.

The solutions advocated would require a great deal of central government resolve and resource, and this will be a question for future national policy. At local level, this authority has experienced the reductions in government grant and funding shortfalls that arise. At the same time, West Sussex has always given its full support to government initiatives – for instance the outstanding performance, with the Council's partners, on the Troubled Families Initiative, about whose future the Council has previously made representations to government.

This Council has publicly made improving its children's services its highest priority, and allocated very significant additional resources to this purpose. Naturally, the

Council is in the process of examining the detail of the Children's Commissioner's recommendations and their implications for West Sussex.

I am, however, broadly supportive of the recommendations for national-level investment, recognising that they will inevitably face strong competing demands for funding across the public sector. I, therefore, intend to signify the County Council's endorsement of the case for investment to the Secretary of State.

4. Written question from Mrs Millson for reply by Cabinet Member for Corporate Relations

Question

This month marks the 25th Anniversary of the Fairtrade Foundation, which exists to promote better prices, decent working conditions, fair terms of trade for farmers in the developing world.

West Sussex was awarded Fairtrade County status by the Foundation in October 2017, following your decision, as Cabinet Member for Corporate Relations in 2015, committing West Sussex County Council to become a Fairtrade Council, by actively supporting and promoting the concept of Fairtrade, and ensuring that producers from developing countries get a fair price for their goods and labour.

Despite the work of the Fairtrade Foundation, exploitation remains rampant in global supply chains. More than 40 million people are trapped in modern slavery, including forced labour, and 152 million young people in child labour. Hundreds of millions more are earning less than a living income or wage.

Therefore, to mark the 25th Anniversary, will you please:

- (a) Renew the commitment of West Sussex County Council to retaining its 'Fairtrade Council' status;
- (b) Continue to actively promote Fairtrade locally, through support for Fairtrade West Sussex, in the media including social media, and events including during Fairtrade Fortnight;
- (c) Continue to support local Fairtrade Schools and Communities, actively promoting Fairtrade teaching materials in local schools and educational institutions and continuing to stock Fairtrade publications in our Libraries;
- (d) Celebrate businesses championing Fairtrade products in the local community; and
- (e) Continue to champion Fairtrade in the Council's procurement policies including its catering offer, to ensure that Fairtrade produce is chosen wherever possible and viable, and ensuring that Fair Trade considerations are included as a requirement in any contracts that could involve Fairtrade products being used, such as catering, going out to tender.

Answer

- (a) The County Council believes in and values the principles of Fairtrade, and is proud to be one of a small number of shire counties to hold the status of a

Fairtrade County. The Council remains committed in trading fairly, not only in its own communities but also further afield worldwide.

- (b) The County Council works closely with the Fairtrade West Sussex group in a supportive and collaborative fashion. The Council celebrates and champions Fairtrade Fortnight each year, both across its own services and also through its communication channels. Many activities take place that highlight Fairtrade to staff and to residents, and show why we believe in Fairtrade.
- (c) The Council works closely with school meals providers all year around, delivering added value sessions in schools around healthy eating, how food is grown, how it makes the body work, knife and fork skills, etc, and during Fairtrade Fortnight there is a focus on Fairtrade. This is sometimes by way of a themed Fairtrade menu item, printed resources, a poster drawing competition or delivering a school assembly on the subject. The library service stocks educational books that are themed on Fairtrade, and will continue to do so.

The Meals on Wheels service delivers literature to its customers across the county and also gives away a free Fairtrade item; this year it was a hot chocolate sachet, last year it was bananas. The Council's restaurants use Fairtrade all year around where possible, as well as increasing products over the Fortnight and then trying to keep those products when the demand is there.

- (d) The Council's food and catering service providers who engage with the Council locally are in general very supportive of the aspiration to use Fairtrade. Using social media posts on the Council's accounts, via an annual summary of Fairtrade events given by the Council to Fairtrade West Sussex at their annual AGM, the Council encourages and celebrates Fairtrade Providers to the wider community.
- (e) The Council's catering contracts continue to feature requirements for Fairtrade to be included within the service offer. Obviously, there is a need to balance commerciality with availability and suitability, however providers are keen to work with the Council and it continues to encourage the use of Fairtrade products in Council contracts.

5. Written question from **Dr Walsh for reply by **Cabinet Member for Corporate Relations****

Question

Can the Cabinet Member for Corporate Relations please inform me of:

- (a) The budget for office furniture replacement across the County Council in each of the last three years.
- (b) The justification for replacing perfectly serviceable tables and chairs in most of the committee rooms.
- (c) When where these same tables were last replaced, as I recall that it has happened in the last 15 years?
- (d) How this aligns with the commitment to cut out wasteful expenditure?

Answer

- (a) See table below.

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
Budget	£175,000	£175,000	£175,000
Spend	£148,307	£151,752	£19,238

- (b) Due to changes in working practices, the front of house team now has increased duties across the whole campus and the meeting room tables in Committee Room 3 were not suitable for individual team members to move the tables by themselves and required two people to set up and reconfigure rooms.

Because the old tables had been dragged across the carpets in recent years, the carpets have stretched and have had to be repaired twice. The new furniture is lighter and has wheels so can be moved by a single member of staff. This means the front of house team can be deployed for additional works around campus. In addition, it makes it easier for users to reconfigure rooms during meetings and workshops.

All of the existing furniture will be redeployed to sites where it can be reused, the majority has already been reserved by other services.

- (c) Facilities do not have records of these tables being replaced in their collective time at the Council; the longest standing member of the team being here for 13 years. Records are not kept that go back further than that.
- (d) All of the furniture bought to date has been to create more ergonomically designed furniture that enables the meeting rooms to be used more effectively.

None of the older furniture will be wasted as it will be reutilised elsewhere on the estate, i.e. Fire Service training rooms. The expenditure will reduce carpet repair maintenance and will enable Facilities to provide a better service to meeting rooms in the main building, Edes House, The Grange and Northleigh.

6. Written question from Ms Lord for reply by Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Question

On 11 September at the Children and Young People’s Services Select Committee in response to a question I asked, an officer and the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills stated that the decision on Woodlands Meed would be going ahead that month and that the council was doing everything in its power to meet the September 2021 opening date.

On 26 September, the decision was delayed in the Forward Plan until November.

On 3 October at Performance and Finance Select Committee, the reports showed that the project has been red RAG (Red Amber Green) rated since June (page 93, 2.8), that the construction start date is challenging, that an update will be provided following further discussions with the school and that the deliverability status is to be reviewed. In response to questions, officers and the Cabinet Member for Finance and

Resources stated that a review of the options was underway and would not provide further assurances on timelines or deliverability.

Given this uncertainty and seemingly rapid change in the status being provided in public, could the Cabinet Members for Education and Skills and for Finance and Resources please:

- (a) Provide a timeline and details of what new information became available in the two weeks between 11 and 26 September for the decision to be delayed by two months;
- (b) Provide details of who was involved in the decision to delay to November;
- (c) Provide details of when County Council officers last met with the Governing Body to discuss the latest status of the project and details of all future meetings as referenced in the Performance and Finance Select Committee documents;
- (d) Provide details of how the delay in the decision and the subsequent review of options mentioned at Performance and Finance Select Committee have been communicated to the Governing Body, how the Governing Body is being involved in this review and when the results of this review will be available;
- (e) Provide details of the role of Faithful & Gould on this project including what their role entails, whether their fees are being charged directly to the project budget and, if so, what they are expected to amount to, and details of the roles of any other consultants, contractors or sub-contractors working on this decision including what their role entails, whether their fees are being charged directly to the project and, if so, what they are expected to amount to;
- (f) Provide details of all options currently being considered by the County Council including costings following Mr Hunt's comment that the proposals were now 'upwards of £25m';
- (g) Confirm both the most likely opening date and whether the September 2021 opening date is still possible, assuming the decision is made to proceed; and
- (h) Confirm whether the officers involved in the project at the County Council are full time employees of West Sussex County Council or are contractors/consultants and, if they are the latter, what their role in the project and decision-making is and which departments they are situated in.

Answer

- (a) Discussion around the designs and site feasibility along with risks linked with access to the school site during the period of construction took place. Greater detail and discussion of potential risks to both access and the safety of pupils in the adjacent primary school during the course of any construction work arose during the period in question. In addition, development of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2019-24 provided a greater understanding of current and future SEND needs across the county requiring the team to assess how this project contributed towards the longer-term provision across the county.

- (b) The education and capital teams, along with Capital Project Board, reviewed whether all the information is in place in order to proceed and agreed that more information is required.
- (c) We last formally met with the college on 4 July 2019 and thereafter provided weekly updates until 13 September. The various building options are now awaiting review and being considered alongside the SEND and Inclusion Strategy development.
- (d) The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills has maintained contact with the governing body along with the Council's Development and Capital Adviser.

Following the current review of this project, along with finalising any capital development to meet the County's future specialist provision requirements as a whole, governing bodies of all those schools involved in any development or expansion will be engaged in reviewing the options and requirements to ensure that planned work enables them to meet the Council's future provision requirements and ambitions.

- (e) The role of Faithful & Gould is to provide full technical advice and support to West Sussex on the Woodlands Meed project and Faithful & Gould fees are funded from the allocated project budget. All other consultants required to provide technical support for this project are also funded directly via the project budget.
- (f) There are several options being considered and the costs currently range from £2,360,000 to £25,000,000 for the construction work. However, there may be additional costs associated with mitigating some of the risks and difficulties faced in accessing the site safely during the period of construction as the site and adjacent primary school will still need to operate during the period of construction.
- (g) For options requiring a full new build, it is very unlikely that the works could be fully completed for a September 2021 opening date.
- (h) Officers involved in the project include representatives from the Resources Department including Capital Projects, and the Education and Skills Directorate. External contractors have been used purely through Faithful and Gould to undertake the design and site appraisal.

7. Written question from Mr Oxlade for reply by Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Question

In February the Cabinet Member took a decision to approve an allocation of £0.5m from the Capital Programme to enable a costed design to be produced for rebuilding and expanding Woodlands Meed College on its current site.

I understand the proposed decision to formally allocate the funding from the Capital Programme to enable the rebuilding and expansion project to proceed which was due to have been taken in September has now been delayed to November.

Given that this Council acknowledges that this Special School and College has significant suitability and condition issues meaning it is unable to offer the full curriculum and is unable to accommodate the full range of Special Educational Needs, I would be grateful if the Cabinet Member could tell me:

- (a) Why the project has been delayed by up to two months?
- (b) Whether there are any issues with allocating the £20m capital funding to this project?
- (c) Whether it is still feasible for the new College to open in September 2021? and
- (d) Whether the school Governors are being kept fully informed of the reasons for delay?

Answer

- (a) The project has not been delayed - the project was undergoing an options appraisal. The building options have now been reviewed alongside the broader SEND and Inclusion Strategy which is in its final stages of planning. It is essential that any major development of SEND specialist provision in the county is informed by, and contributes towards meeting the future need for SEND across West Sussex.
- (b) Some of the project capital is reliant on access to a central grant which currently is not secured and work is ongoing to pursue this.
- (c) It is very unlikely a new-build option can meet a completion date of September 2021. However, a replacement of some of the existing modular units could meet a September 2021 completion date.
- (d) The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills along with the Council's Developments and Capital Adviser have maintained communication with the governing body.

8. Written question from Mr Jones for reply by Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

Question

- (a) Please provide details of all costs incurred relating to the purchase and use of a drone by the County Council, regardless of the budget header they appear in, for the financial years:
 - 2017/18
 - 2018/19
 - 2019/20 to date

These would include but not be limited to: the cost of the drone; Licensing/Civil Aviation Authority permits; training costs including accommodation and food; and IT costs.

- (b) How many staff have been trained to fly the drone including travel costs (if any)?

- (c) How many of these staff have subsequently left the employment of West Sussex County Council?
- (d) How many days training did they undertake?
- (e) How many times has the drone flown in furtherance of WSCC business objectives?
- (f) How many hours has the drone flown in furtherance of WSCC business objectives, and how much is this in miles?

Answer

- (a) See table below.

	Purchase	Training	Insurance	Total
2017/18	£20,850	£2,000	N/A	£22,850
2018/19	N/A	£10,353	£2,753	£13,106
2019/20	N/A	N/A	N/A	£0
Total	£20,850	£12,353	£2,753	£35,956

- (b) Fifteen Fire and Rescue Service Personnel in total have been trained to fly the drone, all costs for the training are represented in the answer to question (a).
- (c) One of the 15 trained pilots has left the service through retirement.
- (d) Initial training consisted of a six-day course for each pilot with the cost contained in the answer to question (a).
- (e) The drone has not flown operationally either for the County Council or the Fire and Rescue Service.
- (f) Please see answer to (e) above.

9. Written question from **Dr Walsh for reply by **the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources****

Question

Can the Leader of the Council confirm that a payment of around £5.137 was made by the County Council to HMRC on 12 February 2019 as a settlement of a claim by the Revenue for a refund of an allegedly tax exempt payment made to the Chief Executive in relation to his £ 47,000 relocation expense?

Can the Leader of the Council further confirm that this sum has subsequently been repaid by the Chief Executive to the County Council?

Answer

The information is correct, except that the payment by the County Council to HMRC followed a self-referral following an internal review which identified the error, not a claim from HMRC. The employee subsequently repaid to the Council his share of the payment made.

10. Written question from Mrs Smith for reply by Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure

Question

The Cabinet Member recently decided to charge local restaurants and cafes across the county a flat rate licence fee of £520 to enable them to have tables and chairs on the highway for customers, regardless of how many tables and chairs they have outside.

The Cabinet Member will no doubt be aware this has led to a not unexpected backlash from local businesses from across West Sussex, many of who consider it unfair, vastly disproportionate and an unnecessary charge solely being imposed as a cynical revenue raiser for the County Council.

Can the Cabinet Member please tell me:

- (a) What action he proposes to take if a business chooses not to pay the fee; and
- (b) Whether he now regrets introducing a flat fee and whether he has come to a view regarding charging arrangements for the next financial year.

Answer

The County Council has a duty to ensure that the highway remains unobstructed in order that everyone can use it safely. I am particularly aware of the needs of more vulnerable groups especially those with a disability who may find navigating an obstructed pathway more challenging.

The County Council fully supports the use of the highway for trading by businesses where this can be done without impacting on others' enjoyment of the space, but this does need to be monitored and managed effectively. To do this the County Council issues licences to traders and has done so for many years, charging a flat fee for that licence to cover the associated administration and inspection costs.

In the review of fees and charges decision taken in February 2019, the charge for the licence for tables and chairs on the public highway was increased to cover the full costs associated with managing this activity. As stated in the question, that fee now stands at the equivalent of £10 per week and is levied at this rate regardless of the space taken up by the tables and chairs. The County Council has also written to all traders reminding them of the need to have a licence.

- (a) There has been an increase in the number of licences applied for across the county and it is anticipated that more applications will be received in the coming months.

The County Council has not enforced this activity in the recent past, although historically has taken action where businesses have chosen to trade on the highway illegally. Options for enforcement remain and officers will make decisions regarding the way this is done on a site by site basis.

- (b) In the meantime, I have listened to the comments that have been received about the current charging regime and considered some of the options put forward. This charge will be looked at again as part of the Council's fees and charges review in autumn.

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The County Council will, of course, continue to have to cover all costs associated with managing this activity as it would be unfair to burden tax payers with the costs of managing a commercial activity.