

Public Document Pack

West Sussex County Council – Ordinary Meeting

19 July 2019

At the Ordinary Meeting of the County Council held at 10.30 am on Friday, 19 July 2019, at the County Hall, Chichester, the members present being:

Mrs Duncton (Chairman)

Mr Acraman	Mrs Kitchen
Lt Cdr Atkins, RD	Mr Lanzer
Mr Barling	Mr Lea
Mr Barrett-Miles	Ms Lord
Lt Col Barton, TD	Mr Markwell
Mrs Bennett	Mr Marshall
Mr Boram	Mr McDonald
Mr Bradford	Mrs Millson
Mrs Bridges	Mr Montyn
Mr Burrett	Mr R J Oakley
Mr Catchpole	Mr S J Oakley
Mr Cloake	Dr O'Kelly
Mr Crow	Mr Oxlade
Mrs Dennis	Mr Parikh
Dr Dennis	Mr Patel
Mr Edwards	Mrs Pendleton
Mr Elkins	Mr Purchase
Ms Flynn	Mrs Purnell
Ms Goldsmith	Mrs Russell
Mrs Hall	Mr Simmons
Mr High	Mr Smytherman
Mr Hunt	Mr Turner
Mrs Jones, MBE	Mrs Urquhart
Mr Jones	Mr Waight
Mrs Jupp	Dr Walsh, KStJ, RD
Mr Jupp	Mr Whittington
Ms Kennard	Mr Wickremaratchi

28 Death of Mr Charles Petts

28.1 The Chairman reported the death of a current member of the Council, Mr Charles Petts, who had been the member for the Three Bridges division since 2017.

28.2 Members stood for a minute's silence.

29 Interim Executive Director Resource Services

29.1 The Chairman welcomed Richard Ennis to his first meeting as Interim Executive Director Resource Services.

30 Apologies for Absence

- 30.1 Apologies were received from Mrs Arculus, Mr Baldwin, Mr Barnard, Mr Bradbury, Mrs Brunson, Mr Fitzjohn, Mr Hillier, Mr Mitchell, Mr Oppler, Mr Quinn and Mrs Sparkes.
- 30.2 Mr Buckland, Mrs Smith and Ms Sudan were absent.
- 30.3 Apologies for the morning session were received from Dr Dennis and for the afternoon session from Lt Cdr Atkins, Mr Barling and Lt Col Barton. Ms Lord gave her apologies and arrived at 11.35 a.m. She also gave her apologies for the afternoon session.
- 30.4 Mrs Bridges and Mr Purchase were absent for the afternoon session. Mr Cloake, Ms Flynn and Mrs Hall left at 3.45 p.m.

31 Members' Interests

- 31.1 Members declared interests as set out at Appendix 1.

32 Minutes

- 32.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the County Council held on 7 June 2019 (pages 9 to 38) be approved as a correct record.

33 Review of Proportionality

- 33.1 The County Council was reminded of its statutory duty following recent changes in group affiliation to review the proportionality on its committees. A report on the application of the proportionality rules and how they were applied was set out at pages 39 and 40 and a table showing the resulting number of seats on committees had been circulated.

- 33.2 Resolved –

That the review of proportionality on committees be agreed.

34 Appointments

- 34.1 The Council approved appointments as set out below.

Committee	Change
Children and Young People's Services Select Committee	Mr Jupp in place of Mrs Russell Mr Jupp as Vice-Chairman Mr Lea to fill vacancy
Performance and Finance Select Committee	Mr Hillier to fill vacancy

Committee	Change
Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee	Mr Jones to fill vacancy
Rights of Way Committee	Mr Lea and Mr Buckland to replace Dr O'Kelly and Mr Quinn Mrs Brunsdon to fill substitute vacancy
Standards Committee	Mrs Brunsdon to fill vacancy
Corporate Parenting Panel	Mrs Millson as Vice-Chairman

35 Address by a Cabinet Member

35.1 Members received an address by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People on the Council's improvement plan in relation to the actions and proposals to address the requirements arising from the recent Ofsted report into Children's Services. A report by the Cabinet Member had been circulated.

36 Motion on Small Schools Federations

36.1 The following motion was moved by Dr O'Kelly and seconded by Mr Smytherman:

'The current financial climate for small schools continues to be challenging. The government strategy for small schools is to aim to keep them open and includes exploring federation before considering closure. This Council itself recognises the need for small schools to consider federation in its School Effectiveness Strategy 2018-22. Closure of a small school can be devastating for children, families and the rural communities they are in and the School Effectiveness Strategy recognises this as only a final option.

The process of federation relies on school governors, who are volunteers, often with full time jobs and other commitments, and who do not always have the time and skill sets needed, to explore and develop the federation options fully themselves. Although the School Effectiveness Strategy outlines that the Council will support and challenge governing bodies who have considered the options, there is no formal process for assisting governing bodies in assessing the options open to them and developing possible federation agreements in the first place.

This Council believes that:

- (a) Small schools are at the heart of our smaller communities.

- (b) The federation process is not always straightforward and without significant input from this Council from the earliest stages of the process, governing bodies cannot easily explore federation on their own.
- (c) A more proactive approach to federation is more likely to keep our small schools open and viable and at the heart of our rural communities.
- (d) Consulting on the possible closure of a school should only be considered where all other options have been exhausted.

This Council resolves to ask the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to:

- (1) Share knowledge about federation and how it can be achieved with all small schools including sharing best practice guidance from other local authorities;
- (2) Provide officer support to governing bodies to consider federation including providing support to find possible partners and facilitate discussions;
- (3) Provide practical tools and officer support during the partnership phase in helping to make all the transitional arrangements; and
- (4) Not consult with the public as to the future of any school in West Sussex without having gone through such a process with schools.'

36.2 The motion was referred to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills for consideration.

37 Motion on system of Council governance

37.1 The following motion was moved by Dr Walsh and seconded by Mrs Millson:

'The County Council has been found 'inadequate' by HM Inspectorate, in respect of the Fire and Rescue Service, as well as in its provision of Children's Services by Ofsted, where the Government has appointed a Commissioner to run the service. The Member of Parliament for Mid Sussex has written to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government expressing his "grave concerns about the governance of this authority", and asking him "to investigate why things have gone so wrong".

It is abundantly clear to all that there is a systemic failure of political leadership of West Sussex County Council encompassing all our major services, and further evidenced by the high turnover rate of most senior officers at Director level including Chief Executive over the last few years, and the churn of Cabinet Members.

The Council therefore resolves to scrap the current Cabinet system of governance, where most major decisions are taken either by individual Cabinet Members, or occasionally by the whole Cabinet, and to replace it with a Committee-based system, where all councillors play a part in decision making, and for this to be in place by May 2020.'

37.2 The motion was referred to the Governance Committee for consideration.

38 Motion on Fire and Rescue Service Inspection Rating

38.1 The following motion was moved by Mr Jones and seconded by Mr Purchase.

'This Council notes with dismay the findings of the recently published Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection report on the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (WSFRS) with a rating of "needs improvement" for Efficiency, a rating of 'needs improvement' for Effectiveness and a rating of 'inadequate' for People. It is also the only service in the country not to get a 'good' rating in any category.

This Council recognises that staff in WSFRS do an excellent job in protecting people in West Sussex but that they have been let down by a failure of political leadership at the County Council, which has allowed cost-cutting and budget pressures to take priority over the maintenance of what HMICFS considers acceptable standards.

This has been exacerbated by decisions from the Cabinet that have seen fire stations closed, and second and third fire engines being removed from some remaining stations. Reports from the former Chief Fire Officer confirm they were major reasons for increased response times. Despite the Council's extended response standard for most of the county of 14 minutes, the service has been unable to meet it, as the inspectorate notes, since 2014.

This Council also recognises that this is the second inspection in recent months that has seen a vital service, important to the welfare and safety of all West Sussex residents, being judged as insufficient to meet the required standard and it has become unsustainable for this council to have confidence in a Leader and Cabinet who have presided over such an outcome. This Council therefore expresses that it has no confidence in the Leader and Cabinet.

This Council therefore calls on the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities (or their successors, if and when they are appointed) to:

- (1) Completely withdraw the cuts to WSFRS proposed for 2019/20 that were put on hold for one year and prioritise the recruitment of additional firefighters to replace those cut since 2010.
- (2) Stop prevaricating on the clearly unfair funding that WSFRS is receiving compared to other surrounding fire authorities and to finally press the Government for urgent additional funding to properly resource the very stretched service, something which the Leader and the Cabinet Member have failed to do, despite being mandated over six months ago by a full meeting of this council dated 14 December 2018.
- (3) Urgently progress the updating of outdated software and communication equipment in the Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that there is a clearer picture of operational staffing levels and gaps.
- (4) Ensure as soon as possible that the Fire and Rescue Service launches an anti-bullying campaign to stamp out any instances of bullying and harassment, which will finally carry out advice that was given to WSFRS following the results of a staff stress survey as long ago as 2017.
- (5) Take steps to increase the diversity of the workforce, particularly in respect of more female firefighters and more from the BAME communities, and to work with councillors and other bodies across the county to reach out to local people from these minority groups to encourage them to consider becoming both wholetime and on-call firefighters.
- (6) Do more to tackle shortages of on-call firefighters and the need to finally accept some of the deep-rooted problems with recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters will need more than marginal changes, but a whole new approach that recognises that:
 - (a) more wholetime firefighters are needed to guarantee availability in certain areas of the county; and
 - (b) recruiting and retaining On Call Firefighters crews can be easier in larger settlements within West Sussex, and the first step should be restoring the third fire engine and on-call firefighter crew at Crawley Fire Station.
- (7) Launch a review, led by an independent person external to this Council, to determine whether alternative governance arrangements for WSFRS may be necessary, given the findings of the inspection report. The review would investigate whether it is still in the best interests of the service for current governance to continue if the County Council, squeezed by continuing Conservative national government cuts, concludes that it cannot afford to meet its

duty to resource the service to the level required to protect the residents of West Sussex with acceptable levels of service and performance. The terms of reference for this review to be drawn up with all relevant parties in WSFRS, and to include their employees' trade union representatives.'

38.2 An amendment was moved by Mrs Russell and seconded by Mr Barrett-Miles as set out below:

'This Council **accepts** ~~notes with dismay~~ the findings of the recently published Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection report on the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (WSFRS) with a rating of 'needs improvement' for Efficiency, a rating of 'needs improvement' for Effectiveness and a rating of 'inadequate' for People. ~~It is also the only service in the country not to get a 'good' rating in any category.~~

This Council recognises that staff in WSFRS do an excellent job in protecting people in West Sussex ~~but that they have been let down by a failure of political leadership at the County Council, which has allowed cost-cutting and budget pressures to take priority over the maintenance of what HMICFS considers acceptable standards.~~

~~This has been exacerbated by decisions from the Cabinet that have seen fire stations closed, and second and third fire engines being removed from some remaining stations. Reports from the former Chief Fire Officer confirm they were major reasons for increased response times. Despite the Council's extended response standard for most of the county of 14 minutes, the service has been unable to meet it, as the inspectorate notes, since 2014.~~

~~This Council also recognises that this is the second inspection in recent months that has seen a vital service, important to the welfare and safety of all West Sussex residents, being judged as insufficient to meet the required standard and it has become unsustainable for this council to have confidence in a Leader and Cabinet who have presided over such an outcome. This Council therefore expresses that it has no confidence in the Leader and Cabinet.~~

This Council therefore calls on the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities, **through the Improvement Plan recently adopted after being fully scrutinised by members, and the investment it brings** (or their successors, if and when they are appointed) to:

- (1) **Maintain the commitment to no budget savings** Completely withdraw the cuts to WSFRS proposed for 2019/20 that were put on hold for one year and **continue to** prioritise the recruitment of additional firefighters to replace those cut since 2010.

- (2) ~~Stop prevaricating on the clearly unfair funding that WSFRS is receiving compared to other surrounding fire authorities and~~ **Continue** to finally press the Government for urgent additional funding to properly resource these very **important** stretched services, ~~something which the Leader and the Cabinet Member have failed to do, despite being mandated over six months ago by a full meeting of this council dated 14 December 2018.~~
- (3) **Complete the well-advanced plans to renew** ~~Urgently progress the updating of outdated software and communication equipment in the Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that there is a clearer picture of operational staffing levels and gaps.~~
- (4) **Endorse the Cabinet Member's commitment to** ~~Ensure as soon as possible that the Fire and Rescue Service launches an anti-bullying campaign to stamp out any instances of bullying and harassment, which will finally carry out advice that was given to WSFRS following the results of a staff stress survey as long ago as 2017.~~
- (5) **Continue to t**~~Take steps to~~ **maintain the** increase **in** the diversity of the workforce, particularly in respect of more female firefighters and more from the BAME communities, and to work with councillors and other bodies across the county to reach out to local people from these minority groups to encourage them to consider becoming both wholetime and on-call firefighters.
- (6) **Continue with the plans** ~~Do more to tackle shortages of on-call firefighters and the need to~~ **address** ~~finally accept some of the deep-rooted problems with recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters will need more than marginal changes, but a whole new approach that recognising~~ that:
- (a) **we need a study to consider whether** more wholetime firefighters are needed to guarantee availability in certain areas of the county; and
 - (b) recruiting and retaining On Call Firefighters crews can be easier in larger settlements within West Sussex, and the first step should be restoring the third fire engine and on-call firefighter crew at Crawley Fire Station.
- (7) **Support the** ~~Launch a review~~ **of governance, member involvement and scrutiny which the Council's Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee recommended to the Governance Committee,** led by an independent person external to this Council, to determine whether alternative governance arrangements for WSFRS may be necessary **within the County Council,** given the

~~findings of the inspection report. The review would investigate whether it is still in the best interests of the service for current governance to continue if the County Council, squeezed by continuing Conservative national government cuts, concludes that it cannot afford to meet its duty to resource the service to the level required to protect the residents of West Sussex with acceptable levels of service and performance. The terms of reference for this review to be drawn up with all relevant parties in WSFRS, and to include their employees' trade union representatives.'~~

38.3 The amendment was carried.

38.4 An amendment was moved by Dr Walsh and seconded by Mrs Millson as set out below:

'This Council notes with dismay the findings of the recently published Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection report on the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (WSFRS) with a rating of "needs improvement" for Efficiency, a rating of 'needs improvement' for Effectiveness and a rating of 'inadequate' for People. It is also the only service in the country not to get a 'good' rating in any category.

This Council recognises that staff in WSFRS do an excellent job in protecting people in West Sussex but that they have been let down by a failure of political leadership at the County Council, which has allowed cost-cutting and budget pressures to take priority over the maintenance of what HMICFS considers acceptable standards.

This has been exacerbated by decisions from the Cabinet that have seen fire stations closed, and second and third fire engines being removed from some remaining stations. Reports from the former Chief Fire Officer confirm they were major reasons for increased response times. Despite the Council's extended response standard for most of the county of 14 minutes, the service has been unable to meet it, as the inspectorate notes, since 2014.

This Council also recognises that this is the second inspection in recent months that has seen a vital service, important to the welfare and safety of all West Sussex residents, being judged as insufficient to meet the required standard and it has become unsustainable for this council to have confidence in a Leader and Cabinet who have presided over such an outcome. This Council therefore expresses that it has no confidence in the Leader and Cabinet.

This Council therefore calls on the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities (or their successors, if and when they are appointed) to:

- (1) Completely withdraw the cuts to WSFRS proposed for 2019/20 that were put on hold for one year and prioritise the recruitment of additional firefighters to replace those cut since 2010.
- (2) Stop prevaricating on the clearly unfair funding that WSFRS is receiving compared to other surrounding fire authorities and to finally press the Government for urgent additional funding to properly resource the very stretched service, something which the Leader and the Cabinet Member have failed to do, despite being mandated over six months ago by a full meeting of this council dated 14 December 2018.
- (3) Urgently progress the updating of outdated software and communication equipment in the Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that there is a clearer picture of operational staffing levels and gaps.
- (4) Ensure as soon as possible that the Fire and Rescue Service launches an anti-bullying campaign to stamp out any instances of bullying and harassment, which will finally carry out advice that was given to WSFRS following the results of a staff stress survey as long ago as 2017.
- (5) Take steps to increase the diversity of the workforce, particularly in respect of more female firefighters and more from the BAME communities, and to work with councillors and other bodies across the county to reach out to local people from these minority groups to encourage them to consider becoming both wholetime and on-call firefighters.
- (6) Do more to tackle shortages of on-call firefighters and the need to finally accept some of the deep-rooted problems with recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters will need more than marginal changes, but a whole new approach that recognises that:
 - (a) more wholetime firefighters are needed to guarantee availability in certain areas of the county; and
 - (b) recruiting and retaining On Call Firefighters crews can be easier in larger settlements within West Sussex, and the first step should be restoring the third fire engine and on-call firefighter crew at Crawley Fire Station.
- (7) Launch a review, led by an independent person external to this Council, to determine whether alternative governance arrangements for WSFRS may be necessary, given the findings of the inspection report. The review would investigate whether it is still in the best interests of the service for current governance to continue if the County Council, squeezed by continuing Conservative national

government cuts, concludes that it cannot afford to meet its duty to resource the service to the level required to protect the residents of West Sussex with acceptable levels of service and performance. The terms of reference for this review to be drawn up with all relevant parties in WSFRS, and to include their employees' trade union representatives.

This Council also asks the Leader to publicly apologise to both the staff of the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and to the people of West Sussex, for the failures of this Council that have resulted in this poor inspection being received.'

38.5 The amendment was lost.

38.6 The amended motion, as set out below, was agreed.

'This Council accepts the findings of the recently published Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection report on the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (WSFRS) with a rating of 'needs improvement' for Efficiency, a rating of 'needs improvement' for Effectiveness and a rating of 'inadequate' for People.

This Council recognises that staff in WSFRS do an excellent job in protecting people in West Sussex.

This Council therefore calls on the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities, through the Improvement Plan recently adopted after being fully scrutinised by members, and the investment it brings to:

- (1) Maintain the commitment to no budget savings to WSFRS and continue to prioritise the recruitment of additional firefighters.
- (2) Continue to press the Government for urgent additional funding to properly resource these very important services.
- (3) Complete the well-advanced plans to renew software and communication equipment in the Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that there is a clearer picture of operational staffing levels and gaps.
- (4) Endorse the Cabinet Member's commitment to an anti-bullying campaign to stamp out any instances of bullying and harassment.
- (5) Continue to take steps to maintain the increase in the diversity of the workforce, particularly in respect of more female firefighters and more from the BAME communities, and to work with councillors and other bodies across the county to reach out to local people from these minority

groups to encourage them to consider becoming both wholetime and on-call firefighters.

- (6) Continue with the plans to tackle shortages of on-call firefighters and the need to address problems with recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters recognising that:
 - (a) we need a study to consider whether more wholetime firefighters are needed to guarantee availability in certain areas of the county; and
 - (b) recruiting and retaining On Call Firefighters crews can be easier in larger settlements within West Sussex.
- (7) Support the review of governance, member involvement and scrutiny which the Council's Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee recommended to the Governance Committee to determine whether alternative governance arrangements for WSFRS may be necessary within the County Council.'

39 Resignation of the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities

- 39.1 Following the debate on the motion on the Fire and Rescue Service Inspection Rating, the Chairman agreed to a personal statement by the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities who announced to the Council her resignation as Cabinet Member on ill health grounds.
- 39.2 Group Leaders expressed their best wishes to Ms Kennard on behalf of their groups.
- 39.3 The Leader gave notice of the appointment of Mrs Jacquie Russell as the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities with effect from the end of the Council meeting.

40 Motion on Prospective sale of County Council-owned land at Withy Patch

- 40.1 The following motion was moved by Mr Jones and seconded by Mr Oxlade:

'This Council notes that West Sussex County Council owns the freehold land known as Withy Patch which currently forms part of an area that has planning permission from Adur District Council for an extensive new development, commonly known as New Monks Farm.

This Council recognises that the proposals for a major development and retail park has been a source of considerable controversy in recent years. This Council believes that the continued uncertainty, anger and stress this has caused local residents, is unacceptable

and calls on the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to either take action now to reassure the community that the Council will not proceed with selling or transferring this land to developers or to confirm he will not accept any arrangement which attempts to get the Council to agree to waive, or write off, any of the section 106 developers' contributions from the New Monks Farm developers that will be required to provide sufficient education provision to meet the needs of the resulting community. The needs of West Sussex children and their education must come first.

This Council believes that there is already an increasing shortage of places both in primary and in secondary education in the Adur and Worthing areas with children currently being sent to maintained schools much further from their homes, because the local schools have not got the places for the existing population. The additional population from the New Monks Farm development will inevitably create further pressures and reduce local parents' ability to find school placements close to them without these contributions. Moreover, the additional financial burden of creating places will almost certainly have to be met by this Council, which already faces unprecedented financial pressures without having to absorb the costs of building additional buildings and increasing capacity elsewhere.

This Council also believes that facilitating this development through the sale of the land will result in outcomes entirely at odds with the values recently expressed in the cross-party motion on climate change and the 'climate action pledge'. Not only may the new development increase the local flooding risk, but the increased traffic and congestion on this part of the A27 relating to the increased population and high profile retail offer will exacerbate further the already serious problems relating to pollution and air quality in the current Air Quality Management Areas within the District.

In the event that the Cabinet Member decides to sell or transfer the land it is understood the gypsy and travellers' site at Withy Patch would be required to move to the edge of the development and the residents effectively living directly on the edge of a building site, with all the dust, noise and disruption that such construction would entail. Given what this would mean for that community, this Council also calls on the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities to undertake a meaningful consultation with those residents as the person accountable for their welfare on the Council's land and to object to the sale of the land should the residents ask for that.

Therefore, for the reasons stated above, this Council urges the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to refuse any sale or transfer of the land at Withy Patch.'

- 40.2 The motion was referred to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources for consideration.

41 West Sussex County Council Annual Report 2018/19

41.1 The Leader moved the report on West Sussex County Council Annual Report 2018/19 (pages 41 to 86).

41.2 Resolved –

That the West Sussex Annual Report 2018/19 be noted.

42 Performance and Finance Select Committee: Annual Scrutiny Performance 2018/19

42.1 The Council considered the Annual Scrutiny Newsletter 2018/19 which summarised the work of the Select Committees and reported the performance measures to the end of the year, in the light of a report by the Performance and Finance Select Committee (pages 87 to 108).

42.2 Resolved –

That the Annual Scrutiny Newsletter 2018/19, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

43 Question Time

43.1 Members asked questions of members of the Cabinet on matters relevant to their portfolios and asked questions of chairmen, as set out at Appendix 3. This included questions on those matters contained within the Cabinet report (pages 109 to 112) and a supplementary report (supplement page 1) and written questions and answers pursuant to Standing Order 2.38 (set out at Appendix 2).

44 Governance Committee: Review of Scrutiny and Delegation to Standards Committee

44.1 The Council noted arrangements for a review of scrutiny and considered a delegation to the Standards Committee in relation to recommendations from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in the light of a report from the Governance Committee (pages 113 to 114).

44.2 Resolved –

That the terms of reference of the Standards Committee be amended to include the delegation set out in paragraph 8 of the report.

45 Retirement of Tony Hill, Front of House Assistant

- 45.1 On behalf of all members, the Chairman expressed thanks and best wishes to Tony Hill, Front of House Assistant, who was retiring before the next meeting of the Council.

Chairman

The Council rose at 4.15 pm

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Interests

Members declared interests as set out below. All the interests listed below were personal but not pecuniary or prejudicial unless indicated.

Item	Member	Nature of Interest
Item 7(a) – Notice of Motion on small schools federations	Mrs Dennis	Governor of Twineham Primary School
Item 7(c) – Notice of Motion on Fire and Rescue Service Inspection Rating	Mr Waight	Member of Worthing Borough Council
Item 7(d) – Notice of Motion on Prospective sale of County Council-owned land at Withy Patch	Mr Simmons	Member of Adur District Council and substitute on Adur District Council Planning Committee and Chair of the School Council of Sir Robert Woodard Academy
Item 10 – QT on ‘Children not in School’	Mr Smytherman	Foundation Governor of St Mary’s Catholic Primary School, Worthing and Governor for West Sussex Alternative Provision College
Item 10 – QT relating to the ‘Our Town Scheme’	Lt Cdr Atkins	Member of Worthing Borough Council
	Mr Smytherman	Chairman of Dementia Friendly Worthing
Item 10 – QT relating to Financial Statements and 2019 Triennial Actuarial Valuation of the West Sussex Pension Fund	Mr Burrett	Deferred member of the Local Government Pension Scheme
	Mr Lanzer	Deferred member of the Local Government Pension Scheme
Item 10 – QT relating to Shoreham Airport	Mr High	Member of Worthing Borough Council
Written Question 4	Mr Lanzer	Member of Crawley Borough Council

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19 July 2019

1. Written question from **Mrs Millson** for reply by the **Leader**

Question

I am sure that the Leader is aware of the recent award of grant funding of over £4m from the European Regional Development Fund to the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership. The funding is available to support projects that support the shift towards a low carbon economy in all sectors, specifically:

- Promoting the production and distribution of energy derived from renewable resources.
- Promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy use in enterprises.
- Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector.
- Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures.
- Promoting research and innovation in, and adoption of, low-carbon technologies.

Is the Leader aware of any projects in West Sussex that may be eligible to put forward bids for funding? What is the County Council doing to promote the opportunity to possible projects and to support such projects in preparing bids?

Answer

We welcome the award of grant funding to support projects that accelerate the shift towards a low carbon economy, closely aligning with our corporate Energy Strategy and aspirations to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Through the Your Energy Sussex team, the County Council has taken a leading part in a successful bid to deliver £42m of investment in energy infrastructure improvements over the next three years. The SMARTHUBS programme will deliver advancements in heating, power and transport systems in a first-of-its-kind smartgrid in the Adur & Worthing area.

With Government's stated expectation that the smartgrid in Adur & Worthing will form the template for a national rollout, the Energy Team's current focus is to ensure that the SMARTHUBS programme moves purposefully and at pace from masterplan to delivery.

We are nevertheless very keen to support bids to this additional fund that align with our corporate Energy Strategy and support our work around smart local energy systems.

To this end, the Your Energy Sussex and Economic Growth teams have engaged with this funding round, held discussions with the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership and provided detailed responses to one party interested in bidding into the fund.

The County Council will continue to take part in the Local Enterprise Partnership's follow up meetings and discussions about the potential for bids to this fund to be grounded in West Sussex.

2. Written question from Mr Oxlade for reply by the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health

Question

I am extremely concerned about the proposed withdrawal of funding currently provided by the County Council to support some high-risk offenders when released from prison. The report to the recent Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee meeting makes it clear there is a risk that without this or alternative funding they will end up sleeping rough, posing a risk not only to others in the county but to themselves.

I understand that the Ministry of Justice has been approached about this problem which is apparently not unique to West Sussex.

Given that previous requests to central government for funding on issues such as education have not been listened to, can the Cabinet Member tell me how confident she is that the current level of funding and support, which is clearly needed, will continue to be made available in the future before the current funding runs out in September.

Answer

The Council currently funds Change Grow Live to provide accommodation-based support for ex-offenders under its housing-related support funding. The Council will continue to fund the service until the end of March 2020.

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group, Natalie Brahma-Pearl (CEO Crawley Borough Council), is currently in negotiation with a number of partners for the continuation of this contract until September 2020 and once details have been confirmed I will ensure all members are advised.

3. Written question from Mrs Jones for reply by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Question

Since the withdrawal of our excellent Mid Sussex Home Start service a few years ago, the support from Crawley has been patchy and has done little to stem the tide of the breakdown of families now being experienced in Mid Sussex. As part of our programme to improve Children's Services, can I request that the Cabinet Member investigates the re-introduction of this service to provide this essential support for our most vulnerable children.

Answer

The future reintroduction of financial support to Home-Start in Mid Sussex is not possible at this time due to the fact that the budget for Early Help is fully committed.

Since the main Home-Start funding agreements ceased in 2014, the County Council has, through its Early Help service, commissioned two pilot schemes with Home-Start. One of these was for the Worthing and Adur Home-Start, to trial a keyworker role supported by a small group of volunteers; the other was for Crawley Home-Start, which was part of a new voluntary sector consortium supporting the Think Family programme. These schemes were funded until 2016 but ceased when savings were delivered at the point of implementation of the Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help Service (IPEH) in 2017. The County Council still has strong relationships with Home-Start, which includes their representation on several of its Partnership Advisory Boards.

Home-Start is now provided to Mid Sussex by Home-Start Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex (CHAMS), which is based in Crawley but delivered by some local and wider area-based volunteers.

Despite the loss of funding, it is important to note that various alternative forms of support for vulnerable families continue to be provided by the County Council. Since 2017, there has been a significant increase in support to partners to aid early identification of concerns in both schools and other settings. There has also been the introduction of Enabling Families, a targeted support scheme, which provides up to four sessions to help families seek support or address low level domestic issues, and if necessary helps them to gain support through an early help plan. There continues to be a good children and family centre offer across the county, and universal and targeted support from the Healthy Child Programme.

4. Written question from Mr Crow for reply by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Relations

Question

I was disappointed with the response to my written question for the previous full Council meeting, which was answered in general and bland terms, without specifically giving direct answers to some questions that I asked. In particular, the actual take-up of dedicated officer support that each opposition group has received was not answered.

It is my belief that the Labour Group of only five members is receiving disproportionate officer support that may entail the reading of reports for them, the formulation of written questions, verbal questions, and motions to full Council. I suspect that this is especially so in comparison to the larger Liberal Democrat opposition group, with the full cost of this being hard to justify when the County Council is having to make significant savings across the board. In relation to this, please answer the following:

- (a) Since this County Council was elected in May 2017, how many group meetings for both the Liberal Democrat and Labour groups (listed separately by group) have had officer attendance to specifically support the formulation of either full Council written questions, verbal questions or motions?
- (b) For the 11 written questions submitted to the June 2019 full Council meeting, which by political group were seven Labour, two Liberal Democrat and two Conservative, how many (listed by political group) had officer input into their actual formulation?
- (c) Has there been any officer input into the actual formulation of the motion on the Fire and Rescue Service Inspection Rating that has been tabled by the Labour Group Leader for this full Council Meeting? If so, please detail that input;
- (d) Please provide an estimation in percentage terms as to how the £17,000pa (0.4FTE) has been split between the Liberal Democrat and Labour Groups in its take-up by the two group since May 2017;
- (e) Given that the Labour Group Leader leads a group of just four other members and receives a very generous Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for this role, please provide the justification as to why the Labour Group Leader receives such significant additional dedicated officer support in addition to the SRA, when the SRA is supposed to cover the additional work that being a group leader entails; and
- (f) With regard to the answer for (e), what justification could be given to the public as to how proportionate this appears when compared to other Councils within West Sussex, given that for example, the Leader of the Opposition at Crawley Borough Council leads four times the number of members than the Labour Group Leader (the third party) at the County Council does, with an SRA roughly half the amount and with no dedicated Officer support for this role whatsoever?

Answer

The County Council provides non-political officer support to all members of the County Council in addition to advice and support for those in particular roles. The Council has been providing minority group leader support since 2002. Where members in any capacity seek advice on the management of any aspect of Council business, officers will help them to do so in the most effective way to ensure the best use of the Council's governance and democratic procedures, including a constructive opposition. Answers to the last question were given by reference to the best information available. The post-holder undertakes other tasks in addition to those referred to in the question and the allocation of the officer's time to each task is not precisely recorded. In response to the further questions:

- (a) A member of Democratic Services staff has attended most Labour Group meetings since May 2017. No members of Democratic Services staff have been requested to attend Liberal Democrat Group meetings in this period. Other County Council staff, including the Chief Executive and

members of the Executive Leadership Team, have also attended group meetings on some occasions. Attendance by officers can be requested by any political group within the constraints set out in the Council's Protocol on relationships between Members and Officers (Constitution Part 5 Section 2). The exact number of Labour Group meetings attended since May 2017 is being collated and will be sent to Mr Crow within the next two weeks.

- (b) Of the 11 written questions submitted for Council in June 2019, officers provided some drafting support for two Liberal Democrat group questions and five Labour group questions. No support was requested for two Conservative group questions and one Labour group question. Support is available to any member when preparing written questions to help them to frame it in the most effective and accurate manner.
- (c) Drafting advice was provided by a Director and a Senior Advisor in Democratic Services, based on areas specified by Mr Jones. Advice has been provided to both opposition groups and majority group members in relation to notices of motion and amendments to notices of motion for most Council meetings. Advice is generally given to assist all groups and any member seeking to present an amendment to a notice of motion given the rules and Standing Orders which apply to them.
- (d) Since 2017, it is estimated that 80% of the support has been used by the Labour Group and 20% has been used by the Liberal Democrat Group. This remains flexible in response to actual requests for support from the minority group leaders and other backbench members.
- (e) Support for minority group leaders has been provided since the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) chaired by Baroness Cumberlege of Newick recommended that it should be provided, in a report to the Governance Committee in March 2002. The justification is set out there. The Governance Committee supported the IRP's recommendations and the support commenced in April 2002. The County Council considers this to be good practice in ensuring effective and constructive challenge within a democratic organisation. The allowances members receive for any special responsibilities do not in any instance displace the need for or provision of officer support to those roles. Prior to May 2017, minority group leaders were entitled to receive a special responsibility allowance of £14,361 each regardless of group size. The IRP review in 2016 recommended that different rates were applied depending on the size of the group - £12,490 for 15 members or more, £10,226 for groups of five to 14 members and £4,072 for small groups of three to four members. This was amended by the County Council to give further payment of £200 per member of the group. In May 2017, the new allowances came into effect and the Labour Group meets the classification of a 'medium' minority group.
- (f) The answer to (e) above includes the rationale. The County Council would be willing to discuss this approach with any other Council or its IRP. Allowances for district and borough council members tend to be lower than those for larger authorities such as the County Council.

5. Written question from Mr Cloake for reply by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Question

I am pleased to note that steady progress continues to be made with plans for the replacement of the existing Woodlands Meed College building on the former Newick House School site in Burgess Hill. When the replacement project was first discussed, there was considerable discussion around the possibility of providing an enhanced disability-friendly sports provision of regional significance, which was supported by Sir Nicholas Soames MP, and which would need to be funded from a central government grant rather than by County Council resources, as an enhancement to the new buildings provided by the County Council. Since that time there has been little mention of this facility, so please could the Cabinet Member give an update as to what progress has been made with securing the funds for this to be provided?

Answer

The brief for the replacement and extended Woodlands Meed College meets all aspects of Building Bulletin 104 which is the Department for Education's Briefing Framework for Special Schools. This includes a two-court sports hall.

Separately, Woodlands Meed College and the County Council have submitted a joint Expression of Interest to Sport England, bidding for funding to provide a four-court sports hall. The initial architect's plans are indicating both the two-court and four-court options to ensure, should additional funds not be available initially, that the facility could potentially be expanded in the future. The bid for funds has been supported by Sir Nicholas Soames MP. Officers have recently been seeking an update from Sir Nicholas on progress with the bid, but no information has been forthcoming as yet.

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

Question

With respect to small schools and the option of federation, which is part of the School Effectiveness Strategy, could the Cabinet Member confirm:

- (a) How many schools have been asked to consider federation and whether any conditions or timelines have been imposed on them by West Sussex beyond which they are subject to consultation on closure?
- (b) Details of the officer support, in terms of hours, West Sussex County Council has provided to each of the schools in (a), including but not limited to:
 - (i) working with governors to identify possible partner schools;
 - (ii) working with governors to facilitate partnership and then federation Discussions; and

- (iii) drawing up staffing and financial plans as part of the partnership and federation process;
- (c) Details of budget allocated within the directorate to providing support to schools as they go through the federation process;
- (d) That he recognises the federation process for some schools may take a number of years as schools move into partnership and then work towards a lasting federation;
- (e) And, therefore, that West Sussex County Council will not consult on the closure of any schools before it has provided significant officer support over what may be a lengthy period to these schools to assist them in considering the federation option?

Answer

- (a) All schools were made aware of the opportunity to consider federations as part of the County Council's School Effectiveness Strategy 2018-22 published last summer. It is not directed just at small schools.
- (b) Significant efforts are being made to work with governing bodies interested in considering federation options, but it is not possible to quantify the staff time or other resource. Officers from the School Improvement Service and School Organisation and Development are available to discuss federation options if governing bodies request.
- (c) The Director of Education and Skills has advised the County's Schools Forum that support will be offered to schools that have formally federated to support the early days of federation and to ensure that the leader and federation is supported through the first two years of federation. All schools have a Link Adviser who is attached to the school and is accessible to governors. Additional support to schools over and above this is available through our traded work with schools.
- (d) There is no specific timescale that a governing body should take to review federation options, but it is expected that typically these should be achievable within a 12-month timescale.
- (e) The County Council is expecting to consult on options such as federation, amalgamation, relocation or closure for five schools this autumn. Discussions over the opportunity for federation have taken place with each of the schools and others over a period of time over the last 12 months. The consultation on options will enable clarity to be given on whether the option of federation is feasible or whether other options are more appropriate. At this stage, I cannot rule out that moving to a potential closure could be a possible outcome.

7. Written question from Ms Sudan for reply by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Question

Young people are required to continue in education or training until at least their 18th birthday, choosing to participate through full time education, a job or volunteering combined with part time study, or by undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship. Furthermore, local authorities have a statutory duty to encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education or training and that under the September guarantee all 16 and 17-year-olds are entitled to an offer of a suitable place in education or training regardless of what qualifications they have gained when they left school.

In response to a written question put by the Labour Group in July 2018, figures were provided in respect the percentage of young people with an unknown education, employment or training (EET) status. These figures made it clear that West Sussex was performing in the bottom quintile nationally.

The County Council committed to addressing these challenges over the subsequent year.

- (a) I would be grateful if the Cabinet Member could provide the figures for young people with an unknown EET status for West Sussex, the South East region and nationally as of April 2019 with comparison to April 2018 and 2017.
- (b) Please also confirm how many young people in West Sussex aged 16 to 24 are currently identified as not in education, employment or training (NEETS) and what proportion of these are:
 - (i) children looked after;
 - (ii) have special education needs or disabilities (SEND); and
 - (iii) are eligible for free school meals.

Answer

- (a) The following data is taken from the monthly-released National Client Caseload Information System (NCCIS) data tables and compares West Sussex against National and South East figures:

NEET and Not Known - April figures 2017-19 inclusive

NEET	2019	2018	2017
West Sussex	2.7%	2.1%	1.7%
South East	2.5%	2.3%	2.5%
National	2.8%	2.9%	3.0%

Not Known	2019	2018	2017
West Sussex	6.5%	7.1%	7.4%
South East	2.6%	3.6%	4.0%
National	2.4%	2.9%	3.0%

NEET and Not Known	2019	2018	2017
West Sussex	9.2%	9.2%	9.1%
South East	5.1%	5.9%	6.5%
National	5.2%	5.8%	6.0%

The County Council's Corporate Plan target is to reduce the number of NEET young people to 1.9% by 2022. We are seeing an increase on last year's NEET figures, an increase of 0.6% compared to April 2018 due to the fact that there has been a lot of work over the last year to improve the accuracy of our data collection, which is still ongoing.

We now have fewer 16 to 17-year-olds for whom we do not know their current education, training or employment status (6.5% compared to 7.1% last year). However, since then work has further reduced the Not Known figure to 5.6% as at the end of June 2019.

Of the Not Known percentage, Year 13 is significantly higher than most other areas in the South East, so this is an area to focus on to reduce the figures further.

- (b) The following data is taken from the quarterly-released NCCIS 'at risk' data tables:

SEND - as of March 2019, West Sussex had a cohort of 1,510 young people aged 16 to 24 with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), and of this cohort 5.9% (89 young people) were identified as NEET, compared to 9.3% nationally and 7.4% in the South East.

Care Leavers - with regards to care leavers, as at March 2019, with respect to those aged 16 to 17 West Sussex had a cohort of 33, of which five young people (15.2%) were known to be NEET. This compares to 24.4% nationally and 25.8% in the South East.

Free School Meals - we do not hold data regarding those who are NEET who are eligible for Free School Meals. Those young people aged 16 to 17 in school and eligible for Free School Meals would not be classified as NEET.

- 8. Written question from Mr Quinn for reply by the by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure**

Question

The Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee considered the proposed Highways maintenance plan 2019 which sets out what the Council will and will not do in respect of highway maintenance. I understand this includes a

reduction in the number of grass cuts, hedges trimmed, weed spraying and maintenance of lines and signs. Further information about this was provided at the recent member day.

Can the Cabinet Member please clarify:

- (a) When he intends the plan will come into effect (given that the draft version presented to select committee was dated 2019);
- (b) When the period of engagement with parish and town councils and communities to encourage more active community support will commence; and
- (c) Whether any aspects of the current reduction of service levels have already commenced (for example weed spraying and lines and signs), given that some information on the County Council's website appears to already reflect the new service level arrangements and there has been a marked increase in the spread of weeds across the county.

Answer

- (a) The plan will come into immediate effect once it has cleared the decision process and will be Council policy. The aim of the plan to is to bring clarity to the operational levels that the Highways service can deliver within the budget allocated.
- (b) Officers will start a period of engagement with the parish, town councils and communities under the new offer 'Improving Local Places and Spaces'. Initial information will be available on the website shortly; members who attended the half day Highways and Transport Member Day on 10 July received a presentation and draft booklet. It was the headline story in the Highways and Transport Members Update sent to members on 15 July and all members will receive a link to the guidance.

Over the next few months, the engagement will involve: completion of comprehensive webpages, parish/town council cluster meetings, articles in newsletters, a West Sussex 'Connections' feature in October, press and social media releases and presentations at the Sussex Association of Local Councils' autumn conference on 3 October and at autumn/winter County Local Committee meetings.

There will also be communications with our partners on the new service levels.

- (c) Due to the budget reduction this year, changes to some operational service levels have, by necessity, had to take place, for example, weed spraying and signs and lines.

9. Written question from Mr Jones for reply by the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities

Question

The Leader recently shared with members a list of the other nine locations identified for potential further community hubs. That list includes Crawley Town Centre and Broadfield, Crawley.

I would be grateful if the Cabinet Member could provide a list of the services within a two-mile radius of these two libraries, provided by:

- (a) The County Council;
- (b) Public Health; and
- (c) Any other service provider deemed to be within scope of this project.

Please also confirm in respect of each of these services:

- (i) Where they are currently being delivered from;
- (ii) Who owns the land or facility from which the services are being delivered; and
- (iii) Whether there are any restrictions or conditions in respect of either the type or level of service provision or in respect of the building or land in the event that the current service provision was to cease.

Answer

Our Place, the County Council's community hubs initiative, aims to create public spaces where the community can access a range of services. A set of objective criteria have been developed to assess in which locations across the county a potential community hub may be an appropriate model. From this work 10 locations have been so far identified for further exploratory work to test the viability of a community hub.

Both Crawley town centre and Broadfield have been identified in the above list and viability work has been commissioned to test the suitability of a community hub solution in these locations. The member Project Board will review and then identify the locations deemed viable for further work and at this stage local member communication will be undertaken as a precursor to extensive community engagement and consultation.

The Community Hubs programme has focused on identifying in-scope services within a two-mile radius of key locations. The in-scope services are Libraries, Children and Family Centres (CFCs) and Find It Out services provided by the County Council.

Details of the in-scope County Council services (a), location (d), ownership (e), are detailed below. A full understanding of any restrictions or conditions (f) on

alternative use and disposal opportunities will be identified through the due diligence process at detailed feasibility stage of phase 1 of the programme for Crawley Town Centre and phase 2 of the programme for Broadfield, Crawley.

Other County Council services and services provided by Public Health (b) and other potential services (c) which could benefit from being offered from a hub location will be identified as part of the detailed feasibility stage of the projects.

Crawley Town Centre

Crawley Library Service is delivered from Crawley Library, Southgate Avenue, Southgate, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 6HG. County Council Freehold ownership.

Langley Green Children and Family Service is delivered from Langley Green Children and Family Centre, Langley Drive, Langley Green, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 7PF which is part of the Langley Green Centre, the CFC is held on a long lease until 2073 from Crawley Borough Council.

Northgate Children and Family Service is delivered from Northgate Children and Family Centre, Barnfield Road, Northgate, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 8DP, County Council Freehold ownership. The site is adjacent to Northgate Primary School.

Pound Hill Children and Family Service is delivered from Pound Hill Children and Family Centre, Crawley Lane, Pound Hill, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 7EB. County Council Freehold ownership. The asset is on the campus of Pound Hill Infants Academy and Pound Hill Junior School.

Crawley Find It Out Service is delivered from Centenary House, Woodfield Road, Northgate, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 8GN. County Council Freehold ownership, this site forms part of the Crawley Town Centre Regeneration proposals and it is anticipated it will be demolished in due course.

Broadfield

Broadfield Library service is delivered from Broadfield Library, Broadfield Barton, Broadfield, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 9BA. County Council Freehold ownership.

Broadfield Children and Family Service is delivered from Broadfield Children and Family Centre, Creasys Drive, Broadfield, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 9HJ and is held on a lease from Crawley Borough Council for 25 years expiring in 2029.

Bewbush Children and Family Service is delivered from Bewbush Children and Family Centre, Dorsten Square, Bewbush, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 8XW and is held on a lease from Kenmal Academies Trust for 125 years expiring in 2137. Southgate Children and Family Service is delivered from Southgate Children and Family Centre, Barrington Road, Southgate, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 6DG, and is held on a lease from GLF Schools for 125 years expiring in 2142.

10. Written question from Mrs Smith for reply by the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities

Question

I understand that the mobile library which until recently visited 33 different areas within the rural south of West Sussex has been taken off the road as it has been deemed unroadworthy. Can the Cabinet Member please tell me in respect of this vehicle:

- (a) When its roadworthiness was last reviewed (I understand mobile libraries are exempt from the requirement to have an MOT);
- (b) Whether that review was carried out internally or externally;
- (c) Whether any concern about the condition or advisory notes was expressed at the time of the last inspection;
- (d) What the problem with the vehicle is; and
- (e) What the estimated cost of repairing the vehicle would be?

I understand that all options for the future of this service are being reviewed and note that the removal of the all mobile library service facilities is one of the options future budget savings options which Cabinet agreed should be explored further last week.

- (i) Given that this proposed saving is for implementation in 2020/21 can the Cabinet Member please tell me what interim arrangements she proposes to put in place to enable residents of rural south West Sussex who are unable to travel to their local library due to a disability or mobility issues can continue to borrow books and other resources. In particular, I would like to know whether an equalities impact assessment has been completed to understand the impact on those residents who until recently relied on this service.
- (ii) I would also be grateful if the Cabinet Member could confirm which 11 libraries form tier 6 and are in scope for potential closure as part of the proposed budget cuts for 2020/21.

Answer

We have been considering for some time the future of library service delivery to those residents who find difficulty in accessing one of our 36 static libraries. Use of the mobile library service has declined heavily making it a very expensive service to maintain.

Issues on the mobile service have declined 27% since the last review of the service in 2011 and that decline has accelerated over the last four years. Registered borrowers have also declined by 25% in the same period. This shows a far greater rate of decline than static libraries. Replacing a customised, large diesel vehicle is expensive, this is not an environmentally sound model and it is

increasingly difficult to source specialist vehicles because demand for them across the country has declined. The lead in time for a new vehicle is around 18 months and the estimated minimum cost well over £100,000. As finances become more challenging this is an area where we feel economies could be made whilst protecting the service to those most vulnerable. Many residents who currently use the mobile service also use a static library and some drive to the mobile stop.

Now that that removing the mobile library service has progressed to the Forward Plan stage of the budget planning we will be accelerating the review of the service which will include a full equalities impact statement.

We have been concerned about the roadworthiness of the two vehicles for some time and the vehicle in question, Community Mobile 1, was off the road for 29 days in 2018/19. We had hoped it would be able to continue until we had the results of the review and our savings requirements, but the failure of the vehicle has necessitated mitigating action.

- (a) Mobile libraries are not exempt from MOT and approaching this year's annual test the vehicle was reviewed by our Transport Services Team who concluded that a new clutch, gearbox, full service and various welding issues on the body were needed. Their view was that this would cost more than the value of the vehicle.
- (b) The vehicle review was carried out by Transport Services not the library service.
- (c) Yes, we have been concerned for some time, but we were not in a position where we felt it wise to commit to the ordering of a new vehicle.
- (d) See above.
- (e) See above.
- (i) Since Community Mobile 1 was taken out of service we have written to all 677 residents who have used the Mobile Library in the last 12 months. Of those, 231 already use a static library as well (that figure has now risen to 320 meaning that 47% of residents using the mobile service have also joined a static library and are able and happy to do so). We have worked with the mobile driver and identified 47 residents who had been using the service who would find it very hard to visit a static library. We are arranging to lease a small vehicle so that we can collect any books from people who are unable to return them to a library and will focus on maintaining a service to those who cannot access a static library whilst encouraging those who can get to a static library to do so. We already work with volunteers to offer Home Library Direct to anyone who cannot access the service and will be working to put people in touch with a local volunteer who can borrow and return for them.
- (ii) Currently there are 13 tier 6 libraries and we will be reviewing all of them as part of the savings exercise.

Tier 6 Libraries
Angmering
Arundel
Broadwater
East Preston
Ferring
Findon Valley
Hassocks
Hurstpierpoint
Petworth
Pulborough
Southbourne
Southwater
Witterings

We will be doing all we can to maximise savings through the community hubs programme so that we do not need to close rural libraries; we will be announcing the programme in due course. In the event that some closures are required these would be subject to public consultation.

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Question Time: 19 July 2019

Members asked questions of members the Cabinet and chairmen as set out below. In instances where a Cabinet Member, the Leader or a chairman undertook to take follow-up action, this is also noted below.

Best Start in Life**Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters.

Children not in school (page 109), from Mr Jones and Mr Smytherman.

In response to a question from Mr Jones about whether there had been any increase in children being removed from schools as a result of the lack of school funding, the Cabinet Member said there had been an increase in the number of children being home educated but he was not aware there was any evidence that the increase related to school funding. He said he would see if there was a correlation and respond to Mr Jones.

In response to the changes in legislation arising from the 'Children not in School' consultation the Cabinet Member agreed to respond to Mr Smytherman about where the special support centres which would be educating primary school-age children were, whether there would be enough places and whether the curriculum would be the same as the one provided by the Alternative Provision College.

Survey of schools, from Mr Oxlade.

Written question 6, from Dr O'Kelly.

A Prosperous Place**Leader**

The Leader answered questions on the following matters.

Gatwick Airport and the end of legal agreement, from Mr Acraman, Mr Bradford and Dr Walsh.

Discussions with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care at the Local Government Association Conference (page 110), from Mr Turner.

Shoreham Airport, from Mr Acraman, Mr Bradford, Mr Boram, Mr High, Mrs Kitchen and Dr Walsh.

Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters.

Downs Link surface improvements (page 110), from Mrs Millson and Mr S J Oakley.

In response to a question from Mrs Millson on funding for surface improvements to the Downs Link, the Cabinet Member said he would let members have a plan which showed exactly what was being done.

In response to a question from Mr Oakley, the Cabinet Member agreed to let him have a breakdown of how much of the money for the Downs Link resurfacing would be required for non-operational costs.

Written question 8, from Mr Jones, Mrs Jones and Dr Walsh.

Safety fencing on central reservation of dual carriageways, from Dr Dennis.

The Cabinet Member said he would investigate and respond to Dr Dennis on whether:

- the work on the A24 had been completed
- safety fences had been extended to other dual carriageways under the County's control where speed limit was more than 50 miles per hour (A264/A259)
- a risk assessment had been carried out of not having safety fencing; and
- a cost benefit analysis had been carried out of their value against other highway safety measures.

Section 278 highways works, from Mrs Dennis.

In response to a request from Mrs Dennis for a review of the timing of Section 278 works by developers, the Cabinet Member said he would see if anything could be done but commented that there was limited scope for improvements given the legal framework. He also agreed to see where communications about such works could be improved.

A Council that Works for the Community

Cabinet Member for Corporate Relations

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters.

Preparation for service continuity in relation to back office functions (page 112), from Mr Wickremaratchi.

Written question 4, from Mr Crow.

Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters.

Triennial actuarial valuation of the Pension Fund (page 112), from Mr S J Oakley.

Chichester Harbour Conservancy award for education service, from Mr Acraman, Mr Montyn and Mr S J Oakley.

A Strong, Safe and Sustainable Place

The Leader, on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities, answered questions on the following matters.

Our Town scheme (page 111, from Mr Barrett-Miles and Mr Smytherman.

In response to a question from Mr Barrett-Miles the Leader agreed to circulate to all members the rollout programme for the rest of the county. She also agreed to make sure Burgess Hill Town Council knew if there was any requirement for it to help.

In response to a question from Mr Smytherman, about the resources for supporting the Our Town schemes and a list of local businesses involved, the Leader agreed to let members know.

Unauthorised occupation of County Council land at Tangmere, from Mr S J Oakley.

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