

Public Document Pack

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7 September 2020

Cabinet

A virtual meeting of the Cabinet will be held at **10.30 am** on **Tuesday, 15 September 2020**.

Note: In accordance with regulations in response to the current public health emergency, this meeting will be held virtually with members in remote attendance. Public access is via webcasting.

The meeting will be available to watch live via the Internet at this address:

<http://www.westsussex.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

Agenda

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|----------|----|--|
| 10.30 am | 1. | <p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Members and officers must declare any pecuniary or personal interest in any business on the agenda. They should also make declarations at any stage such an interest becomes apparent during the meeting. Consideration should be given to leaving the meeting if the nature of the interest warrants it. If in doubt please contact Democratic Services before the meeting.</p> |
| 10.35 am | 2. | <p>Minutes of the last meeting (Pages 5 - 8)</p> <p>The Cabinet is asked to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2020 (attached, cream paper).</p> |
| 10.40 am | 3. | <p>Urgent Matters</p> <p>Items not on the agenda which the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency by reason of special circumstances.</p> |
| 10.45 am | 4. | <p>For decision:
Horsham Fire Station and Fire & Rescue Service Training Centre (CAB07_20/21) (Pages 9 - 22)</p> <p>The Cabinet is asked to approve the proposal set out in the attached key decision report.</p> <p>The named Cabinet Members will introduce the key decision</p> |

report.

The Chairman of the specially established Scrutiny Task and Finish Group will be invited to summarise the Group's deliberations on the proposal. Other members of the Group present may be invited to comment.

Each of the main Opposition Group Leaders will be invited to speak for up to three minutes each on the proposal.

The Cabinet will then discuss the proposal prior to taking any decision.

11.15 am 5. **For debate and decision:**
Q1 Total Performance Monitor (CAB08_20/21) (To Follow)

The Cabinet Member for Finance will introduce the report.

Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committees will be invited to speak for up to three minutes to provide the views of their Committee on the content of the report.

Each of the main Opposition Group Leaders will be invited to speak for up to three minutes each on the report.

The Cabinet will then discuss the report and the proposals prior to taking any decision.

11.45 am 6. **For decision:**
Appointments to Outside Bodies (CAB09_20/21) (Pages 23 - 26)

The Cabinet is asked to approve the proposed addition to the list of outside bodies and to approve an appointment to the outside body identified in the report.

11.55 am 7. **For debate and discussion:**
West Sussex County Council Response to Covid-19 (Pages 27 - 44)

The Cabinet is asked to consider and comment on the Council's response to the Covid-19 emergency as set out in the report.

Scrutiny Committee Chairmen and each of the main Opposition Group Leaders will be invited to speak for up to three minutes on the Council's response to the Covid-19 emergency.

Cabinet Members may respond to comments made and the Leader may sum up the discussion.

12.35 pm 8. **Emerging Issues**

Cabinet Members are invited to provide any verbal updates on current significant issues for their respective portfolios which may benefit from discussion.

12.45 pm 9. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Cabinet will be held on 20 October 2020.

To all members of the Cabinet

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Cabinet

21 July 2020 – At a virtual meeting of the Cabinet held at 10.30 am with restricted public access.

Present: Cllr Marshall (Chairman)

Cllr Crow, Cllr Elkins, Cllr Hunt, Cllr A Jupp, Cllr N Jupp, Cllr Lanzer, Cllr Russell, Cllr Urquhart,

Also in attendance: Cllr Barrett-Miles, Cllr J Dennis, Cllr M Jones and Cllr Dr Walsh

22. Declarations of Interest

22.1 In accordance with the code of conduct the following personal interests were declared:

- Cllr Nigel Jupp as a member of Horsham District Council in relation to item 5, Economy Reset Plan.
- Cllr Dr James Walsh as leader of Arun District Council in relation to item 4a, Climate Change Strategy, and item 5, Economy Reset Plan.
- Cllr Michael Jones as a member of Crawley Borough Council in relation to item 4a, Climate Change Strategy, and item 5, Economy Reset Plan.
- Cllr Duncan Crow as a member of Crawley Borough Council in relation to item 5, Economy Reset Plan.
- Cllr Roger Elkins as a member of Arun District Council in relation to item 5, Economy Reset Plan.
- Cllr Bob Lanzer as a member of Crawley Borough Council in relation to item 5, Economy Reset Plan.

23. Minutes

23.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2020 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

24. Urgent Matters

24.1 The Cabinet Member for Adults and Health advised there had been an increase in Covid-19 cases in the Crawley area. Public Health England (PHE) were leading on contact tracing and WSCC was working with Crawley Borough Council and other partners. A media campaign had been launched to advise residents on action to take. Organisations likely to be at high risk had also been contacted. The situation would be monitored.

24.2 The Cabinet Member for Environment advised there had been a fire at Crawley Household Waste Recycling Site (HWRS) and it was now closed. The HWRS at Horsham would be open 7 days but residents are encouraged to visit only if necessary. The Cabinet Members for Environment and Fire and Rescue and Communities thanked the Fire and Rescue Service for their response to the incident.

25. Key Decisions

25.1 Cllr Paul Marshall, Leader, introduced the item.

26. Climate Change Strategy (CAB06_20/21)

26.1 Cabinet considered a report by the Executive Director of Place Services and the Director of Environment and Public Protection.

26.2 The report was introduced by Cllr Deborah Urquhart, Cabinet Member for Environment and set out an ambition for carbon neutrality by 2030, climate resilience and effective use of natural resources.

26.3 Cllr Andrew Barrett-Miles, Chairman of the Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee advised of the Committee's support for the strategy noting that it would increase the resilience of the county to climate change effects. He welcomed the role of the climate change board.

26.4 Cllr Dr James Walsh, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, welcomed the strategy. He asked when the LED changeover for streetlighting would be complete. He felt that joint action should be taken with coastal district and borough councils to tackle the issue of flooding and rising sea levels.

26.5 Cllr Michael Jones, Leader of the Labour Group, supported the strategy. He praised the work of the Climate Change Board and agreed a consistent approach across the county was required.

26.6 Cabinet Members welcomed the Climate Change Strategy, agreeing it to be creative and innovative, offering an opportunity for the authority to lead by example in influencing partners and stakeholders. The role of highways and transport was considered as was the improved air quality brought by the pandemic. Covid-19 had provided an impetus to transform the way people work, further reducing the need for travel.

26.7 Resolved – that Cabinet adopts the Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030.

27. Economy Reset Plan

27.1 Cabinet considered a report by the Executive Director of Place Services. The report was introduced by Cllr Bob Lanzer, Cabinet Member for Economy and Corporate Resources who outlined the following points:

- The environment and economy are key, complementary issues for the county and the reset plan will bring about a robust, sustainable and growing economy which will be environmentally friendly.
- Covid-19 had caused a contraction in the economy. The reset policies and plans would aid growth from this base point. Economic snapshot data would be used for intelligence.
- The situation is fluid and the draft plan is the basis for initial stakeholder engagement which would continue through adoption of the corporate reset and reboot plan.

- There are 9 proposed themes covering 3 economic areas; Crawley and Gatwick Diamond, coastal towns and the rural economy.

27.2 Cllr Joy Dennis, Chairman of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee said the themes struck the right balance for the recovery to a robust and healthy economy. She noted the importance of partnership working with district and boroughs, the need to consider the implications of Brexit and links with the health market, digital working and a green agenda as new ways of working were developed.

27.3 Cllr Dr James Walsh, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group noted the absence of the mention of Brexit and its impact on the West Sussex economy. He welcomed the protection of the coastal town and horticulture economy and felt improving the skill level in coastal towns is vital as is the health and social care sector for the growing elderly demography.

27.4 Cllr Michael Jones, Leader of the Labour Group felt the 9 priorities represented the right area of focus. He highlighted the importance of Gatwick and associated supply chain on the county's economy. He felt that tourism in coastal towns needed addressing as did career opportunities for young people.

27.5 Cabinet Members supported the content of the report. The Leader summarised that the recovery of the economy was a vast and nationwide challenge but that this draft reset plan addressed appropriate priorities to stimulate the economy in West Sussex.

27.6 Resolved – that Cabinet:

1. Endorses the draft economy reset plan proposals in principle and as the basis for engagement with partners
2. Endorses the proposed approach to partner engagement on the draft economy reset plan
3. Agrees to adopt the economy reset plan in October as a sub-plan of the corporate Reset and Reboot plan, with the new plan superseding the current Economic Growth Plan 2018-2023.

28. Date of Next Meeting

28.1 The next meeting of Cabinet would be held on 15 September 2020.

The meeting ended at 12.19 pm

Chairman

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Key decision: Yes
Unrestricted
Ref: CAB07 (20/21)

Cabinet

September 2020

Horsham Fire Station and Fire and Rescue Training Centre

Report by Executive Director Place Services and Chief Fire Officer

Electoral division(s): All

Summary

This report proposes the delivery of a new live fire training centre and a new Horsham fire station at Highwood to replace the one at Hurst Road.

The project responds to risks identified within the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2018-2022

In addition, the recent HMICFRS report identified areas for improvement aligned with items within the IRMP, such as: diversity & inclusion, firefighter skills, recruitment and retention and ensuring the adequacy of the WSFRS estate.

Fire and Rescue Services training and preparedness for dealing with high rise scenarios is also a significant area under national scrutiny and the new facility would provide the training to address this requirement within West Sussex.

The scheme aims to:

- Provide a new operational Fire Station, accommodating whole-time crews, fire appliances and other key teams such as People and Organisational Development (incorporating the training delivery department).
- Provide a new, centralised training centre for the Fire Service to replace the facility at the former Horley fire station and the Worthing site including an upgraded and enhanced training offer with live fire training, incident command and breathing apparatus training.
- Release the Horsham and Horley estates and part of the site at Worthing.

The previous decision (Ref No: FR2218.19, March 2019) approved £1.5m capital budget to complete the design phase works under a Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA).

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- (1) Endorses the delivery of Horsham Fire Station and FRS Training Centre at Highwood in Horsham with the allocation of £20.85m and additional design fees of £461,000 from the capital programme to fund the completion of the project
- (2) authorises the submission of applications for full planning permission for the project;

- (3) subject to receipt of planning permission to enter into a construction contract with Willmott Dixon through the Southern Construction Framework and
 - (4) Confirms that the Fire and Rescue assets at Horley and Hurst Road Horsham and part of the site at Worthing, as detailed in the report, are declared surplus to all operational use.
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Proposal

1 Background and context

- 1.1 West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service must make provision to train and develop a firefighter workforce in compliance with national guidance and health and safety legislation.
- 1.2 The Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2018-2022 provides an assessment of all risks to life and injury within the West Sussex community. It has identified key areas for improvement including live fire training, fire fighter safety, adequate training of firefighters and development of their specialist skills and improved provision for an inclusive and diverse workforce. The review by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire Rescue Services (issued June 2019) echoes the concerns identified in the IRMP and the need for improved facilities
- 1.3 WSFRS are currently limited in the high-rise scenario training (referenced in the IRMP). The Grenfell Report (Phase 1) has provided the impetus for shift change in the way fire fighters must now be trained. Currently training of this nature is limited and must be undertaken out of county as and when available which is both cost prohibitive and time consuming to travel to. It is also disproportionately difficult to access for the retained workforce due to constraints around working patterns.
- 1.4 WSFRS currently buy live fire training from several locations, including Gatwick Airport under a Service Level Agreement. This Agreement is due to expire in December 2020 and there is uncertainty over the long-term viability. WSFRS have negotiated to extend this Agreement on a rolling yearly basis, however, Gatwick's longer-term plans will mean removal of the current fire training ground area. In addition, Gatwick requires airside access and the need to be escorted to the training ground, all of which reduce the available training delivery time. As the facility is only available during the day it is also challenging for our retained crews as many must request leave from their primary employment.
- 1.5 The forecast WSFRS firefighter recruitment profile is due to increase significantly over the next 3-5 years meaning that greater volume of live fire training will be required, which Gatwick's 50 days of provision cannot accommodate. Given the reduction in experiential learning through reducing numbers of operational incidents, coupled with the increase in new firefighters and the national learning from critical events (such as Grenfell), we need to increase our capacity in live fire training, which the new facility will provide. In addition, the facility will provide increased local training capacity in both breathing apparatus and incident command training, which are also essential to future proof the discharge of statutory requirements.

- 1.6 Currently WSCC trains 12 new recruits per annum, which is forecast to increase to 24 in 2021/2/3 etc. It is believed that (based on historical recruitment information) additional training of 30 RDS staff per year will be required. Also, the current expansion to the WSFRS learning and development offering will increase the demand for additional training of 348 firefighters per year, which equates to 1 additional training day (per annum) for each wholetime firefighter. In total, these requirements will result in an increased training capacity demand of at least 30 additional training days per year, which cannot be met through the existing facilities.
- 1.7 Horsham Fire station is an example of a fatigued and outdated building where a capital investment is required to modernise facilities in line with current working standards (e.g. diversity & inclusion and addressing workplace contamination).
- 1.8 The proposed training facility will provide leading edge technology which will set it apart as a centre of excellence in live fire training in the south of the country, while the proposed fire station building will provide modern design layouts to required standards and an incident command centre capable of supporting the full spectrum of training expertise in this field.
- 1.9 WSFRS have actively explored the opportunities for the joint use of the new Horsham Facilities with other Fire & Rescue Services and blue light services during the development of this proposal. WSFRS remain focussed on exploring opportunities to collaborate with other services where possible, including through the joint 4F regional collaborative forum.

Business Case development and project delivery

- 1.10 There have been changes to the original outline business case, which was based on a 'one public estate' partnership proposal with blue light partners. The withdrawal of Sussex police and ambulance service from the project was outlined in decision (Ref No: FR2218.19, March 2019). Subsequently it was confirmed that the planned income from a commercial training offer could not be assured and a site review identified that the energy facility could not be accommodated meaning the grant would not be available. These led to a number of revisions of the scope of the scheme and a need to review the financial elements of the business case.
- 1.11 The new facility is now classified as a capital delivery project and does not include any associated revenue generation. This original scheme was costed at circa £26M but has reduced significantly through scope revisions and design development. The original business case was at no cost to the council because the anticipated commercial and energy generation revenue covered the borrowing costs. The project will now increase the pressure on the council's revenue budget by £830k per annum and this pressure will need to be addressed in future budget planning. The primary use of this facility will be for WSFRS firefighters, but the combination of the incident command facility and live fire training may attract out of County interest and we will continue to look at opportunities to share resources where appropriate with neighbouring authorities.
- 1.12 This project was previously approved up to and including the appointment of the main contractor (Willmott Dixon) in October 2019 to complete the design phase works, after a successful tendering process. £1.5m of the previously approved total capital budget was allocated to the project to undertake RIBA design stages 2-4.

Agenda Item 4

- 1.13 Following the completion of Stage 2, the project continued into developing the approved concept design under RIBA Stage 3 but needed to consider design solutions and value engineering in order to meet the construction budget as published in the capital programme in February 2020, whilst also ensuring that the project brief was met. As a result of this, the current revised proposal was identified,
- 1.14 Design works at RIBA Stage 3 have been paused (pending this decision) prior to RIBA Stage 4 commencing.
- 1.15 The contractors have confirmed that they are able to recommence Stage 4 design in September 2020 with no additional cost to WSCC provided the project is approved as revised against the original outline business case as noted above and summarised in this report.
- 1.16 The main benefits of this scheme are identified as follows:
- Modernising facilities for WSFRS to increase standards of training and safety.
 - Removing the risk of insufficient training capacity for WSFRS recruits and existing firefighters.
 - Increasing accessibility and frequency of live fire training and breathing apparatus training for all firefighters within local commuting distance.
 - Increasing accessibility and frequency of incident command offering for all firefighters.
 - Improve upon WSFRS facilities in relation to inclusion and diversity standards.
 - Improve upon WSCC's environmental contribution towards a carbon neutral estate by 2030.
 - Address obligations for exposure to contaminants and reducing workplace risks to firefighters.
 - Avoid costly refurbishment of Horsham, Horley and Worthing sites, each of which would not deliver the scope required to future service provision.
- 1.17 It is expected that Planning Approval can be gained later in 2020 and construction works will commence in line with procurement procedures thereafter. It is proposed that the application for planning permission addresses the projected life-long requirements of the assets and the need for flexible use as needs and service requirements evolve. It will also seek to anticipate and respond to areas of concern about the impact of the building and its service use for immediate neighbours and the local area. An ecological survey has been undertaken and the relocation of newts present identified for relocation by mid-October 2020. The neighbouring residential care home was established at a time the proposals for the use of the site for Fire and Rescue use was known.
- 1.18 As part of this project the current training facilities at Horley, the fire station at Hurst Road in Horsham and part of the estate in Worthing consisting of two buildings used for training, that are located either side of the fire station will all become surplus to operational use as this project is delivered. Therefore, they will be surplus to the requirements of the service and have also been assessed to have no practical use for other council services and so can be released for disposal in due course. The potential capital receipts for these three sites has been estimated to be in the region of £3.8M, which WSCC aim to realise by the end of financial year 2024. Attention will be paid to the need to ensure optimum return on these assets.

2 Proposal details

- 2.1 The proposal for a joint fire station and training centre has been progressed for the following key reasons:
- The land at Highwood Mill was covenanted, at the point of its inclusion in a local development scheme, for use as a fire station and WSCC can now act on the opportunity to make best use of this asset given that this is the only service or corporate use it can be used for;
 - Horsham Fire station was built in 1968 and has reached the end of its useful life. A refurbished station at Hurst Road would not provide the usefully designed spaces that the new facility would, due to the constraints of the existing site and would require increasing on-going maintenance costs;
 - WSFRS currently need to obtain live fire training at external third party controlled sites. The longevity of these arrangements and their ability to deliver the required training capacity are not secure. Some require several hours commuting for West Sussex based staff, which is not cost effective or practical. This is particularly relevant in respect of the retained duty crews who need to gain time away from their daytime occupations to attend WSFRS courses;
 - WSFRS estimates that training demand will rise in the next 5 years, and the new facility would meet these expected demands on capacity, whereas the facilities currently used would not;
 - Highwood Mill is in an area of growing development and is well suited to respond to calls in the area and respond to Road Traffic Collisions via the A24 route.
- 2.2 It is proposed that the project for a new Fire and Rescue training facility and fire station for Horsham be delivered by re-commencing design activity during September 2020 and completing RIBA 3 & 4 under the current PCSA agreement, including the submission of a planning application, leading to a start on site of construction works around July 2021
- 2.3 It is anticipated that the construction works will require circa 16 months to complete, with full handover of the facilities around November 2022. This timeline will be revisited once contractors are recommissioned on RIBA Stage 4 and planning approval gained, expected later this year.
- 2.4 However, delivery of any project dates is still subject to the risks around and associated with the Covid-19 outbreak, as discussed further under section 6.

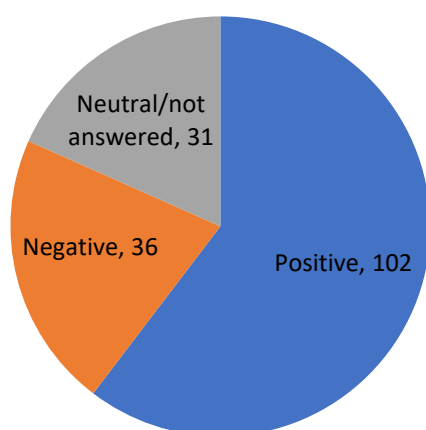
3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 3.1 Following the completion of Stage 2 action was taken to consider design solutions and value engineering in order to meet the construction budget, whilst also ensuring that the project brief was met. Other options were included in the original outline business case and the project scope has needed to be revised significantly as set out in the background section above. It should be noted that the lack of commercial training availability does not affect the fire station operations or the training of WSFRS personnel.

- 3.2 Do Nothing' Option: Maintaining the current estate to the current 'compliance, wind and weatherproof' minimal approach (currently adopted by WSCC for all buildings) would require a facilities management revenue expenditure of circa £12M over the next 50year lifecycle. However, the product delivered would not meet the standard required by WSFRS either now or in the future. It would mean that many of the benefits and aims of this proposal could not be realised. This would be particularly problematic in terms of the growing need for enhanced training facilities and the need to address challenges presented by the current third party training provision arrangements.

4 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 4.1 Highwood Mill care home is adjacent to the site and WSFRS have made several visits to discuss the scheme with the residents. These meetings have gone well, and the residents are keen to be kept abreast of developments. The next visit to update the residents was scheduled for June 2020 but will need to be re-arranged due to social distancing requirements.
- 4.2 A public consultation into the impact on fire and rescue emergency response of the relocation of the fire station was held between 8th August and 19th September 2018. This is a statutory requirement applying to any proposal for a fire station relocation where response times may change as a result. Our response standard is measured on a service wide basis, and there would be a small improvement overall. Whilst there is a slight negative impact on the response in the Horsham area this is balanced by minor improvements into Chichester North and Crawley.
- 4.3 The consultation did not cover areas such as building design, traffic impact, noise etc which forms part of the standard public consultation during the Planning determination period.
- 4.4 169 responses were received in total (165 online, 3 via email, one letter). A summary of the consultation responses received are shown below.



- 4.5 A Horsham satellite fire station was, at an early phase of the project, discussed at the Strawford site; however, this was cost prohibitive at a project cost of

£3m, and so all retained fire fighters will now be located as originally envisaged at Highwood Mill.

- 4.6 Contractors Willmott Dixon held a Public Exhibition based on the Stage 2 Information (Concept Design) at Horsham Library between 4th-11th March. Two periods within this time frame were attended by the project team and WSFRS to discuss the project.
- 4.7 About 40 people attended these two sessions. Many were impressed and excited that a new facility of this kind is being planned. However, there were comments regarding the proximity of the fire station to the adjacent amenities, the design (colour scheme), use of the Highwood Mill access road, planting and ecology strategy, flood strategy, noise and the training tower. Attendees were advised of planning application dates and that these concerns would be dealt with during this phase of the project.
- 4.8 Early consultation has already commenced between the County Council's planning department and Willmott Dixon regarding the scheme proposals. Feedback received to date has been largely positive and all points raised by the planning officer have been considered by the contractor within the emerging design proposals; consultations are due to re-commence in Mid-September 2020. The planning application will address the flexibility required in relation to usage of the live fire training building. This is required to safeguard the increased capacity to train WSFRS firefighters and to adapt to changing training needs into the future and will be discussed fully during the next phase of planning discussions.
- 4.9 Member scrutiny of the proposal was carried out by a single Task and Finish Group comprising five members from Performance and Finance and the Fire and Rescue Scrutiny Committees. They considered the final draft of the proposal and were able to question the Cabinet Member and lead officers.
- 4.10 The TFG gave general support to the proposal but asked for additional information about the implications of a 'no change' option and for aspects of the financial case, including the potential capital receipt from assets to be disposed of. These have been included. The TFG commented that the longer-term needs of the service and the flexible use of the training facility would need to be carefully addressed in the planning process. This point has been covered in revised references to the planning stage. The TFG also expressed concern about the time taken to bring the final proposal forward and asked that it be actioned with some urgency.

5 Finance

- 5.1 The revised project proposal will mean increased costs over the first ten years of the operation of the scheme as follows. Negative numbers indicate lower expected costs and positive numbers indicate higher expected costs.

	Year 1 £000s	Year 2 £000s	Year 3 £000s	Year 4 £000s	Year 5 £000s	Year 6 £000s	Year 7 £000s	Year 8 £000s	Year 9 £000s	Year 10 £000s	MTFS period average £000s	10 year average £000s
FRS Training budgets	-81	-81	-81	-81	-81	-81	-81	-81	-81	-81	-81	-81
Live Fire Specialist Maintenance	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90
Other premises costs excl capital financing	61	62	63	90	91	92	94	95	96	98	69	84
Capital financing costs	737	737	737	737	737	737	737	737	737	737	737	737
Total Impact on revenue budgets	807	808	809	836	837	838	839	841	842	844	815	830

5.2 Revenue consequences of proposal

The inclusion of a live fire training facility and a more complex building in general means higher maintenance standards. As such, a reduction in facilities maintenance costs is unlikely. In addition, the live fire facility demands the use of a highly specialist maintenance contractor. South Wales Fire & Rescue Service has recently built a live fire training facility and have provided information to support the projected £90,000 a year maintenance costs.

The maintenance revenue budgets will need to consider the whole life cycle costings prior to setting any budget for the new facility, to ensure that the 50-year lifespan is supported through an adequate maintenance regime. The resource implications for the Council, taking costs averaged over the first ten years of the scheme, mean the forecast revenue consequences of the proposal after implementation in 2025/26 are to:

- reduce Fire & Rescue Service costs by £81,000 a year;
- increase specialist facilities maintenance by £90,000 a year;
- increase other premises related costs by over £84,000 a year; and
- increase capital financing costs by nearly £737,000 a year.

In summary, the overall revenue impact is to increase costs to the Council by over £830,000 a year. As explained in 1.11 above, these costs are additional costs not currently included in the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy as the original planned project contained a commercial offer that covered the anticipated borrowing costs.

5.3 Capital consequences

The capital consequences of the scheme compared to the approved capital budget are as shown in the table below.

The design fees have exceeded the approved £1.5m budget allocation for such fees due to changes in the project's scope. These changes have included a redesign of the main facility which no longer supports commercial training and a more advanced design of live fire training building. An additional £460k has been spent on these elements which is indicated below. However, due to the estimated development costs coming in under budget, the overall capital costs of the proposed scheme still fall within the approved capital programme provision of £22.6 (inclusive of the design fees provision).

	Actuals 2019/20	Forecast 2020/21	Forecast 2021/22	Forecast 2022/23	Forecast 2023/24	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Scheme Costs Already Approved						
Horsham Fire Station and Training Centre - <i>Design Fees</i>	641	859				1,500
Capital Programme Allocation						
Horsham Fire Station and Training Centre - <i>Design Fees</i>		461				461
Horsham Fire Station and Training Centre - <i>Construction</i>			17,117	2,957	306	20,385
Total Profiled Expenditure						
Horsham Fire Station and Training Centre - <i>Pre & Post Construction</i>	641	1,319	17,117	2,957	306	22,346*

* Total Forecast Construction Cost £22,346,260.83

- 5.4 The estimated disposal proceeds from the vacated sites (Horley, Horsham and a portion of the Worthing site) are estimated at £3.8m. The projected capital receipts will help reduce the borrowing costs of the capital programme or be used to fund qualifying revenue expenditure if the current capital flexibility schemes are extended by government.

Value for Money

- 5.5 The Fire and Rescue IRMP makes a commitment to consider our assets and to ensure we are making the most of them, both now and in the future. The proposal will save poor value investment in maintaining dated facilities at their current standards, which as identified in this report are below the service requirements. The proposed facility is significantly less money than a refurbishment option which would include decant to temporary facilities. The facility also offers us an opportunity to rationalise our estate, combining three sites into one. This will reduce operating costs as well as our carbon footprint while providing a positive working environment for all crews and staff. The proposal also makes optimum use of a site provided to the Council and removes the need to seek and secure an alternative site in the County, whilst releasing assets that have limited long term value.
- 5.6 Part of this commitment includes understanding the changing needs of our facilities. The new Horsham site will provide a modern, efficient and technologically advanced building with lower running costs for the fire station part of the build and improvements in gender equality and safety from contaminants. In addition, WSFRS will have the facility to increase the frequency of training within a live fire environment, which is a critical operational requirement, and be able to offer this to both wholtime and retained staff with ease.
- 5.7 Benchmarking

The benchmarking analysis suggests there are further opportunities to lower costs for the overall scheme and to reduce the £2.5m contingencies as risks are treated, transferred or terminated. As such the £22.346m overall estimated scheme cost should be viewed as a cap at the top end of expectations.

5.8 Cost Schedule Summary

The cost summary for the project is summarised below, and shows the breakdown in pre-construction and construction costs associated with the scheme:

Description	Preferred Option (£M)
Total Pre-Construction Costs	£1.96
Total Construction Costs	£20.39*
*Including £2.5 contingencies as risk.	
Total Project Cost	£22.35

6 Risk implications and mitigations

- 6.1 The Stage 3 project risk register has been developed to help plan and manage project risks over the life of the project.). It indicates a range of risks which exist on the project, with the highest scoring items being factors which may prevent meeting the project budget and programme. All these risks have been additionally impacted by the presence of the of Covid-19 pandemic and far reaching effects upon supply chain resources, which is also an independent risk.
- 6.2 A total Client risk contingency of £2.5m is currently included within the overall project budget, which the Client Cost Manager considers to be adequate to mitigate all financial risks, including those identified above.
- 6.3 The five highest rated risks on the current register are shown below;

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Project cost budgets exceeded	Business case has been regularly updated and a new option costed that is within budget. Work has been paused to enable costs to be managed during the project revision.
WSCC access road adoption for construction purposes	Investigate alternative forms of access and egress to the site via the A24 slip road

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Level of capital receipt achieved through Disposal of WSCC assets.	Agree a programme for release of the Fire and Rescue assets declared surplus all operational use at Horley and Hurst Road Horsham and part of the site at Worthing with firm and expert advice for marketing and sale at the optimum time reducing the risk of any impact on further borrowing costs. NB: The current value is estimated to be in the region of £3.8M, which will need to be re-assessed.
Delay in full funding approval leads to increased design or construction costs	Business case presented 3rd June 2020 and timetable for governance settled and to be adhered to

- 6.4 Any delay to The Decision will impact on the project team availability, resulting in an increased risk to the current delivery programme and allocated costs. For these reasons it is proposed to re-appoint Willmott Dixon during September 2020, which would avoid this risk.
- 6.5 The risks of not proceeding with the project would be to maintain the status quo' with regards to the training and development of all West Sussex firefighters. Limiting training facilities as per the current provision would similarly limit firefighter effectiveness in the field. The Council needs to invest in upgrading their facilities in order to provide the level of realistic fire training required to ensure firefighter competencies are maintained and increase firefighter effectiveness.

7 Policy alignment and compliance

- 8.1 The public sector equality duty does not have direct implications for the project set out in this report save that the improved facilities are directly linked to the need to achieve compliance with diversity and inclusion requirements for fire fighters.
- 8.2 Sustainability considerations will be fully imbedded in the design of the new building as it develops and will support the County Council's goals in relation to combatting climate change.
- 8.3 The contractor appointment will reflect the County Council's duty under the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.

Lee Harris
Executive Director Place Services

Sabrina Cohen-Hatton
Chief Fire Officer

Contact Officer: Nick Burrell, Strategic Manager (OPE and Growth), 033022 23881, nick.burrell@westsussex.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix A: Report from the Task and Finish Group – Horsham Fire Station and Fire and Rescue Training Centre.

Background papers

None.

Key decision: Not applicable
Unrestricted
Ref:n/a

Cabinet

September 2020

Horsham Fire Station and Training Centre

Report by Chairman of the Task and Finish Group – Horsham Fire Station and Training Centre

Electoral divisions: All

Summary

The Horsham Fire Station Task and Finish Group (TFG) was established as a joint TFG with members of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee and the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee. Its purpose was to scrutinise the proposed Cabinet decision for the delivery of a new Horsham Fire Station and Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) Training Centre.

The TFG undertook its work at a single meeting and this report details its findings and recommendations to Cabinet on 15 September.

The TFG considered the draft decision report and was content to endorse the proposal and asks Cabinet to consider the recommendations listed below.

Recommendations

- (1) To ensure that the service requirements for a flexible training facility at Horsham and to ensure sufficient training capacity for future needs are addressed in the planning process;
 - (2) That future reports for investment proposals contain sufficient financial detail to ensure members are able to fully scrutinise them;
 - (3) That more information on the approximate level of capital receipts is included in the decision report if feasible;
 - (4) That a “do nothing” option with details of implications is added to the decision report
 - (5) That the Task and Finish Group endorses the delivery of the Horsham Fire Station and training centre, including the financial implications, and agrees that the project should be given priority in the capital programme; and
 - (6) That “as a matter of urgency” is added to the end of Recommendation (2) in the decision report.
-

Proposal

1 Deliberations of the Task and Finish Group

Agenda Item 4
Appendix A

- 1.1 The TFG met once on 28 August 2020 to scrutinise the draft decision report which is scheduled to be considered by Cabinet on 15 September 2020.
- 1.2 Members of the TFG raised questions about response times, capacity of the site, opening hours and viability of the building.
- 1.3 The TFG investigated the financial details in order to establish the breakdown of costs and the possible capital receipts from any disposal of surplus assets.
- 1.4 Members felt that it was essential that the planning application addressed the need for flexibility to ensure the site is available to be used as efficiently as possible and to address future needs of the service.
- 1.5 The TFG raised concern about the time the project had taken and recommended that it be taken forward urgently.
- 1.6 The TFG was broadly happy with the content of the draft decision report and supported the decision, but raised concern about the level of financial detail. It made recommendations as detailed above including one to strengthen future investment proposals being presented to scrutiny committees for consideration.

Tony Kershaw
Director of Law and Assurance

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**Key decision: No
Unrestricted
Ref: CAB09 (20/21)**

Cabinet

September 2020

Appointments to Outside Bodies

Report by Director of Law and Assurance

Electoral division(s): All

Summary

Outside bodies are external organisations, including partnerships to which the County Council is a party, which have requested that the County Council appoints an elected member or a representative to them or to which the Council expects to make appointments. Cabinet is asked to make the appointment to this Outside Body.

Recommendations

That Cabinet approves:

- 1) The addition of the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group to the County Council's Outside Bodies list.
- 2) The appointment of Cllr Roger Elkins to the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group for the remainder of the County Council term (May 2021).

Proposal

1 Background and context

1.1 The Council maintains a list of outside bodies which have requested that the County Council appoints an elected member or a representative to them. Participation in outside bodies:

- Contributes to the County Council's strategic functions, priorities or community leadership roles.
- Supports partnership and joint working.
- Enables Members to gain and share knowledge and expertise.

1.2 The criteria for appointments to outside bodies as set out in the Constitution are:

- That the interests of the County Council can be assisted by the making of the appointment or renewal of the appointment.
- That the Councillor is able to devote the time needed to meet the expectations of the external body and the Council.

- That, where the external body has a geographical limit to its functions, whether the Councillor's Division falls within or close to that area should be taken into consideration.
- That the Councillor has the knowledge, skills or interest in the work of the organisation that may be required.
- That the Councillor is prepared to provide such information on his or her participation in the work of the outside body as may be required.

- 1.3 All Councillors are eligible to be appointed as representatives of the County Council on outside bodies. Councillors appointed to outside bodies must respond to all reasonable requests for information about the work of the outside body and their participation in it.

2 Proposal details

- 2.1 The Cabinet is responsible for making Councillor appointments to outside bodies which precept on the County Council.
- 2.2 The LGA Coastal Special Interest Group seeks to champion and represent the collective interests of coastal, estuarine and maritime communities by increasing awareness and debate on environmental, economic and social issues at all levels in relation to the coast. It is proposed that Cabinet adds the Group to the Council's Outside Bodies list and appoints Cllr Roger Elkins to it for the remainder of the County Council term (May 2021).

3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 3.1 The Cabinet may choose not to appoint to an outside body but should consider whether there are any implications arising for the County Council by not making an appointment.

4 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 4.1 The Cabinet reviewed the list of outside bodies in October 2019 to ensure that the County Council continues to appoint to bodies that are relevant to the County Council and which are consistent with its priorities.

5 Finance

- 5.1 There are no financial or resource implications.

6 Risk implications and mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Conflicting interests	All councillors appointed to an outside body must declare a personal interest in any business of the county council where it relates to a body to which they are appointed to by the county council.
Ineffectiveness in the role	Appointees should obtain key documents regulating the organisation - constitution or terms of reference - to ensure they are aware of what the body does and receive a briefing on it and their role within it

- 6.1 There is a risk in not making such appointments as this could hinder the County Council in furthering its interests and priorities, and not develop the wider community role of Members.

7 Policy alignment and compliance

- 7.1 The equality duty is not applicable as this report deals with appointments to outside bodies. There are no social value, crime and disorder or human rights implications.

Tony Kershaw

Director of Law and Assurance

Contact Officer: Natalie Jones-Punch, Democratic Services Officer, 033022 25908, natalie.jones-punch@westsussex.gov.uk

Appendices

None.

Background papers

None.

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**Key decision: No
Unrestricted
Ref:**

Cabinet

15 September 2020

COVID-19 Response: update

Report by the Chief Executive

Electoral division(s): all

Summary

Attached at the Appendix is an update on West Sussex County Council's continued response to the Covid-19 providing information on cases in West Sussex, local outbreak management, the re-opening of schools and the County Council's current financial position.

A verbal update will be provided at the meeting to ensure an up-to-date picture is provided given the fast-moving nature of current events.

Recommendation

- (1) Cabinet is asked to consider and comment on the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
-

Proposal**1 Proposal details**

- 1.1 The details of this item for consideration are set out in the attached Appendix.

2 Resource/risk implications

2.1 The resource implications of the COVID-19 emergency response continue to be assessed, and are reported on in the Annex. There are significant risk implications. Business continuity plans have been implemented and risks are being monitored by the Executive Leadership Team.

2.2 Decisions required to address COVID-19 include assessments in accordance with Council policy and the statutory framework of duties and responsibilities including those relating to Equality, Human Rights, Social Value, Sustainability and Crime and Disorder Reduction implications.

Becky Shaw
Chief Executive

Appendices

Appendix A - West Sussex COVID-19 response - update

Background papers

none

West Sussex County Council COVID-19 update

Priority issues

- a) Local Outbreak Management (paras 1 - 16)**
- b) Schools reopening - update (paras 17 - 70)**
- c) West Sussex County Council financial position (paras 71 - 78)**
- d) Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant (paras 79 - 83)**

1. Priority issues

a) Local Outbreak Management

West Sussex Data

1. In West Sussex, we have seen the number of people testing positive for COVID-19 rise over the past few weeks. However, this should be put into context to fully understand the impact on the local population:
 - In the 7 days to 27 August, 44 residents tested positive. This is a rate of approximately 5 per 100,000 population less than half of the national rate (approximately 12 per 100,000).
 - It does differ across the county and at present there have been some higher numbers in Mid Sussex – where the rate per 100,000 is closer to 11, but numbers do fluctuate.
 - If we were seeing rates closer to the level at which countries are put on the quarantine list this would be approximately 175 cases per week and if we were at the level of some of the areas in the country in the north west experiencing additional lockdown - then this would be in the region of 350 cases per week.
 - It should be noted that the average age of cases was much higher in the Spring– in March 2020, the average age of someone testing positive was 70 years, now it is 40 years and we have not seen rises in hospital activity. Of course, testing itself has expanded. Of the 44 people who tested positive in the 7 days to 27 August just 3 people were over 65 years old.
 - We have seen a few cases of people returning from holiday and then testing positive - but we don't always have such detailed information as to how someone may have contracted the virus.
 - Just because, at present, we have comparatively low figures does not mean we can be complacent, all information is monitored daily by the public health team - both in terms of people being tested positive but also in relation to any specific setting or location such as workplaces etc and we work closely with colleagues in Public Health England (PHE) and district and borough councils to understand the local situation.

Laboratory Testing Capacity: the implications of the recent reduction in COVID-19 tests for West Sussex residents

2. West Sussex County Council has been notified that the laboratory capacity to test for COVID-19 has been reached. This has resulted in a decrease in the availability of COVID-19 Pillar 2 testing in areas of the country with a low incidence of COVID-19. The South East Region has the lowest incidence of the virus at present therefore we are a low priority for Pillar 2 testing.

3. West Sussex County Council has raised the issue with government but have been informed that this will possibly take some time to resolve (4 to 6 weeks). We are urging government to take action as a matter of urgency.
4. The implications for West Sussex are that without testing of pillar 2 at full capacity, we are unable to have an accurate picture of the number of cases of the virus and therefore may not be able to detect any concerning increase in the number of cases at locality level. It also means that we are unable to put any planned advance action in place, including advising residents to take further preventative action.
5. At the moment with a relatively low incidence of COVID-19 in West Sussex and no outbreaks, things are stable. However, we are monitoring the situation carefully.
6. Please note: Pillar 1 testing (those with a clinical need and health and care workers) continue as normal as these tests are analysed in hospitals.

Managing Local Lockdowns: National COVID-19 Contain Framework: A guide for local decision-makers

7. The Department for Health and Social Care published the [national COVID-19 Contain Framework: a guide for local decision makers](#) on Friday, 17 July 2020.
8. The Framework sets out how national and local partners will work with the public at a local level to prevent, contain and manage outbreaks.
9. Successful management of local outbreaks is a core element of NHS Test and Trace's ambition to break the chains of COVID-19 transmission to enable people to return to and maintain a more normal way of life.
10. This framework supports local decision-makers by clarifying their responsibilities and empowering them to take preventative action and make strong decisions locally, supported by mechanisms that safeguard key national assets and interests.

Accountability

11. Ministers are accountable nationally for setting this framework and for oversight and intervention where necessary.
12. Locally, Directors of Public Health (DPH) are accountable for controlling local outbreaks, working with Public Health England (PHE) and local health protection boards, supported with resource deployment by local 'gold' structures led by council chief executives, and local boards to communicate and engage with communities led by council leaders.

Designation of Local Systems – Three Escalation Categories

13. For the majority of scenarios, it will be most effective to deal with the local arrangements, where local community spread will largely be manageable within local COVID-19 arrangements, as has been the case during national lockdown. However, depending on the prevalence and progression of the virus, local systems will be designated into three 'escalation' categories which would enable specialist expertise and resource to be drawn down from regional and national levels to augment the local systems.

14. The three 'escalation' categories are:

- **Areas of concern** – Upper Tier Local Authorities (UTLAs) will work with their partners, supported by regional PHE and NHS Test and Trace resource, to take additional actions to manage outbreaks and reduce community spread of the virus to more normal levels e.g. additional targeted testing.
- **Areas of enhanced support** – UTLAs deemed as areas for enhanced support will be provided with increased national support, capacity and oversight, including additional resources deployed to augment the local teams.
- **Areas of intervention** - in certain instances, decision-making will be referred to national level. This includes cases where local leaders request an intervention from government, multiple outbreaks require resource prioritisation by Ministers, outbreaks raise issues of national importance e.g. impact on critical infrastructure, and local capabilities and controls are exceeded. A multi-agency national incident resource will be deployed to significantly bolster local resources to respond to the incident.

West Sussex Escalation Framework

15. A draft West Sussex Escalation Framework has been developed in liaison with Brighton and Hove City Council and East Sussex County Council to ensure a consistent approach is adopted across Sussex. The framework outlines potential triggers, escalation determination, notifications and communications, and potential actions required.

16. It is currently going through County Council internal sign-off processes and will be ratified by the West Sussex COVID-19 Health Protection Board at their next meeting.

b) Schools reopening - update

Summary as at 1 September

17. It remains the directive of the Department for Education (DfE) that all pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term. This directive has been given by the Government and remains to be the case at the time of this briefing.

18. As reported in their [latest guidance](#) to schools, now the circumstances have changed, the prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased, the NHS Test and Trace system is up and running, and the Government is clear about the measures that need to be in place to create safer environments within schools.
19. Returning to school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children. This impact can affect both current levels of learning and children's future ability to learn, and therefore we need to ensure all pupils can return to school sooner rather than later.
20. The guidance reports the risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school. We know that school is a vital point of contact for public health and safeguarding services that are critical to the wellbeing of children and families.
21. Lower academic achievement also translates into long-term economic costs due to having a less well-qualified workforce. This affects the standard of living that today's pupils will have over the course of their entire life. For many households, school closures have also affected their ability to work. As the economy begins to recover, we need to remove this barrier so parents and carers can return to work.
22. In relation to working in schools, whilst it is not possible to ensure a totally risk-free environment, the Office of National Statistics' analysis on [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) related deaths linked to occupations](#) suggests that staff in educational settings tend not to be at any greater risk from the disease than many other occupations. There is no evidence that children transmit the disease any more than adults.
23. Given the improved position, the DfE guidance reports the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children returning to school. For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in school far outweigh the very low risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), and this guidance explains the steps schools need to take to reduce risks still further. As a result, we can plan for all children to return and start to reverse the enormous costs of missed education. This will be an important move back towards normal life for many children and families.
24. The DfE are, therefore, asking schools to prepare to welcome all children back this autumn. While coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in the community, this means making judgments at a school level about how to balance minimising any risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) by maximising control measures with providing a full educational experience for children and young people. Schools should use their existing resources to make arrangements to welcome all children back, though additional funding has been agreed in the form of a 'catch up' premium to support children to recover gaps in their learning caused as a result of the pandemic.

25. The outcome of the year's A level assessments were initially published on the 13 August and prompted a national outcry that the algorithm used to determine results has unfairly disadvantaged particular groups of students and schools. A similar algorithm was in place for moderating GCSE grades due to be published this week. Government announced on 17 August that students in England will instead receive centre assessment grades for this week's GCSE results and last week's A and AS level results. If students' calculated grades were higher than the centre assessment grade, their calculated grade will stand. Government also now intends to remove temporary student number controls for Higher Education which had been introduced for the coming academic year. We are still awaiting publication of vocational BTEC qualifications for 16 and 18 year olds which were withdrawn to ensure alignment with changes in the A level and GCSE awards.

Our support to school leaders and governing boards.

26. Throughout COVID-19, the Department for Education have provided national guidance to schools, and West Sussex County Council through our weekly Education and Skills e-briefings to schools has fully adopted this guidance, together with that provided by Public Health England (PHE), to ensure all schools in West Sussex have been supported to provide a continuous service to children and families whether children are in school or have remained at home.

27. At all times, the DfE require Governing Boards of every school to have in place robust risk assessments in order to safely provide the education services they are permitted to provide to children and families, and at all times with due regard for the health, safety, and safeguarding of all children. The DfE require Governing Board to continually review these and to communicate and publish any changes to parents and carers via the school website.

28. In West Sussex, we have seen many excellent examples of how school leaders and governors have routinely updated their school website with the necessary information about their re-opening plans and risk assessments, giving assurance to parents and carers of the safety and safeguarding arrangements in place, and particularly during the pandemic. Many school websites contain very detailed risk assessments in order to provide additional reassurance to parents and carers.

29. In addition to daily e-briefings to school leaders and governors provided by the Director of Education and Skills, and taking into account national guidance and direction from the government, DfE and PHE, the Council issued to every school a copy of our 'Framework for Re-opening Schools in West Sussex', first in May 2020 ahead of the phased re-opening from 1st June 2020, and further re-issued in July 2020 to support the full re-opening of schools from September 2020. Accompanying the frameworks issued was a 'risk assessment tool'. Both the framework and the risk tool were designed with teams from across the Council, ensuring all aspects of 'risk' were considered for mitigation, not limited to but including:

- Preparing to re-open buildings and facilities

- School organisation and planning, including transport and catering
 - Staffing and deployment
 - Health, safety and hygiene
 - Curriculum and learning provision, models and practices (including online provision)
 - Emotional wellbeing and mental health support for children and staff
 - Safeguarding children and staff
 - Updating policies and procedures
 - Finance matters
 - Human Resources matters
 - Governance arrangements
 - Communicating with pupils, parents and carers.
30. The framework and risk assessment tool have been produced in consultation with representative head teachers, unions representatives, senior representatives of the County Council and representatives from Public Health England (PHE).
31. In addition to the framework and risk tools, supplementary guidance has been collaboratively created by the West Sussex County Council teams and issued to parents, school leaders and governors, particularly, but not limited to, supporting them to keep their children active and learning safely online for children who remained at home during lockdown periods; transition arrangements for pupils returning to school or joining school for the first time; assessment and moderation guidance for school leaders to support end of year assessments and children's progression into the next year, phase or next school.
32. In April, we produced and shared with parents and carers some specific guidance on how to keep children active and positively engaged in on-line and physical learning and development, whilst prioritising their emotional wellbeing, online safety and online safeguarding, providing a list of useful learning and development website links and resources, including highlighting the availability of the [Oak National Academy](#) and [BBC Bitesize](#) online learning facilities.
33. Specifically to support a re-start of the curriculum in September, we have produced and issued to schools our curriculum guidance to support school leaders in their restart planning of the curriculum and learning, taking into account a variety of curriculum models to support children in making a successful return to school, recognising the potential and likelihood of any children experiencing significant gaps in lost learning, and whilst ensuring the emotional wellbeing and mental health of both children and staff are fully considered during the period of restart throughout the Autumn term.
34. Throughout COVID-19, the education and skills service has remained fully engaged with school leaders and governors in providing the necessary support to facilitate them providing a continuous service to children and families. Our school effectiveness, SEND and inclusion teams have provided a continuous service of support and challenge to all schools, working most closely with Head teachers and Chairs of Governing Boards, including working closely with the Academy Trust Boards and CEOs, to ensure national and

local guidance has been interpreted correctly and adapted by each school and academy.

35. The school link advisers, SEND and inclusion teams have worked closely with the headteacher and Chair of Governors in each school in supporting them to provide continuous childcare provision for children of key and critical workers, and those with an EHCP, as well as in maintaining an education provision for pupils who have remained at home during the lockdown period. The link advisers have provided appropriate support and challenge to the Headteachers and Chairs of Governing Boards in the development of their re-opening plans and risk assessments, taking into account national and local guidance. We have remained in close contact with academy principals and the Multi Academy Trust CEOs in supporting them in their plans.
36. In working with our school leaders and governors, we have promoted the importance of local decision making taken by school leaders in consultation with the Governing Board, as the arrangements for re-opening any school, and the risk assessment pertaining to this, are unique to each school setting and must be adapted to reflect the individual characteristics of a school such as its location, facilities, staffing, opening and closing times, health, safety and safeguarding arrangements. Furthermore, the DfE in issuing its own guidance has always promoted the guidance is provided as 'guidance' and may need to be interpreted and adapted by school leaders in consultation with the governing boards to take account of their local context and setting.
37. As of the 1 June, as directed by the DfE at the time, our primary schools partially re-opened to welcome back children from Reception, Year 1, and Year 6, while our secondary schools partially re-opened to welcome children from Years 10 and 12 back into face to face tuition.
38. In West Sussex, our schools remained partially open and provided a continuous childcare service to children of key worker families, vulnerable children, and children with Education Health and Care Plans, whilst maintaining an education provision for all other children who remained at home during the lockdown period. These services continued throughout Easter and bank holiday periods, meaning many of our school buildings remained opened during the holiday periods.
39. Our discussions with Headteachers and Chairs of Governors at the end of July confirm all schools and academies, including special schools, are planning to fully re-open from September 2020.

Preparing our schools for full re-opening from September 2020

40. To support our school leaders and governors in preparing for the full re-opening, and in completing their risk assessments throughout, our school link advisers have been in regular contact with the head teacher and chair of governor of each school. We have also maintained close contact with the Multi Academy Trusts in providing support and securing the full re-opening of schools from September.

41. We re-issued our 'Framework for re-opening West Sussex Schools from September 2020' and 'risk tool' to every school and academy early in July in response to the issuance of further guidance to schools from the DfE.
42. The additional measures set out in this version of the 'framework' specifically promotes the importance of school leaders and governors putting in place additional proportionate protective measures for all pupils and staff in their return to school, whilst also ensuring that all pupils receive a high-quality education that enables them to thrive and progress.
43. Many schools have refined their re-opening plans and risk assessments ahead of closing in July for the summer holiday period. Whilst schools remain closed, we are providing a continuous school effectiveness service for any school leader and governor to assist them with their re-opening plans and in completing their risk assessments, recognising this is ever changing as new national guidance is provided.
44. In supporting parents and carers during the summer holiday period, we have published on our own West Sussex website and local offer pages some additional advice, guidance and support for keeping children active and positively engaged in purposeful and developmental learning and activities throughout the summer holidays, including access to local provision such as leisure and recreation services.
45. The very [latest updated guidance](#) for the re-opening of school, issued by the DfE on 7 August provides additional specific updated guidance relating to:
- risk management
 - welcoming children back to school in September
 - clarification on the age requirements related to face coverings on public transport
 - confirm revised guidance on cleaning has now been published
 - how the Department for Education will be supporting schools over the summer on communications with staff, parents and pupils
 - information about pupils with education, health and care plans
 - information about managing contractors and other visitors to schools, including immunisation programmes
 - details of the test and trace process
 - additional advice on staff who are clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable
 - expanded guidance on use of space and ventilation
 - a website link to the recorded webinar on mental health and wellbeing, clarify resources available from MindEd, and link to e-Bug resources to support teaching children about hygiene measures
 - advice on exam results day.
46. This DfE guidance is intended to support schools, both mainstream and alternative provision, to prepare for the full re-opening. It applies to primary, secondary (including sixth forms), infant, junior, middle, upper, school-based nurseries and boarding schools. The DfE expect independent schools to follow the control measures set out in the guidance in the same way as state-funded schools. The guidance also covers expectations for

children with special educational needs and disability (SEND), including those with education, health and care plans, in mainstream schools. Separate guidance is provided for early years, further education colleges and for special schools.

47. This DfE guidance is in 5 sections. The first section sets out the actions school leaders should take to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their school. This is public health advice, endorsed by Public Health England (PHE).

48. The rest of the guidance is focused on how the Department for Education (DfE) expects schools to operate in this new context. This includes:

- school operations
- curriculum, behaviour and pastoral support
- assessment and accountability
- contingency planning to provide continuity of education in the case of a local outbreak.

49. The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated significant additional risk assessments to be conducted and put in place by school leaders and in consultation with their Governing Board, and for parents and carers to be communicated with throughout the pandemic, and particularly in leading to a full re-opening of schools in September.

50. The local authority, through our school effectiveness service, and in our duty to all children attending all schools in West Sussex, will continue to provide a continuous service of support and challenge to school leaders and governors in developing their risk assessment and in preparing for fully re-opening their school in September. We have planned a robust conversation with every school headteacher and chair of governors around their planned returns and risk assessments between 24 August and 4 September, guided by an aide memoire, and aiming to assure the Council that risk assessments have been comprehensive and are fully aligned to national guidance and local context

51. At all times we have been guided, and will remain guided, by that provided by the DfE and PHE. We have been, and remain, especially vigilant to information relating to COVID-19 cases, any rises, spikes or outbreaks whether local or national, including monitoring the 'R' level and any scientific evidence available to us nationally, across the South East, and in West Sussex.

52. Recognising that the environment in which we currently operate is rapidly evolving and may change, perhaps requiring additional guidance and quick response to national guidance issued either by the DfE or PHE, our school link advisers will be speaking with every head teacher and Chair of Governor in each school towards the end of August and by the end of the first week of September to provide any new guidance and to conduct further enquiries to ensure every school can fully re-open safely and securely in September, and to ensure that all necessary health, safety and safeguarding arrangements are in place as directed by national policy and statute.

53. Recent announcements on the use of face coverings in secondary schools and colleges have reinforced that such coverings are not to be used in classrooms but that flexibilities have been provided for headteachers to consider their use in communal areas where the organisation makes it difficult to keep students in different learning bubbles apart.
54. We are confident the guidance we have provided, and will continue to provide to all West Sussex schools, takes full account of the national guidance provided by the DfE and PHE, and is robust and detailed, placing significant emphasis on school leaders and governors prioritising the safety, safeguarding, emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and staff in all risk assessments and decisions regarding the full re-opening of any school.
55. In welcoming children back this autumn, schools will be asked to minimise the number of contacts that a pupil has during the school day as part of implementing the system of controls outlined to reduce the risk of transmission. If schools follow the guidance set out by the DfE and PHE, and maximise control measures, they can be confident they are managing risk effectively. Our school link advisers will continue to work closely with school leaders and governors throughout the re-opening phase to ensure they receive appropriate support and challenge to ensure our schools operate safely and securely at all times and in the best interests of children.
56. Schools are planning for the fulltime return of students including changes to break and lunchtimes to ensure full time access even where schools are operating staggered start and finish times.
57. The school link advisers will be working very closely with school leaders and governors to ensure any gaps in children's learning are rapidly recovered, supporting leaders to make best value use of additional 'catch-up' premium funding, and specifically focusing on those children who are known to as being disadvantaged as well as those who have become disadvantaged as a result of lapses in learning, provision and support whilst they remained at home during Covid-19 and were unable to attend school. This is a particularly important aspect of their role as many schools will expect a 1-day visit from Ofsted inspectors who will focus much of their attention on the re-opening arrangements, risk assessments, curriculum and learning, and school leaders' use of the 'catch-up' premium funding to address gaps in pupils' learning.
58. In supporting our schools, the Education and Skills service will continue to work collaboratively and purposefully drawing on the expertise of other Council teams and directorates to provide coherent and robust guidance and support to our schools, and in consultation with our stakeholders.
59. The local authority has received a grant of £101,000 to support wellbeing for students returning to school. Plans are being drawn up on how to utilise this funding to provide social, emotional and mental health support to those who need it the most.

Local lockdown

60. While our aim is to have all pupils back at school in the autumn, every school will also have a plan for the possibility of a local or national lockdown, partial closure of a school owing to an outbreak in a 'bubble', 'class' or 'year group', and how they will ensure continuity of an education service should such scenarios occur.
61. Our school leaders and governors, as well as our academy partners, have been overwhelmingly positive and exceptionally professional in responding so positively to the COVID-19 pandemic, at all times considering what is in the best interest of their children to make the best start in life in West Sussex, to maintain the safety, safeguarding and wellbeing of every child, and to mitigate any gaps in learning and delays in development.
62. Our school leaders and governors have responded exceptionally positively to our guidance and support including our framework and risk assessment tools, as evidenced by the continuous service provided by every school during COVID-19, and the very few complaints we have received from parents and carers. However, whilst we recognise each school has been supported to take an individualised approach to their re-opening plans and education / childcare provision during the lockdown period, as a result of their individual school context, this may not have satisfied all parents.
63. We are assured our school leaders and governors, whilst operating with the national and local guidance we have provided, have been supported to take and make the very best decisions on behalf of children and families in their community, and will continue to work closely with us to achieve this safely and securely from September.

Home to school transport

64. National guidance has been provided on home to school transport arrangements for the September return. Key recommendations made include:
- Encouraging children to walk or cycle
 - Recommending the use of masks on dedicated school transport as well as public transport
 - A reduction of social distancing requirements on dedicated school transport
 - Provision of additional transport where demand is greatest and there exists conflicts between demand for school travel and general public travel at times.
65. We have been working with our suppliers and the bus operators to understand what additional capacity might be available and indicative costs.
66. We have completed a survey of parents to understand their thoughts on travel arrangements for September with a response of approx. 2200 – this will help inform our response.

- 67. We have been awarded £150k to assist us looking at ways to try to manage travel demands to aid the issue of capacity on public transport due to social distancing requirements.
- 68. We have been and shall continue to provide PPE for staff including contractors where needed. Whilst this is a requirement within the expected guidance it ensures that we will retain as many staff as needed to provide the service as they see it as a key requirement.
- 69. The County Council has updated its communications for parents on school reopening that shall include advice on guidance to try to reduce demand on transport with a preference for active travel options such as walking and cycling.
- 70. Transport emails and letters about arrangements are currently being sent to parents of eligible pupils.

c) West Sussex County Council Financial Position

- 71. The anticipated financial impact of the COVID-19 emergency upon West Sussex County Council has not significantly changed since the last COVID-19 briefing. The financial impact is included in the first quarter TPM, considered elsewhere on the agenda. The next DELTA return will be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on the 4 September.
- 72. The Government has issued draft guidance on the proposed compensation scheme for income losses. In this scheme the Government has committed to compensating authorities for 75% of income losses after allowing for a 5% loss across income categories. We are considering the guidance but have not yet determined if our estimate of £1.2m, which has been included in the current forecast, needs adjusting as a consequence.
- 73. Additional support has been announced for Local Authorities' Home to School transport. The government has also announced additional support for public transport which will be distributed direct to transport providers. We do not yet know how local providers will benefit from the funding. We continue to review our forecasts as government guidance emerges.
- 74. Our current financial modelling indicates that the estimated gap in funding arising from the pandemic will be in the region of between £9m and £19m in 2020/21. The picture for 2021/22 and future years remains uncertain. The major variables include the impact of unemployment on our council tax base and the impact of business closures on our business rates income.
- 75. Unemployment continues to increase across the county and as the furlough schemes end it is likely we will continue to see pressure in this area. Across the county the numbers of claimants for JSA or universal credit have risen from 2% in March to 5.1% in June. The highest number of claimants are in Crawley followed by Worthing. Districts and Boroughs are revising their council tax estimates and we will continue to update our assumptions as

information emerges. We are currently projecting a reduction of between 2.5% and 5%.

76. We are in regular dialogue with our Districts and Boroughs regarding their financial position for 2020/21 and future years. The major financial issues facing our Districts and Boroughs is the loss of income from car parking and the loss of income/additional support for leisure centres. Council tax income is a smaller proportion of their overall funding and therefore the reduction in the council tax base is less of an issue. The Government support for income losses is beneficial to authorities who receive an income stream for car parking, however, the application of the scheme to leisure services is not yet clear. Our current understanding is that our Districts and Boroughs plan to use reserves to cover in year losses and are focussing on understanding the potential impact on their financial position for future years.

The estimated costs to the County Council fall into the following portfolio areas

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
Budget Gap February County Council	0	15	17	13	45
Optimistic scenario:					
COVID pressures (includes undeliverable savings)	50	14			64
Service pressures		12	8	9	29
Council tax and business rate funding	0	18	3	3	24
Government funding	-41	-17	13	0	-45
Revised budget gap – optimistic	9	42	41	25	117
Pessimistic Scenario:					
COVID pressures (includes undeliverable savings)	54	27			81
Service pressures	6	16	8	9	39
Council tax and business rate funding	0	41	4	4	49
Government funding	-41	0	13		-28
Revised budget gap - pessimistic	19	99	42	26	186

77. Given the current overall financial outlook for the County Council and in the absence of further funding, the current expenditure in excess of Government support would have to be met through either serious service reductions or use of reserves. Any unplanned use of reserves would reduce the financial resilience of the County Council.

78. It is important that the County Council continues to lobby Government for sufficient funding to ensure that the County Council can play an active role in the County's recovery from lockdown, ensuring communities are able to access employment and continue to lead healthy happy and productive lives. The Government has indicated there will be a Spending Review in the

autumn, which will provide some invaluable context for financial planning over the medium term.

D) Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant

79. In response to the continuing COVID 19 situation DEFRA has announced a Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies to support people who are struggling with food and essential supplies. The county's share of the grant is £737,319. The guidance states the authority can use its discretion to support those most in need – DEFRA envisage the majority to be used over the next 12 weeks.
80. It is proposed that £140k of the grant is passported to voluntary organisations for distribution. £100k will be allocated initially to *Citizens Advice* to pass to residents who face hardship due to COVID-19. This will primarily be through vouchers for utility payments or food supplies. £40k will also be passed to Food banks to provide additional assistance to residents who are in urgent need of food supplies.
81. The remaining grant will be set against costs resulting from the delivery of essential food and medicines through the community hub and for essential supplies and services to those residents who are known to our social care teams to need essential supplies and services due to the impact of Covid-19. This will be administered through the Community Hub on behalf of, and in partnership with, District and Borough Councils and the voluntary sector.
82. There will be a review of the relative quantum of the two elements based on experience over the early operation of the scheme. They may be rebalanced in order to direct the remaining proportion of the grant to the area of greatest need.
83. Appropriate safeguards against misuse and reporting arrangements will be in place.

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